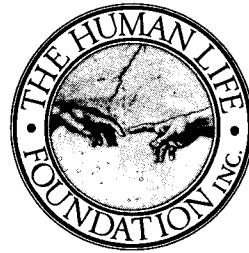


FAM

the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



SUMMER 1990

Featured in this issue:

- Nat Hentoff on Changing the Odds
- Faith Abbott on The Baby That Wasn't
- Christine Allison on More Room at the Inn?
- Martha Bayles on Feminism & Abortion
- Christopher Lasch on Conservatism vs. Itself
- Malcolm Muggeridge on What Wins My Vote
- James Hitchcock on The Art of 'Listening'

Special Supplement: Cardinal John J. O'Connor
Asks and Answers 23 Questions on Abortion

Also in this issue:

James Burtchaell • Joseph Sobran • Wm. F. Buckley Jr.
Francis Canavan • Patrick Buchanan • Jeffrey M. Rubin

Published by:

The Human Life Foundation, Inc.
New York, N.Y.

. . . FROM THE PUBLISHER

We think that you will find this (our 63rd) issue an unusual one, if only because it includes an unusual document—Cardinal John J. O'Connor's "Questions and Answers" on abortion. When the Cardinal issued the statement (on June 14), it caused what might be described as a "media sensation"—but the nationwide headlines concentrated almost exclusively on the "threat of excommunication" which, presumed most editors, was the "news" involved. The Cardinal called this "very sad," adding "Those who are distressed have an obligation to read what I truly said, not the headlines." We agree: the entire document is more than 300 times longer than the 60-odd words dealing with excommunication.

Indeed, its almost 20,000 words are more than we were able to get into this issue. But we do provide you with the complete text of the questions and answers themselves, in the special section beginning on page sixty-five. They were followed in the original text by "suggestions" for . . . well, a positive response. We asked the archdiocesan office how we might best describe them, and received the following:

The Cardinal's original text continued with a series of pastoral suggestions on how every person can incorporate concern for the unborn into his or her daily life. These pro-life suggestions were written to parents, to educators, to health care professionals, to those in the media, to religious, deacons and priests, to those in the legal profession, to those in political life, and to all people of good will. The column concluded with a reflection on true love—of every person made in His image and likeness, including the unborn, the aged, the disabled, the sick—leading to a more complete respect for all human life.

We hope that you will give the Cardinal's words the hearing they deserve; we believe that they comprise a most important statement in the continuing controversy over abortion, which remains the primary concern of this journal.

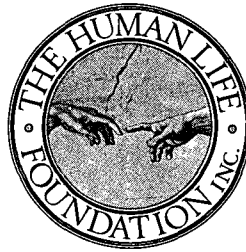
We also reprint in this issue (as we did in our previous one) an impressive article from the new monthly *First Things*, this one by Professor Christopher Lasch (see page forty-seven). Last issue the piece was by our friend Pastor Richard John Neuhaus, who is editor-in-chief of the new "Journal of Religion and Public Life" (should you want to subscribe, address *First Things*, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; \$24 a year).

Speaking of reprints, we are pleased to report that Christine Allison's article "A Child to Lead Us," which appeared in our Summer, 1989 issue, was adapted for the June issue of the *Reader's Digest*, thus giving Mrs. Allison's excellent story a somewhat larger readership than we were able to provide.

As usual, you will find information about previous issues and volumes, etc., printed on the inside back cover.

EDWARD A. CAPANO
Publisher

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



SUMMER 1990

Introduction	<i>J. P. McFadden</i>	2
Changing the Odds	<i>Nat Hentoff</i>	7
The Baby That Wasn't	<i>Faith Abbott</i>	13
Room at the Inn	<i>Christine Allison</i>	28
Feminism and Abortion	<i>Martha Bayles</i>	37
Conservatism against Itself	<i>Christopher Lasch</i>	47
"The vision of life that wins my vote"	<i>Malcolm Muggeridge</i>	62
Abortion: Questions and Answers	<i>John J. O'Connor</i>	65
The Art of "Listening"	<i>James Hitchcock</i>	97
Appendices		114

Editor

J. P. MCFADDEN

Publisher

EDWARD A. CAPANO

Contributing Editors

FAITH ABBOTT ELLEN WILSON FIELDING JOSEPH SOBRAN JOHN WAUCK

Editors-at-large

FRANCIS CANAVAN, S.J. JAMES HITCHCOCK MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

Managing Editor

MARIA MCFADDEN

Assistant Managing Editor

MARY M. O'CONNOR

Articles Editor

BRIAN ROBERTSON

Production

RICARDO RIVERA

Circulation

ESTHER BURKE MARY McDONOUGH

Published by THE HUMAN LIFE FOUNDATION, INC. Editorial Office, Room 840, 150 E. 35th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10016. The editors will consider all manuscripts submitted, but assume no responsibility for unsolicited material. Editorial and subscription inquiries, and requests for reprint permission, should be sent directly to the editorial office. Subscription price: \$20 per year; Canada and foreign \$25 (U.S. currency).

