



A Philosophy of Re-humanization



catherine@jfaweb.org

Catherine Wurts

JFA Newsletter

October 2010

Don't Debate - Dialogue!

From Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech), March 2010
In last month's newsletter, Melissa and I agreed that unborn children are at least biologically human...

Melissa (M): It's *biologically* human, but it's not a human *being* until later, after it's developed.

Catherine (C): But the term human being is a biological one. Do you mean it's not a *valuable* human being - a person - 'til then? That's a philosophical claim.

M: Yes, that's what I mean. How could an embryo be a person? It's so small; it doesn't even look like a human.

C: And a human zygote is even smaller - microscopic! It looks like a typical skin cell. But isn't that exactly what a human is supposed to look like at that age? A newborn is much smaller than a teenager - does that mean newborns are not valuable? Is it fair to dehumanize someone based on size or appearance?

(See "Dialogue" on page 2)



Discussing the philosophical case for the humanity of the unborn with Sierra (left), a biology student, and Leah (right), who has her PhD in genetics.

Dear family and friends,

Take a minute to read the conversation to the left. How would you respond to Melissa? Below are some ideas from our training; I'd love to have you join us sometime!

"No one knows when life begins!" I hear this all the time from on campuses. How can we respond in a helpful way?

First, I would ask for a clarification:

"What do you mean by 'when life begins'? Do you mean no one knows when *biological* life begins (science/biology), or that no one knows when a human life begins to have *rights and value* worth protecting (philosophy/morality)?"

If her concern is a biological one, see last month's newsletter for a response. But what if the pro-choice advocate's claim is philosophical?

I'd ask why she believes unborn humans are *not* persons with rights. She will likely point out one or more of the following differences between born and unborn humans. These make up the acronym SLED¹:

(See "SLED" on page 2)

(cont'd. from "Dialogue" on page 1)

M: I guess it's not the size. It can't breathe or think on its own; how can it be a person?

C: True, they can't. But breathing and thinking are developmental stages. Two-year-olds are also much less developed than a 20-year olds. Does that justify killing them?

M: No. But a fetus isn't born yet. It's totally dependent on the mother. Until viability, she's the *only* person who can take care of it - she can't give it to anyone else yet - so she has the right to decide what happens with it.

C: Unborn children are totally dependent on their mothers - that's for sure. But imagine you're the last one leaving a swimming pool and you hear a splash. You turn around and a toddler has fallen into the deep end - what do you do?

M: Jump in and save it.

C: Why? He's totally dependent on you and *only* you at that point. Doesn't that mean he's not a person?

M: I guess not....



(Continued from "SLED" on page 1)

Size (or appearance)

Level of Development

Environment (or location)

Degree of Dependency

Now, by "trotting out a toddler"² (see my August 2010 newsletter), I can help the pro-choice advocate see that these differences are not relevant to a discussion of human rights and value.

We would never justify killing a toddler because he is less developed than us. Why justify killing an unborn child because she is not as developed as a born child (see dialogue box to the left)?

The good news is that many people today are uncomfortable with discrimination. When they discover the pro-choice position to be rooted in discrimination against unborn humans because of their appearance, level of development, location or degree of dependency, this often concerns them enough to begin rethinking their position.

In Christ,

Catherine Wurts

Before a class of humans can legally be victimized, they must first be dehumanized

-Quote from side one of the Justice For All Exhibit.

Please pray for my upcoming events:

Oct 16 Clovis, CA: "Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue" seminar. 9:30am-3pm; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Notre Dame Hall, 333 8th Street.

Oct 17 Fresno, CA: Poll table and survey outreach at The Big Fresno Fair.

Oct 18 Fresno, CA: JFA Exhibit outreach at CSU-Fresno (Fresno State).

Oct 26-Nov 2, 10, 11 Norman, Oklahoma: "Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue" high-school and community seminars with JFA Exhibit outreach at the University of Oklahoma.

Nov 6-9 Denton, Texas: "Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue" high-school and community seminars with JFA Exhibit outreach at the University of North Texas.

¹ Schwartz, Stephen D., "The Moral Question of Abortion", Loyola University Press, 1990.

² Klusendorf, Scott, "The Case for Life", Crossway Books, 2009.