

# Is GOD for the 8th?

A Cross-Denominational  
response to the proposal to  
repeal the 8th Amendment



Many leaders from most Denominations in Ireland have set out the Christian argument for the Pro-Life stance. They affirm that: The 8th Amendment is responsible for saving more than **100,000** lives in Ireland in the last two decades.



A **NO** VOTE WILL BLOCK UNRESTRICTED ABORTION ON DEMAND UP TO 12 WEEKS IN IRELAND

“The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right” (Article 40:3.3)

This Amendment was definitively passed in 1983 in a Referendum on the Irish Constitution by 66% to 33%. On the 7th Sept 2016 the Irish Times wrote: **“More than 100,000 lives have been saved in Ireland by the Eighth Amendment, based on a report by the Pro-Life Campaign. The actuarial report was commissioned by the group ‘to show the Eighth Amendment is life-saving’ and to challenge the assertion by those in favour of repealing the amendment, that it had not reduced the Irish abortion rate.”**

(<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/eighth-amendment-has-saved-100-000-lives-group-claims-1.2783045>)

**Mary Kenny from Limerick said on Newstalk** (Dec 2016) that when she had an unplanned pregnancy that people around her recommended abortion. She said **“that the time it took her to book an abortion in England was the time she needed to change her mind.”** (<http://prolifecampaign.ie/main/portfolio/detail/11-12-16-mary-kenny-cora-sherlock-discussing-abortion-newstalk-fm/>)

## REPEAL THE 8TH AMENDMENT

The proposed Referendum will ask the electorate if they wish to repeal the 8th Amendment and allow the Dail to provide for the termination of pregnancy. This has arisen because a Dail Committee had recommended the Repeal of the 8th Amendment in a majority Report and Dail legislation allowing unrestricted abortion up to 12 weeks. However this Committee **“was clearly biased both in its membership and in who it invited to appear before it. The committee invited 24 pro-repeal witnesses [many of whom were abortion campaigners] and only four pro-life ones.”** Michael Collins TD speaking in the Dail. (<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2018012400056?opendocument>)

# God's

## perspective on the unborn child...

Scripture faithfully records that the highest point in creation was reached when both men and women were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27). This phrase is never used in relation to any other form of life. Only human life has been designed by God to possess His image. From the moment of fertilisation the human embryo is a member of a distinct species, ‘a human being’ rather than any other kind of being.

Nobody because of race, sex, physical or mental disability, fails to bear the image of God. There is no ‘quality control’ system in operation before or after birth. The dignity and worth, given by God to human beings, is behind the commandment in Exodus 20:13 “You shall not kill.”

David in Psalm 139:13-16 makes an eloquent statement supporting the presence of life with real human value in the womb: **“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place”.**

Life in the womb for David was not merely the existence of a foetus or even a potential human being. He or she was already someone made in the image of God, with the potential of growing into the fullness of the life that he or she already possessed. Jeremiah also had this understanding:

**“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I set you apart”.**

(Jeremiah 1:5)

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The way the first believers spoke of the births of John the Baptist and of Jesus gives us insight into their view of human life before birth. Luke, a doctor, describes two unborn children in the first chapter of his Gospel.

**1. Elizabeth and John the Baptist:** During the sixth month of pregnancy Elizabeth was visited by Mary who had just conceived. “At the approach of Mary, John leapt in his Mother’s womb for joy” (Luke 1:41.44). This clearly assumes that before he was born, John is already alive and reacted joyfully to Jesus’ presence.

**2. Mary and Jesus in the womb:** Elizabeth greeted Mary with the words “Why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:43). This is no mere polite greeting. Elizabeth is speaking of Mary’s child as her Lord already, even at a very early stage of Mary’s pregnancy.

The human life of Jesus commenced at his conception; this has always been the conviction of the Church. Jesus Christ was ‘conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary’. Before He was born He grew in the womb like all human children. His birth in Bethlehem made public what had already happened in private nine months earlier.

The implications of this are crucial when it comes to dealing with the question – **“When does a human life begin?”** Jesus chose to be identified with us by becoming an embryo within the womb of Mary. In doing so he identified radically with each one of us. Like Jesus, each human embryo, from the moment of fertilisation, has its own individual genetic characteristics which determine the sex, colour of hair and eyes, and characteristic build and physique. The minute child must be regarded as a tiny human being right from the start, not just a clump of cells or a blob of jelly.

