

Abortion Worldwide Report: Part I

What is the Basis for the Sanctity of Human Life?

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“Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.”
(King Solomon, 940 BC)¹

After the death of 60 million people during World War II,² government leaders of many nations united to take decisive action to prevent further world wars and bloodshed. With diverse cultures, religions, and economic systems, 51 nations united in 1945 to form the United Nations for the purpose of protecting human life and maintaining “international peace and security.”³ Through the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), member nations unanimously declared “the inherent dignity . . . of the human family,” and that “[e]veryone has the right to life” (United Nations, General Assembly, UDHR). But with diverse beliefs and cultures, upon what basis did they unite with one voice and declare these self-evident truths?

The bloodiest 102 years in history was 1914–2015. More than 300 million people were murdered by governments (*democide*) or died in wars.⁴ Even more astonishing, as this report documents, is that people, by their own choice or by coercion, exterminated the lives of over 1 billion unborn babies during this same time period.

Prior to 1920, laws regarding abortion enacted by governments consistently prohibited the practice. Further, between 1920 and 2015, a total of 85 governments enacted original or additional laws prohibiting abortion. However, half of these later authorized abortion, and 136 nations currently permit abortion for limited reasons or on demand.

Therefore, just as those who survived World War II and wrote the UDHR, we must ask ourselves: Does human life have inherent dignity? If so, upon what basis? Is there a “right to life” for all humans? If so, who gave that right? Let us consider upon what basis we may restore a sacred understanding of the gift of human life.

Evolutionary theories assert that man has evolved from lower life forms through a process of “natural selection” by which “the less improved forms of life” become extinct, and only the fittest survive. Charles Darwin, who presented his theory of natural selection in 1859, asserted that the traditional view “that each species has been independently created—is erroneous” (Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*).⁵ Further, Darwinism ascribes no special dignity to human beings whatsoever. This is why some Darwinists support infanticide for the same reasons they support abortion. In 2012, *The Journal of Medical Ethics* published an article by two doctors advocating infanticide, or what they prefer to call “after-birth abortion.” They argue that “many non-human animals . . . are persons,” but say that children in the womb and newly-born

children “are not persons”—only “potential persons”—unless an “actual person,” the mother, attributes value to her child (Giubilini & Minerva, “After-Birth Abortion”).⁶

Humanism “regards the universe as self-existing and not created,” and “believes that man is part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process” (Kurtz, *Humanist Manifesto I & II*).⁷ Thus, humanism is based on impersonal and evolutionary views of the origin of man. In essence, humanists believe man has emerged as a supreme being, and the supreme good is self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-advancement at the expense of others when necessary. Thus, to a humanist, if a conceived baby is a perceived obstacle or even a hindrance toward achieving self-fulfillment and personal goals, then the baby is expendable.

Marxism and its offspring, **Communism**, claim that “nothing can have value, without being an object of utility” (Marx, *Book One*).⁸ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels formulated their ideas upon evolutionary theory, viewing human history as “class struggles” and calling upon the *proletariat* (the oppressed class) to arise and overthrow the *bourgeois* (the ruling class) (Marx & Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*).⁹ During the past 100 years, Communist countries have exhibited systems of belief that do not value human life at any stage, except as it is useful to the person, government, or political party exercising control over that person’s life. Indeed, their leaders and governments are responsible for the majority of democides and abortions worldwide.

Each of the above theories rejects the existence of a Creator God, and thus any authority above man, and they have no basis for respecting the inherent dignity of all human life. Ultimately, they provide no reason—except self-interest—to love, protect, or show compassion or mercy to any other human being, especially someone in a vulnerable or weakened condition like a defenseless prebornⁱ child.

Buddhism also rejects the existence of a Creator God, and asserts, “The idea of evolution is consistent with the Buddha’s teachings . . . that everything arises from natural causes rather than divine creation.”¹⁰ Thus, “life begins ‘with the mind’s first arising, when consciousness first manifests itself,’ although exactly when this happens is not clear” (Keown, “Abortion”).¹¹

Hinduism claims “man is an animal” and “man . . . is divine.” He “arises from animal to human level,” and possibly to a god level if he reaches certain prescribed goals by means of endless effort and many reincarnations (Brahmeshananda, “The Nature of Man”).¹² While Hinduism condemns both abortion and animal killing, it does so primarily because of its belief in reincarnation, not because the preborn child is a unique person of intrinsic worth.

