

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE

P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-4343
(925) 944-5351 FAX (925) 944-5449

E-Mail: callife@calright2life.org

Web Site:

www.calright2life.org

Established 1981

September 2003 Conception/Fertilization

What's the difference?

By Cecelia M. Cody

I was out having coffee with a pro-life friend a few weeks ago and we were discussing the question, "When does life begin?" She was making a definite distinction between "conception" and "fertilization," so I asked, "What's the difference?" My friend explained that when we are defending the sanctity of life, we usually use the word "conception" to mark the beginning of life. For example, we tell people that life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. However, she explained, due to some frightening happenings it may be time to be more precise with our language.

By "conception," we in the pro-life movement understand this word as meaning "the union of sperm and ovum." Another word for that same event is "fertilization." Even the U.S. Senate used these two terms synonymously as recently as 1982 in its two-volume report on the Human Life Bill then being debated. [1]

The meaning of the word "conception" has been intentionally changed by pro-abortion forces in recent years to refer not to the fertilization of the ovum by the sperm, but instead to the implantation of the blastocyst (the newly developing human at about a week after fertilization) into the wall of the mother's uterus. This change in definition has become so commonplace that it is reflected in standard medical reference books such as OB & GYN Terminology: "Conception is the implantation of the blastocyst. It is not synonymous with fertilization." [2]

One example of this change in definition is the following, a quote from Planned Parenthood's website:

"According to general medical definitions of pregnancy that have been endorsed by many organizations including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, pregnancy begins when a pre-embryo [3] completes implantation into the lining of the uterus. [4] Methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, prevent pregnancy by inhibiting ovulation, fertilization and/or implantation." [5]

So what's the big deal? Well, this means that now if a preborn baby is purposely killed before implantation, what happens is not called abortion (the name it

deserves), but rather contraception, or the "prevention of conception." Look at that Planned Parenthood quote again – they are admitting that some methods of contraception prevent "pregnancy" by preventing "implantation"! If a baby is alive and ready to implant in her mother's womb, isn't the mother pregnant? (Yes!) Wouldn't killing this baby be abortion? (Yes!) Well, not any more! This shift in language is a public relations move to cover up countless abortions. Beware of these new definitions of words when you hear someone talk about "preventing conception." What they really mean includes ABORTION.

So, should we use the term "fertilization" now instead of "conception," just to be crystal clear in what we mean? With modern technology, genetic manipulation, and the threat of cloning, there can even be problems with saying "fertilization." Yes, human life begins with the union of sperm and ovum. But now, even though the procedures used are immoral and contrary to God's plan for creating people, some human lives may begin by other methods of asexual reproduction and the transfer of cell nuclei. Similarly, if a person were ever cloned, he or she would still be a person, with full human rights and dignity. Using the word "fertilization" might be seen as excluding these instances of human life.

So now, to avoid any confusion about whether or not the smallest human beings are persons, it may be best to explain that "human life is sacred, and is to be protected, from the single-cell stage." This wording makes it clear that implantation is not the start of a human life, and that all human beings are members of our family regardless of the circumstances of their beginnings.

[1] See Human Life Bill, US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee of Separation of Powers, 97th Congress, S-158, April-June 1982, Serial No. J-97-16).

[2] OB & GYN Terminology, E. Hughes, ed., Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 1972.

[3] Note: There is no such official term as a "pre-embryo." Use of this term is yet another attempt to de-personalize the preborn human being.

[4] ACOG, 1998; DHHS, 1978; Hughes, 1972; "Make the Distinction..." 2001.

[5] From website dated August 2002, <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/library/birthcontrol/ecandma.html>

Greatest Destroyer of Peace – "I feel the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is war against the child – a direct killing of the innocent child – murder by the mother herself. And if we can accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? How can we persuade a woman not to have an abortion?"

