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A Pastor's Guide to Understanding Abortion and Its Theological and Ethical Implications

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A PASTOR'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING ABORTION AND
ITS THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF PLATES	v
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
THE PROBLEM	3
Statement of the Problem	3
Justification of the Problem	3
Limitation of the Problem	3
Basic Assumptions	3
ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY	4
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	5
LIFE	5
Definition of Life	5
Physiological	5
Metabolic	5
Biochemical	5
Genetic	5
Contributors of Life	6
Man	6
Woman	6
Potential of Life	6
Division of Cells	6
Importance of Life	8

Age of Fertilization.	8
ABORTION	11
Definition of Abortion.	11
Debate of Abortion.	11
Procurement of Abortion	12
Intent	12
Deliberate and purposeful means	12
The desired Effect	13
Why an Abortion	13
Reasons for an Abortion	13
Therapeutic Abortion	13
Existential approach	14
Situational approach	14
Biblical approach	14
Eugenic Abortion	15
Causes fo Abortion	15
Methods of Abortion	17
Dilitation and Curettage	17
Suction	17
Hysterotomy	18
Saline Poisining	18
Incentives of Abortion	19
Benefits of Abortion	19
THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	21
Old Testament	21
Texts bearing on abortion	21
No regard for the fetus	21

Rights of the Fetus	22
Direct gift from God	22
God fashioned the fetus	23
New Testament	25
Relationship of the Soul to the Fetus	26
ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS	30
Abortion in Ethics	30
Absolute Value of Distinction	31
Viability	31
Experience	31
Sentiments of adults	31
Visibility	31
Formation of Ethical Policy	31
Four Conditions of Action	32
Is is justifiable or unjustifiable?	33
When abortion is not Justified	33
Abortion is not justified when	33
Two areas of justifying Abortion	34
Therapeutic	34
Eugenic	35
Who is responsible	35
The mother	36
The father	36
Is it Wrong	37
Is it Right	38
Availibility-on-demand	39
Ethical Argument against Abortion	40
External judge	40

Man made in a juridical model	40
Catholic Church	40
Exclusive to physican and patient	41
Natural laws	41
Eternal life	41
For fulfillment	41
3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	42
4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY	52
APPENDIX	
A	59
B	61

LIST OF PLATES

PLATES

I.	UNION OF THE SPERM AND THE EGG	65
II.	DIVISION OF CELLS	66
III.	FORMATION OF THE FETUS AT THE 26 TH DAY SHOWING THE MAJOR ORGAN DEVELOPMENT	67
IV.	FORMATION OF THE FETUS AT THE 28 TH DAY MEASURING 1/6 OF AN INCH	68
V.	FETUS PRESENTING THE ARM AND LEG BUDS AT THE 37 TH DAY MEASURING 1/2 OF AN INCH	69
VI.	FETUS SHOWING THE ARMS, LEGS, EYES, AND EARS AND MEASURING 1/2 OF AN INCH AT THE 42 ND DAY	70
VII.	FETUS SHOWING RIB CAGE, DEFINITE HANDS, LEGS AND EARS AND MEASURING 1 1/2 OF AN INCH AND WEIGHING 3/4 OF AN OUNCE AT THE 67 TH DAY	71
VIII.	FETUS FULLY DEVELOPED SHOWING FACIAL FEATURES AND COMPLETE LIMB CONSTRUCTION, MEASURING 8 INCHES AND WEIGHING 4 OUNCES AT THE 120 TH DAY	72
IX.	DILITATION AND CURETTAGE AND SUCTION ABORTION	73
X.	HYSTEROTOMY AND SALINE POISONING ABORTION	74

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Babies are God's opinion that the world should go on. Babies are also the life-line for humanity. This continuing life-line proposes certain questions concerning the life and the death of babies as the pastor deals with humanity.

God has created man and woman to reproduce and replenish the earth, as seen in Genesis 9:7. However, the issue that faces society and particularly the pastor is, unwanted infants. The issue of unwanted infants has consequences that will govern the father and mother's thoughts and actions for life. Generally, people who question the importance of God's ways in the issue to be covered, are dealing with the religious and ethical questions of life. This is where the pastor's role comes into view.

In most cases, the pastor is looked to as a man with divine insight, high disciplinary values, community respect, and social discernment. This insight and discernment with which the minister has been endowed by God is of special importance because it provides a basis in dealing with the needs of the community. With today's rapid advancement of technology and science, the pastor must keep abreast of society in order to meet the specific needs of the community.

One question the pastor may be asked is: Where does life begin, and when does it end? Life, in general, is thought of as the every-

day occurrence of hustle and bustle. Yet, throughout our existence, lives continue to be brought into existence, and these lives are deeply implanted into the hearts of men. But,

Never in modern times, except by Hitler, has a nation put a price tag of economic or social usefulness on an individual human life as the price of its continued existence.

Never in modern times, except by Hitler, has a nation demanded a certain physical perfection as a condition necessary for the continuation of that life.

Never since the ancient law of pater families in Rome has a major nation granted a father or a mother total dominion over the life and death of their child.

Never has a nation legally allowed innocent humans to be deprived of life without due process of law.¹

Today, mothers and fathers are given the option of deciding whether the above assumptions are realistic to their life-style. Society has decided to give parents choices that never used to be, except by authority.

To all these assumptions the pastor has a special place in meeting the needs of parents. As the laws of the people change, the pastor in his responsibility to mankind, must remain with convictions that are Biblical.

"One cannot help but wonder about the anguish of the Nazi judge who was tried at the Nuremberg trials, when he commented to the American judge, "I never knew this would happen." The reply that came from the American judge was, "It came to this, the day that you decided to take the lives of the innocent and condemn them.""²

¹J.C. Wilke, Handbook on Abortion, (Cincinnati, Ohio; Hiltz Publishing Company, 1971), p. 4,5.

²Ibid. p. 6.

Even though life was taken, the potential lives of future humans are at stake when they are killed. Future lives should not be taken for granted!

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem.

What is abortion, and what are the theological and ethical issues involving the pastor? As society becomes increasingly promiscuous, the pastor is obligated to know and understand the Biblical and ethical position on abortion!

Justification of the Study.

This study was undertaken to: 1) inform the pastor what abortion is, and 2) to help the pastor understand what the theological and ethical aspects are. The pastor should communicate these principles to people making a decision on abortion.

Limitations of the Study.

It is not the purpose of this study to state that abortion is right or wrong from the Biblical context, or from the ethical position. The purpose of this study is to present the problem from the secular and religious viewpoints and to show that these points have definite value and meaning. The study is also designed to show when life begins and how life is taken in the form of abortion.

Basic Assumptions.

The following basic assumptions apply to the study:

- 1) The question of when life begins.
- 2) The use of the universal carefree thought of "why not, everybody else is doing it."

- 3) That abortion is an everyday occurrence and that the religious community should accept the situation.
- 4) That life can be taken for granted and looked upon as something that can be produced at will and taken at will.
- 5) That people's laws are being placed over the Laws of God.

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

The remainder of the study is divided into the following chapters.

Chapter Two. Review of the Literature. This chapter is divided into four sections: 1) What is life, 2) What is abortion, 3) What are the theological implications, and 4) What are the ethical implications?

Chapter Three. Summary and Conclusion.

Chapter Four. Discussion and Recommendation.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Life.

Life is a very complex system of development from the beginning of formation to the termination point. In the development of life, there must be a starting point and a definition. In defining life, four areas that are of major importance are:

Physiological: the system of performing a number of such functions are eating, metabolizing, excreting, breathing, moving, growing, reproducing, and being responsible for external stimuli.

Metabolic: a living system of an object with a definite boundary, continually exchanging some of its materials with its surroundings, but without altering its general properties.

Biochemical: living organisms as systems that contain reproductive hereditary information coded in nuclearic and molecules and that metabolize by controlling the rate of chemical reactions using proteinaceous catalysts known as enzymes.

Genetic: A system capable of evolution by natural selection. The belief that a certain level of complexity cannot be achieved without natural selection.¹

Life, then, is the uniting of two different and separate cells that have come together with the ultimate goal of producing its own kind. Life is the building of cells forming a developed, responsible,

¹W. Benton, Editor, "Abortion", Encyclopedia Britannica, (1974), X, p. 893-894.

potential human being.

Contributors.

There are two major contributors that create life.

Man. Man is one contributor, producing the sperm. As he becomes sexually aroused, greater amounts of blood rush into the penis, making it erect. Man is then able to enter the vagina to ejaculate the sperm into the urethra, completing the union. The testes produce approximately three centimeters of two to five hundred million sperm per ejaculation.

Woman. Woman, as the other contributor, has the major role in developing the potential being. Her ovary produces an egg or ovum once a month. After fourteen days this egg drops from a follicle and moves into the abdominal cavity of the oviduct.

Potential of Life.

As the sperm and ovum unite, life has its beginning pulses. As shown in plate number one (see p. 1), the sperm is nearing the ovum and the penetration will be completed. This union of the sperm and ovum has brought together the potential features of a human being. This stage is called activation; where the sperm and ovum become progressively alive. After fertilization of the ovum by the sperm, division of the ovum occurs. This union has brought together twenty-three different sets of chromosomes which are the definite features and sex of the new individual.

Division of Cells.

The first week of impregnation, the ovum floats freely in the oviduct and then secures itself into the uterine cavity. Within thirty-six hours after impregnation, the ovum has divided into two cells and

is termed a zygote. From this period on, the zygote becomes a very distinct entity from its mother. As shown in plate two (see p.66), the zygote divides; the number of divisions increase at slow and rapid paces. At the fourth day (or ninety six hours), the division is called the uterine blastula and this is the formation of a tiny embryo.

As the embryo divides, a sac for protection, nutrition, and warmth is formed. Inside this sac, a fish-like creature (see plate 3) has formed. Dr. J.C. Wilke states:

The body of an unborn baby is more complex than ours. Before he is born, the baby has several extra parts to his body which he needs only so long as he lives inside his mother. He has his own space capsule, the amniotic sac. He has his own life line, the umbilical cord, and he has his own root system, the placenta. These all belong to the body himself, not to his mother, They are developed from his original cell.²

This means that life begins to form even before birth. During the formation of the vital limbs, organs, and trunk, there is an independent functioning of the embryo. Dr. Herbert Ratner of the Public Health Division of Illinois states:

The embryo depends upon the mother for nutriment and an environment conducive to growth, but so does the suckling babe... From the moment of zygote formation, the characteristics of a highly individualized human organism are established by the inter-mixture and combination of the genes, chromosomes and cytoplasm contributed by the paternal human egg and sperm... This new individualized human life starts to grow immediately, and after several days, begins to implant itself in the womb.³

At a symposium at Asbury Seminary, Drs. Kuhn, Howell, and Seamands stated:

²J.C. Wilke, Handbook on Abortion, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Hiltz Publishing Company, 1971), p. 15.

