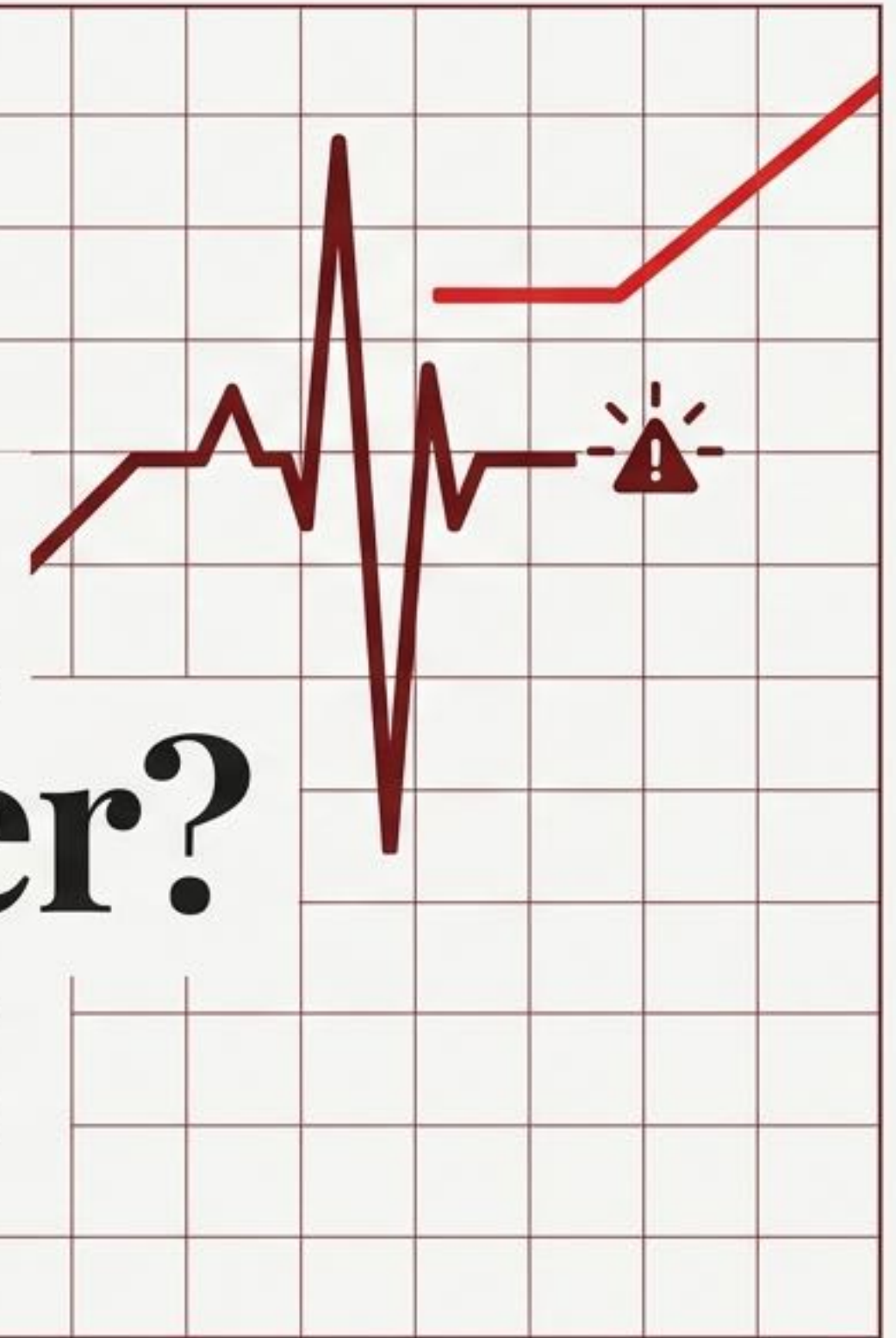


Is Abortion Always Murder?

A Data-Driven & Theological Audit of the Modern Right-to-Life Movement



Based on the paper by Douglas F. Olena, Independent Scholar.
Presented at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies.

This document challenges the consequences of the alliance between the Right-to-Life movement and political conservatism. It argues that while intentions are spiritual, the outcomes are statistically catastrophic for the very lives the movement seeks to protect.

