



Just a Minute...

Can You Defend the Unborn in Sixty Seconds?



Dear Friend,

A few years back, I had a conversation with a pro-choice activist at Colorado State University (CSU). After she repeatedly talked over my questions, assuming she knew what I thought, I said, "You haven't even given me a chance to make my case. Can I have even one minute to tell you why I am pro-life?"

I got what I asked for. In fact, a crowd had formed and her friend set her watch and instructed me to begin. I was being timed.

Would you know what to say if you were in my shoes? Every day you have similar opportunities even if they are not as contentious as my campus debate. You can make a great impact if you think about what you might say beforehand. In my case, I had about three seconds to decide which tools I would include as I began my response. You have this next five minutes to think it through.

Test Yourself. Take just a minute or so and write down what you would say if the same challenge were posed to you: Why are you pro-life? Why should anyone agree with you? (*Hint: If you want a pro-choice advocate to change her mind, you'll have to give more than subjective autobiography. To persuade, you'll have to share objective reasons.*)

To find out how I made my case to the pro-choice advocate at CSU, see the reverse. →

The stopwatch was set. I felt the weight of the lives of the unborn in the balance as the crowd fixed their eyes on me. Here's what I said:

If the unborn is growing, it must be alive. And if it has human parents, it must be human. And living humans, or human beings like you and I, are valuable aren't they? From conception, all that's added to the unborn is a proper environment and adequate nutrition. But those are the same things all of us need. And not only that. There's one quality all of us have equally that demands equal treatment: we all have a human nature. Racism and sexism are wrong because they pick out external differences and ignore the underlying similarity between men and women, blacks and whites. And my concern is for your rights as a woman, that you can vindicate them against the will of the majority, but you can only vindicate your rights if you base them on your human nature. But the unborn also has that same human nature, so shouldn't we protect him from discrimination just like we protect minorities and women?

I remember sharing a version of this argument with a young woman named Lynette at the University of Texas in 2005. Her response: "That's the best argument I've heard for the pro-life position. If I were pregnant, that's the argument I'd have to grapple with." (Lynette and I went on to correspond by email. A note she wrote about our conversation became the final section of my book, *Common Ground Without Compromise*. See www.commongroundbook.com.)

Notice why the argument is so powerful: First, it shows that the unborn is a living, whole organism of the human species. Then, it shows that if we oppose racism and sexism (which almost everyone does), then the reason we oppose them must be due to the underlying similarity we all share: our human nature. It's our common human nature that demands equal treatment. The argument then points to the unborn as another being with that same human nature and asks this question: Don't the unborn deserve our best efforts to protect them?

I think unborn children are worth our best efforts. That's why I'm so thankful for each of you who faithfully support my work with prayer and finances.

In Christ,

Stephen

WHAT CAN I DO NEXT?

- **Share with Steve:** If you completed the exercise on the reverse, would you take a moment to share your thoughts? Go to <http://stephenmwagner.blogspot.com/search/label/newsletters> and find the June 2010 newsletter post. Use the comments section to share how you made your case.
- **Connect the Dots:** How does my approach compare to the way the Founders defended human equality in the preamble to the [Declaration of Independence](#)?
- **Teach a Friend:** Challenge your pro-life friends to complete this exercise by sending them to the online copy of this letter: www.jfaweb.org/steve/SWnews_2010_06.pdf
- **Tell a Friend:** Start the conversation this way: "I've been doing some thinking about one of the most contentious issues of our day, abortion, and I've actually condensed my view down into a one-minute summary. Would you take a look at it and tell me what you think?" Let me know how it goes!
- **Help Steve Train Pro-Life Advocates!** To give a tax-deductible gift, go to <http://www.jfaweb.org/donate.html>. In the "Comments" section, write "Steve Wagner."