

Harley Burgess
LOTS 2020 - GWU DRSP

BEYOND THE SAMARITAN

A CONSIDERATION OF JUDITH JARVIS THOMPSON'S A DEFENSE OF ABORTION



A white silhouette of a violin is positioned on the left side of the image, extending from the top to the bottom. The background is a watercolor-style wash of soft pink, yellow, and light blue colors.

Assumptions



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**What does the New Testament say
about abortion?**



Assumptions

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about abortion?**

Do you already know?



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**What does the New Testament say
about abortion?**

Do you already know?

How long have you held this belief?





The “abortion debate” has often been framed around the issue of the sanctity of life —



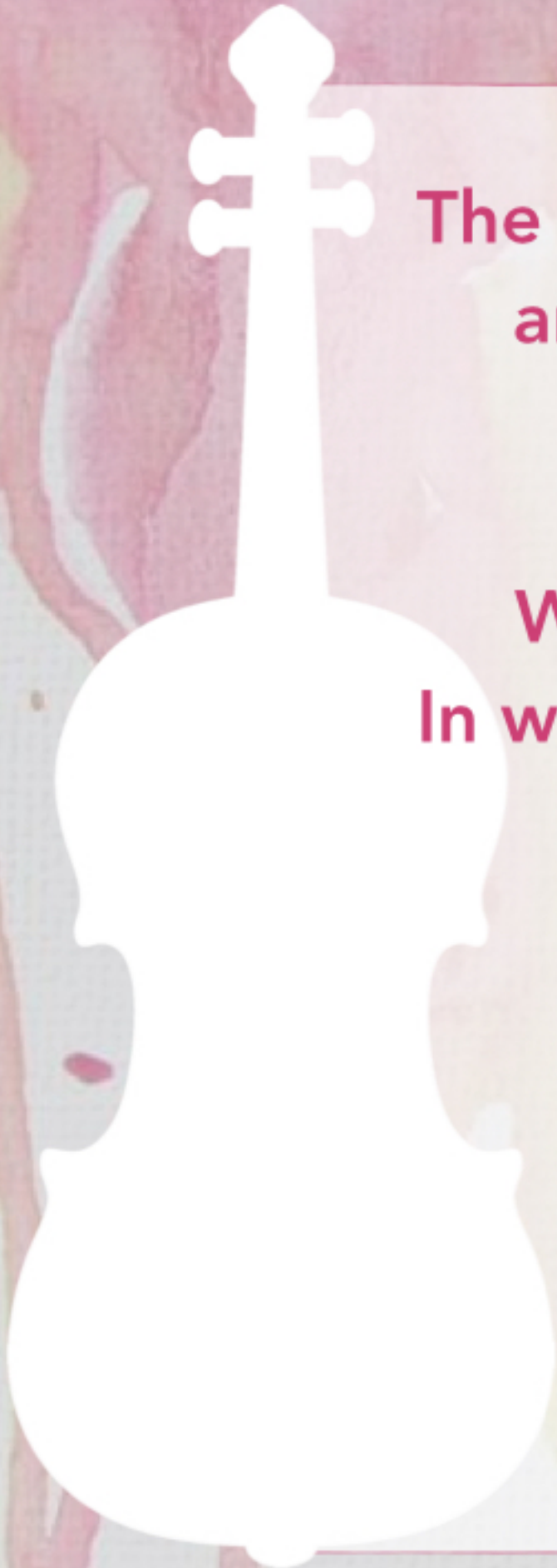
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When does a fetus become a person?



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**When does a fetus become a person?
When does a fetus gain the right to life?**