**In agreement with Scripture, one must conclude that God forbids the taking of life, because from the beginning He set it apart as unique, distinctive and valuable. He has done this in creation by forming each one in his own image, and his incarnation demonstrates powerfully that life begins at conception.**

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Those supporting this publication, who come from many different backgrounds, are unashamed in declaring that God is Pro-Life and thus for the 8th Amendment. In doing so they are aware of many difficult and complex issues which we now consider.

### 1. The pregnant woman’s life is at risk

During pregnancy, a condition may arise which places the life of the mother at risk.

**Comment:** If a woman has cancer she is treated as safely as possible and mostly the same as a non-pregnant woman demonstrating the value of the woman’s life. Most chemotherapy can be given in the 2nd and even into the 3rd trimester, therefore the life of a woman is what takes priority. Ireland already has a good maternal mortality reputation. According to figures published by the World Health Organisation in 2015, the maternal mortality rate for Ireland is 8 per 100,000 live births. This is in contrast to the UK’s rate of 9 per 100,000. In the US it is 14 and in India it is 174 per 100,000 – yet in all three countries abortion is legal.

### 2. The pregnancy results from rape or incest

This is perhaps the most emotive of all supposed grounds for abortion. In those cases when pregnancy follows rape, the woman, having suffered an appalling attack, now finds herself bearing a child. This results in a deeply traumatic situation needing tremendous understanding and care.

**Comment:** Rape and sexual abuse are serious crimes and are a terrible burden for the victims and the immediate family. The child in the womb is, in no way, to blame for the circumstances in which she or he was conceived and should therefore be given the opportunity to live.

The woman has been greatly wronged, but to commit another wrong will not make things right and may leave a legacy of unforeseen after-effects. In Ireland we do not sentence rapists to death.

It seems strange, therefore, that we should advocate ending the life of the unborn child because of rape. It is worth noting that **the Rape Crisis Centre statistics for 2015 show that 76% of women, who had been raped, did not have abortion.**

Abortion doesn't bring real healing to the rape victim. Creating a second victim never undoes the damage to the first. What is needed are more compassionate support systems and structures for mother and child in these situations.

### 3. The Child has, or may have, a Disability

Screening techniques have made it possible to diagnose various foetal abnormalities during pregnancy. Following screening in Britain it is permissible for an abortion to take place where there is a substantial risk of abnormality or congenital condition. There are cases where mothers have been advised to have an abortion, have refused and have subsequently given birth to a fully healthy child.

**Comment:** Curiously, some Christians regard congenital disability as a particularly compelling argument for abortion. In fact it sets the Biblical notion of compassion on its head, taking a quality control approach to human life. The healing and compassion ministry of Jesus Christ expressed God's concern for people with disabilities and disease.

In recognising the difficulties and demands parents face in situations like this, Christians need to be a stronger voice on their behalf and give them every support possible.

Sometimes the reason for aborting the child with a disability comes from a very real humanitarian concern. However, it's also true to say that arguments are often advanced for eliminating life on the basis of convenience or usefulness. For the Christian, these are not adequate criteria for deciding who lives and who dies.

### 4. Life Limiting Conditions

Some Irish politicians and sections of the Media describe babies with life limiting conditions in terms that are dishonest euphemisms such

as 'incompatible with life' and as a 'fatal foetal abnormality' – terms which have no medical meaning according to doctors. Do such terms not inevitably dehumanise these unborn babies and deprive them of their rights?

**Some Irish politicians are seeking abortion-on-demand, and are simply targeting babies with a disability to try to drive a wedge into Ireland's pro-life culture.**

Some of our Irish politicians even say that these vulnerable babies are less than human, and are thus undeserving of the Constitutional protection granted to every other preborn baby, simply because they have a severe disability. They ignore the medical evidence that shows that most children diagnosed with a life-limiting condition do live beyond birth, and that some, like the child of Thomas and Tracey Harkin (below), have lived for years after a diagnosis of being 'incompatible with life'.

**Thomas and Tracey said 'Our daughter (Kathleen) would have been diagnosed as having fatal foetal abnormality, yet this special soul has made us far better parents and better people.'**



<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/features/our-daughter-would-have-been-diagnosed-as-having-fatal-foetal-abnormality-yet-this-special-soul-has-made-us-far-better-parents-and-better-people-35157625.html>

**Jim Cosgrave from Waterford wrote, (Examiner 4/7/2016),** that he and his wife were advised that their baby girl had zero chance of living more than a few hours after birth. "Our little girl, Hannah, was beautifully born, and lived for seven powerfully life-filled months. She radiated total love, incessant emotionality, and had a heart-warming personality to melt all hearts," he wrote. "The impact she had on a worldwide circle of friends and family was astounding, empowering, and life-affirming."