Vol. XVI, No. 3. ©1990 by THE HUMAN LIFE FOUNDATION, INC., New York, N.Y.

Printed in the U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

MR. NAT HENTOFF HAS long been known as an ardent defender of civil liberties, which he construes broadly. He was surely a role-model member of the American Civil Liberties Union. But the ACLU's appreciation began to wane soon after Good Friday, 1982—the day the original “Baby Doe” was born (in Bloomington, Indiana). The baby had Down Syndrome. Put bluntly, his parents preferred him dead and, incredible as it then seemed, the Supreme Court of Indiana did too. Starved and dehydrated, Baby Doe gasped his last just as an appeal was being carried (literally) to the U.S. Supreme Court.

How could a born citizen, presumed to possess all his Fourteenth Amendment rights, be legally killed for the offense of being born “imperfect”?

That question was a kind of Road to Damascus for Mr. Hentoff (who is, by the way, a self-professed atheist). Up to then, as he told us himself, Hentoff had avoided the abortion issue and its progeny, such as infanticide—with trademark honesty, he said “I just didn't want to face it.” Well, the “execution” of innocent Baby Doe ended all that: Hentoff soon became a leading champion of those whose “unmeaningful” lives put them in mortal danger. Soon he was grinding out white-hot columns for his “home” paper, *The Village Voice*—much to the dismay of his ACLU friends, who had good reason for their dismay—Hentoff is above all a *convincing* polemicist.

At the next opportunity, we asked him if he would “go all the way” on abortion as well. Again, that trademark answer: “I guess I'll have to.” And he has, as our lead article demonstrates. As you read it, you will understand why his erstwhile allies don't know whether to treat him like a pariah, or beg him to stop, or *both*. Nobody hammers home an argument with greater *élan*, nor digs harder into the record—if the “right” quote is out there, Hentoff will find it, and use it with devastating effect. Indeed, our (now) friend Nat has gone “all the way” so far that he's sometimes beyond *us*. But we'd say damn the differences, full speed (it's his *only* speed) ahead, it's a treat to have him in the battle.

Then get ready for more powerful prose: Faith Abbott, our new Contributing Editor, is back with another in-depth vision of what many refuse to see (most

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

notably former Surgeon General Everett Koop): abortion can be anything *but* a “simple procedure” leaving no scars. Indeed, the psychological wounds can obviously be permanent. Abbott too is expert at finding the telling quote, and the book she “reviews” for you here is an incredibly rich vein of such material. Author Sue Nathanson is determined never to forget the “fourth child” she didn’t have, no matter how painful the memory. And, as you will learn, she is not alone. As usual, Faith manages to pull you straight into the story along with her, building up the tension for an ending that will make you wince—you won’t soon forget the final lines.

Next, Christine Allison provides a fresh look at an “old-fashioned” alternative to the misery Abbott describes: the now-little-used “adoption option.” Why are there so few adoptions nowadays? Almost half a million teen-age girls abort their babies each year, while a million infertile married couples yearn to have a child. Yet many advocates of “choice” strongly oppose the “third choice” of ending a pregnancy with an act of unselfishness that can both save life and give love. A successful adoption should provide a great good for at *least* four people, not least the mother who is spared what Sue Nathanson insists is the “murder” of one’s own child? We hope this one gets the attention it deserves. And by the way, Mrs. Allison’s previous article, “A Child to Lead Us” (Summer, 1989), did get considerable attention: the story of her daughter Chrissie (born with Down Syndrome—she’s doing fine, thank you), it was adapted for the *Reader’s Digest* (June, 1990). It’s nice to know that, given our combined readership, many millions here and abroad have had the opportunity to read a very moving story.

We then move on to the vexed question of “Feminism”—hardly a move at all, for as everybody knows, “true” feminists have made abortion the defining issue of their creed. Recently *The Atlantic Monthly* ran a “debate” on “Abortion, Morality, and Feminism,” with Novelist Mary Gordon championing the “moral choice” of abortion, and Martha Bayles (a cultural critic for *The Wall Street Journal*) holding that pro-choice arguments “reflect the ambitions, hypocrisies, and contradictions of contemporary feminism.” While we have heard Miss Gordon’s arguments many times over, we’ve not previously read anything quite like Miss Bayles’ spirited response. We thought you would enjoy reading it yourself—it’s all here.