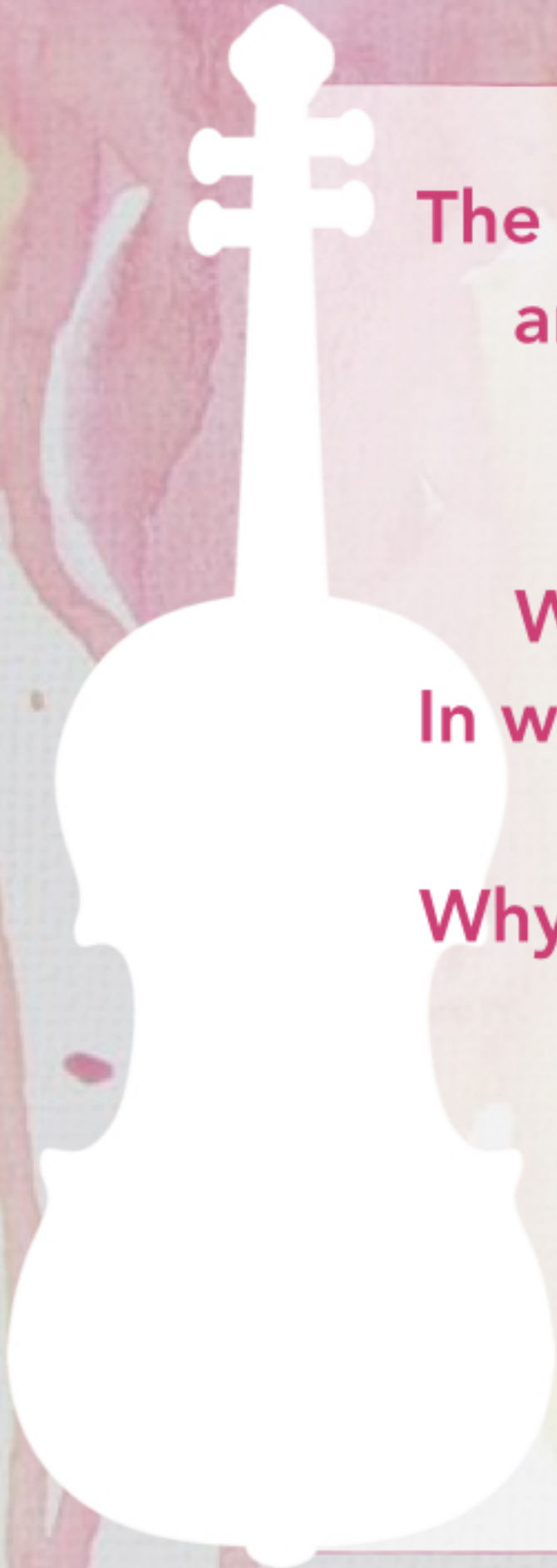


The “abortion debate” has often been framed around the issue of the sanctity of life —

When does a fetus become a person?

When does a fetus gain the right to life?

In what circumstances does a woman have the right to take the life of another?



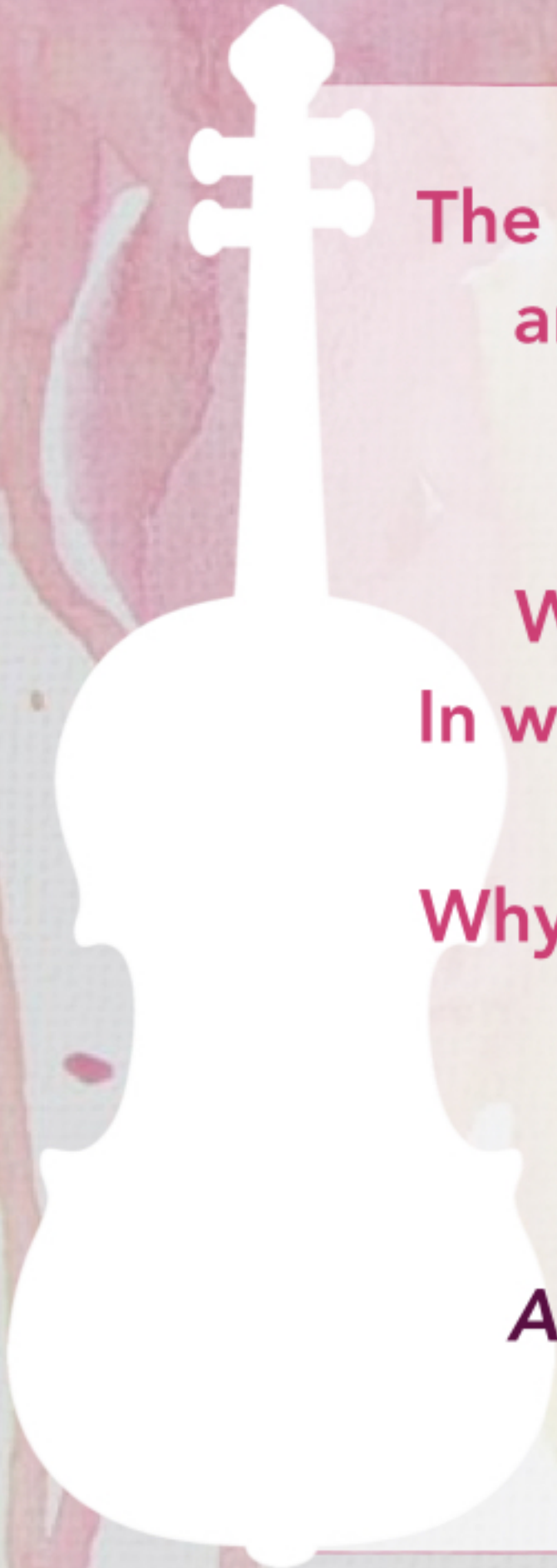
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Judith Jarvis Thomson’s *A Defense of Abortion* attempts to reframe the ethical question of abortion.