³B. Brown, "The Crime of Abortion", Vital Speeches, Vol, 36, #18, July 1, 1970, p. 550.

The following formula is valid, when the zygote (fertilized ovum) has passed the stage which monozygote (identical) twinning is possible and when it has permanently implanted itself in the uterine wall, then all of the elements requisite for the formation of a human being are present. Thus we believe that a human being is on the way to becoming a human person.

Importance of Life.

Once there has been the implantation of the fertilized ovum into the uterine wall, the division of the cells begins. From the beginning of cell division up to the fourth month, there is a definite formation of vital organs, limbs, and body formation. During this time a potential human being is fully evident. Dr. Hannibal Hamlin writes, "the electroencephalogram reflects a distinctly individualized pattern that soon becomes truly personalized."⁵

Joel Feinberg writes, "Once conceived, the being is recognized as man because he has man's potential. The criterion for humanity was simple and all-embracing; if you are conceived by human parents, you are human."⁶ From the simple to the complex, the human being has stages of growth. These stages of growth start from the moment of conception up to the delivery of the baby. The graph shows the stages of growth illustrating the formation of the fetus and also the different stages when an abortion may take place.

Age of Fertilization

DAYS	INCHES	WEIGHT	STAGES OF GROWTH
5-9			Remains in uterine cavity

⁴Harold Kuhn, "Symposium in Christian Social Ethics", The Asbury Seminary, Vol. 29, January, 1974, p. 17.

⁵Paul Ramsey, "Fetocide and Infanticide upon Request", Religion in Life, Vol. 49, #2, Wilmore, Kentucky, Summer, 1970, p. 173.

⁶Joel Feinberg, The Problem of Abortion, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California, 1973, p. 11.

DAYS	INCHES	WEIGHT	STAGES OF GROWTH
10-11			Becomes attached to lining of uterus, layers of ectoderm, mesoderm, endoderm, and development of specialized tissue.
14			Irregular blood-like body with elongated formation.
18-21			Formation of neural plate, the formation of central nervous system, formation of the tube heart and primitive lung buds.(see plate 3)
28	1/8"		Beginning of gall bladder, liver tubes, brain, stomach, nose, arms, primitive thyroid cells, first heart beat, blood corpuscles, and circulation. (see plate 4)
30	1/5"		
33	2/3"		
37	1/2"		Formation of nasal buds, arm and leg buds, pancreas cell begins, tongue appears, eye lens, cranial nerves appear. (see plate 5)
42	1/2"		Formation of eye and toe buds, kidney parts established, salivary glands identifiable, skeletal pre-cartilage, heart fuses from chambers. (see plate 6)
49			Beginning of fingers, eyes, toes, muscle fibers, autonomic nervous system, optic nerve fibers, adrenal glands.
56	1"		Teeth appear, bone marrow, human facial characteristics recognizable. (see plate 7)
60	1 1/5"		
66	1 1/2"		
77	2"	3/4 oz.	

DAYS	INCHES	WEIGHT	STAGES OF GROWTH
90	3"	1 oz.	Eye lids meet and fuse until seventh month, hair follicles and skin layers appear, external genitals evidenced by swelling, vocal chords shape.
120	6"	4 oz.	Brain recognizable, outer skin thickens into layers. (see plate 8)
135	8"	5 oz.	
150	10"	8 oz.	Structure of testes, wind pipe well developed.
165	12"	9 oz.	
180	13"	1 1/2 lbs.	Fetus is covered with downy hair, print of palm and soles, bronchial trees branches out actively.
210	13-20"	2 1/2 lbs. ⁷	Eyelids fuse, testes descend, fat ⁸ begins to be deposited under skin.

From the beginning of formation until the seventh month, the embryo is developing the potential characteristics of the human being. However, from the first division of cells until birth and finally death, the only added ingredients will be time, nutrition, and oxygen.

The plates (located in the Appendix) illustrate when life begins and when an abortion takes place. They are meant to be of help by showing at what stages of life an abortion can and may be done.

⁷Fitzpatrick, E., Mastorianni, L., Reeder, S., Maternity Nursing, 12th Edition, Philadelphia, Penn., Lippincott, 1971, p. 82.

⁸Donald Cooley, Editor, Family Medical Guide, (New York, Better Homes and Gardens, 1964), p. 104.

ABORTION

Abortion is the termination of a pregnancy before the embryo can survive outside the uterus. Mrs. Alene Klass states: "an abortion is the untimely removal of the lining of the uterus."⁹ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has defined abortion as:

The expulsion or extraction of all (complete) or any part (incomplete) of the placenta or membranes, with or without an abortus, before the 20th week of gestation.¹⁰

According to the Roman Catholic Encyclopedia, abortion is, "the loss of foetal life or to perish,"¹¹ which comes from the Latin word "aboriri."

Abortion is, then, the taking of a potential life in an early stage of development. This stage is generally considered to be between the moment of conception and the fourth week, with the fetus weighing from almost nothing to forty ounces. The accepted standards for viability (the stage of development that will permit the fetus to live outside the uterus), is five hundred grams and the fifth month of gestation.

Debate of Abortion.

⁹Statement by Mrs. Alene Klass, Director of Counseling at Lovejoy Specialty Hospital, personal interview, Portland, Oregon, Jan. 16, 1976.

¹⁰W. Benton, Editor, "Abortion," The New Encyclopedia Britannica, (1974), Vol. x, p. 977.

¹¹_____, "Abortion," Roman Catholic Encyclopedia, (1910), Vol. 1.

The debate as to whether abortions are permitted for health reasons, religious reasons, or social reasons is an issue that should be left in the hands of the mother, or should it? These two debates, as to who should decide, are being asked by society today. Can abortion be permitted in some cases, and who is responsible for the decision? The aim of the American Medical Association and the American Law Institute presumed that one person or a group of people have superior wisdom as to know who should live and who should die, and for what reason.

Procurement of an abortion.

The procurement of an abortion involves the mother, the father, the doctor, and at times, the pastor. The mother is the primary person and she must show implications of "1) intent, 2) deliberate and purposeful use of means, and 3) the means must produce the desired effect."¹²

Intent. "The intent must be willed as an end in itself, with regards to termination of the pregnancy and safeguard to the mother." The intentions of the mother must be considered and examined closely.

Deliberate and purposeful use. "The purpose deals with the internal and external actions of the mother. As the mother ponders and deliberates over the abortion process, the external actions must apply to the cause. As the mother wishes for the abortion, the actions governing that decision must be realized by actions with the opposite sex." The mother must show a reason and purpose for the desired abortion.

¹²W. Benton, Editor, "Abortion," The New Encyclopedia Britannica, (1974), Vol. X, p. 977.

The desired effect. The cause must be responsible for the abortion. The specific effect is that of planned sexual activity without the need for further abortions.¹³

To procure an abortion, the mother must be able to meet her physical and sexual needs without paying the consequences of abortion. There must be a willingness to be responsible for the internal and external actions in a sexual relationship.

Why an abortion?

The mother is faced with a decision of keeping the baby and dying herself, or staying alive and killing the baby, or facing life with an unwanted child, or keeping the child without fatherhood.

Reasons for abortion.

In June of 1967, the American Medical Association and the American Law Institute formed a platform of reasons for abortion.

These are:

When it is needed to prevent grave impairment of the physical or mental health of the mother;

Where there is a substantial risk of the child being born with a grave physical or mental defect;

When the pregnancy results from rape or incest and there is no authoritative certification.¹⁴

There are other reasons, but most of those can be summarized by two words: therapeutic and eugenic.¹⁵

Therapeutic abortion. A therapeutic abortion is the removal of

¹⁴D. Bisscher, "Therapeutic Abortion: Blessing or Murder," Christianity Today, Vol. 12 #25, Washington, D.C., Sept. 27, 1968.

¹⁵Walter Spitzer and Charles Saylor, Birth Control and the Christian, New York, Columbia Press, (1970), p. 26.

the embryo in order to save the life of the mother, whether for physical or mental health. Therapeutic abortion is a highly unfortunate situation between the lives of the mother and the embryo. Three approaches are developed to substantiate a therapeutic abortion. These are "existential, situational, and Biblical."

Existential. A common approach is the existential position, in which man is alone in the universe and free to act as he sees fit. He lives for himself and establishes values as situation arise. The nearest thing to an existential guideline would be freedom. Decisions are not right or wrong; they are only authentically free or not free. Man should do just what is right, decided solely by his feelings.

Situational. Another approach is the situational ethics code of conduct, for which the only guideline is love. Out of human love and concern for a woman's social predicament, a doctor may decide that she needs an abortion.

Biblical. Biblical rule tries to make a hard and fast rule for everything and often makes absolutes of things that are relative. It insists that the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is the absolute rule by which to judge abortion and thus forbids any direct interruption of a pregnancy at any stage of development.¹⁶

In contemplating therapeutic abortions Kenneth Sharp states:

If for no other reason, than the question of protecting related human rights, therapeutic abortions must be granted, but only on the basis of clearly demonstratable severe health impairment.¹⁷

¹⁶D. Visscher, "Therapeutic Abortion: Blessing or Murder," Christianity Today, Vol 12 #25, Washington, D.C., September 27, 1968, p. 1238.

¹⁷Kenneth Sharp, "Abortion Psychological Price," Christianity Today, Vol 15 #18, Washington, D.C., June 4, 1971, p.5.

Eugenic abortion. Eugenic abortions are performed for the specific reason of removing the embryo which has shown possible mental retardation or physical deformities. Eugenic abortions have the positive elements of relieving the family of undue suffering. Eugenic abortions can bring heart-ache and sorrow for the mother who has wanted the child. Also, eugenic abortions "may lead to mercy killing."¹⁸ To counteract the idea of relieving suffering, Pearl Buck states that "a retarded child brings his own gift of life, even to the life of normal human beings."

Whether therapeutic or eugenic abortion is desired or affirmed, the consequences of both have positive and negative aspects to both the mother and the fetus.

Causes of Abortion.

Since abortion is the removal of the lining of the uterus, and the reasons are that full-term pregnancy can impair the health of the mother or embryo, or that of mental retardation or physical handicap, the causes effect either of these reason for abortion. There are correlations between the reasons and causes of abortions. Two reasons for abortion originate from the causes of abortion. Medical science has progressed in technological advancement to the degree of finding the causes and reducing these causes so women can produce healthy babies. Charles Saylor and Walter Spitzer have listed seven causes for abortion. They are as follows:

- 1) Defective development. "Nearly half of the abortions are

¹⁸Russell Hitt, "Can an Evangelical Consensus be Found?" Eternity, Vol 22, #7, Philadelphia, Feb., 1971, p. 26.

caused by defective development of the structures that grow from the fertilized egg."¹⁹

2) "Some are genetic accidents caused by abnormal characteristics carried in the egg or sperm or by the failure of normal development of chromosomes after the egg and sperm unite."²⁰ Both the egg and the sperm can be defective before unionization and after unionization. The chromosomes will not force together when defection occurs.