-Mother Teresa at 1994 National Prayer Breakfast

UPCOMING EVENTS

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE IS PLEASED TO PRESENT

Eric J. Scheidler

Communications Director
of the Pro-Life Action League

Friday, October 24, 2003 6:00PM

Walnut Creek Civic Arts Building

111 Ygnacio Valley Road

Walnut Creek, CA

Reserve your spot by calling us now!

Hayward, Saturday September 27 – Mary's House for Homeless Pregnant Women will celebrate their 1st anniversary fund raiser Dinner Dance and Silent Auction 4:00-8:30 p.m. in Hayward. For further information call 510-236-0383.

Clayton, Friday October 17 – Birthright of Concord will celebrate its 30th anniversary with a dinner dance at Oakhurst Country Club in Clayton. Dinner 7 p.m. Cost \$35 per person. For further information contact Birthright at 925-798-7227.

Oakland, Saturday November 8 – Life Legal Defense Foundation's annual banquet at the Bellevue Club on Lake Merritt in Oakland, featuring Grover G. Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform. Contact Mary Riley at 707-224-6675 for further information.

Marin County, Saturday November 15th -- The Marin County Respect Life Committee presents Wesley J. Smith, attorney for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, author of Forced Exit, Culture of Death and numerous articles speaking on the important issues of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide. Potluck dinner starts at 5:45 PM at St. Sebastian Church hall. For details and reservations, call Vicki Evans at 415-945-0180.

Around the Office: Emails and letters

Throughout the month our office receives e-mail announcements of time-urgent pro-life opportunities that we would like to be able to share with our members. If you would like to be informed of these items of interest, please send us your e-mail address. Also if you have recently changed your e-mail address... did you remember to let us know? Please contact us at callife@calright2life.org.

Last month we reported on the success of the Berkshire Hathaway boycott, the result of our "Mustard Seed Project." If you would like to be part of the "Mustard Seed Project" letter-writing effort, please note your interest on the enclosed form.

Combined Federal Campaign

In the corporate world, autumn brings the annual United Way "charitable giving" campaign. The equivalent for federal government employees (postal, airport security, military, social security administration, IRS, etc.) is the Combined Federal Campaign, commonly referred to as the CFC. Cecilia recently attended a CFC kickoff event in San Jose where she passed out pro-life materials and made a brief presentation about California Right to Life. Her message was very well received, and she was asked to come speak at other Bay Area CFC kickoff events to tell federal employees about their opportunity to donate to pro-life organizations. If you are a federal employee, consider designating California Right to Life Education Fund as a beneficiary of your payroll deduction for 2004. California Right to Life Education Fund is a 501-c3 organization; a validly designated agency for this type of charity drive contributions. **OUR CFC NUMBER IS 7507.** Call us for assistance in making the designation and/or further information.

Finally, does your company have a "Charitable Giving Matching Program?" Consider making a donation to us and informing your company. Through a Corporate Matching Fund Program, your donation dollars give to California Right to Life Education Fund twice. *Contributions to California Right to Life Education Fund are fully tax-deductible.*

WHO IS CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE?

This is the newsletter of California Right to Life **Education Fund**, a 501-c-3 organization established to educate the public about pro-life issues. We are an affiliate of the American Life League, headed by Judie Brown. Donations to us are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-4343.

California Right to Life **Committee, Inc.** is a 501-c-4 organization providing information on legislative issues affecting the right to life; and pro-life political advocacy. CRLC, Inc. is not permitted, under IRS regulations, to offer a tax deduction for donations. \$24.99 annually is requested for a subscription to the CRLC legislative email updates list and can be sent to 1920 Monument Blvd #309, Concord, CA 94520.

Both share the same "no-exceptions" beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the *single-cell stage* to natural death.

Thank you for your generous and continued support of California Right to Life Education Fund. If we may be of any assistance to you in your pro-life efforts, by providing pamphlets, speakers, etc., please feel free to contact our office. Normal office hours are 9-12 Monday through Friday.

For Life,