

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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Established 1981

January 2007

How to Debate a Pro-Abort Part 1 - Laying the Foundation By Philip Morrison

I recently had the opportunity to participate in a debate at a local college about abortion. Following the debate, one young man came up to me and told me that I had given him something to think about; that he had never heard my particular arguments before. I later asked myself why - why had he never heard my argument? I wasn't presenting a "new" argument. It occurred to me that, most likely, he had never heard my argument because the pro-life people he has heard debating the pro-abortion arguments are usually doing just that - debating the pro-abortion arguments.

Many of you may be wondering, isn't that what we are supposed to do? Actually, our goal should be to explain the pro-life position. That's what I want to write about. I want to help empower you to be able to defend the pro-life position. In this, and subsequent articles, I will share with you some tips I have learned about sharing the pro-life message; these have come through numerous debates and conversations with pro-aborts.

I have often been asked how to refute pro-abortion arguments. In a nutshell, you don't. Okay, so I'm being a little facetious. Yes, there will come a time when you must address the pro-aborts' arguments. However, we need to stop doing so on their terms. My point is that too often pro-lifers debate what the pro-aborts want to debate. There is an adage that says he who defines the terms of the debate wins. It is time that we reframed the debate to talk about the one - the only - issue that must be resolved. By focusing on this one issue, we can refute just about all the pro-abortion arguments.

That's why, before you debate the pro-abortion arguments, you must first lay the foundation for the pro-life position. Whenever I participate in a debate or give a presentation to an audience that contains primarily people who are pro-abortion (or who may consider themselves as undecided or in the middle), I always start off with this illustration (formulated by Greg Koukl in his book *Precious Unborn Human*

Persons) which encapsulates what should be the pro-life position:

Imagine you are at the sink washing dishes. As you are scrubbing away, your 5-year old son comes up behind you and asks, Daddy (or Mommy), can I kill this? What is your first response? What is it? Right? The answer you would give your child will depend on the answer to that question. It is a cockroach? (Sure, go ahead.) Is it a kitten? (I don't think so.) Is it his little brother? (We're sending that boy to counseling!) What this simple illustration demonstrates is that the answer to the question, "Can I kill this?" is entirely dependent on a predicate question: "What is it?" Everyone in the abortion debate agrees that abortion kills something. But whether it is right to take the life of any living thing depends entirely on the answer to the question, "What is it?"

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This is the heart of
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The one question we must focus on, therefore, is "What is the unborn?" This is the heart of the abortion debate. All other issues are secondary.

If you want to have a little fun with the pro-aborts, just point out that even *Roe v. Wade* agrees with this. As you are no doubt aware, *Roe v. Wade* is the Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion through all nine months of pregnancy. For pro-aborts, it is the epitome of Supreme Court rulings, their "Holy Grail," if you will. That's why I like to point out a little known paragraph in *Roe v. Wade*. In his majority opinion, Justice Blackmun wrote,

The appellee . . . argue[s] that the fetus is a "person" within the language and meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment. In support of this, they outline at length and in detail the well-known facts of fetal development. **If this suggestion of personhood is established, the appellant's case, of course, collapses, for the fetus' right to life would then be guaranteed specifically by the Amendment.** (Emphasis added)

Even Justice Blackmun recognized that the crux of the abortion issue is whether or not the unborn entity is a person.

Another method for laying the foundation for the pro-life position is to summarize that position in a simple argument form. I like to use this method with college

students. Any of you who took a course in logic in high school or college will remember how to structure an argument. An argument, in the classical sense, is a series of premises, or statements of fact, which are designed to lead to a conclusion. A simple argument can be composed of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Here is the argument I present to explain the pro-life position:

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

Premise: Abortion intentionally takes the life of an innocent human being.

Therefore: Abortion is morally wrong.