3) "Inadequate secretion of the ovarian hormones, estrogen, and progesterine needed for the development of the fertilized egg."²¹ The enzymes needed to help develop the egg are missing, therefore the egg is under-developed.

4) "X-rays in large doses, an over amount of radium and certain drugs may cause the need for an abortion."²² The fetal and embryonic stage cannot take overly large amounts of treatment if the mother is on medication of rays and potent drugs.

5) "Abnormal development in the mothers uterus may make it impossible to retain the egg."²³ The mucous membrane may be too thin and fluid for the egg to remain attached to the uterine wall.

6) "Uterine tumors may cause abortion because they increase uterine inability or create an unfavorable environment for the embryonic growth."²⁴ Growths of cancerous membranes may develop and cause the uterine wall the inability to secure the egg for growth.

¹⁹Ibid. p. 27.

²⁰Ibid. p. 28.

²¹Ibid. p. 28.

²²Ibid. p. 29.

²³Ibid. p. 29.

²⁴Ibid. p. 29.

7) "Physical injury to the mother."²⁵ The mother may be in an accident that could cause injury which would necessitate an abortion.

Methods of Abortion.

Medical technology has been able to induce four methods of abstraction. Human nature has a fifth way, that of spontaneous abortion, or, more commonly called a miscarriage. A miscarriage is the safest method for the uterus cannot contain the embryo and it is discharged much like a menstrual discharge. Medical science has devised the other four methods known as: 1) dilitation and curettage, 2) suction, 3) hysterotomy, and 4) saline poisoning.²⁶

Dilitation and Curettage. The method is done by the surgeon. The cervic muscle ring or womb opening is paralyzed. When fully paralyzed, the surgeon stretches it open and inserts a curette into the uterus. This curette cuts the placenta and embryo into fragments and scraps the remains into an empty basin. The bleeding is profuse. The surgeon generally has to do a second curettage to insure no remains are left in the womb. This method is performed from conception through the tenth week of gestation. See plate #1, and also plates #4 to #8 in the Life section.

Suction. The surgeon inserts a small hollow tube into the uterus. A powerful suction apparatus tears the embryo and placenta into fragments and out of the uterus. This method is the hardest and

²⁵Ibid. p. 30.

²⁶J.C. Wilke, Handbook on Abortion, (Cincinnati, Ohio, Hiltz Pub. Co., 1971), p. 25.

the most dangerous as it causes profuse hemorrhaging following the suction process. A dilatation and curettage is needed to clean out the uterus and cavity. This method is done from conception and on through the twentieth week of gestation. (See plate #2, also plates #4 to #8 of Life section.)

Hysterotomy. A hysterotomy is like the Caesarean Section. The surgeon makes an incision in the abdomen and the uterus. The embryo is then cut free of the umbilical cord and placenta. The embryo and placenta are discarded and left to die. As with a Caesarian Section, babies are born alive; so are the fetus' of a hysterotomy. These embryos are either killed or left to die. This method of abortion takes place from the twelfth to twenty-fourth week of gestation. (See plate #2 and plate #8 of Life section.)

Saline Poisoning. This method is more difficult and more hazardous than the proceeding methods because of the passing of the fetus. A large long needle is injected into the womb after the lower half of the trunk has been deadened. This needle upon entry into the womb is directed into the amniotic sac and an amount of fluid is removed and replaced by a saline solution. Within an hour the saline solution has poisoned the embryo; twenty-four hours later the mother is in labor and delivers the dead embryo. This method is used up to the twenty-eighth week of gestation. (See plate #2.)

The removal of the embryo either by natural methods or by induced methods of medicine, is a termination of a potential human being. The difference is that nature is controlling one and the other terminates life with more difficulty.

Incentives for Abortion.

Ms. Martha Willing of Seattle, Washington, states that there should be incentives for abortion. At the 1971 Planned Parenthood National Conference in Washington, D.C., she states:

There should be tax incentives for families with only two children;

Taxes should be levied for families who have three or more children;

The state should penalize those parents with three or more children;

The mother should be tattooed, to signify a third birth;

The child should be sterilized on the spot, so the gene pool will not be carried forward.²⁷

In that same year, Ms. Willing stated:

For no reason why anyone who accepted abortion should balk at an infanticide...no newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment, if it fails these tests, it forfeits the right to live.²⁸

Extremisists believe in these views, and views such as these, are being taken seriously each time they are presented. Tax, pay, and employment incentives are important motives. Some people consider these motives when thinking about the abortion question.

Benefits from Abortion.

Abortion has not become accepted as the form of killing babies, however, this method is gaining momentum. The benefits of abortion are four-fold, as Howe and Nicholas have stated:

²⁷Harold Lindsell, "License to Live," Christianity Today, Vol 18 #21, July, 1974, p. 1201.

²⁸Ibid. p. 1201.

It will drive the women away from illegal abortionists;

Liberalized laws will promote the physical welfare of women who face passive problems in childbirth;

Abortion will be another step toward family planning;

An unmarried women should have the right to decide whether or not she will bear the child.²⁹

The supposed benefit would then legalize abortion so that the murder of the embryo would not become a social ill plaguing society.

It has been stated that "Once you permit the killing of an unborn child, there will be no stopping. There will be no age limit. You are setting off a chain reaction that will eventually make you the victim."³⁰

²⁹Howe, W. Nicholas, "The Problem of Abortion," Moody Monthly, Vol 72 #1, Sept., 1971, p. 36.

³⁰Ibid. p. 37.

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

Old Testament.

Men and women of the Old Testament days had five ways by which they could limit their reproductive activity: "abortion, sterilization, infanticide, continence, and contraception by withdrawal."³¹ The Scripture allows for two arguments which allowed procured abortion.

Texts Bearing on Abortion. "The first argument in favor of permitting induced abortion is the absence of any biblical text forbidding such an act. Here we must appeal to the literature of the ancient Near East to weigh this negative evidence. In this case the silence of the Bible is significant because an Assyrian law dated between 1450 BC and 1250 BC prescribed death by torture in cases of induced abortion... Against this background the silence of the Old Testament appears to be both deliberate and instructive. The failure of God to set forth a similar law becomes even more profound when one realizes that the Mosiac Code is normally more extensive and more severe than these other Codes in sexual matters."³²

No Regard for the Fetus. The second argument on procurement of abortions is "that God does not regard the fetus as a soul

³¹Charles Saylor and Walter Spitzer, Birth Control and the Christian, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1969), p. 9.

³²Ibid. p. 9.

(Hebrew word; Nephesh), no matter how far the gestation period is."³³
 The fifth commandment (Thou shalt not kill) does not apply to this fact in that the fetus has no soul which can be put to death. A man will be put to death according to the commandment, however, when a fetus is aborted, there is a difference between fully human in soul and the fetus in the soul.

Rights of the Fetus.

Do fetus' have rights? This question needs to be dealt with.

The concepts of the positive affirmation are:

Direct gift from God. "Contraception is a gift from God in that children are not only a result of sexual union, but a direct gift from God."³⁴ The Bible draws a distinct line saying that sexual intercourse and contraception are different. Sexual intercourse has a distinct bearing on life in relation to the gift of God, "as Adam and Eve had sexual intercourse and she conceived and gave birth to a son whose name is Cain; meaning "I have created.""³⁵ The same gift God gave Eve was the same gift Leah received when "Jehovah let her have a Child."³⁶ The miracles of God are immense as Stuart Babbage states: "God permits man to share in the joyous task of

³³Ibid. p. 10.

³⁴Ibid. p. 12.

³⁵Genesis 4:1 Living Bible.

³⁶Genesis 29:31 Living Bible.

creation, therefore the Christian must seek to protect the fetus because he ought not to destroy what God has put together."³⁷ These statements deal with the fact that infants are gifts from God and should be treated as such.

God directly fashioned the fetus. "God is actively involved in the process of fashioning the fetus."³⁸ David said:

You have made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mothers womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex. It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion. You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in Your book."³⁹

As God has permitted man to procreate the earth, He has also left man with the decision of terminating life. As death is the result of a capital offense, "the destruction of the fetus is not a capital offense."⁴⁰ The Bible does not specifically state that abortion is a capital offense, however, the Bible speaks about the relationship of an abortion and death in Exodus 21:22-23.

If two men are fighting, and in the process hurt a woman so that she has a miscarriage, but lives, then the man who injured her shall be fined whatever amount the womans husband shall demand, and as the judges approve. But if any harm comes to the woman and she dies, he shall be executed.⁴¹

³⁷ Charles Spitzer and Walter Saylor, Birth Control and the Christian. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1969) p. 12.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 12.

³⁹ Psalms 139:13-16 Living Bible.

⁴⁰ Saylor and Spitzer, op. cit. p. 12.

⁴¹ Exodus 21:22,23 Living Bible.

The first distinct relationship of abortion to death applies in this way, "If a woman goes into labor as a result of a brawl and has a miscarriage, then a fine is payable, and if she dies, then a life for a life, tooth for a tooth, and an eye for an eye."⁴² This being a basic feature of the Mosiac Law entitled "Lex talionis." The law plainly states that if any life is taken, then the man who takes that life must be taken in like manner. The Bible clearly speaks very specifically about the killing of a person, however the death of a fetus is not deemed as death.

The second distinct relationship of abortion to death applies in this way, "A fine is payable for the blow providing no harm follows the mother and child."⁴³ The Bible speaks of collecting a fine even when the evidence is not damaging to the parties involved.

In reference to Exodus 21:22,23, Dr. Lloyd Kalland states: "that abortion is not a capital offense and...while the fetus is a precious organism, it is not yet a complete person."⁴⁴

Dr. Bruce Waltke states significant implications concerning this passage: "that this passage excuses indiscriminate abortion. The killing of the fetus has been considered a less serious wrong than killing the mother because of its presence. From the text, the unborn fetus is qualitatively inferior to fully human life."⁴⁵

⁴² Jack Cottrell, "Abortion and the Mosiac Law", Christianity Today, Vol, 17, #12, Washington D.C., March 16, 1973, p. 9.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 9.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

Dr. Bruce Waltke sums up the verse by stating: "that the premature birth is otherwise that of a healthy child...and that an injury to the child is no less than an injury to the mother and the call for the application of the "lex talionis."⁴⁶

New Testament Implications.

With the absence of clear teaching in the New Testament concerning the reproductive aspect, the context of the writings must rely upon the social context of Judaism and Hellenism. Two observations are of particular importance in relating abortion to the teaching of the New Testament.