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Remaining attached will probably not kill you, but will force you to make lots of sacrifices.



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Pulling the plug is different from actively seeking out removal.



The life of a fetus conceived without consent is the same as the life of a fetus conceived with consent.





The life of a fetus conceived without consent is the same as the life of a fetus conceived with consent.

"If the room is stuffy, and I therefore open a window to air it, and a burglar climbs in, it would be absurd to say, 'Ah, now he can stay, she's given him a right to the use of her house—for she is partially responsible for his presence there, having voluntarily done what enabled him to get in, in full knowledge that there are such things as burglars, and that burglars burgle.'"





Good Samaritan



Good Samaritan

Minimally Decent Samaritan



Good Samaritan

What one strives to
achieve, but is not always
attainable

Minimally Decent Samaritan

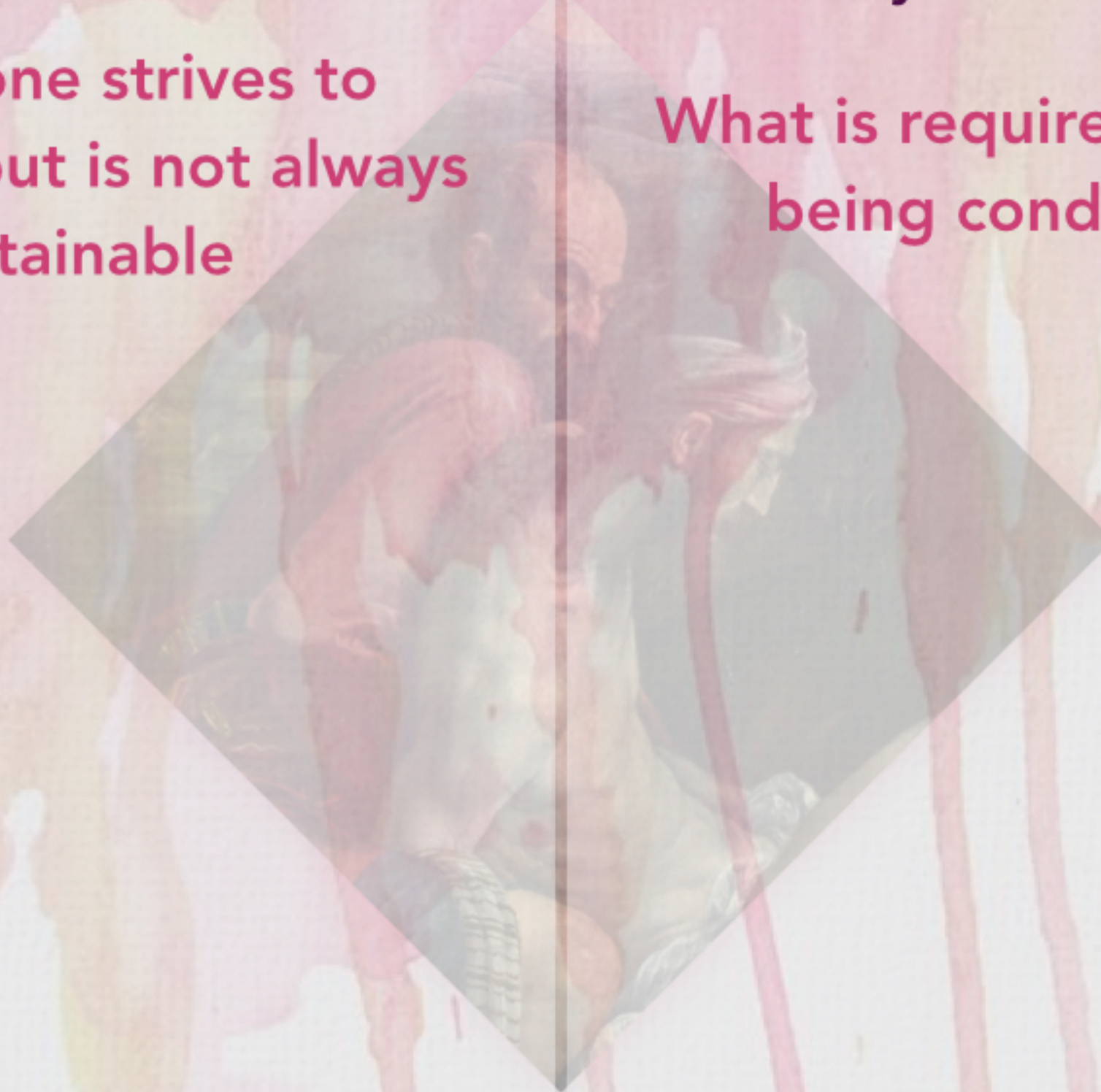


Good Samaritan

What one strives to
achieve, but is not always
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Minimally Decent Samaritan

What is required to avoid
being condemned



Good Samaritan

**What one strives to
achieve, but is not always
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Christ-like

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Good Samaritan

**What one strives to
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**What is required to avoid
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Law-abiding





Good Samaritan

**What one strives to
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Christ-like

Remain attached

Minimally Decent Samaritan

**What is required to avoid
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Law-abiding

Good Samaritan

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Minimally Decent Samaritan

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Love your neighbor

Minimally Decent Samaritan

**What is required to avoid
being condemned**

Law-abiding

Good Samaritan

**What one strives to
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Christ-like

Remain attached



**Love your neighbor
Take up your cross**

Minimally Decent Samaritan

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Law-abiding