Mr Cosgrave said that Hannah's life "gives the lie to the term 'fatal foetal abnormality', which is being brashly bandied about as a given 'truth' to suit a fallacious perspective." He also cautioned: "No one can be sure how long a child with a life-limiting condition will survive. But whether it is minutes, hours, days, or months, their short lives have infinite value".

**Some families of babies diagnosed with life-limiting conditions are devastated at the pressure they come under from medical professionals to abort their child. If such arguments are taking place with the 8th Amendment in place, how much worse will the pressure be on parents to abort, if the 8th Amendment is dismantled?**

Abortion is never the answer. We should instead be seeking solutions which care and support both these sick babies and their families, so that they can spend precious time together, and have a pathway to healing.

### 5. Down Syndrome

Up to 90% of babies diagnosed with conditions such as Down Syndrome are now aborted before birth in the UK and other countries. What a tragic loss to the world this is.

In Aug 2017 **UTV news anchor Paul Clark** took to twitter to reject claims that children with Down Syndrome lead unhappy lives. The TV presenter, who has a deep Christian faith, said: "As the father of David, who has Down Syndrome, I want to assure you that he does not suffer. He's enriched all our lives in his 26 years.

David has brought a real sense of purpose to the lives of Carol [Paul's wife] and myself." He also added that "it wasn't more difficult to bring up David than his older brother Peter and as a parent 'you just get on with it'. You don't think: 'Our son has Down Syndrome'. He is our son and that's it."

**Sinead McBreen spoke at the Citizens' Assembly in March 2017** about the repeated pressure she came under from medics to abort her daughter Grace who was diagnosed with Down Syndrome. Sinead said: "Grace is beautiful, strong, funny and makes everyone who meets her fall in love with her. She also has Down syndrome. It is the part that makes everyone love her even more. It is also the part that would make her a target for abortion in most other countries."

## IS ABORTION A HUMAN RIGHT?

Surely Abortion denies the most basic human right of all, that of life to unborn children! Abortion on the grounds of gender or disability ensures that this denial of human rights is compounded by discrimination.

It is important to understand that no international treaties list a right to abortion and the European Court of Human Rights does not recognise an entitlement to abortion, despite misleading media reports to the contrary. In a judgement involving Ireland, the European Court of Human Rights actually ruled that no such entitlement exists.

**In the words of Baroness Nuala O'Loan, human rights lawyer and N. Ireland's first police ombudsman, "There is no human right to abortion."**



## MISLEADING MEDIA REPORTS

There has also been confusion in Ireland due to statements from some UN bodies condemning Ireland's ban on abortion as violating human rights, even though there is no such thing as a human right to an abortion.

These statements are often misreported in the Irish media with headlines such as "UN says Ireland's abortion ban cruel, inhuman or degrading" (Irish Times 9th June 2016

(<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/un-says-ireland-s-abortion-ban-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading-1.2678246>)

and "Ireland's abortion ban 'cruel, inhuman and degrading', says UN" (Irish Independent 9th June 2016)

(<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/irelands-abortion-ban-cruel-inhuman-and-degrading-says-un-34785735.html>)

Anyone reading such headlines would imagine that Ireland has violated a major international treaty, and that the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution condemning Ireland. This is not the case.

## WHAT ABOUT A WOMAN'S "RIGHT TO CHOOSE"?

Some choices should never be available to us. Nobody should have the choice to enslave someone else, or to abuse a child or to engage in human trafficking. In the same way, no woman or man has the right to kill an innocent human being.

In relation to the "my body, my choice" argument, the unborn child is not part of a woman's body. Scientifically, while the baby is indeed in the mother's body, it is not part of it. The baby's DNA is different from that of the mother. In addition, the notion that the baby is a potential human being is mistaken. It is a human being with potential from the beginning. Nothing essential is added following conception.

If you're pronounced dead when your heart stops beating, why aren't you pronounced alive when your heart starts beating?



**Fetal heartbeat 18 days after conception**

## UK ABORTION ACT

In the UK the 1967 Abortion Act was introduced by David Steel to provide for the difficult cases already referred to above. BUT it very quickly led to abortion on demand. Steel subsequently regretted introducing it. According to Lord David Alton the UK Abortion Act has led to:

» 200,000 abortions yearly in the UK. The Promoters of the 1967 Bill stated that it was not their "intention to have abortion on request".