"The New Testament, whether in the teaching of Jesus or of Paul, as well as in other Loci, maintains the stringency of the Old Testament over against the looseness of sexual morality so prevalent in the surrounding world.

Regarding the New Testament teaching and practice which tends to modify the relaxing tendency of the Old Testament stringency... is the pressure of the imminence of the Kingdom of God as it impinges upon the sexual side of the people."⁴⁷

As the forces of Judaism were practiced in force with strong emphasis upon the family and procreation within marriage, the Gentile world practiced family procreation in lesser degrees. As marriage was declared for the purpose of procreation, abortion was widely used. "It must be noted that a large number of pagan writers speak of the practice of abortion as an evil practice."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 10.

⁴⁷Saylor and Spitzer. p. 19.

⁴⁸Ibid. p. 31.

"Early Christianity as presented in the Didache and other writings separated from the New Testament by only a brief time span, also view abortion as unlawful."⁴⁹ "The Didache condemned killing of a child in the womb as one bearing God's image."⁵⁰

Abortion in the New Testament is mentioned only once. In I Corinthians 15:8 Paul says, "And last of all he appeared to me also, as to one prematurely and dead born (no better than an unperfected fetus among living men.)" The term "ektroma means abortion, abortive birth and untimely birth."⁵¹ The term was used by Paul to describe his own position among the apostles. Paul was saying that the term refers to himself as unfit to become an apostle because of the persecution he caused the Christians.

"The one thing that the Scriptures indicate about abortion is that it is not the same as murder. When natural abortion was precipitated by fighting, the guilty person was not charged with murder."⁵²

The Relationship of the Soul to the Fetus.

"The soul is an entity without material reality, regarded as the spiritual part of the person and having the functions of thinking and willing."⁵³ The fetus is the material entity in the developmental

⁴⁹Ibid. p. 31.

⁵⁰Matthew Buss, "The Beginning of Human Life as an Ethical Problem", Journal of Religion, Vol. 47, #3, 1967, p. 246.

⁵¹Saylor and Spitzer, p. 40.

⁵²Norman Geisler, Ethics: Alternatives and Issues, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), p. 218.

⁵³David Guralnik, Websters New World Dictionary. (Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing Company, 1956).

stages before birth. As the two areas are separate entities, when and how do they fuse together? James Barr states:

"The soul is not an entity with a separate nature from the flesh and possessing or capable of life on its own. Rather it is the life animating the flesh. Soul and flesh do not therefore go separate ways, but the flesh expresses outwardly the life or soul...man does not have a soul, he is a soul."⁵⁴

"Man is more than a complete chemical machine; he is or has a soul; and presumably he is or has a soul from the earliest stages of fetal development, then as a fetus, he is a primordial person whose life cannot be taken with impunity. Man is a living tissue with an unique genetic makeup, destined to become a fully developed human being."⁵⁵

Man becomes fused together with the soul at the time of conception. The Biblical description of mans' distinctive creation in the divine image refers to a quality of life that though it depends upon breath and blood, it is not equal therein. The Biblical view presents the fusing of the soul and fetus as the creature is processed by God. "For the soul of every living thing is in the hand of God, and the breath of all mankind."⁵⁶

The Psalmist declared:

"for thou didst form my inner parts. Thou didst cover me in my mothers womb, my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth."⁵⁷

⁵⁴Robert Gardner. Abortion: The Personal Delimna. (Grand Rapids, Michigan. William Eerdmans, 1972) p. 124.

⁵⁵Edward Plowman, "Lobbying for the Unborn," Christianity Today, Vol. 177, #21, Washington D.C. July 21, 1973, p. 44.

⁵⁶Job 12:10 Living Bible.

⁵⁷Psalms 139:13-16 Living Bible.

The Psalmist is declaring that he regards himself as a self even before he was conscious of himself. Even before he was fully developed, God knew of the importance that being would possess. The Bible speaks of the breath of life as "the time came when the Lord God formed a mans body from the dust of the grounds and breathed into it the breath of life."⁵⁸ "God gives you the breath of life."⁵⁹ "For in him we live and have our being."⁶⁰ The soul and fetus are then fused together when God breathes into mans' nostrils the breath of life. Matthew Buss states: "this could mean that the soul informs the fetus when the first breath is drawn."⁶¹

One's personality and physical characteristics are totally present at conception, so the soul is conceived at conception. As the soul is the spiritual breath of life, the fetus has the potential characteristics of the God-consciousness. Dr. Matson states: "that the fetus in any stages of development should not be treated like a soul-less animal."⁶² Dr. Klass Runia states: "the fetus is the beginning of a human life and is therefore sacred."⁶³ Dr. Vincent states: "that from the moment of conception, the fetus has a value and this value steadily increases until the time of birth when it has a value equal to that of any living person."⁶⁴

⁵⁸Genesis 2:7 Living Bible.

⁵⁹Daniel 5:23 Living Bible.

⁶⁰Acts 17:28 King James.

⁶¹Matthew Buss, "The Beginning of Human Life as an Ethical Problem." Journal of Religion, Vol. 47 #3, July 1967, p. 245.

⁶²Russell Hitt. "Can an Evangelical Consensus be Found." Eternity, Vol. 22 #2, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Feb. 1971, p. 20.

⁶³Ibid. p. 21

The fetus has worth, value, potential, personality and quality. As God breathes life into the fetus, the soul which is the spirit is united with the fetus.

⁶⁴Ibid. p. 24.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

Abortion in Ethics.

Abortion. Is it right or wrong ethically? According to Dr. David Mace: "society has abdicated its responsibility for thinking through the question and turned it over to the woman and her doctor."⁶⁵ Society has not helped the woman, but hindered her. Society has turned its' back on her and let her wrestle the problem by herself. The problem confronts not only one person, but many. Dr. Mace states again: "there is no abortion situation in which only one person is involved."⁶⁶ Abortion is then the consequence of the action of the mother and the father. Robert Hall states: "Let us declare unequivocally that the sexual relations of human beings and their reproductive consequences are not the business of the state, but rather free decisions that free people have every right to make for themselves in a free society."⁶⁷ Society is made up of people who live and breathe in a free society. Therefore, society does not regulate the actions and mores of people.

⁶⁵David Mace. Abortion: The Agonizing Decision. (New York, New York, Abingdom Press. 1972) p. 60.

⁶⁶Ibid p. 64.

⁶⁷Robert Hall. Abortion in a Changing World. (New York, New York. Columbia University Press. 1970) p. 33.

Absolute Values of Distinction.

Society must therefore have definite absolute values of distinction. Joel Feinberg in speaking about abortion, states four principles of value to ethical importance.

Viability. The principle that incubation makes the fetus viable at anytime. That mere length of life is not an exact measure and that that viability of the fetus depends upon the extent of its anatomical and functional development.

Experience. The principle that one must suffer, possess memories and have lived. However, the embryo experiences touch at the eighth week. The argument that living and learning are necessary to make man human.

Sentiments of the Adult. The principle that people suffer over the death of a young child or baby differently than that of the fetus. That the fetus is still an "it" until the movement within the womb.

Social Visibility. The principle that the fetus is still an "it" until birth and dependence outside the womb. That the rules are for those outside the womb. That the behavior of the fetus is not yet of significance to society.⁶⁸

Paul Ramsey states:

After formation of the blastocysts, approximately seven days after conception, when an unique genetic package has developed in the womb, the human embryo deserves the same moral and ethical considerations of an infant.⁶⁹

Man, therefore, must realize that the fetus has rights and those rights must be considered before an abortion is consummated.

Formation of an Ethical Policy.

In order to justify abortion, there must be a policy in which the mother can rely on and be confident upon. Daniel Callahan

⁶⁸ Joel Feinberg, The Problem of Abortion, (Belmont, California. Wadsworth Publishing House. 1967) p. 20.

⁶⁹ K. Woodward. Moral Responsibility: Of Abortion. (Newsweek. Vol. 75 #23. New York, New York. June 8, 1970) p. 60.

states three positions:

to establish a bias or general direction.⁷⁰

to establish a policy which is either biased toward either form or loose rules.⁷¹

to establish a policy toward heirarchical ordering of rules among themselves.⁷²

Abortion based upon the ethical policy must lead toward one basic principle that is either upheld by heirarchical rules among society or based upon rules designed by society.

Four Conditions of Action.

The ethical policy must meet four conditions if the act of abortion is to be justified. James Nelson presents these:

- (1) the act itself must be morally good or at least indifferent.⁷³
- (2) the evil effect cannot be as a means to the good result.⁷⁴
- (3) the forseen evil effect must not be intended or approved, but only tolerated,⁷⁵ and
- (4) the good effect must outweigh the bad.⁷⁶

⁷⁰Daniel Callahan, Abortion: The Law, The Choice, and Morality, (New York, New York, McMillian Company, 1970), p. 300.

⁷¹Ibid. p. 301.

⁷²Ibid. p. 301.

⁷³James Nelson, Human Medicine: Ethical Perspectives and New Medical Issues, (Minneapolis, Minnesota, Augsburg Press, 1973) p. 48.

⁷⁴Ibid. p. 48

⁷⁵Ibid. p. 49

⁷⁶Ibid. p. 49

Is it justifiable or unjustifiable?

Is abortion right or wrong? "Abortion if it is justified, is justified by putting the child out of misery rather than letting it live a less than normal life."⁷⁷ To justify abortion, the mother must realize that life and death of the child is in the hands of some Higher Being. Norman Geisler points out that this Higher Being produces entities that have real meaning. Geisler states, "for what is, has more value than what may be."⁷⁸ The value of this Being must have significant emphasis upon the act of abortion.

When is Abortion not Justified?

Abortion is not justified when the responsibility of the mother is not exercised properly. The responsibility is exercised by the mother in the capacity to make appropriate responses to the situation. The mother must realize that it is her body, and her right to abort or give birth. However, it is only from the decisions of the mother and the father that the outcome of the decision should become final.

Abortion is not justified when:

- (1) there is viability or the beginning of the sixth month.⁷⁹
- (2) there is unwanted children, the personal whims of the mother are insufficient grounds.⁸⁰
- (3) there is unwillingness to accept the moral responsibility one chooses which will not lessen the responsibility for her.⁸¹
- (4) for population control.⁸²

⁷⁷Norman Geisler, Ethics: Alternatives and Issues. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1971). p. 210.

⁷⁸Ibid. p. 220.

⁷⁹Ibid. p. 228-230.

⁸⁰Ibid. p. 228-230.

⁸¹Ibid. p. 229-230.

⁸²Ibid. p. 228-230.