In order to refute the conclusion of this argument, all one has to do is refute one, or both, of the premises. I'd love to see someone try to refute the first premise. In fact, I'd love to see someone try to refute the second premise as well. Most of the time, whenever I present this argument, the pro-abortion doesn't even attempt to refute it. He/she usually just goes on arguing his/her pet pro-abortion arguments. For example, in my most recent debate, my opponent continually argued, among other things, against the parental notification proposition that was on the ballot this November. She argued that this bill would prevent young girls from getting adequate "health care." I hope you can see how this totally misses the point of the debate, which was whether abortion should be allowed in the first place. She just assumed that abortion was not morally wrong without making any attempt to address my argument.

In summary, before you try to refute an assertion presented by a pro-abortion, you must first lay the groundwork of establishing the basis for the pro-life position. That is that abortion is morally wrong because it takes the life of an innocent human being. This then becomes the foundation for your refutations of the pro-aborts' arguments.

In the next installment, I will discuss how you can use science and philosophy to demonstrate that the unborn are persons.

Philip Morrison is a pro-life speaker living in the Sacramento area. Before moving to California, he served as President and Director of Education for New Hampshire Right to Life. He has spoken about the pro-life issue on high school and college campuses, at churches and on radio and television programs. Philip is available (free of charge) to speak on a variety of pro-life issues. Contact him at philipmcal@netzero.com for more information.

Right to Life Act Critical For New Congress

"While the Right to Life Act failed to generate sufficient interest to schedule hearings in the House of Representatives, we will persist in our efforts to focus Congressional attention on this groundbreaking piece of legislation," said Judie Brown, president of American Life League. "We are truly grateful to the one hundred courageous men and women who co-sponsored this bill during this past session and anticipate continued support from both new and returning members of Congress in 2007. The bill would protect every human person – born and preborn – from his beginning."

The Right to Life Act, as introduced in 2005 by Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), would have established "equal protection under the 14th article of the Constitution for the right to live of each born and preborn human person." According to Brown, establishing personhood for the preborn baby is the only way to effectively end the abortion epidemic in this country.

"The Right to Life Act is the most important piece of pro-life legislation Congress could enact. In an instant it could restore personhood to the preborn child and bring an end to abortion on demand in this country," said Brown. "The men and women who supported this piece of legislation truly understand that personhood is at the crux of the abortion battle."

One hundred Congressmen and women signed on to co-sponsor the Right to Life Act, including both Democrats and Republicans. "The bipartisan support for this bill is indicative of the fact that it is time for abortion to end in this country now," said Brown. "Unfortunately, the pro-life movement has been attempting to merely chip away at abortion for almost 34 years. Now is the time for a dramatic change."

Brown says the greatest strength of the Right to Life Act is that it is built on solid pro-life principles; it contains no exceptions. "Pro-lifers, and especially pro-life leaders, need to put enormous efforts into this bill in 2007 to ensure protection for the most vulnerable of all human beings – the preborn child in the womb."

Planned Parenthood closes clinic after clinic

"Planned Parenthood is shrinking," said Jim Sedlak, vice president of American Life League. "Though it still operates the nation's largest chain of abortion

facilities, Americans are rejecting Planned Parenthood and its agenda as more and more of its clinics are closing across the United States." American Life League's exclusive new study shows that the number of Planned Parenthood "health" clinics has plummeted to its lowest total in almost 20 years.

"In our study," explained Sedlak, who leads American Life League's effort to expose the true nature of Planned Parenthood, "we found the organization has 817 'health' clinics. The number of 'health' clinics is the lowest it has been since 1987." The rise and fall of Planned Parenthood clinic numbers can be seen in the following table:

1987	816	"health" clinics
1990	879	"health" clinics
1995	938	"health" clinics
2000	875	"health" clinics
2005	825	"health" clinics
2006	817	"health" clinics

The number of Planned Parenthood "health" clinics has dropped from 938 in 1995 to 817 today – a reduction of 121 clinics in 11 years, an average of 11 "health" clinics per year. (Planned Parenthood also operates 42 "express" clinics that have no exam rooms and are basically retail store fronts. These facilities are not included in the count of "health" clinics.)

