



What Makes Us Equal?

Learning to Defend the Unborn's Right to Life

Holly Meath's Monthly Newsletter • September 2013



Dear Friends,

Why do we have equal rights?

Think about all of the people in your neighborhood, your school, or your workplace. Most of us would agree that all of those people are equal in their basic rights, most foundationally their right to life. But take a moment to think about how odd that really is. After all, we have different sexes and different races, different ages, sizes, and levels of intelligence. Our differences are innumerable, so what's the same about us that entails that we be treated as equals?

A student named Matho on the campus of Wichita State University (WSU) knew the best answer to that question immediately: "We're all human."

My coworker Jacob and I were starting conversations on WSU's campus by surveying students about this question of equal rights. When we talked to Matho, a young, Kenyan-born man, he at first told us that he was in a hurry, but he was so intrigued by the conversation about equal rights that he stayed to ask several questions, wanting to know more. He was pro-choice, but he was struggling to make his instinctive explanation of equal rights fit that view, since the unborn are human.

Before we could answer all of his concerns, he had to rush off, but we were able to tell him we'd be back on campus with an exhibit in a few weeks, and he seemed eager to come and find us again if he got a chance. (See the sidebar for an explanation of how our deepening regional activity is improving our ability to impact people like Matho.)

This concept of equal rights resonates strongly with people, especially in our very individualized culture. Tim Brahm, a JFA staff member who has worked extensively on developing our staff training on this argument has said, "It is the most persuasive argument I have ever used." He explains that it deeply challenges people to rethink their views when they realize that

Regional Impact

The department I've been assigned to within Justice For All is focusing this year on increasing and deepening our activity in Wichita, a city of nearly 400,000 people. This will include at least five outreach events on the campus of Wichita State University this school year.

This increased local activity will provide ongoing opportunities for our local volunteers, and the experience with Matho shared in this newsletter is an example of how we can also be a greater help to students on local campuses if we become a regular presence. We were able to tell him we'd be back soon, and it will be easy for him to reconnect with us in person.

This focus allowed us to name specific opportunities to continue a helpful conversation that might otherwise have been lost. Matho also has something concrete to which he can refer friends if abortion comes up in conversation before our next outreach.





being human is the only thing that's the same about us that doesn't lead to counterintuitive implications.

Any other attempt to find something the same about all people that gives them equal rights fails. For example, if people say the ability to think rationally makes us equal, then they run into problems because newborn babies don't have rational thoughts, and to be consistent they would have to say that these babies don't have a right to life. The bar is too high.

To fix the problem with this view, they might then say that what they really mean is the ability to think at all. Now this view would include newborns, but unfortunately, it would also include many animals, and almost no one actually thinks or operates as though we should treat animals as equals, at least regarding the basic right to life. Most reasons for why we're equal will include too few born people or some animals. The only solution that doesn't encounter these problems is that we're all equally human. And guess what? The unborn meet that qualification! Therefore they deserve the right to life as much as any of us.

The encounter with Matho illustrates that this solution—that simple humanness is what entails equal rights—is obvious to people if they are willing to admit it and gives them cause to reconsider justifications for abortion that don't hold up against it.

You too can use this argument in conversations. Simply ask someone what they think we all have equally that demands that we be treated equally. Then suggest that the best answer is simply that we all are human. Many people won't question why human beings are valuable, but if they do ask, this can be an excellent opportunity to share your faith as well—to explain that we believe human beings are valuable because they are made in the image of God.

Your support helps me reach students like Matho with this and other conversational tools. Thank you. I am still working hard to raise another \$8,355 for the next nine months of this internship. Please pray for these efforts.

Blessings,

Holly V. Meath

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Note: JFA credits J.P. Moreland with the Equal Rights Argument I've presented in this letter. Steve Wagner, Tim Brahm, and Trent Horn contributed to JFA's training material on the argument, some of which I've included.



Justice For All trains thousands to make abortion unthinkable for millions, one person at a time.

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