» Almost 9 million abortions to date since the 1967 Act.

» Only 143 abortions since 1967 where the mother's life was at risk.

» 98% of all British abortions are carried out under the Abortion Act's social clause, in spite of the intention of the original Bill.

» Babies with disabilities being aborted up to and during birth.

**In one year alone 66 babies that survived abortion were left to die, according to a UK Government report. Is this not murder by another name?**

(<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-512129/66-babies-year-left-die-NHS-abortions-wrong.html>)

**In the last General Election in 2016 the Irish Labour Party launched their alternative to the 8th Amendment. What was it? It was a bill similar to the UK Abortion Act which wreaked so much havoc on the unborn. (<http://www.thejournal.ie/labour-abortion-law-2611642-Feb2016/>)**

## PRO-ABORTION UNDEMOCRATIC FOREIGN FUNDING

The Open Society Foundation in the US (funded by George Soros) gave large donations to three Irish pro-abortion groups: Amnesty International, Abortion Rights Campaign and the Irish Family Planning Association. Receiving money from foreign bodies for political purposes is illegal in Ireland. One of these groups – the Abortion Rights Campaign was forced to return its donation from Soros, by the Standards in Public Office Commission. More people need to file complaints to SIPO to ensure a level playing pitch.

## FORGIVENESS

Those who have had an abortion may experience deep feelings of guilt and regret. The good news is that the forgiveness of God is unlimited for those who seek it. Abortion is not THE unforgivable sin and Christians must be careful to balance their concern for the unborn child with compassion for the person who has decided to have an abortion.

It is clear that **"God hates the shedding of innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17), but the Bible also says 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9).** God is a loving, forgiving Father whose grace, shown in Jesus Christ, deals with all our sin.

**This was recently affirmed by Pope Francis:**

"I wish to restate as firmly as I can that abortion is a grave sin, since it puts an end to an innocent life. In the same way, however, I can and must state that there is no sin that God's mercy cannot reach and wipe away when it finds a repentant heart seeking to be reconciled with the Father." (Pope Francis, Misericordia et Misera, 12 Nov 2016)

**Dr. Billy Graham responded to a lady who had an abortion and had sought his advice:** "One of abortion's unseen consequences is deep regret and guilt over what happened... [God] has not rejected you or abandoned you. He loves you, just as He loved the child that was growing in your womb (and is now, I am confident, safely in His presence).

Accept God's gift of forgiveness today, by turning to Christ and by faith inviting Him to come into your life. Then believe that His promise of forgiveness is true." (<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2016/10/billy-grahams-wise-counsel-on-post-abortion-guilt/#.WhhS8jdpE2w>)

## Responsible Christian action

**1. PROTECT THE UNBORN CHILD BY VOTING NO** to repealing the 8th Amendment. Support the Pro Life Movement. Make sure you are registered to vote.

**2. Pray to God to guide you in how you can help mothers with challenging pregnancies and possibly unwanted children.**

**3. Beware of casting stones.** It is all too easy to blame those who have abortions. We proclaim there is forgiveness with God.

**4. Repent of not being salt and light in the world and prepare to engage in debate.** Innocent human life must be protected by law.

**5. Give financially to/support counselling, adoption and caring services.**

**6. Pray for our politicians, North and South, that they will be guided by the wisdom of God and choose to protect and nurture human life from conception to natural death.**

**7. Pray for activists to be raised up to successfully challenge the foreign pro-abortion money that seeks to buy undemocratic influence.**

**8. Write letters to newspapers all over the country. For a list of email addresses write to: [anevangicalresponse@gmail.com](mailto:anevangicalresponse@gmail.com)**

## CONCLUSION

We, as Christians from different denominations, do not want to see abortion on demand being introduced to Ireland. Furthermore, even selective abortions on the basis of gender or disability are forms of discrimination. Thanks to highly sophisticated technology today, the true horror of what abortion has become is now available for all to see, i.e. shocking worldwide statistics; barbaric methods used in terminating the lives of unborn children; aborted babies left to die; the sale of body parts; the evidence that the abortion industry is now a vast money-making industry, and much more.

Is this what we want for our country, the consequences of which will be far more serious than we realise? We stand at a crossroads for good or for evil. **The Eight Amendment** is the last bulwark against abortion in Ireland, recognising the equal right to life for both mother and unborn child. It also represents a forward thinking approach to human rights which, we hope, will one day be adopted by other nations. Let's hold fast to this and do what is right.

Proverbs 24:11-12 "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this' does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?"

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