Good Intentions, Catastrophic Outcomes

Executive Summary

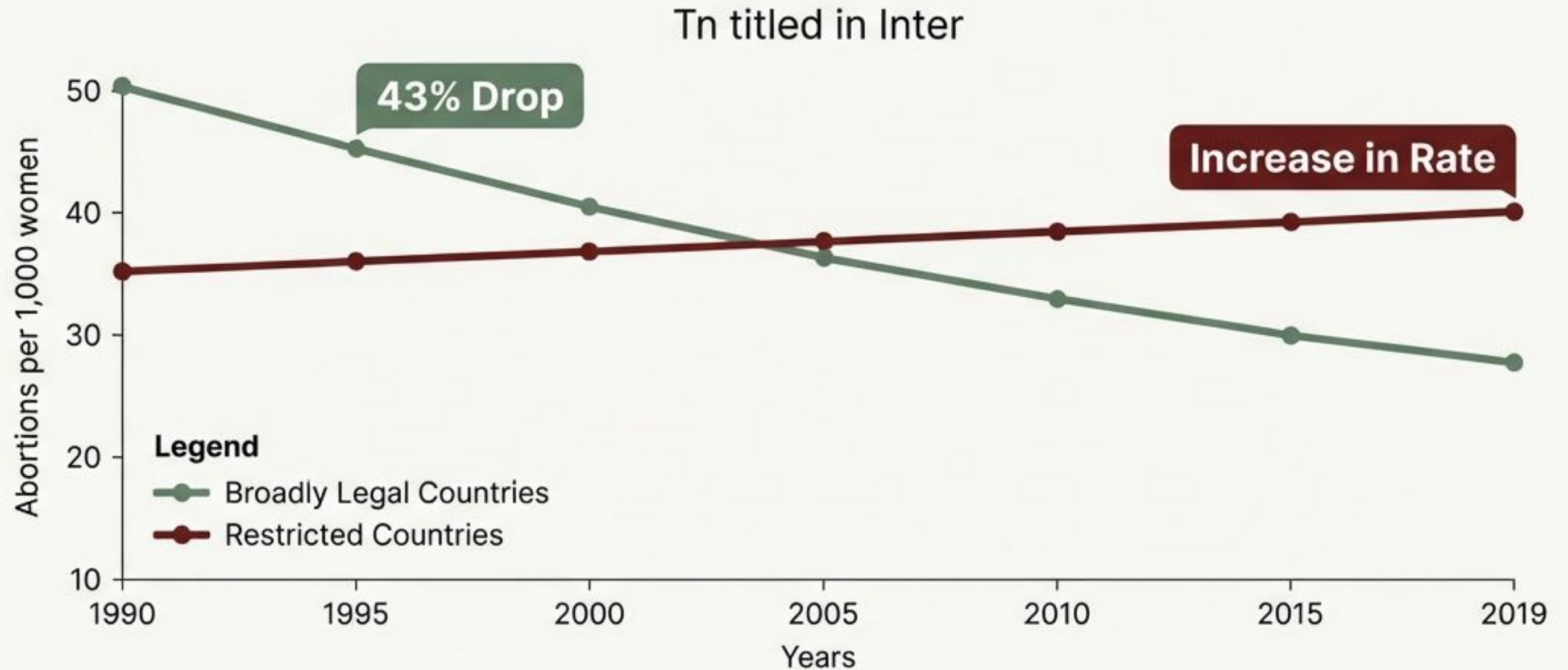
The alliance with political power has produced a culture of cruelty, not a culture of life.

- **The Paradox:**
Restrictions lead to more abortions, not fewer.
The stated goal of saving lives is at odds with the data.
- **The Cost:**
Women's health outcomes degrade significantly under restrictive laws, increasing maternal mortality.
- **The Cause:**
A philosophical error regarding Personhood and a disconnect from Scriptural precedent.

Core Insight: If believers wish to reduce abortions, they must increase support for women's healthcare, not dismantle it.

Restriction Does Not Equal Reduction.

These trends may not be intuitive. The data reveals that societies supporting women's agency and healthcare effectively reduce the need for abortion.



Why do we assume a politician has a more informed opinion on a woman's health than the woman and her doctor?

When Ideology Overrides Medicine

Case File

Subject: Tierra Walker

Outcome: **Deceased** (Preeclampsia)

90+ doctors were involved in her care. None offered the necessary termination due to legal ambiguity and fear of criminal charges.