Islam presents a higher view of man. The **Qur’an** asserts that God created man.

And indeed, we created the human from an extract of clay. Then we made him a nuftah (drop of seed) in a secure place. Then we created the nuftah into a clot. So we created

ⁱ Please note that in this report, we generally refer to a conceived child in utero as a “preborn” child because this term refers specifically to a child prior to birth (i.e., preborn). The term “unborn” may refer to a living child in utero, or a child who died (i.e., unborn) due to miscarriage or abortion. Thus, generally in this report, “unborn” refers to children who died by miscarriage or abortion.

the clot into a piece of flesh . . . into bones, so we clothed the bones with flesh. Then we made it another creature. (Dakdok 23:12–14)¹³

“Hadith 4” expounds on this passage and asserts that human life begins at 120 days.

Verily the creation of each one of you is brought together in his mother’s womb for forty days in the form of a drop, then he becomes a clot of blood for a like period, then a morsel of flesh for a like period, then there is sent to him the angel who blows the breath of life into him. (Muslim American Society, “Hadith 4”)¹⁴

Thus, while Islamic doctrine does recognize the humanity and worth of the preborn child, it does so only 120 days after conception. That is why the Islamic government council in Maldives issued a *fatwa* that abortion was permissible “within 120 days of conception” (“Abortion Permissible”).¹⁵ Also, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia allow abortions for limited reasons within the first four months of pregnancy. This view conflicts with modern scientific evidence revealing rapid early development. Moreover, the Qur’an places value only on the lives of followers of Islam and calls upon them to destroy or subjugate all others.¹⁶

Evolutionary theories, humanism, and Marxism have no basis for the inherent value of human life. Buddhism and Hinduism place value on human life, but not above other forms of life. Islam is inconsistent on the value it places on human life, both before and after birth.

The Law Written on Human Hearts: Since none of the above human theories or religious belief systems provide an adequate basis for the universal understanding of “the inherent dignity” of every person, where does this common consciousness come from? Why do evolutionists demonstrate care for the weak, or humanists show self-sacrificing love, or the majority of Muslims want to live peacefully with those of other faiths instead of practicing *jihad*? They do so because of “the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness” (Romans 2:14–15). This Law of God written on every human heart, regardless of beliefs, culture or nationality, gives us a common basis to come together and agree upon self-evident, universal truths.

The Holy Bible, including the Tanakh, is the only book in the world that explains these universal laws and truths that are consistent with God’s Law written on our hearts and consciences. The Bible is God’s gift to *all* mankind. It reveals the eternal, unchanging basis for the sanctity of human life of every person—preborn and born—from every tribe and nation.

7 Truths about the Sanctity of Human Life:

1. God created man in His image. “In the beginning,” when “God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), His final act on the sixth day was the pinnacle of His creation: making man in His image and likeness. The Personal God made personal man. “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’ . . . God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:26–27).¹⁷

In creation, God made mankind distinct from and lower than Himself, but also distinct from and above plants and creatures, and distinctly male or female.

2. God created man for relationship with Him for eternity. God created each person as an eternal being to live in right relationship with Him, and with other people. That relationship was broken because of sin, as recorded in Genesis 3, but can be restored instantly through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and His redemptive sacrifice for our sins. Through belief in Jesus alone, God has extended to every person the opportunity to live with Him eternally.¹⁸

3. God created man as “male and female” for marriage, procreation, and family. God ordained the institution of marriage when He created the first man and woman, and designed them to be joined together as “one flesh” in a lifetime covenant (Genesis 2:24). He also ordained them to procreate and form a family when He commanded them to “[b]e fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28).¹⁹ It is through this union of love that He ordained a husband and wife to bring forth, nurture, and raise children. Yet children born out of wedlock are to be equally cherished and protected. Furthermore, God created women to be givers of life, and never to arbitrarily take life (Genesis 3:20).

4. God knows a child before conception. Another profound truth God revealed in the Bible is that He knows each person before we are conceived in our mother’s womb. When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, He said: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (Jeremiah 1:5).²⁰ Every child is precious to God and known by God before he was even a thought in the mind of his parents.