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**Love your neighbor
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Minimally Decent Samaritan

**What is required to avoid
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Law-abiding

Unplug

Good Samaritan

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Christ-like

Remain attached



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Minimally Decent Samaritan

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Law-abiding

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What is required to avoid
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Law-abiding

Unplug



No obligation to prevent death

Good Samaritan

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Christ-like

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Take up your cross

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What is required to avoid
being condemned

Law-abiding

Unplug




No obligation to prevent death
Sacrifice is your choice






Even if fetal personhood is affirmed, the issue remains:



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Does one's right to life negate another's bodily autonomy?



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Does one's right to life negate another's bodily autonomy?

Using the New Testament as a guide for ethics, is sacrificing one's body/freedom for the sake of another's life an ethical obligation?
Is refusing to do so unethical?





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462 maternal deaths per 100k live births in low income countries vs. 11 per 100k in higher income countries

Risk is highest for adolescent girls (<15)
Complications are higher for girls 10-19

WHO lists access to safe abortion as a necessary step toward reducing maternal death



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In the US, the PRMR is twice as high now as it was in 1987 (but the CDC doesn't identify a reason why)

The PRMR for black non-Hispanic women is 3x as high as the PRMR for white non-Hispanic women.






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(Jung, 288)






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Especially when abortion services are withheld or shamed by the community, pregnant women are disproportionately burdened by pregnancy— this is only made clearer in cases of rape, contraceptive failure, medical complications, or parental abandonment (Jung).



