**In the beginning**

 **GOD**

Everything in creation has a beginning. As human beings who are finite we tend to measure everything by time and space, a beginning and an end. Genesis tells us that in the beginning, God was. He is not limited as we are, he is infinite while we are finite. In the beginning he created, and out of his creative force all else came into being.

The pinnacle of God’s creation is human life.

Unique, special, significant.

**Genesis 2:7** ‘God formed the man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature.

* Man and woman were created in God’s image
* They were animated by the breath of God

From the very beginning God intended that man and woman, together should multiply and just as the rest of creation were to reproduce after their own kind, so too were they.

Cain was conceived ‘with the help of the Lord’ (Genesis 4:1). The bible doesn’t indicate the exact moment that this began, but he was acknowledged after his birth. But when does life actually begin?

How this question is critical in determining a number of issues regarding issues of pregnancy, birth and right to life.

The central argument

 It is wrong to kill an innocent human being.

 A human foetus is an innocent human being.

 Therefore it is wrong to kill a human foetus.

Defenders of abortion, challenge the idea that a foetus is a human being



How then do we determine when life actually begins? Is it at conception, or at some other time Because if life has not begun then how can it be morally wrong to terminate the pregnancy?

A foetus has no rights until viability or actual birth

Only the mother has rights including the right to choose

Abortion is a medical procedure related to maternal health (US Supreme Court 1973)

Abortion is private and the state has no right to interfere

A woman’s biological relationship to a child does not give her special responsibility for it. The foetus is a parasite that has invaded the woman’s body and she has the right to resist such an invasion (Thompson)

 As long as an individual is completely dependent on the mother it is not a person (Abernethy)

Life begins at conception

The unborn child is not simply a ‘mass of tissue’ or ‘part of a woman’s body but a unique human body

‘The fertilized egg contains a staggering amount of genetic information, sufficient to control the individual’s growth and development for an entire lifetime’ (Davis)

The foetus is an unborn human being and abortion is therefore murder

No possible psychological, emotional, or financial problems justify abortion

**The current trends**

25% of all teenage pregnancies in the U.S. end in abortion. 75% are unintended, and two out of every five of these ended in abortion in 2011. Teens may choose to have an abortion because they have concerns about how having a baby would derail important personal goals (for example, education); financial responsibilities; or they feel that they are not mature enough (Child Trends database (2016) Teen abortions)

About 50% of all pregnancies in Australia are unplanned and half of those are terminated; between one quarter and one third of women will experience an abortion in their lifetime (Australian abortion statistics - Children by Choice)

ABORTION INCIDENCE IN 2010-2014: (Guttmacher Institute 2016)

56 million induced abortions occurred each year, on average

There were 35 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44

73% of abortions were obtained by married women

The abortion rate has declined in the developed world, but not in the developing world

**So where does life begin:**

The alternatives that are presented include

Conception

* the moment of fertilisation
* the fertilised egg contains the full genetic code of a human being
* it marks the beginning of biological life

Implantation

* when the fertilised egg is implanted in the womb. This happens about a week after conception ‘Quickening’
* when the foetus first moves in the womb. About 16 to 17 weeks after fertilisation.
* the moment that the foetus gets its soul

Tissue Separation

* when tissues in the foetus separate into different types.
* the increasingly human appearance of the foetus causes us to feel increasingly protective

Aristotle’s Theory

* 40 days (males), 90 days (females). Purely arbitrary times which came out of Aristotle's three-stage theory of life: vegetable, animal, rational. The vegetable stage was reached at conception, the animal at 'animation', and the rational soon after live birth.

Brain Activity

* a necessary state for many of the characteristics that some think a 'moral person' has to possess, it doesn't demonstrate that the foetus is actually 'conscious'

Viability

* the stage when the foetus could survive outside the womb.
* the most common criterion used in drafting laws regulating abortion depends on: the state of medical science and the medical facilities available and the competence or willingness of the mother

Birth

* a clear date, but there is disagreement on the point at when a baby is born.

When part of the baby is outside the mother's body?

when the whole baby is outside the mother's body?

when the placenta separates from the womb and the foetus has to rely on its own resources?

**What does science say?**

The conclusion that human life begins at sperm-egg fusion is uncontested, objective, based on the universally accepted scientific method of distinguishing different cell types from each other and on ample scientific evidence… ...it is entirely independent of any specific ethical, moral, political, or religious view of human life or of human embryos. . .this definition does not directly address the central ethical question surrounding the embryo: What value ought society place on human life at the earliest stages of development? A neutral examination of the evidence merely establishes the onset of a new human life at a scientifically well-defined “moment of conception,” a conclusion that unequivocally indicates that human embryos from the one-cell stage forward are indeed living individuals of the human species; i.e., human beings.

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**What does God say?**

**Eccles 11:4** You do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything

Only God knows how and when he gives life to the body, science may try to explain it, but the animating spirit, which is the very breath of God is and will always be a mystery

**God’s intimate knowledge**

**Jeremiah 1:5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you

**Psalm 139: 13,15** For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. . .Your eyes saw my unformed substance, In your book were written, every one of the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them

God knew of your existence before you were formed and superintended the way you were made. Nothing about you is an accident. He knows the length of your life from before you were born

**Awareness in the womb**

**Luke 1:44** For behold when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy

**Genesis 25:22** The children struggled within her

The unborn foetus is called a child and is able to feel pain, respond to stimuli and express emotion

**God’s plan for you**

**Ephesians 2:11** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand

**Jeremiah 1:5** Before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations

**Luke 1:15,16** And he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God

**Psalm 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them

You were created by God, in his image to do the works he prepared for you before you were even born.

From the moment your life began, you had everything you needed to become the person you are today

Your life is not simply the number of days you live on this earth, but is an eternal relationship between you and your creator

He knows all of them