Joseph Fletcher states: "that taking a potential life is not morally justified because one does not want to suffer the social or physical discomforts which come from their own free choices."⁸³

Robert Bluford and Robert Petries state:

In our judgement, therefore, within the highest moral, ethical, and religious sensitivity, a woman may have unwanted pregnancy terminated, if in her thoughtful judgement that is the most able response she can make to the situation, given her the alternatives.⁸⁴

Abortion is not justified if there are no medical reasons.

The mother must have taken the responsibility to conceive and in turn taken the responsibility to carry out the full term pregnancy. Abortion cannot be consummed just for the whims of the mother or that she has too many children.

Two areas of Justifying Abortion.

In justifying abortion, Norman Geisler presents two areas that affect the abortive act. Therapeutic abortion and eugenic abortions.

Therapeutic abortion. In the case of therapeutic abortions, the answer would be yes that it is justified. Norman Geisler states: "an actual life, (the mother) is of more intrinsic value than that of a potential life (the unborn)."⁸⁵ Therefore being fully human has higher value than the mere possibility of becoming fully human. The mother is free, mature and autonomous, but the unborn has only the potential to become human.

⁸³Matthew Buss, "The Beginning of Human Life as an Ethical Problem." Journal of Religion. Vol. 47 #3. July 1967. p. 224.

⁸⁴Robert Bluford; Robert Petries. Unwanted Pregnancies. (New York, New York, Harper and Row. 1973) p. 62.

⁸⁵Ibid. p. 221.

Eugenic abortion. In the case of eugenic abortions, the answer would be yes. The evidence for this answer lies in the possibility of mongolism, deformation due to thalidomide, and for retardation due to measles. Norman Geisler states:

Eugenic abortion is called for only when the clear indications are that the life will be subhuman and not simply because it may be a deformed human.⁸⁶

A human life, handicapped or not, is worth living and anyone who takes it upon himself to decide in advance for another that his life should not be given the opportunity to develop is engaged in a serious ethical act.⁸⁷

Abortion is then justified when the result will be a deformed child. Also abortion is justified if the mother could die as the result of delivering the baby.

Who is Responsible?

The responsibility rests upon the personal choice of the mother, by the way that the mother looks at herself and at life. John Noonan states:

The goal is to keep alive in the consciences of women a moral tendency, and the hope that they will be willing to bear the pain and uncertainty of having to make a moral choice.⁸⁸

The action itself can be understood as a private personal act, the ultimate goal of action to prevent the arrival of a particular person.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Ibid. p. 222.

⁸⁷Ibid. p. 223.

⁸⁸John Noonan, "History of Abortion in the Catholic Church" Theology Digest, Vol. 21, #4, Winter 1973, p. 149.

⁸⁹John Noonan, "Methods of Moral Argument", Theology Digest, Vol. 16, #3, Autumn, 1968, p. 250.

The mother. The mother by the time of abortion is well determined to abort the baby. "The mother must desire not only to achieve a situation of calmness and peace, of absence of suffering and conflict but also achieve positive goals."⁹⁰ Judge Gerhard Geseell of Washington D.C. states: "that a womans liberty and right of privacy...may well include the right to remove an unwanted child at least during the early stages of pregnancy."⁹¹

The father. The responsibility also rests upon the father. Dr. Ellis states: "the father has just as much responsibility to the situation as does the mother."⁹² Because the father has no bodily responsibilities at stake, it is easy for him to evade his responsibility. Dr. Ellis states further, "if a man does not back up his stance with the appropriate offers, his moral position is no different!"⁹³

The responsibility rests then upon mother and father. As the mother and father have control over their bodies for preventing unwanted pregnancies, they also have control of responsibility to prevent abortion. Dr. Ellis states:

⁹⁰John Noonan, Editor, The Morality of Abortion, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 110.

⁹¹Paul Ramsey, "Feticide and Infanticide upon Request", Religion in Life, Vol. 49, #2, Summer, 1970, p. 182.

⁹²V. Ellis, "Let's Get Straight about Abortion", Brethern Life and Thought, Vol. 20, #2, Spring, 1975, p. 116.

⁹³Ibid. p. 116.

Before conception, nothing has been determined as to who the person would be or even whether a person "should be"... Indeed there is no possibility of a person getting started except with the help of his parents. Here the decision, control and responsibility are entirely theirs. But after conception, the only power they control is...violent interdiction of the definite person who is definitely on the way.⁹⁴

Is it wrong?

According to the Catholic Church, abortion is wrong. The church presents its views in the following concepts:

- (1) The presence of a rational soul is attributable to a creative act of God;⁹⁵
- (2) The spiritual and material interests of the child are not sufficiently protected if we are allowed to act on non-conclusive estimates of the time of animation.⁹⁶

The church states than "an act upon these assumptions will be a violation of the fetus' inviolable rights."⁹⁷

Daniel Callahan in presenting the negative position states, "that the sanctity of life is in all favor, life in all its manifestations."⁹⁸ He stated further "that society ought to have a high regard for nascent life, seeking to protect it."⁹⁹

⁹⁴Ibid. p. 117.

⁹⁵J.F. Donceel, "Why is Abortion Wrong?" America, Vol. 133, #4, August 16, 1975, p. 879-880.

⁹⁶Ibid. p. 880.

⁹⁷Ibid. p. 879-880.

⁹⁸K. Woodward, "Morality of Abortion", Newsweek, Vol. 75, #23, June 8, 1970, p. 64.

⁹⁹Ibid. p. 65.

James Nelson presents three issues on the negative aspects of abortion:

- (1) A principle mark of a just and compassionate society is its defense of the defenseless, its special concern for the weak, and the powerless in the case of the fetus.¹⁰⁰
- (2) The physical and mental health of the mother actually are best guarded by serious restrictions on abortion.¹⁰¹
- (3) The moral health of the entire society is at stake.¹⁰²

The Catholic Church is the most ardent supporter of anti-abortion states from the Human Vitae:

We must once again declare that the direct interruption of the generative process already began, and above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for the therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as licit means of regulating birth.¹⁰³

Is it Right?

Today abortion is right if it is demanded. Mothers today stress the absolute right to control their body and its reproductive process.

Rachel Wahlberg states:

The crucial point for the woman is that she feels that if she does not have power of decision over the contents of her uterus, then the fetus has a certain power over her. She is at the mercy of her reproductive system.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ James Nelson, Human Medicine: Ethical Perspectives on New Medical Issues, (Augsberg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1973), p. 46.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 46.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 46.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 49.

Tilda Norberg presents:

We (women) protest being victimized by lawmakers and doctors who say we have no voice in what happens in our bodies... we protest the way we are taught to please men...we protest the double standard.¹⁰⁵

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion, for all states and all people, with the consent of the mother and doctor involved. However, in 1972, the United States Congress passed the Congressional Bill H.R. 14715 which legalized abortion. Representative Bella Abzug of New York states: "I believe that no philosophy of life, no one religion or doctrine, or dogma, should be imposed upon the women of this country."¹⁰⁶

Availability-on-Demand.

The availability-on-demand would bring upon women unbearable pressure from husbands and boyfriends to abort children. The abortion-on-demand platform lists five reasons why abortion is right.

- (1) To protect womens lives and health.¹⁰⁷
- (2) To preserve the autonomy of the medical profession.¹⁰⁸
- (3) To ensure that only those children who are wanted will be born.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵Ibid. p. 49.

¹⁰⁶M. Beloter. "Congress Gets Bill on Abortion." America. Vol. 72, #8. August 1972, p. 1372.

¹⁰⁷John Noonan. "Methods of Moral Argument." Theology Digest, Vol. 16, #3, Autumn 1968, p. 69-71.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. p. 70.

¹⁰⁹Ibid. p. 70.

(4) That women are to attain equal status in security.¹¹⁰

(5) To avoid the social and racial discrimination.¹¹¹

Abortion is then right when it provides women the right over their own bodies, the right to want only those children when they want them, and to equalize themselves to the male counterpart.

Ethical Arguments against Abortion.

The arguments against abortion have been presented from both the liberal and conservative camps. From these camps have come platforms stating the religious and non-religious issues. The arguments presented are as follows:

(1) Issues are invalid if "made by an external Judge."¹¹² These are written by persons who claim the right to judge the past actions of others as morally right or wrong. This person can be distinguished in that they are not immediately in the situation.

(2) Another argument "is made basically in a juridicial model."¹¹³ The action is right or wrong depending on whether it conforms to or is contrary to a rule of law.

(3) "The Catholic Church's arguments largely confine the relevant data to the physical life."¹¹⁴ They are concerned with the physical life, sanctity of life, and its preservation.

¹¹⁰Ibid. p. 71.

¹¹¹Ibid. p. 71.

¹¹²John Noonan, Editor, The Morality of Abortion, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard Press, 1970) p. 102.

¹¹³Ibid. p. 103.

¹¹⁴Ibid. p. 103.

(4) Another argument is "limited exclusively with the physician and the patient."¹¹⁵ The doctor and patient are isolated from the problems of others and they concentrate on the abortion. The doctor has to decide for the patient, the obvious basis for the abortion.

(5) "The use of natural laws."¹¹⁶ These are binding and persuasive on all men in that these are the basis of the historical evidences and substance of the Christian message.

(6) "Made for eternal life...nascent life is of special interest and value to God."¹¹⁷ God designed man to inherit life through regeneration, consecration, and dedication.

(7) "Created for fulfillment."¹¹⁸ Life was not derived from a concern for convenience or a desire for comfort or self centered pleasure, but formed to fulfill the fulfillment of God.

Abortion, with the ethical implications, leaves the topic up to the individual. It is the individual involved who makes the decision whether to keep the fetus or to abort. It is also up to the individual to pay the consequences for that decision.

¹¹⁵Ibid. p. 104.

¹¹⁶Ibid. p. 106.

¹¹⁷E. McDonagh, "Ethical Problems of Abortion." Theology Monthly Review. Vol. 71, #579, 580, 581. September, October, November, 1968. p. 982.

¹¹⁸Ibid. 983.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The problem of abortion is a major health problem in society today. Abortion increases at an alarming rate causing physical, mental and spiritual conflicts. The cause of these conflicts may be internal or external depending on the background of the mother and also the situation. External conflicts may come in the form of pressure from family, friends or society because of the decision by the mother to remove the fetus.

When confronted with this situation, the Pastor has a definite role of counseling with the mother. The Pastor should know the guidelines whereby he can guide the mother in deciding whether life should be taken for granted or whether life is of ultimate value for the fetus. However, in order to help the mother, the Pastor must understand when life begins and when abortions occur. From this basis, the many facts of abortion can be dealt with in counseling.

Life and abortion coincide with each other in terms of development. An abortion is procured while life is in the formation stages. Abortion can be consummated from the time of conception up through the twenty-eighth week of gestation.