5. God forms each child²¹ in the womb. It is a profound revelation that God Himself forms each baby²² in his²³ mother’s womb. King David beautifully explained this truth 3,000 years ago:

Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.” (Psalm 139:13–16)²⁴

Every baby is an eternal being created by God from the moment of conception.

6. God brings forth children “from the womb,” as King David realized: “You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother’s breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother’s womb” (Psalm 22:9–10).²⁵

7. Children are a gift from the LORD. When the first child was born, Eve declared, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD” (Genesis 4:1). King David, 3,000 years later, said, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Psalm 127:3).²⁶

These truths given to us in the Bible and self-evident to us in life, are the unchangeable and universal basis for the sanctity of human life and the inherent right to life given by God.

Scientific Evidence Matches Biblical Truth. The next brief will discuss the scientific and medical evidence of the humanity of a child in the womb. There is no conflict between honest scientific research and Biblical truth; in fact, science and medical evidence match the truths revealed in the Bible, within the limits that science and medicine can inform us.

When the LORD God created all the plants, trees, fish, birds, animals and then man on the earth, He made them each with unique seed within them to produce only “after their kind.” God created “plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them after their kind.” Then He created living creatures and fish in the waters “after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind.” Then He created “cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind” (Genesis 1:11–12, 20–21, 24–25). After He finished all the other aspects of creation, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’ . . . and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it’” (Genesis 1:26–27). God separately made mankind uniquely in His image, with seed in them to create offspring after their kind.

The seed within each determines what it will be. We know that plants cannot produce trees; trees cannot produce fish; fish cannot produce birds; and apes cannot produce humans. They did not evolve from one to the other. “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish” (1 Corinthians 15:39). Each can only produce “after their kind.” The seed in humans can only produce another human being—descendants or “seed” of the father and mother (Genesis 9:9; 12:7). Further, as discussed above, God knows each child before conception, forms each boy or girl in the womb, and brings him or her forth from the womb. In creating us in His likeness, God Himself, the Person of God, imparted personhood, intrinsic value, and inherent worth to every human being. His handiwork is described and displayed in the next brief.

The book of Genesis reminds us that, “A human being is created in the image of God” and for that reason, every human being has an intrinsic dignity for which he should be honoured and respected, not exploited or eliminated (Archbishop David Gitari, Church of the Province of Kenya, Anglican Communion).²⁷

The transmission of human life is a most serious role in which married people collaborate freely and responsibly with God the Creator. It has always been a source of great joy to them, even though it sometimes entails many difficulties and hardships (Pope Paul VI, “Humanae Vitae”).²⁸

The greatest destroyer of peace is abortion, because it is a direct war, a direct killing—direct murder by the mother herself. . . . (I)f a mother can kill her own child—what is left for me to kill you and you to kill me—there is nothing between (Mother Teresa, “Nobel Lecture”).²⁹

As a scientist I know . . . that human life begins at conception. Although I am not a formal religionist, I believe with all my heart that there is a divinity of existence which commands us to declare a final and irreversible halt to this infinitely sad and shameful crime against humanity (Nathanson, “Confessions of an Ex-Abortioneer”).³⁰

We recognize and assent to the truth that every human being—the one just conceived, the new-born, young or old, healthy or ill—has the very same right to live (Wosicki and Zięba of Poland).³¹

From conception each unborn child is by nature a human being (San Jose Articles, art. 3, San Jose, Costa Rica).³²

The sanctity of human life is a core principle . . . We believe human life is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions . . . To be created in the likeness of God means that each human bears His image and with it, a value beyond our unique characteristics or individual attributes. Nothing else in God's created order has the distinction of reflecting His image; it's a privileged status reserved only for humankind (Earll, “Sanctity of Life Ethic”).³³

Endnotes

¹ Ecclesiastes 11:5.

² “Research Starters: Worldwide Deaths in World War II.” *The National WWII Museum*, www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/world-wide-deaths.html.

³ United Nations. “Chapter 1: Purposes and Principles.” *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

⁴ Professor Rudolph J. Rummel (1932–2014), author of *Death By Government and Power Kills*: www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/20TH.HTM; also, see: “List of Wars by Death Toll.” *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_by_death_toll.