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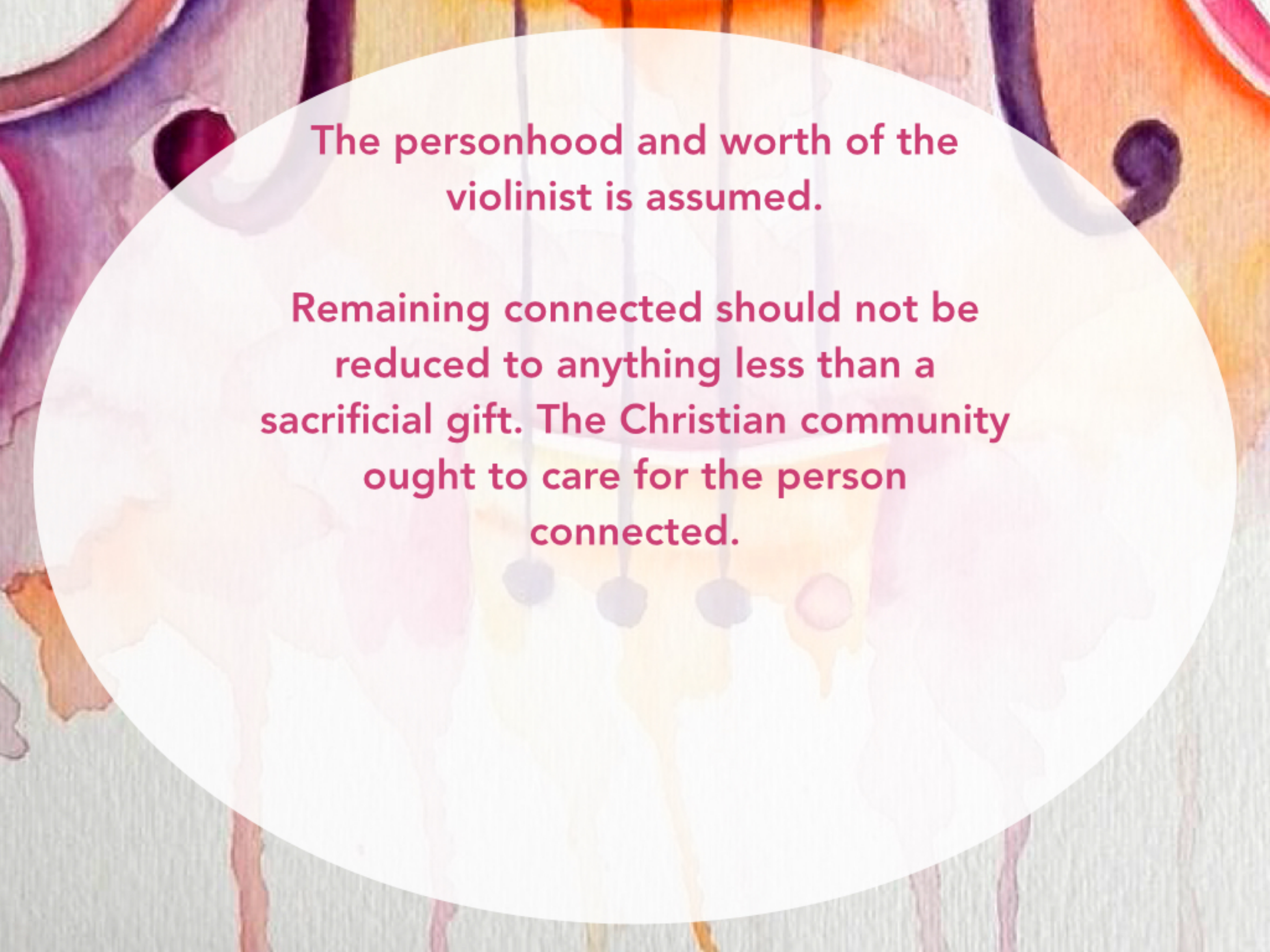