Another vexed question is: Are the feminists actually representative of the majority of American women? Polls almost invariably show that more women than men oppose abortion (hardly surprising, given the “convenience” factor for unwilling fathers?), despite the overwhelmingly “pro-choice” propaganda that spews from the Major Media. Professor Christopher Lasch argues that the reasons are cultural—and religion is the key factor. In fact, Lasch was writing about a larger cultural conflict (in the new monthly *First Things*), and chose abortion as, again, the defining issue. So even if you aren’t terribly interested in his primary concern—whether “cultural conservatism is compatible with

INTRODUCTION

economic liberalism”—we think you will find his analysis both fascinating and informative. Certainly you will recognize the cultural mind-sets he describes. The *avant-jargon* word “insightful” is not our favorite, but there is plenty of insight in this unusual article.

Now: a major portion of this issue is devoted to a treatise that, as we write, is nationwide news—Cardinal John J. O’Connor’s moving “Questions and Answers” on abortion. The media fastened on the Cardinal’s “warning” that Roman Catholic politicians who support abortion (not to mention *paying* for it with taxpayers’ money) just might be candidates for formal excommunication (one irreverent anti-abortion publication called it “The Ex-Com Pastoral”). But that possibility used up just over 60 words in a document that contains almost 20,000—typical of the Media’s “objective coverage”?

We call the whole thing “moving” and we think you will agree. Space (and in this case *time*) considerations allow us to provide only the Cardinal’s questions and answers—he added a number of “pastoral suggestions” as to what concerned Americans might actually *do* about the abortion plague—but what you get here is not only the major portion but also the text of what will inevitably become an historic contribution to the abortion debate.

That all sounds pretty stuffy, doesn’t it? Whereas the Cardinal is writing from his heart, meticulously—agonizingly—aware that even many among his own flock do not, or *will* not, agree with him. That fact was in the back of our minds while proofing *another* piece we thought you would enjoy—a short item, almost a decade old now, but still fresh, by our old friend Malcolm Muggeridge—it’s amazing how well “St. Mugg” caught the *truth* of our times (and sad to say that, now past 87, he writes no more). We had intended to add it to our appendices, but the happy thought hit: Why not put it just before the Cardinal’s *opus*? It seems a perfect preface: the Credo before the Canon, you might say. That’s where you’ll find it.

We trust that you will also give Cardinal O’Connor’s words the careful hearing they warrant. We wouldn’t dare *ask*, but if they are not his *own* words, he has a (holy?) ghostwriter as talented as a Marcel Marceau—it all sounds just like he speaks (and we hear him often). As we say, it is an historic addition to our permanent record of the Abortion War, which remains the greatest moral conflict of our lifetime.

Before we knew anything about the Cardinal’s statement, we had asked our colleague James Hitchcock to do a piece on an abortion statement by another Catholic prelate, Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, which had already caused quite a stir. Last March, Weakland initiated “listening sessions” for women in his archdiocese; the result did not please him—he hadn’t expected so many *anti-abortion* women to show up—but he issued a “balanced” summary statement anyway. As with O’Connor, the headline writers zeroed in on the “news”—the local *Journal* blazoned “Weakland rejects tactics of pro-lifers” (May 20) and “Weakland: Prochoice could be OK” (May 21)—the

difference was, as Professor Hitchcock makes plain, those headlines were *accurate*. But we'll let Hitchcock tell the story, which he does, like a good historian should, by putting everything into proper perspective. (A footnote: Hitchcock had almost finished his article *before* O'Connor's statement was issued—he mentions it only briefly—but we received it afterwards. In the interim, we wondered whether the two pieces would, well, go together. We shouldn't have worried: they're a perfect fit. You might say that the Cardinal neatly answers the Archbishop (and wonder: *post hoc, propter hoc?*).

Also, we'd say the accuracy of Hitchcock's analysis has been confirmed by the "best" available source: the entire text of Weakland's letter has already been printed in *Conscience* (May/June), the organ of "Prochoice Catholic Opinion" put out by "Catholics for a Free Choice," the "letterhead group" Hitchcock himself mentions—it's "catholic" enough to have received support from the Playboy Foundation. Fact is, we wish we had the space to print Archbishop Weakland's text—it most certainly is an unusual document—we may do so later. Meanwhile, we will be glad to supply interested readers with a copy. We also have a limited supply of Cardinal O'Connor's full statement as well.

Weakland's *démarche* has also received considerable praise in the *National Catholic Reporter*, which is hardly surprising, given the paper's adamantly "liberal" stance on Church affairs. For instance, Daniel Maguire (in the June 15 issue) calls Weakland's letter "delicate and prophetic"—again, no surprise: Maguire, an ex-priest who still teaches theology at Jesuit-founded Marquette University, is a well-known pro-abortion spokesman, and a regular contributor to *Conscience*. What *did* surprise us was another commentary in the same issue, from Rev. James Burtchaell (generally a Weakland admirer), who calls the letter "biased and ignorant." With Father Burtchaell's kind permission, we have reprinted his full text in *Appendix A*. It makes very interesting reading.