⁵ Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. John Murray, 1859.

⁶ Giubilini, Alberto, and Francesca Minerva. “After-Birth Abortion: Why Should the Baby Live?” *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2012. *BMJ*, doi:10.1136/medethics-2011-100411.

⁷ Kurtz, Paul, editor. *Humanist Manifesto I & II*. Prometheus Books, 1982.

⁸ Marx, Karl. *Book One: The Process of Production of Capital*, sec. 1. Progress Publishers, 1887/2005. *Marxists Internet Archive*, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm.

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¹² Brahmeshananda, Swami. “The Nature of Man According to Hinduism.” *Understanding Hinduism*, www.hinduism.co.za/natureof.htm; Murti, Vasu, and Mary K. Derr. “Abortion is Bad Karma: Hindu Perspectives.” *Special Issue on Spiritual Diversity*, special issue of *Feminism and Nonviolence Studies*, 1998, <http://www.fnsa.org/fall98/murti1.html>.

- ¹³ Dakdok, Usama. *The Generous Qur'an: An Accurate, Modern English Translation of the Qur'an, Islam's Holiest Book*. Usama Dakdok Publishing, 2009.
- ¹⁴ Muslim American Society. "Hadith 4: Deeds Are by Their Final Actions." *40 Hadith Nawawi*, 2013, 40hadithnawawi.com/index.php/the-hadiths/hadith-4; see also "Imam Nawawi and Hadith 4: When Does Life Begin? Abortion in Islam." *Is the Qur'an the Word of God?* 2017, bible-quran.com/hadith-04-imam-nawawi/.
- ¹⁵ "Abortion Permissible in Five Circumstances, Rules Fiqh Academy." *Sun.mv*, 17 December 2013, english.sun.mv/18588.
- ¹⁶ Dakdok 2.190–194, 216–218; 9.5, 29.
- ¹⁷ See also: Genesis 2:7; 5:1–2; Psalm 36:9; 100:3; 119:73; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 45:12; 64:8.
- ¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 3:11; John 3:14–18, 35–36; 17:1–3; Romans 3:9–26; 5:12–21; 6:21–23; 10:9; 2 Corinthians 5:18–20.
- ¹⁹ See also: Genesis 9:1; Leviticus 26:9.
- ²⁰ See also: Isaiah 49:1, 5; Matthew 1:20–23; Luke 1:15, 26–27, 30–32, 41; Galatians 1:15.
- ²¹ In this report, "child" refers to a human being from the moment of being created (conception) through in utero development (zygote, embryo, fetus) to birth, and into the early years of life after birth.
- ²² In this report, "baby" has the same definition as "child" through infancy.
- ²³ In this report, the term "he," "him," "his," or "man" means "male" or "female" unless referring to a specific male person or the context indicates otherwise. This is the pattern of usage in scripture beginning in Genesis 1 when God made man as both male and female.
- ²⁴ See also: Job 10:10–12; 31:15; 33:4; Zechariah 12:1.
- ²⁵ See also: Psalm 71:5–6; Isaiah 66:9.
- ²⁶ For Jacob and King David's statements, see: Genesis 4:1–2; 33:5; 49:25.
- ²⁷ Gitari, David. "The Sanctity of Human Life: Priority for Africa." *Transformation*, vol. 14, no. 3, July/Sept. 1997, pp. 19–23. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43070218?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.
- ²⁸ Pope Paul VI. "Humanae Vitae." *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 25 July 1968, w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.
- ²⁹ Mother Teresa. "Nobel Lecture." *Nobel Prize*, 11 Dec. 1979, www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1979/teresa-lecture.html.
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- ³¹ Wosicki, Pawel, and Antoni Zięba. "How the Law Protects Life. The Polish Way to the Right to Life Law." *Polish Federation of Pro-Life Movement*, 2013, www.pro-life.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/the-polish-way-to-the-right-to-life-law.pdf.
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- ³³ Earll, Carrie Gordon. "The 'Sanctity of Life' Ethic." *Focus on the Family*, www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/life-issues/dignity-of-human-life/sanctity-of-human-life.