Phil 2:5-8



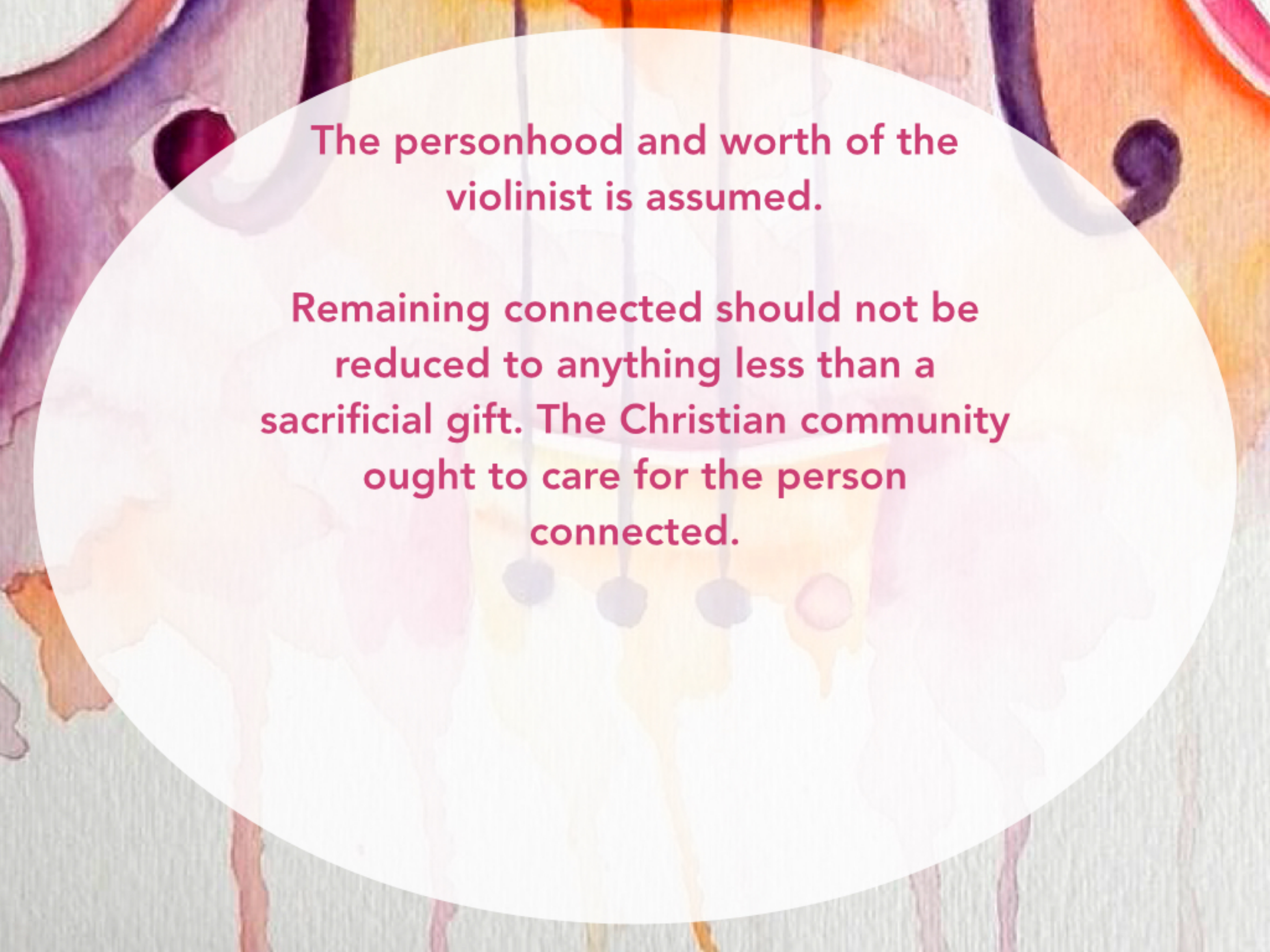
The personhood and worth of the violinist is assumed.



The background is a watercolor painting with soft, blended colors of purple, pink, orange, and yellow. A large, white, semi-transparent circle is centered on the page, containing two lines of text in a dark red, serif font.

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violinist is assumed.

Remaining connected should not be
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The personhood and worth of the violinist is assumed.


Remaining connected should not be reduced to anything less than a sacrificial gift. The Christian community ought to care for the person connected.

As such, a Christian ought to avoid disconnecting where possible, but the Christian community is also responsible for caring for both parties.