Appendix B brings you our old friend Joe Sobran (absent, alas, from our articles section this issue—we trust he'll return soon). He writes about the Cardinal's statement, noting that it is "widely construed as directed against Governor Mario Cuomo"—quite true, and as usual Joe makes some pithy (not to mention *funny*) comments.

In *Appendix C*, Wm. F. Buckley Jr. (an even *older* friend) also writes about Cardinal O'Connor—but *before* the "excommunication" controversy—Buckley examines the previous uproar (also mentioned by Hitchcock) over the Cardinal's announcement that the Bishops would hire a leading public-relations firm to "sell" their anti-abortion position. You will note that he mentions this journal along the way, which we greatly appreciate.

Appendix D is yet another short abortion piece, by our colleague Francis Canavan, S.J., who speculates on what *he* would do about The Issue, if he had the power. We think it is one of his best ever—Canavan is a master of the "sermonette"—and if you decide that this one might also concern Gov. Cuomo, you may be right.

INTRODUCTION

In *Appendix E*, you'll find another staccato blast from the redoubtable Pat Buchanan, whose syndicated columns must stir up memories of Westbrook Pegler among veteran journalists? His target here is "Doctor Death"—the inventor of the handy "suicide machine" that recently made headlines—but as Buchanan makes (*very*) clear, the first step toward a "right to death" was the denial of the right to *life* in *Roe v. Wade*. If there is no "higher law" than a Supreme Court *fiat*, we are all at risk, and the Nazi doctors condemned for "crimes against humanity" were simply ahead of their time. As we say, Buchanan pulls no punches.

Indeed, shortly after he wrote the column, the Supreme Court *did* elevate the "right to death" to the constitutional level in the long-awaited *Cruzan* decision, *via* the "traditional" tactic of ruling *against* the plaintiff (shades of John Marshall and the Court's original "Judicial Review" usurpation) while establishing the new "right." We note that *only* Justice Antonin Scalia held that the Court had no business intruding further into matters wisely left—by the Framers of the Constitution—to the several states.

Our usual practice is to provide you with something lighter than our usual fare, half-way along if possible. But this issue is so crammed full of weighty matter that we had to wait to the end to give you a good laugh. In *Appendix F*, Mr. Jeffrey Rubin describes how some ancient news might have been handled. He not only catches the right tone, but keeps his "perfect pitch" throughout—it's an impressive job, we trust you'll enjoy it as much as we did.

And we did manage to save one page for our "traditional" cartoon, which should also amuse you.

J.P. MCFADDEN
EDITOR

R.I.P.

Dr. Bart T. Heffernan died, at age 65, on June 26 in Florida; he was buried in his native Chicago four days later. He was a distinguished physician and cardiologist. He was also one of the first American doctors to champion the cause of the unborn, beginning well before *Roe v. Wade* (he was prominent among the *amicus curiae* in that case). He brought to the battle not only professional expertise but also a powerful intellect. Nor did he allow his own severe physical infirmities to deter him; he remained an active "pro-lifer" to the end. His many friends have no doubt that he will receive his just reward.

Changing the Odds

Nat Hentoff

I'm so sick of being called religious radicals. We're Americans—simple, normal people.

—Cindy Burgess, a Minnesota farmer, at Rally '90, Washington, D.C. (New York Times, April 29).

You can't just clean up a problem by killing an innocent victim. Abortion doesn't provide poor women with a job, a home, or with groceries. I honestly believe that abortion makes women weaker because it allows them to destroy their own flesh and blood without thinking about the ramifications.

—Maria Master, a Columbia University sophomore and head of Columbia Coalition for Life, at Rally '90, Washington, D.C. (New York Times, April 29).

IN HIS TROMBONE TONES, conservative analyst Kevin Phillips said on national television the day after Rally '90 that “the anti-abortion movement is past its prime. It's on a downtrend.”

Yet, Olivia Gans of the National Right to Life Committee proclaimed at the rally: “We are not losing! We are *winning!*”

Then why are so many once-and-former “pro-life” politicians pleabargaining with the forces of death?

The politicians aren't the basic problem, though. They're responding to what they think their constituencies want. And as Cardinal John O'Connor has said, pro-lifers have not been effective in making inescapably clear to those constituents that “a human life is a human life.”

They have also allowed the other side to get away with the kind of prejudices and distortions that—if exposed—would make many Americans queasy at being allied with such propagandists of bigotry.

Consider, for instance, a full-page ad in the *New York Times* (April 22) by the National Abortion Rights Action League. The ad is a distillation of the main arguments of the pro-abortionists (not only NARAL). And these arguments have been very effective

Nat Hentoff, a well-known and prolific writer on civil liberties, appears regularly in *The Village Voice*, New York City's “radical” weekly, and writes the “Sweet Land of Liberty” column for the *Washington Post*.

in the confusion following the *Webster* decision.

