

We all know people who say that they would never have an abortion themselves but who still feel that abortion should be legal. Politicians who refuse to support a Human Life Amendment often say "I am personally opposed to abortion, but . . ." Each of these individuals is really saying, "I hold two beliefs about abortion: 1) it is morally wrong, but 2) it should be legal." Can these two beliefs reasonably co-exist?

Why does someone believe that abortion is morally wrong? Because of the basic beliefs that 1) an unborn child is a human being, and 2) it is wrong for one human being to kill another.

For a person to believe that abortion is wrong but that it should be legal, he or she must believe that abortion qualifies for a special exception to the criminal laws against one person killing another. What could be the grounds for such an exception?

The pro-abortionists say abortion should be legal because of the burden of pregnancy or child care on the mother, or because the child may be unwanted or handicapped. But reasons such as these would not allow us to kill human beings already born. These arguments are logical only to a person who believes that an unborn child is not a human being. They must be rejected by the

people who accept the testimony of science that human life begins at conception.

There are, however, two arguments addressed specifically to those who believe abortion is wrong. One of these is "You should not impose your morality on others." This is an attractive expression of a tolerant attitude. But tolerance must have reasonable limits. For one who believes that abortion is wrong, it is a fact that in the United States, legalized abortion results in the intentional killing of over a million innocent human beings each year by their parents and doctors. Surely one can remain a tolerant person without acceding to such a horror. Every law imposes some morality on somebody. The legality of abortion imposes the abortionist's morality on the unborn victims as well as on the many people who are distressed to live in a society which tolerates the intentional killing of innocent human beings by their mothers and doctors.

The other argument is the analogy to prohibition. It is said that like prohibition, criminal abortion laws are unenforceable and would be generally ignored. The facts do not show this to be true. The laws against abortion were enforced. Prohibition cannot be compared to laws against

abortion. In the hope of preventing abuses of drinking, prohibition (often called the "noble experiment") had the effect of banning even moderate drinking, which is almost universally considered a perfectly moral pleasure, and which has been legal from the beginning of time. The legalization of abortion, however, is a barbaric experiment. Civilization long ago rejected abortion as inherently abusive of human dignity.

It is clear that there is no logical way in which a person can believe both that abortion is wrong and that it should be legal. A politician who continues to insist that abortion should be legal cannot be believed if he or she says that "I am personally opposed to abortion, but . . ." Any one of us who believes that abortion is wrong must discard the position that abortion should be legal.

A person who believes that abortion is wrong but should be legal must be prepared to say: "I think that it is civilized and appropriate for a society to permit the killing of innocent and defenseless human beings, so long as the killing is done by a doctor with the consent of the victim's mother."

No reasonable person of good will can honestly make that statement.