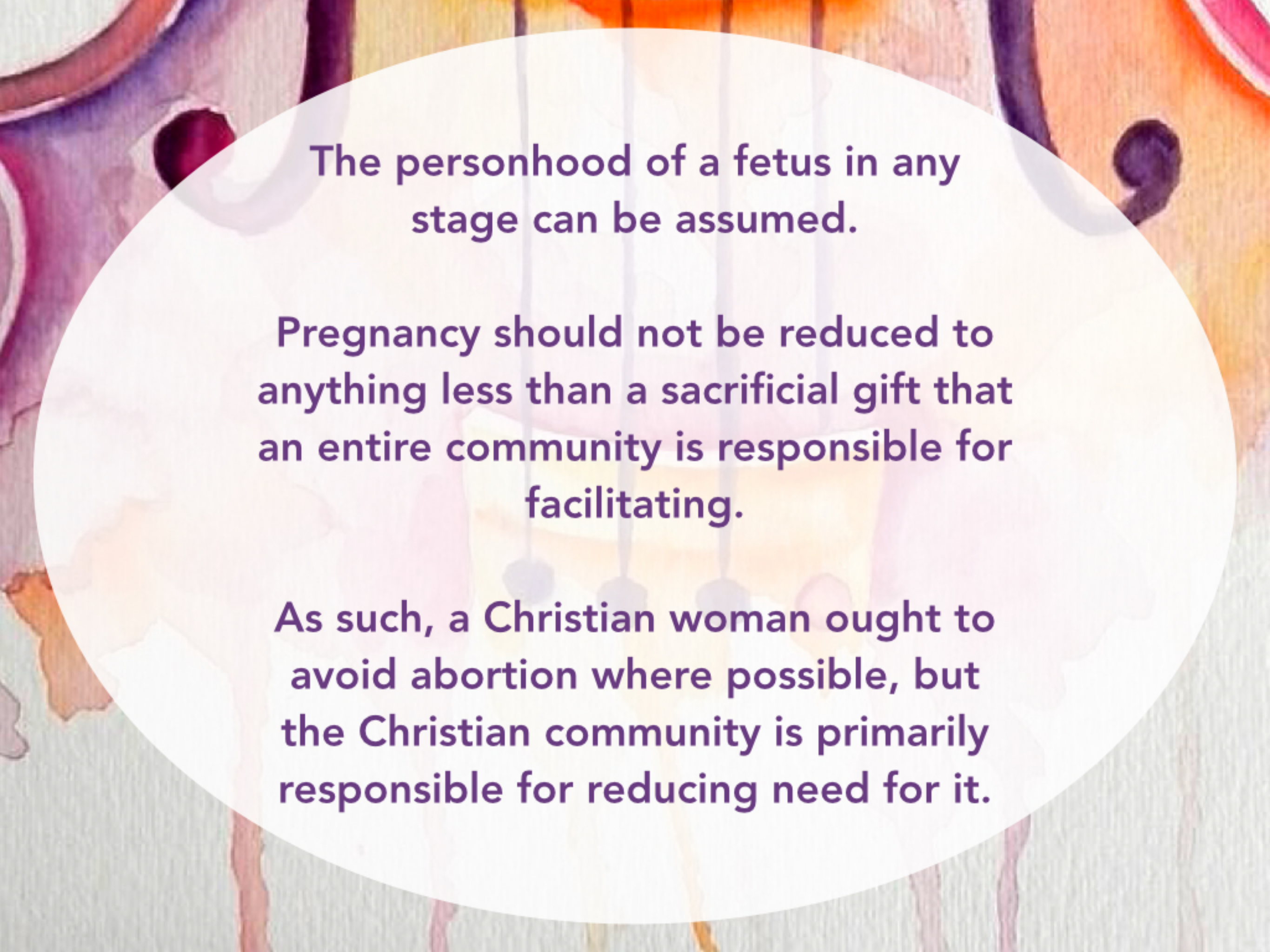
The personhood of a fetus in any stage can be assumed.



The background is a watercolor painting with soft, blended colors of purple, pink, orange, and yellow. A large, white, semi-transparent circle is centered on the page, containing two lines of text in a dark purple font. The text is centered within the circle.

The personhood of a fetus in any stage can be assumed.

Pregnancy should not be reduced to anything less than a sacrificial gift that an entire community is responsible for facilitating.



The personhood of a fetus in any stage can be assumed.

Pregnancy should not be reduced to anything less than a sacrificial gift that an entire community is responsible for facilitating.

As such, a Christian woman ought to avoid abortion where possible, but the Christian community is primarily responsible for reducing need for it.



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