The ad begins with the familiar fanfare: "Who Decides? Bishops? Politicians? Or You?" Bishops lead the list of those who would assault the privacy of women. As is later evident in the ad, they mean *Catholic* bishops. Part of the pro-abortion strategy is to bring back the specter of the Pope running America. The anti-Catholicism is as old as Samuel Adams's warnings against Papists.

For years, the other side has engaged in this not-very-subtle anti-Catholicism by more than implying that the pro-life movement is dominated by the Catholic Church and that its reason for being is to impose Catholic theology on the rest of us.

As in the vintage anti-Catholicism of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the NARAL ad used *allegedly* direct quotes to show the fell designs of the Church.

Watch this: "The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has just announced it will seek 'to impose its will directly' on the American people by contracting with Hill and Knowlton—a giant public relations firm—to craft a \$5 million dollar campaign to alter the political climate on abortion."

Any way you look at the inner quote—"to impose its will directly"—it has to be attributed to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. But there is no way the Conference or any bishop would say that. Indeed they jump backward through narrow hoops to say that this is *not* their intention. Persuade, yes, in the marketplace of ideas. But not impose. This slippery quote feeds on the notion that the pro-life movement is part of a sinister conspiracy directed from the Vatican.

There is indeed a degree of anti-Catholicism in the nation—as there is of anti-Semitism and racism—but most Americans are uncomfortable at being associated with any group or person that maliciously plays on these prejudices.

Yet the pro-life movement has not sufficiently and persistently illuminated this sleazy element of pro-abortion propaganda, which pervades the *Times* ad, for instance in another familiar—and effective—argument by the death-as-a-choice side. Our "historical separation of church and state" is endangered, the ad claims, when attempts are made "to enshrine" a "theological perspective in our nation's laws." It's just another version of the "black-clad minions of the Vatican trying to impose their will on the American people" theme.

The concept of church and state being separate, but not adversaries,

is in the First Amendment's Establishment Clause: the state cannot prefer or support any or all religions. But *only* the state can violate that clause. Bishops or rabbis or ministers can advocate whatever they please. That's why a good many Protestant churches and Jewish religious organizations have vigorously supported pro-abortion causes. Yet they are not charged with violating the Establishment Clause.

Anti-abortionists have been negligent in not pointing out—in ads, in Op-Ed page articles, in letters-to-the-editor, and in other forms of communication—just what the Establishment Clause actually is. Nor have they emphasized how sad it is that the pro-abortionists feel they have to distort the Constitution to try to impose *their* views on the American people.

NARAL also instructs the American people that “the central question in the abortion rights debate” is: “Who Decides in America?” No, that's not the central question. A young woman from Staten Island, Maria Claps, focused right on the central question at Rally '90: “To me, it's not a thing of religion. It's so obvious a baby is alive in the womb.”

That baby should be brought directly to the attention of the cadre of Republicans—led by fundraiser Ann Stone—who are trying to generate pressure to get the anti-abortion plank out of the Republican platform. Ann Stone and the others should be asked whether they do indeed consider it civilized to kill that baby. The Democratic Party also, of course, ought to be asked the same question.

The Stone cadre will respond with some kind of newspeak about choice being the American way (like the choice to abuse a child?). But then they, and others like them in both parties, should be asked whether they feel at ease being part of a movement that spreads anti-Catholicism and misleads the gullible as to the meaning of the First Amendment.

The propaganda in all the anti-life ads stresses the alleged narrowness of the pro-life movement. (“A loud minority,” Kate Michelman says). It's almost entirely Catholic, they imply, led by men who look like Jesse Helms but are to his right. The pro-lifers exemplify, according to the propaganda, Rep. Barney Frank's line: “They're pro-life, but only up to the point of birth.”

Pro-lifers have been remiss in not spreading the word about their diversity and about their increasing support of women throughout their pregnancies and after—women who might have had an abortion

without that support.

Moreover, I've seen in ads and speeches by pro-abortionists the supposedly crushing point that people who say they are for life also overwhelmingly support the death penalty. Well, polls indicate that a majority of pro-lifers do not support the death penalty. When I speak at pro-life meetings, I invariably bring up capital punishment. I've yet to speak before a group where a majority supports this kind of killing by the state. In fact, when I spoke recently before the Delaware Pro-Life organization, much of the audience rose and applauded when I spoke of my own opposition to capital punishment.

This is not to say that there aren't a good many pro-lifers who are convinced of the necessity of capital punishment. ("These are not innocent lives.") But there is a diversity in the movement on this and other matters. Just about all religions are represented, for further example, and I've come across some of my fellow atheists.