Life is the union of two different masses of potential being. When this union is completed, the formation will culminate and develop.

into a human being. The mass of cells divides at such a rapid rate, and with such magnitude that life begins to develop immediately. Since life produces at such a rapid rate, the possibility of abortion introduces itself early in pregnancy. In citing when life begins, the conclusion has been that as the sperm and the egg unite, life has been that as the sperm and the egg unite, life has begun to develop.

Drs. Kuhn, Howell and Seamands stated that "life begins at unionization."¹

Dr. Germain Grisez also concurs to this statement. In a personal interview with Mrs. Alene Klass, the view she expressed was the "life starts at the tenth week of gestation, the seventh month of gestation, and the eighth month after birth."² Her reasoning being that at the tenth week, the fetus has movement within the womb, at the seventh month the fetus can live outside the womb, at the eighth month after birth the life can subsist without depending upon the mother. The beginning of life has not been absolutely determined.

An abortion is the removal of a potential life before it is born. An abortion is an issue centered around the physical, social and spiritual areas of life. According to the medical and legal aspects, the mother can dictate when life begins and when life should be terminated. The highest courts support this when declaring that an abortion may

¹Harold Kuhn, "Symposium on Christian Social Ethics," The Asbury Seminarian, Vol. 29 #1, January 1974, p. 17.

²Mrs. Alene Klass, Personal Interview, Director of Counseling, Lovejoy Specialty Hospital, Portland, Oregon, January 16, 1976.

be procured when the mother's health is in danger, or psychological harm may result from the birth of an unwanted child. From this position, abortion is generally agreed upon by pro-abortionists, that a life is saved and not terminated in abortion.

In order for the mother to secure an abortion, in her own mind she must know the intent of procurement. The abortion is a deliberate and purposeful act with the direct result of the desired effect, so she must know her own intentions for the future. Willingness to understand and be responsible for the external and internal actions of future sexual relations is necessary.

Abortion is classified in two categories, therapeutic and eugenic. The therapeutic abortion is secured in order to save the life of the mother, while eugenic abortion is secured in order to stop a possible mental retardation or physical deformity to the child. In comparison, therapeutic abortion is sympathetic with the mother and eugenic is sympathetic to the child and family. Eugenic also applies in the case of mental deformities. Doctors do not always agree on the categories of abortion as shown by the following quotations. Dr. Ray Heffern of Tufts University states; "anyone who performs a therapeutic abortion is either ignorant of modern methods of treating abortion in complication, or is unwilling to take the time to use them."³ The opposite view is presented by Dr. Kenneth Sharp as he states: "if for no other reason than the question of protecting related human rights, therapeutic abortions must be granted, but only on the basis of clearly demonstratable severe

³Nicholas, W, Howe, R., "The Problem of Abortion," Moody Monthly, Vol. 72 #1, September 1971, p. 35-38.

health impairment."⁴ Another view of therapeutic abortions is what psychiatrists state, "the pregnant woman usually does not develop a specific felling or attachment toward the fetus."⁵ Therefore, therapeutic and eugenic abortions, as categories, are not always absolute.

Abortions are performed in the following medical and technical methods: dilitation and curettage, suction, hysterotomy, and saline poisoning. The miscarriage is termed as spontaneous abortion. Each method has a gestational time period of when abortions can be performed on the fetal growth.

Today abortion is demanded by many. There have been seminars conducted by Planned Parenthood, Right to Life and Birth Right emphasizing contraception, abortion, and birth control. Yet, the incentives for abortion have been the most damaging with over-population. Certain pro-abortionists ascertain that families will either have to be within certain size limits or levies will be placed upon them to account for a larger family.

In planning families, abortion will lead to supposed benefits and options. These benefits would lead to fewer illegal abortions, more personal freedom with the reproductive system, and better welfare of the children. However, not all persons agree to these benefits.

⁴Donald Vischer, "Therapeutic Abortion: Blessing or Murder," Christianity Today, Vol. 12 #25, September 27, 1968, p. 8.

⁵Judson Landis, Current Perspectives on Social Problems, Vol. 12, #25, September 27, 1968, p. 213.

As in centuries long ago, abortion is still a controversial subject today. In referring to the Old Testament, an abortion was considered a miscarriage when God permitted it. The Old Testament gives the example of a man and woman involved in a fight with another man, causing the loss of an unborn child. The man who caused the fight would have to make restitution by giving his life or pay for the loss in some manner deemed by the mother and the judge.

The Bible is silent when it considers an abortion in terms of deliberate removal of the fetus. However, civil Assyrian Law condemned abortion and prescribed death for those who permitted induced abortions. The Mosaic Law condemned killing, however, did not specifically regard abortion as killing. This is possibly because a miscarriage was considered God's natural way of aborting.

Using the Hebrew Bible, God did not regard the fetus as a soul. This refers back to the fifth commandment where souls could not be killed. A man would be killed for murdering another person, however, a man causing an abortion could not be killed, because the fetus was considered not to have a soul. Determining that the fetus does not have a soul, does not imply that God does not care for His creation, or that man is to terminate creation arbitrarily. God shows His care, in love, in the New Testament, and in the person of His own Son. Therefore, the fetus has rights because of God's involvement in creating and fashioning this potential life. The Bible declares man to have, worth, value, potential, personality and quality.

The New Testament does not deal specifically with abortion. The emphasis here being upon the moral area of living, with responsibility to God in every relationship. Passages dealing with the marriage

relationship and its responsibility to God, along with the definite warning to those involved in fornication or adultery would be indirectly dealing with abortion. Responsibility to God, being the key to a moral society dealing with abortion.

Two arguments have appeared on the issue of abortion being right or wrong. One argument being, that the woman has the right and responsibility to decide the abortion. Second argument being, society being the decision maker before the abortion is attempted. However, whether one person is confronted or the community is confronted, the mother and father will assume the rights and responsibility ultimately.

In order to make the decision of right or wrong about abortion, an absolute value of distinction must be reached. There must be a distinction of viability, of experience, of sentiments of the adult, and of social understanding or acceptance. The mother, personally, will make these distinct values realizing the fetus has the same rights as an infant or disregarding those rights. In view of the above, an ethical policy enters.

The ethical policy the mother chooses makes abortion for her, right or wrong, or society the determiner of the abortion being right or wrong, through acceptance of her or rejection. In formulating the conclusion for the ethical values placed upon abortion, the research indicates that abortion is not a situation involving one person. Society does regulate and dictate some of the actions of its' people, yet the individual actions of society form the basis for making decisions, whether right or wrong, just or unjust. There are four conditions to be considered that are intended to affect the reasoning of right actions

over that of wrong actions. Whether right or wrong the mother justifies her actions.

Justification of an abortion may be in the form of the therapeutic or eugenic abortion. Abortion is right according to the eugenic abortion when evidence lies in the fact that malformed and mentally deformed babies will result. Therapeutic abortions could be justifiable to the mother if she sees no value in life for the fetus, and her life of more value.

Abortion is not justified when gestation is too far advanced, when the personal whims of the mother are evident, when the moral responsibility is not exercised, or when the population is out of control. Justification of an abortion is not a personal choice, if society does not accept that persons decision. That is the real problem of abortion.

Who is responsible for securing an abortion? As society has abdicated its' responsibility, the mother and the father are ultimately responsible for this additional life and the outcome of that life. The mother making the decision must be upheld by the father or his position is of no value. Today, the decision of abortion is left to the mother and her doctor. The mother has the rights, freedom, and responsibility. The decision will be constantly with her from the time she decides until she meets her Creator.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussion of abortion has been debated in the areas of health, religion and society. The results of research present the facts that future birth will center around the need for control. The discussion has been centered around projected size of families and children with no families. The debate has sited the anti-abortionists and the pro-abortionists. From these two sides, a strong argument has developed whether abortion is just or unjust.

The anti-abortionists have presented the view that the life of the fetus has value equal to that of the mother. The main platform of the anti-abortionists is to defend the right of the fetus and give permission to let a potential life be born. The discussion has been presented as to when and why the fetus has this equal status. In discussing equal status, theologians stand out strongest as to the equal status, while on the "liberal" moralists have said that the mother is superior and over-powering to the fetus.

While the theologians have stressed the idea that the fetus was conceived to produce a potential life for the fulfillment of God, the abortionists have proposed the idea that life has no fulfillment until birth and then full dependence upon itself. While the anti-abortionists and theologians have also presented the platform whereby God has given men and women the liberty and responsibility to procreate the earth.

In presenting the pro-abortionists view, their platform projects that the mother has her own rights over that of the fetus. They state that the life of the fetus is incomplete until viability. Also presented in the view, is the mother and her doctor having the right to decide on abortion and the reason for that abortion.

The pro-abortionists discussion is focused upon the incentives and supposed benefits and options for abortion. The discussion is based upon the rights of the mother over the rights of the fetus,.

Theologians, lawyers, doctors, and psychologists have discussed the platform of pro-abortionists and have reached no basic conclusion as the rights of the mother or the fetus. The research presented for discussion asks whether a Supreme Being is the major factor, whether the happiness of the mother is the factor, or whether the physical feelings are the factor for an abortion.

The discussion as to whether abortion is right or wrong has not or will be approved. The research shows that this question has been discussed and will be discussed for years to come. There has been much discussion as to whether the mother, father, or doctor have the right answer. Many pro-abortionists and anti-abortionists have left the decision up to the mother.

The discussion of abortion is very much alive today because of a promiscuous society. As research has presented the views, the discussion will continue to stay alive, for those contemplating an abortion.

In recommendation for further study, the writer would suggest:

1. research presented in the psychological implication of abortion,
2. personal interviews presenting why an abortion was secured and the emotional value gained from the secured abortion,
3. research based upon the amount of abortions secured from girls who have been raped,
4. a study presenting the views held by each state and the implications concerning abortions,
5. a study presenting the importance of society and the church in helping the mother in the abortion situation,
6. a study in abortion and its relation to the law and court system.

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APPENDIX

A

The following questions are the questions pertaining to the personal interviews with people involved in abortions. The interviews were with counselors of public abortion hospitals, a doctor, and director of counseling. These questions were intended to find facts and opinions from people involved in counseling women considering abortion.

1. When does life begin?
2. Do you think you are playing God when you take the life of a fetus?
3. What is the average age of girls that come in for an abortion?
4. What are the methods used in abortion?
5. How many deaths occur from abortions?
6. What are the types of scars left after there has been an abortion?
7. At what stages of life do these scars appear?
8. Do you feel the pressure from from the pro units such as Right to Life, Birthright, and Planned Parenthood?
9. What is the cost for an abortion? Physically, morally, and financially?
10. Does the fetus have any rights? From conception or birth?
11. What is the responsibility of the mother and father?
12. What right does the doctor have in abortion?
13. What is the attitude of society toward abortion?