"In states that ban abortion, patients with chronic conditions often have nowhere to turn." — ProPublica

Aggregate Data

16% INCREASE

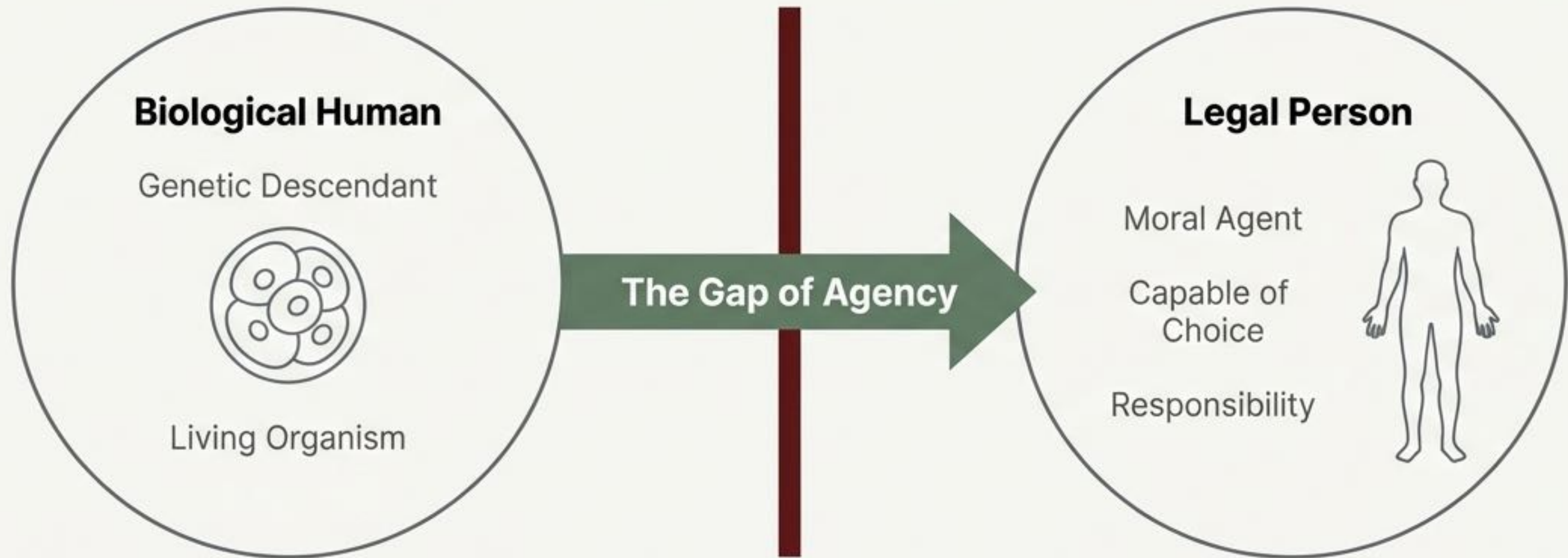
Infant Mortality Rate in states with most restrictive laws (11-12 laws) vs fewest (1-5 laws) (2014–2018).

HIGHER RATES

Maternal Mortality during pregnancy and 1-year postpartum in restrictive climates.

By removing the doctor's ability to act, the state effectively destroys both the mother and the unborn.

Agency is the Prerequisite for Personhood



Forced
Second-Class
Citizenship

The Conflict: To attribute full legal personhood to the unborn—who cannot choose—requires destroying the personhood of the mother, who can.

Key Insight: “My freedom ends when it impinges on your rights.” The fetus, lacking agency, cannot have rights that negate the bodily autonomy of the realized person.

Coercion is Not Faith

If a path is chosen *for* us (determinism), we are not persons; we are automatons. Neither fate nor biological determinism can be the basis of law.

