

# The abortion debate: a matter of choosing rights

by Jenn MacLeod

Abortion: a matter of religious freedom and human rights or a threat to the sanctity of human life? Pitting their opposing views on these questions last Friday afternoon were Mildred Moir of the Nova Scotians United for Life organization and Florence Dione, a volunteer with the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League. The debate, entitled Abortion: Who Chooses, was part of the Thank God It's Friday lecture and debating series sponsored by Community Affairs, SODALES, CKDU, and the Gazette.

Abortion should be the sole choice of the mother, free from pressure from anyone else, said Dione. It's a question of religious freedom because "The definition of life and the point at which it begins is an unresolvable problem and remains a matter of one's personal belief", she says. "No one should have the right to impose their beliefs on anyone else". Dione opposes the pro-



lifers' assumption that life begins at conception and said that the urgent issue is the right to choose, "so that the woman is free to decide whether or not that one called

entity is a person". Giving rights to the fetus above the rights of the mother is wrong." The dangerous results of anti-abortion laws include 300 to 400 deaths in a given year

among women forced to seek illegal abortions, says Dione. Children of women denied an abortion have a 50% chance of requiring psychiatric care or of having criminal tendencies. She added that because of present laws, it can take eight weeks for a woman to obtain an abortion so that many women are having them well into their fourth month.

The focus for pro-lifers is respect for life, says Moir. "Abortion proponents use phrases such as 'termination of pregnancy' to obscure the humanity of the baby, but our greatest successes have resulted from exposing the truth". She described abortion techniques such as dismemberment by suction and poisoning and burning by salene.

Babies have survived premature births at stages of development far before those reached by many aborted fetuses, Moir said.

Granting freedom to individual beliefs is unrealistic, she said. "The decision has to be taken. The issue is concerned with biological truths, not philosophical theory." Giving society the power to kill its unwanted means death to the concept of human rights and fosters the concept that human life is expendable according to its worthiness", Moir said. The handicapped, she cited, are not inferior people, but the desire to be free to abort handicapped fetuses only implies this belief.

### Birth Control

All women should have full and free access to complete information about contraception and birth control, says Dione, and abortion should be available as a back-up method when birth control fails.

Pro-lifers are not opposed to birth control, said Moir, but don't advocate it as the answer. More relevant, she said, is comprehensive education that teaches appreciation for individual life.

Pursuing the birth control question, panelist Lesley Shaw asked what pro-lifers have to offer women, if not abortion, for control of their

destiny. Birth control doesn't work, said Moir, citing that 85% of women having abortions were using birth control. Shaw suggested that the statistic was from a rather biased specimen group and expressed dissatisfaction with Moir's treatment of the question.

### The IUD Factor

The use of IUD's causes far more contraceptive abortions than term abortions performed in hospitals, stated panel member Dr. Phillip Welch. Addressing Moir, Welch asked why pro-lifers stress the latter form of abortion but ignore the question of IUD abortions.

Discussing IUD's in this context is becoming far too picky, responded Moir. The pro-life organization does not believe in IUD's either, she said, but is more concerned with the larger and more immediate problem of term abortions that are destroying thousands of babies because they are unwanted.

### In The Case of Rape

Is there ever a case, such as rape, when abortion is justifiable, asked panelist John Robinson, addressing Moir.

At no time is abortion medically needed, responded Moir. The psychological implications of carrying the child of a rapist to term are not necessarily worse than the effects of having an abortion, she said. "The child should not have to pay with its life for the crime of its father".

Rape results in hundreds of unwanted pregnancies, countered Dione, and back-alley abortions will be available regardless of prohibitive laws.

### Abuse of The Unwanted Child

Pro-lifers should direct their efforts to those living, unwanted children being abused, said both Dione and Shaw.

Abortion is child abuse, responded Moir, "and the whole issue stems from the prevalent attitude that treats pregnancy as a disease and children as burdens."



Rum flavoured.  
Wine dipped.

## Crack a pack of Colts along with the beer.