14. How does the ethics of sex fit into the abortion picture?
15. Do you ever try to talk a mother out of an abortion?
16. Are there many self induced abortions since the law of 1973?
17. What is the spiritual aspect of abortion?
18. What are the alternatives of abortion?
19. Is abortion ever justified and if it is, under what circumstances?
20. How many abortions do you schedule each day?
21. Will the real reason for abortions be that of keeping the population down or just permit a freer use of sex?
22. Why are there abortions?
23. How does situation ethics play in abortion?
24. Has rape gone up now that abortions are easy to secure?
25. What is your religious affiliation and what side do you take on the issue?

APPENDIX

B

This annotated bibliography is presented with the hopes that further work will be done on the subject of abortion. The list ranges from the medical to the theological implications. Also it ranges from the liberal to the conservative and from the womens side to the churches position.

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Presenting its nature, its evidence and the laws of the doctors and nurses performing the abortions.
- Tietze, Christopher, Abortion Bibliography, National Committee on Maternal Health, New York, New York, 1965.
Centering on the birth control, contraception and prevention of birth defects.
- Walbert, David, Abortion: Society and the Law, Case Western Reserve University Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1973.
Presenting the views held by the states and the courts. How society and the law react to abortion and what can be done to alleviate abortion.
- Westoff, Leslie, From Now to Zero, Little Brown Books, Boston, Massachusetts, 1971.
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- Williams, Glanville, The Sanctity of Life and the Criminal, Knopf Publishers, New York, New York, 1957.
Presenting the view that life is of value and that the deviant person does not have the right to take the life and lives of other people. Showing that life is a gift from God.
- Weishit, Eldon, Abortion, Concordia Publishing House, Kansas City, Missouri, 1976.
Presenting a resource for pastoral counseling. Also including information, regarding clinics available for abortion and those offering counsel.

APPENDICES



PLATE 1

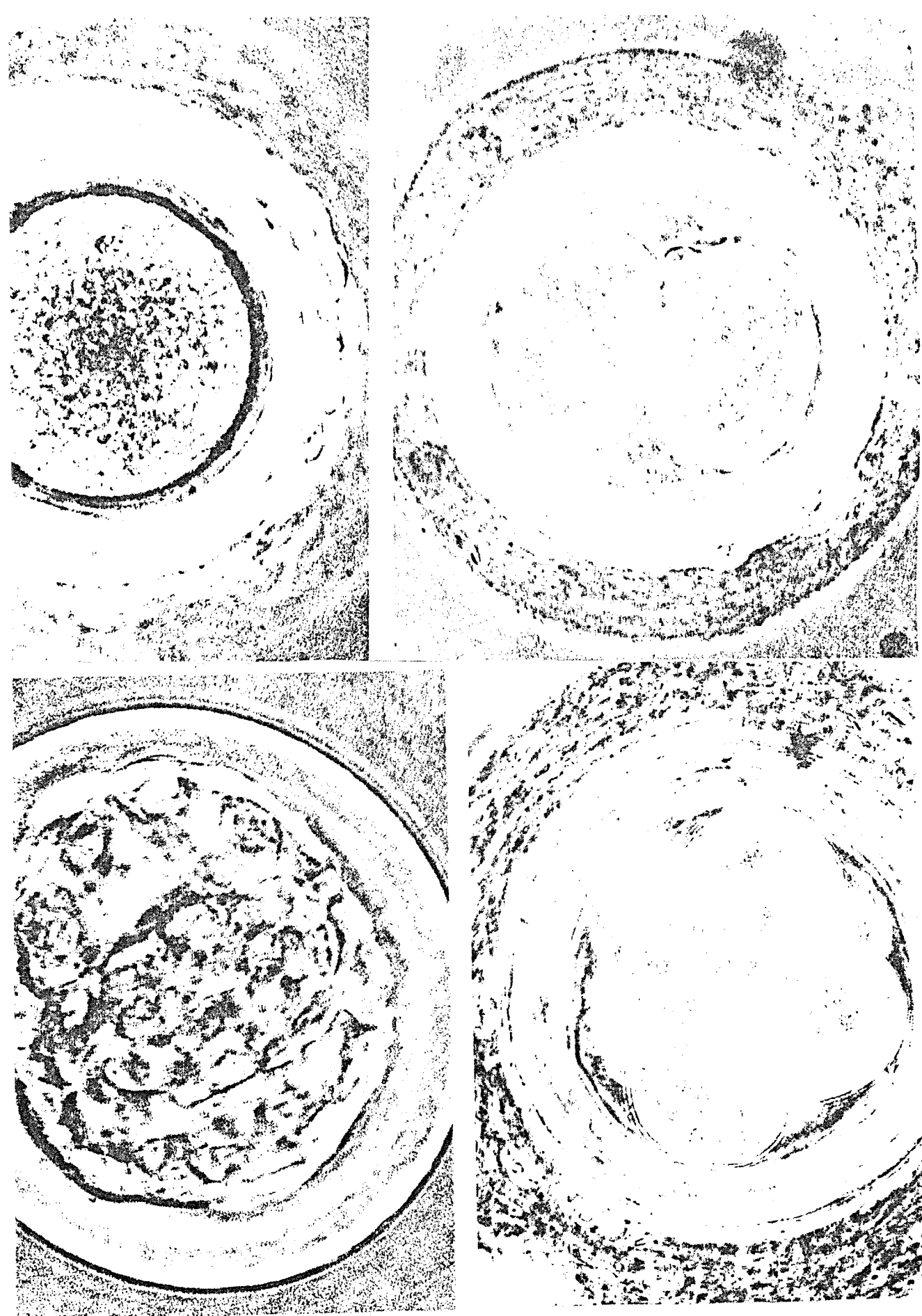
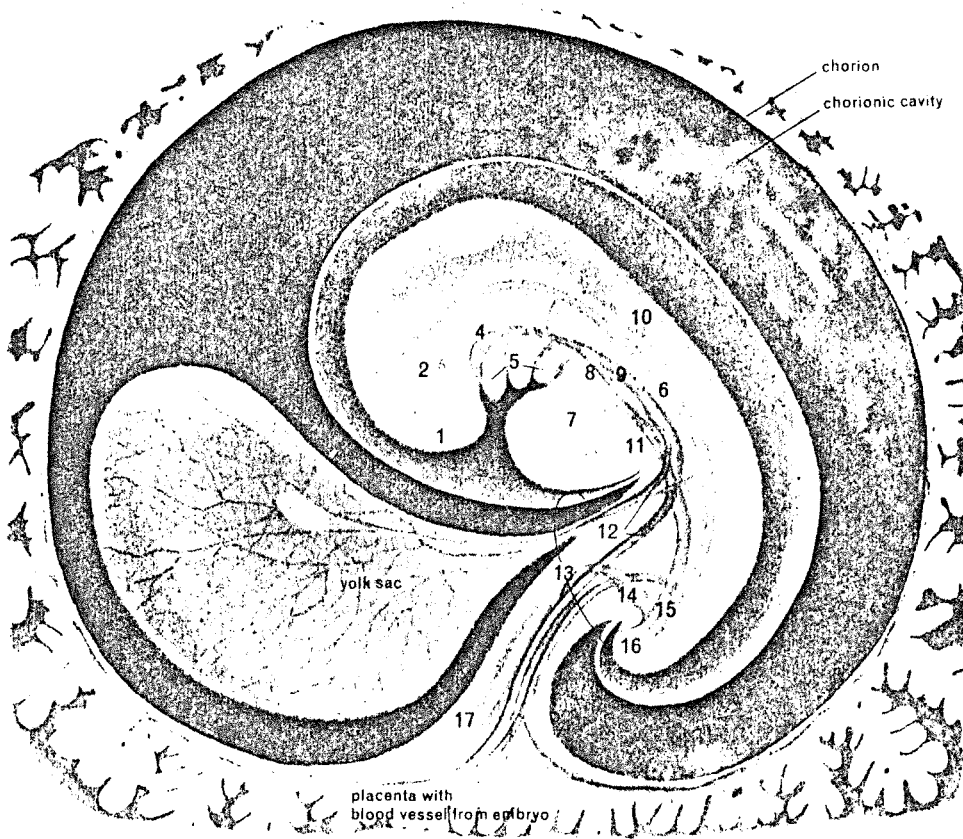
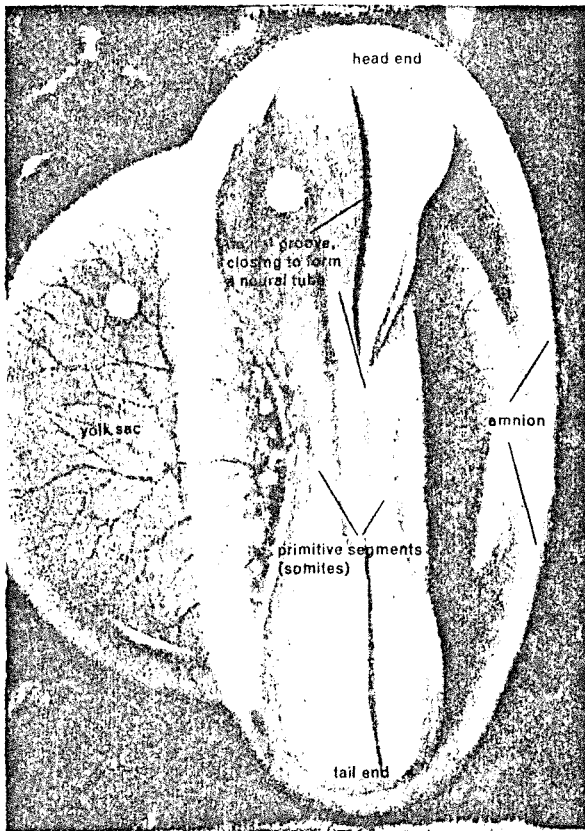