Yet, the stereotype of pro-lifers—ardently propagated by NARAL *et al.* is widely believed because it has not been effectively countered.

Much more should be known, for example, of Feminists for Life of America—an organization of highly knowledgeable women, mostly liberal, many with experience in the anti-war and anti-nuke movements, and far wittier than their opponents.

One of them, Frederica Mathews-Green, a Vice-President for Communications, spoke at the College of William and Mary recently. Her theme: "Pro-woman, Pro-life: Feminism and Abortion."

As printed in *The Remnant*, an alternative student newspaper at the college, there was this passage. (Had I the money, I would give it to Feminists for Life of America so they could print it in a New York *Times* ad, preferably right alongside one of the choice-to-kill ads):

A woman with an unplanned pregnancy faces more than "inconvenience." Many adversities, financial and social, at school, at work, and at home confront her. Our mistake was in looking at these problems and deciding that the fault lay with the woman, that she should be the one to change. We focused on her swelling belly, not the discrimination that had made her so desperate. We advised her, "Go have this operation and you'll fit right in."

What a choice we made for her. She climbs onto a clinic table and endures a violation deeper than rape—the nurse's hand is wet with her tears—then is grateful to pay for it, grateful to be adapted to the social machine that rejected her when pregnant. And the machine grinds on, rejecting her pregnant sisters.

It is a cruel joke to call this a woman's "choice".

If we refused to choose, if we insisted on keeping both our lives and our bodies intact, what changes would our communities have to make? What

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

would make abortions unnecessary?

Flexible school situations, freedom from stigma, fairness in hiring, more flex-time, part-time jobs, better access to prenatal and obstetric care, attractive adoption opportunities, a whole garden of safe family planning choices, support in learning how to handle our sex lives responsibly, and help with child care and parenting when we choose to keep our babies; this is a partial list.

Yet these changes will never come so long as we're lying down on abortion tables . . . For over a hundred years, feminists have warned us that abortion is a form of violence and oppression against women and their children. They called it “child murder” (Susan B. Anthony), “degrading to women” (Elizabeth Cady Stanton), . . . and “a disowning of feminine values” (Simone de Beauvoir). How have we lost this wisdom?

That's a pro-life voice that many people will pay attention to. She does not speak for all pro-lifers, but she speaks for many women, especially younger women, in the pro-life ranks. Voices like hers should be heard more widely.

Obviously, a crucial element in the strategy to defeat the impression that “the anti-abortion movement is past its prime” is to emphasize that it is a human being who is being executed. The “choice” is like that in the Roman arena—thumbs down.

On *Nightline*, earlier this year, a seventeen-year-old who had had an abortion was asked if she'd had any doubts, any emotional problems, afterwards.

“No,” she said, looking down at where the abortion had been performed. “There was no life in there.”

I remember that photographs of the doomed developing human being used to be practically omnipresent at pro-life booths, in ads, at sidewalk tables. I still see some, but not as many as before, and that's a mistake.

As Dr. Joel Hylton, a physician in Thomasville, North Carolina, wrote in a letter to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (February 18, 1990):

Who can say that the fetus is not alive and is not a separate genetic entity? Its humanity . . . also cannot be questioned scientifically. It is certainly of no other species. That it is dependent on another makes it qualitatively no different from countless other humans outside the womb . . .

It strikes me that to argue that one may take an innocent life to preserve the quality of life of another is cold and carries utilitarianism to an obscene extreme. Nowhere else in our society is this permitted or even thinkable, though abortion sets a frightening precedent.

NAT HENTOFF

Anti-abortionists should show the humanity of some of the millions of beings killed every year. Showing the photographs of the developing human beings—and also the photographs of those who have been “terminated”—can’t help but make the undecided feel awful. And that state is often the beginning of feeling much better by being more human yourself.

Television won’t show photographs of the corpses, nor will most newspapers. They should be asked, often, why they won’t, since abortion is, after all, a political issue of remarkable magnitude and it will become even more so. To decide democratically, the populace should be informed, shouldn’t it? The media has no problem showing photos of gruesome drug killings—so why balk at these killings?

The populace also ought to be enlightened as to the growing emphasis within the pro-abortion leadership, on abortion as a form of population control. Which segments of the society are to be kept within limits? Why, the poor, of course, very much including the black poor.

Molly Yard has warned that if population rises at its present rate, there will be catastrophe. And Geraldine Ferraro, in the *New York Times*, followed right along:

Teenage pregnancies beget teenage pregnancies. Welfare mothers beget welfare mothers. How much education and training must be given to break the cycle? How will housing be made available? What about schools? Where will the money come from?

So the slogan “Who Will Decide?” is being expanded to: “Who Is Not Good Enough to Be Born?” Propagating abortion has now become a public-service responsibility—to keep thinning out the ghettos.