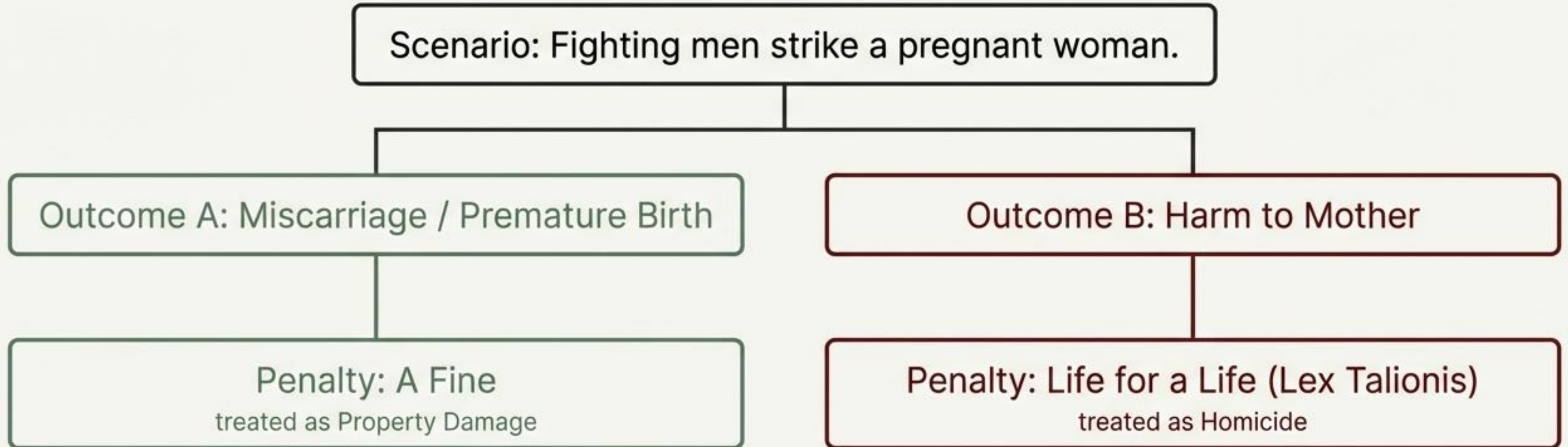
Laws that force women to carry pregnancies against their will revert society to a primitive patriarchy, echoing historical British common law where women were property.

“The Right-to-Life proponents have substituted careful judgment... for a system of rules that forces the dehumanization of some persons.”

To force a specific biological outcome is to strip the subject of moral agency.

The Bible Assigns Unequal Value to Mother and Fetus

Evidence: Exodus 21:22-25 (The Law of Moses)



Rabbinic Interpretation (Talmud, Sanhedrin 79a): The unborn child is not yet a full legal person. The Mosaic Law explicitly values the mother as a full person and the fetus as something else.

The “Abortion is Murder” absolutism contradicts the Bible’s own legal code.

Reaction is Not Volition



Biological Reaction

The Myth: John the Baptist “leaping” in the womb (Luke 1) proves personhood.



Conscious Choice

The Reality: John was not choosing. He was reacting to presence. Consciousness requires the ability to observe and choose between probabilities.

*Without the ability to choose, there is no personhood.
Attributing agency to a biological reaction is an overreach of reason.*

Distorting Faith for Political Power.

Christian Nationalism

The Error: The “Christian Nation” narrative decontextualizes history to serve a modern political ideology.