PLATE 2



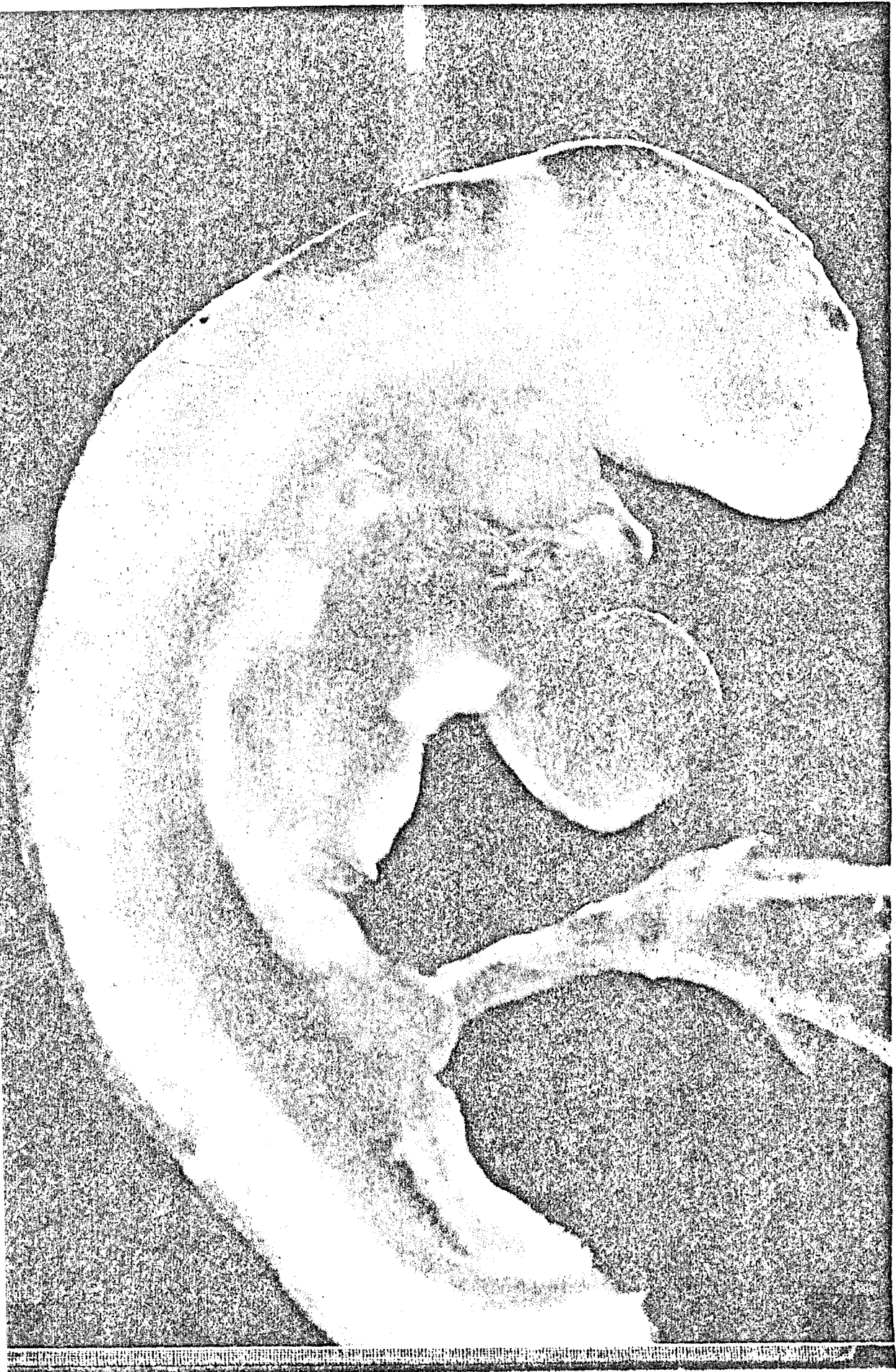
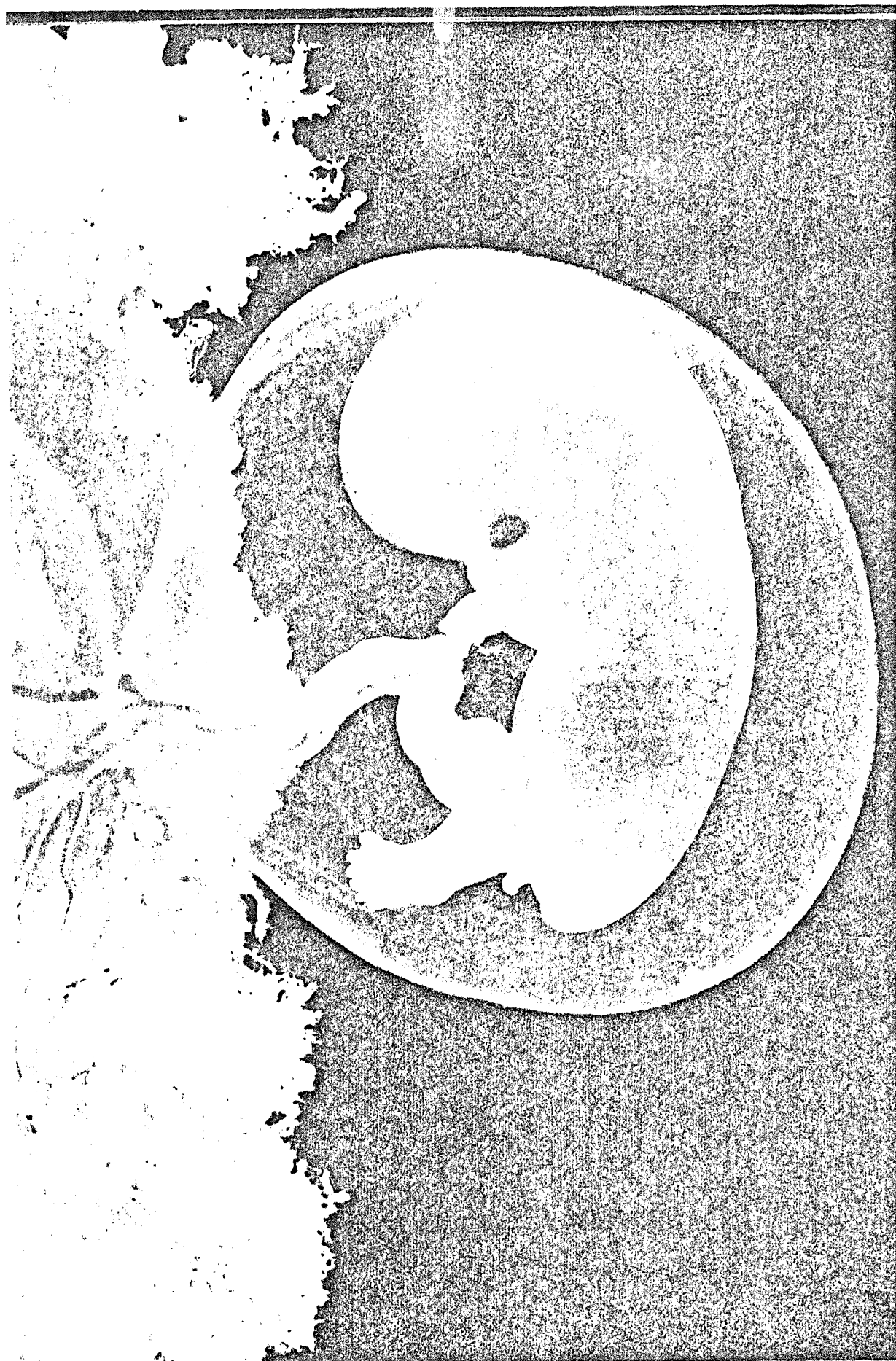


PLATE 4



PLATE 5



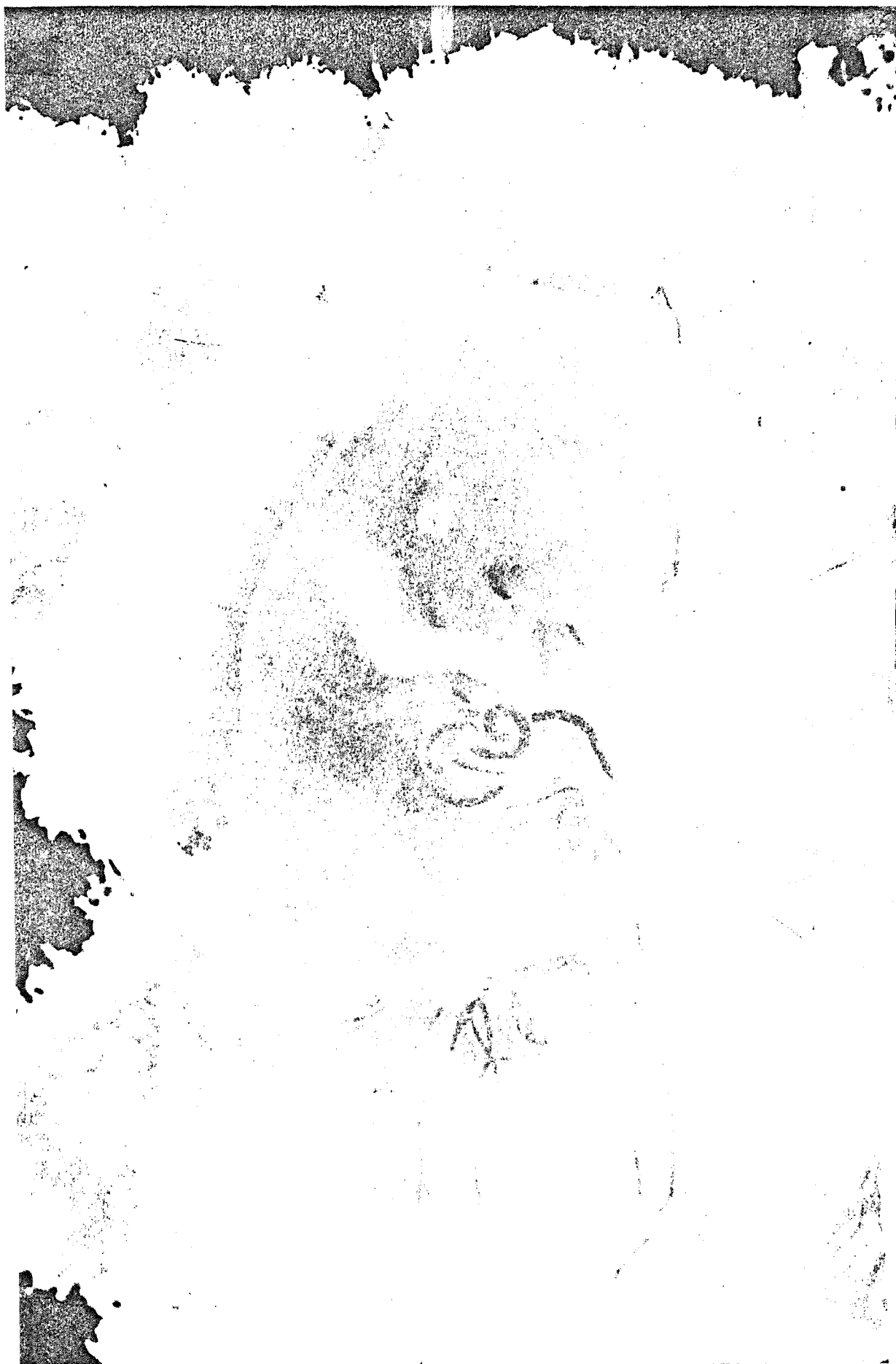


PLATE 7