This is also useful information for the public to know—especially for those in the public who live in the ghettos.

The pro-life side has been too kind and gentle in this battle. The truth is usually neither.

The Baby That Wasn't: a Ghostly Presence

Faith Abbott

There is absolutely no empirical basis for the existence of a post-abortion syndrome.

—Brenda Major, Professor of Psychology
and an author of a new scientific report

. . . in preventing my fourth child from having a life, I have unwittingly fractured my own; like Humpty Dumpty, my life, my self, is beyond repair.

—Sue Nathanson, psychologist, author
of *Soul Crisis*

WHEN MY SISTER-IN-LAW, who lives in San Francisco, sent me a review of *Soul Crisis* (from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 23, 1990) I thought this was a *new* book and that I'd be seeing more reviews. When I got the book and saw that it had been published (by New American Library) the previous *June*, I was surprised that I *hadn't* seen other reviews: had there been some sort of cover-up? You'd think that the subtitle—*One Woman's Journey Through Abortion to Renewal*—would evoke at least a *mention* in women's magazines of the "pro-choice" feminist persuasion, especially now that there are so many scientific studies and "scholarly discussions" about the question of post-abortion psychological effects. I hadn't read far, though, before I realized why Sue Nathanson couldn't be the darling of the feminist sisterhood, *or* the activists on either side of the abortion controversy.

The book evolved from a personal journal Sue Nathanson began keeping when she realized what she was having was a soul-crisis: she thought it would help her understand her trauma. The book's jacket tells us that *Soul Crisis* "provides an urgently needed third voice—one removed from the other two voices represented by the right-to-life and pro-choice movements—on this complicated and emotionally charged issue." The publisher's news release says Nathanson's "honest, open account of her grief and guilt reminds us to beware the simplistic motivations and easy excuses offered by extremists on both sides of the issue"—that the abortion issue "requires a complex,

Faith Abbott, our new Contributing Editor, is also the mother of five children.

personal decision, never completely reducible to the black and white principles expounded in public debate." The *Chronicle* review quotes from an interview with Nathanson: "It's always hard in this culture to have a position in the gray area. . . . Women who have had abortions . . . may still be pro-choice yet experience intense feelings of loss, guilt, and grief . . ." If those in the "gray area" have heard this "urgently needed third voice," they have written few if any book reviews: nor have the "extremists."

In her Prologue, Nathanson writes: "Once a new life has been conceived, there is no turning back; an unalterable event—physical and psychological—has occurred." Later, she quotes writer Esther Harding about the "ancient powers" that stir within a pregnant woman "whether she knows it or not . . . She disregards them only at her peril." The "pro-choice" advocates wouldn't like that: they would recoil from Nathanson's incessant use of the phrase "my unborn fourth child"; "right-to-life" activists wouldn't like *most* of the things she says about them; ideological feminists won't be pleased that this successful career woman considers childbirth and parenting to be "the peak of the mountain," and they won't find grist for their mills in her chapters about "female experience" and "reconnecting to the feminine." What *ordinary* feminists may not like most of all is Nathanson's husband Michael: they would classify him, early-on, as a male chauvinist. And while "pro-choice" feminists would applaud Nathanson's "responsible" exercise of the "right" to *choose*, they would wish that the choice had been *hers* rather than something that sounds like a "life of the father" exception. (They may also wonder how the marriage managed to survive, and so do I.)

Here is some chronology: by age 23, Sue Nathanson was married; by age 27 she had earned a doctorate in psychology and was on her way to becoming a successful psychotherapist in private practice; by age 33 she and Michael had become "proud parents" of three children, and Michael had established a successful law firm. When she was 38, she conceived her fourth "child-never-to-be."

Here are Sue and Michael (given the "intimate journal" flavor of the book, it's hard to call them anything *but* "Sue" and "Michael") and their three children on the eve of Sue's abortion. They are sitting around the kitchen table: "Dinner is painfully ordinary that night." There's the usual bantering about how much each child must eat in order to have dessert; everything seems perfectly normal, but Sue is distracted. She is thinking that this is "the last evening of

the last pregnancy I will experience . . .” She wonders how the kids would feel about having a little brother or sister, and where the new baby would fit at their small table. Her awareness of “the new life inside me, an awareness my three small children do not have, creates a gulf between us that leaves me feeling isolated and alone, even in the midst of my family.” That family, which had seemed to her to be a fixed unit, “now has its boundaries opened suddenly to include a new member, a ghostlike presence.” As Sue and Michael clean up after supper, they are both “heavy with the awareness that for us a potential child has also been present at this evening meal.”

That night was just the beginning of Sue’s feelings of isolation and aloneness, which would—along with guilt—drive her to the brink of suicide. Throughout her book she describes in excruciating detail the trauma she suffered because of (the phrase appears on so many pages you’d think *it* was the subtitle) “my abortion and tubal ligation.” It’s repeated as often as “my unborn fourth child.”

