

N TWO VIEWS...



Dr. Carolyn Barry
Official Spokesperson for Frederickton
Pro-Life Association

What is your view toward abortion?

I think abortion is the taking of a human life. Abortions, as we know them, are done from about 9 weeks up until 7 to 8 months. 7 months in North America, later in other countries. And at that stage the unborn child is fully developed, it has the features of a child, it has a functioning digestive system and functioning urinary system and is indistinguishable from any other child. I think the deliberate taking of human life is wrong.

Legally they are trying to define when life begins. . . Is there any point at which you think life exists or is conceived?

The Law Reform Commission looked at that question, because the government is probably going to try to take a gestational approach to the problem. But if you really start to try to pick a point, its very difficult. A few years ago, when I started into practice, I had a baby born at 32 weeks, and we just kept our fingers crossed, we were nervous that the baby would die, and it didn't. Just a few months ago, there was a baby born at 20 weeks, and it survived. The government may still want to go outside 26 weeks, but here we have a 20 week old baby who is living and is a human being, logically we must say that this child was born and lives - it is a human being.

So you're saying at 20 weeks its a human being. O.k. so what about the week before that, and the week before:

There is no point, if you try to draw a line, you can't, it's impossible because nothing happens except conception; because at that point a sperm joins an egg after which, nothing is added except nutrition, nothing!

Pro-choicers are of the opinion that the soul enters the body of the child as it is born; and at that point only is the baby a human being. How do you respond to this?

Sometimes they say, soul, sometimes they say personhood or personalities. We can operate on a baby, if it has something wrong with its kidneys, or if it has some fluid in the brain. We can operate on the baby; take it out of the womb and put it back in again and that has been done. So the act of removing the baby from the womb is no big deal. It doesn't confer any type of humanity to that child. It's a human that we are operating on when we bring it out of the womb. Philosophically, those arguments hold no water. It makes absolutely no sense, that a soul would come 8 weeks to one baby and 32 to the next. It is used just to give a reason for. In fact several people have put forth the idea that we shouldn't decide whether a child is human until it has been living for a few weeks that the child doesn't have any serious problems. If you start with that type of argument, there is no end to it, it is my opinion. Birth is just a change of place for the baby to be.

Do you hold any exclusion to your stand on abortion, say for example of somebody has been raped?

If a mother is sick, (and this isn't that common); if she is severely toxic (if she has high blood pressure and she is severely diabetic, or if she has cancer or any other problems, then is that the baby sick too. You can't have a sick mother and a healthy baby. In the old days we talked about the balancing of the mothers health against the baby's health, and it's absolutely ludicrous. If the mother is sick, the baby is sick and the baby has to be delivered. So we deliver the baby and hope for the best. If the baby is far along, and it is old enough, hopefully the baby will live. That is not an abortion although some people would think of it as such.

Today, medically there are many ways of keeping babies alive until their lungs mature, which is the real problem with premature babies.

So from that point of view, when you are talking about the life of the mother, you are also talking about the life of the baby too. The baby has to be delivered.

If you are talking about the health of the mother, 99% of all abortions were done just for economic reasons, because the girl wanted to go back to school, because the mother had planned on going back to work and the pregnancy came as a surprise. That sort of thing.

The rape and incest arguments, is the same type of argument the soul argument is. The number of rapes, that result in abortion in Canada, amount to point one of a percentage point. When the other side talks of rape as being reason for abortion and in fact before the law was changed in 1965, that was one of the biggest reasons. It is just a smokescreen. It is just so that we can get our emotions raised up for this poor girl who is raped. Rape is a terrible thing, but the victim almost never becomes pregnant from it, and, almost never has an abortion. So they conjure up all these images so we will say abortion is right, when abortions are being done for social reasons.

And while poverty and prejudice and all those wrongs are very, very wrong, we shouldn't solve them surgically.

It is difficult to say that the child who is a product of that pregnancy, is any less innocent than you or I are. Do we have the right to deny that child, as somebody said "to feel the sand between his toes, and the sun on his face." That child was not an accomplice in that act; and as awful as that act was, we don't remove that act, we don't justify that act; we don't change that act by performing another violent act on that girl.

How do you feel about the prevention of abortion by proper contraception education?

It sounds very good, and I wish that it could be true, but studies on teenage sexual habits e been done and what they have concluded, is that although teenagers are using contraceptives more effectively than before, and more frequently the incidence of pregnancy has continued to rise. Their conclusion is that we have to make abortion firmly available as a means of contraception. You see, it is not as easily as that. 25% of teenagers deliberately go out and get pregnant, and they do so for various reasons, such as problems at home, parent break-up, poor self-image. What they are searching for is someone to love them. They will have intercourse to get someone to love them, and they will have a baby in order to get someone to love them. Contraceptives will not cure that.

People say that until we have perfect contraception, we will have to have abortions. That is an illogical argument as there will never be a perfect contraceptive.

As a result, in the United States, 35% of women who go for an abortion have already had one or more abortions. They are now using abortions as a contraceptive.

It is up to 25% in Canada and rising. As this number rises, the incidence of repeat abortion increases also.

In many American states, an underage child can have an abortion without the knowledge of her parents. One state overturned that, and the incidence of pregnancy dropped 30%.

In many Canadian cities, there are more abortions. This means that essentially we are pushing ourselves towards extinction. About 15% of our population today has been lost to abortion.

How do you feel about the statement that many of these children would be unhappy?

This is another fallacy. There have been many studies. A few years ago there was an Eugenics magazine that did a study to try to prove that this would happen. And they, themselves had to openly conclude, that they were unable to prove that children born to mothers who were denied abortion, would end up battered and unloved.

There has never been a study to show that women who are denied an abortion, abuse their children.

Today what I think about is the kid who would be in our class who is not there, or those 10 kids and what they could have contributed to society. I look at my children and think of the 3 or 4 children who are not there. What they would have done for my child? They may have been there to give him a boost or they may have discovered a cure for cancer.

What we have destroyed is not the potential for bad, but the potential for good, and we continue to destroy it. . . how do you measure that. It's frightening that when the destruction of life occurs in such a grand, massive scale, we become numb to it. We become numb to that incredible destruction of life.