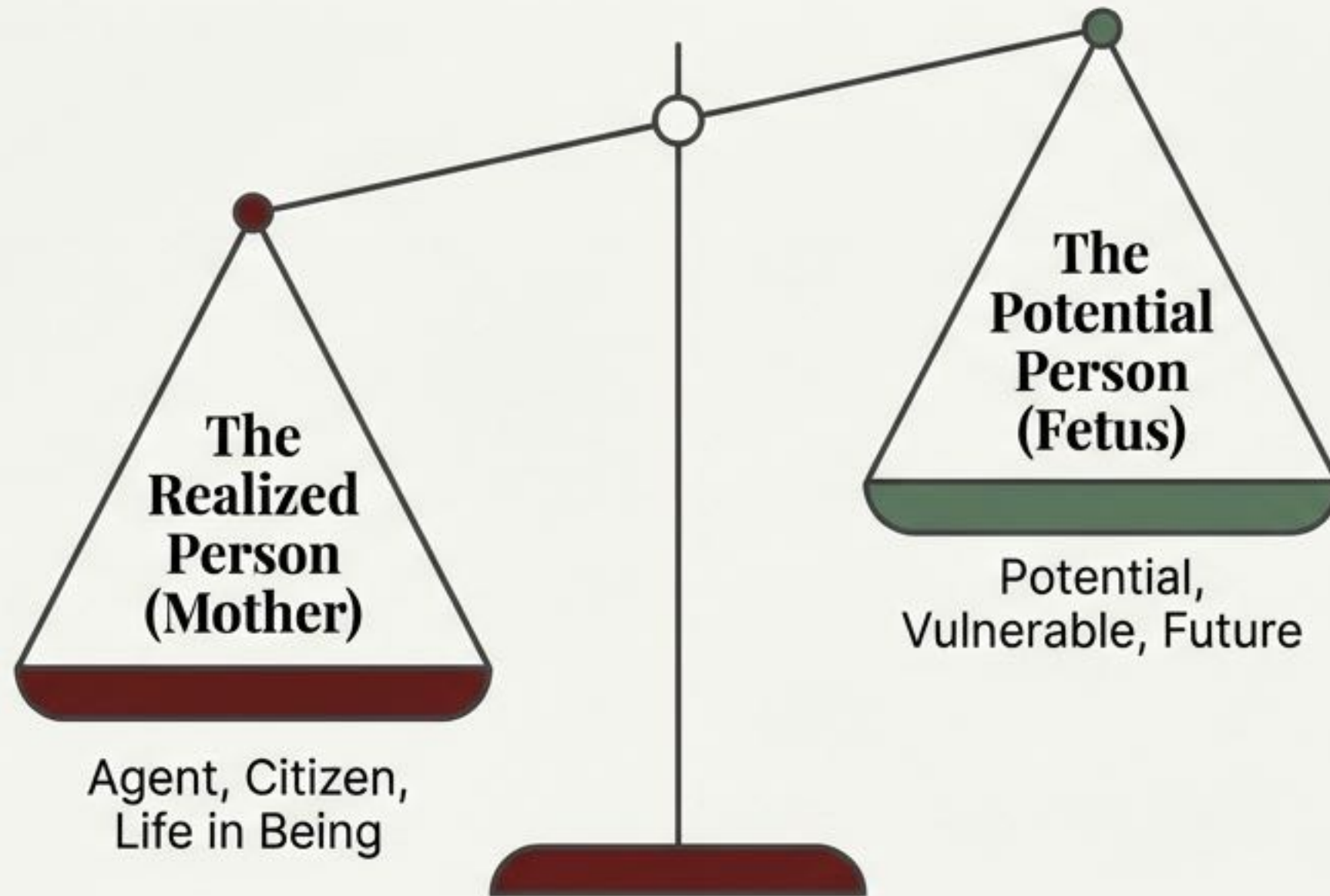
Constitutional Pluralism

Pluralism vs. Theocracy: The Constitution guarantees equality under the law, not religious compliance. The state cannot serve as an enforcer for rules that are clearly unequal for those who do not subscribe to the same moral codes.



By pursuing absolutism, the movement has disconnected from actual Scripture and relied on intuitions that result in bad law and cruelty.

Prioritizing the Living



A New Ethical Insight: The Principle of Double Effect.

We must return to a worldview where the mother takes precedence. The life of the child is important, but attempting to secure it by subverting the life and natural rights of the mother is an ethical failure.

Move from treating the fetus as a 'clump of cells' OR a "full person" to a nuanced valuation that protects the vulnerable but prioritizes the agent.

Support, Not Subjugation.



The Path to Reduction

- **Expanded Healthcare:** Prenatal and postnatal care for all.
- **Adoption Support:** Non-profit, accessible services.
- **Access to Birth Control:** Prevention as the primary tool.



The Current Reality

Force without support.
Restricting access while
dismantling safety nets.

Labelled as “Cruelty to Citizens”.

If the goal is reducing abortion, the State must abandon force and provide evidence-based support.

Moving from Ideology to Compassion.

Is abortion **always** murder? No.



Scripture (Exodus) does not support it

Based on interpretation of the Bible, which does not explicitly define abortion as murder in all contexts.



History (Common Law) does not support it

Historically, common law often treated abortion differently based on stages of pregnancy and quickening.



Data (Public Health) condemns the 'ban' approach

Evidence shows bans lead to unsafe procedures and increased maternal mortality without significantly reducing abortions.

We must leave behind the social and political war. The way forward is a scientific assessment of reality combined with genuine neighborly obligation. Trust women and their doctors, not politicians.