

Pro-life Basics

John Wilks submitted this comment in response to American Life League president Judie Brown's daily column on ALL's web site. We share it with you as an illustration of why we pro-lifers must be extremely careful about the terminology we use.

One can trace the earliest origins of... semantic corruption of key embryology terminology to the 1969 book *The Second Genesis: The Coming Control of Life* by Albert Rosenfeld. This book was written only a few years after the invention of the birth control pill. The author, with remarkable perception and honesty, foresaw that there was a "problem" with the newly discovered birth control pill. The problem was that the birth control pill could terminate embryonic human life by inhibiting implantation. As Rosenfeld wrote,

Because these substances [the pill] do not prevent the sperm from penetrating and fertilizing the ovum—the classic definition of conception—they are not strictly contraceptives. What they do is prevent the newly fertilized egg from implanting itself in the uterus. Since the interference occurs *after* conception, some hold that such practice constitutes abortion. A way around this impasse has been suggested by Dr. A.S. Parkes of Cambridge: Equate conception

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with the time of implantation rather than the time of fertilization—a difference of only a few days. (page 108)

This initial corruption of foundational embryology definitions suggested by Rosenfeld represented a stark break from the hitherto accepted scientific view, which stated that conception of a new human person was the result of the process of fertilization, which marked the beginning of a pregnancy. Conception was synonymous with fertilization, and therefore, pregnancy, as Rosenfeld clearly understood.

But in 1972, the rot set in, with the deliberate and strategic printing of the text *Obstetric-Gynecologic Terminology*, published by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. This text formally sought, as a first strategic strike, to break the developmental connection between conception

and fertilization. "Conception" was no longer linked with fertilization. Instead, it was unilaterally decided that conception would be associated with "the implantation" of the human embryo.

John Wilks, B. Pharm., M.P.S., M.A.C.P.P., is a noted pharmacist, consultant, researcher, author and lecturer from Australia.

We highly recommend his book *A Consumer's Guide to the Pill and Other Drugs* (available from American Life League; visit www.all.org or call 866-LET-LIVE toll-free).

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