"This latest study shows that people are rejecting Planned Parenthood all over the country," said Sedlak. "Americans, whom we have supplied with the truth about this organization, simply do not want Planned Parenthood in their communities. It is time elected officials got the message and stopped giving hundreds of millions in taxpayer money to an organization that is clearly losing public support all across the nation."

*To view the survey in its entirety, view:
<http://www.all.org/stopp/plan2.htm>*

Around the Office 2006 in Review -- Plans for 2007

2006 was a great year for our organization, and with your ongoing support we hope to continue in 2007. We are a presence in the media and had opportunities to speak out AGAINST over-the-counter sale of the Morning After Pill, Partial Birth Abortion and embryonic stem cell research and, IN FAVOR OF parental notification before a minor can have an abortion, and informing women about fetal pain before they kill their offspring through abortion. We are the first organization several reporters in the news media call for "the pro-life position."

We try to be there to answer our phone 24/7:

- Helping mothers in difficult pregnancy situations and possibly considering abortion to choose life. Most of these calls we refer to the CareNet line 1-800-395-HELP (4357.)
- We also assist families facing end-of-life decisions through referrals to the International Taskforce on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide <http://www.internationaltaskforce.org/> for questions on "living will"-type documents.
- We partner with Life Legal Defense Foundation referring legal issues to their expertise <http://www.lldf.org/>

Since we answer the phone 24/7, more than a few of our members have been surprised to get a live voice in the middle of the night. Please do not call between 9PM and 7AM (unless it is an emergency of course.) Cecelia will answer, and you may be surprised how cheerful she sounds "even in the middle of the night!"

**Do you know someone who might be
considering abortion?
Make sure they get the facts first!
A LIFE depends on it...
1-800-395-HELP (4357)**

Our major focus continues to be on education, assisting students and their teachers with pro-life materials for school presentations and projects, and our monthly mall tables. During 2006 we had the opportunity through our mall tables to refer over a dozen women to Post-Abortion healing ministries like "Rachel's Vineyard." <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>

We will be working with "Students for Life" on their annual conference to be held April 21 at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, CA. The topic is "Life-Camera-Action" and we will be sharing our experience dealing with the media on life issues – before cameras – and our ongoing actions promoting the Culture of Life. If you are interested in joining us or helping in the preparation for this event, contact our office at 925-944-5351 or by e-mail: callife@calright2life.org.

And let us not forget the almost-monthly newsletter. Many of you have enclosed brief notes complimenting the content of the newsletter. This continues to be our major expense, costing almost \$500 per mailing. For more urgent matters, we continue to send one or two e-mails a week to our members who have provided us their e-mails. Do we have your e-mail? Has your e-mail recently changed? E-mail us with any updates or requests to be added to our e-list. We do NOT share email or address lists with any other organizations.

We were able to do all this for \$26,000 last year along with several “gifts in kind” and a lot of donated time! Your donations or time, talents and treasure are critical to the ongoing success of our efforts. The phone bill needs to be paid, Internet – our major outreach/advertising/contact point with students - is an ongoing expense, and stocking our pamphlets to be ready for Mall Tables and student requests... all this requires an ongoing flow of funding. We exist solely on private donations. We continue to review all expenditures and have begun to cut some of our infrastructure in 2006. (Our 800 number and incoming fax number were eliminated this past year.) During 2006 we also had to set a limit on the number of copies of any one pamphlet we gave to a student and/or mall table visitor, due to our limited resources.

In order to be able to continue to serve, we rely on your ongoing support. Please consider becoming a monthly donor in 2007. Your donations, large or small, are the lifeblood of our efforts, providing our volunteers the resources needed as they promote the culture of life from the single-cell stage to natural death. A special thank you to all our 2006 donors, especially monthly contributors.

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. Donations to the EDUCATION FUND are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0343.

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 are affiliates of American Life League, headed by Judie Brown, and share the same “no-exceptions, no excuses” beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the single-cell stage to natural death.