Psychologist, therapist, faithful wife, but above all else Nurturing Mother, Sue Nathanson loved everything about pregnancy and birth. She nursed her babies around the clock until they weaned themselves. After the second baby did that, Sue became depressed: the thought of No More Babies was unbearable, so she managed to talk Michael into admitting a third child, which—once “planned”—was conceived immediately, and after *that* child had weaned itself, Sue worked very hard “to renounce forever that cherished part of my life.” Then came the accidental pregnancy, and Sue knew exactly when she had conceived “my child not-to-be. It was that Tuesday night . . .” She was thrilled about her “ongoing fertility” but suspected that Michael would *not* be thrilled. She was right.

They discuss. Michael does not want to be responsible for a fourth child. She writes in her journal: “My wish to have this unborn, though very alive, fourth child is so strong it is palpable.” Michael says it was “all he could do to have the third child” (all *he* could do?) when he was forty: if they had the fourth, he’d be forty-six and would be “parenting” most of his life. There were his health problems, the law firm wasn’t all that stable, he didn’t want additional economic worries; it would, he said, “literally kill me” to take care of another child.

Sue is chilled by the word “kill” which brings home the extent of Michael’s worry about himself. Her heart “aches” for him but

FAITH ABBOTT

she is split in half: "Hate swells inside me toward this man who is pressuring me to give up my fourth child, and yet I am also awash in love for him . . ." (Some feminists would stop reading right about here.) Sue tries again: she reminds Michael that they are not, as before, talking about the choice of whether to *conceive* a child, because "this child is a reality, taking shape already deep within my body." Unmoved, Michael brazens on: he'd be sixty when the fourth child (whom of course he'd love, but . . .) was thirteen—"I'll have worked so hard all my life"—and does Sue realize what it will cost to have three kids in college ten years from now? It's not just money, he adds quickly: what about their physical and emotional limits? "Can't you see that we're being very responsible to ourselves and to our living children by making the difficult choice not to have a child? . . . I'm trying to take care of myself! I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, my father had his stroke one year ago . . . I'm in absolutely no position to think about nurturing an infant."

So much for Michael. He is "persuasive" but Sue is not convinced. What else, she wonders, is important in life besides caring for children? "When we retire," she tells him, "we aren't going to feel best about our jobs; we'll feel best about having participated in raising the next generation. Maybe we should make whatever sacrifices necessary to bring this child forth."

The "discussion" is finally ended when Michael utters the words that "permanently silence" Sue: "If you don't choose to abort this child, I will push you to do it." Good wife Sue does not want to enter into a life-and-death battle with this man "whom I love and who shares my life" so she decides that *she* will take responsibility for the decision. She will have the abortion. "If that opening in the heavens is to be kept closed to this new life inside me, I want to be the one responsible for keeping it shut." Had she *chosen* to become pregnant, she would have done everything in her power to bring her child "through that miraculous opening into the world," so it seems to her fitting that *she* should be the one to block its entrance:

. . . the final responsibility for the choice clearly rests with me alone. The baby is growing in my body, not Michael's. . . . This physical fact renders me all at once the judge, the jury, and the lawyers representing both sides. And no matter which perspective I adopt, the balance scale appears the same. I will keep that window in the firmament closed to my fourth child; I will not let it enter this world . . .

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

And so it seems that Sue Nathanson's post-abortion trauma began *before* her abortion.

"The weight of the evidence from scientific studies indicates that legal abortion of an unwanted pregnancy in the first trimester does not pose a psychological hazard for most women," concludes a recent study commissioned by the American Psychological Association. Sue Nathanson suspected she was not "most women"—that the abortion would indeed be hazardous for her mental health—but she wanted it over and done with as soon as possible. The doctor cautioned her about the *physical* danger of very early abortions: sometimes they can't get all the tissue. And, sure enough, Sue's abortion didn't exactly "take." The doctor prescribed medication "to help the process along." Sue writes:

I lie awake all night on my back, pelvis elevated, knees up, as the doctor instructed me, in a kind of labor, delivering not a healthy infant but the shredded remains of my child.

But the pregnancy went on. She had to have blood tests, and she had irrational fantasies:

As long as I am informed that the hormone level in my bloodstream is high, it is impossible for me to escape the fantasy that my pregnancy has somehow been magically restored to me. Oh, how I wish, how I will it to be true.

Stark reality, then, when Sue—one week after the abortion—phones for the results of the tissue removed from her uterus during the surgery. The doctor's receptionist tells her that the pathologist had found "living tissue." This was just an impersonal, routine, lab report but Sue is

flooded with a torrent of horror that virtually lifts me off the floor and sweeps me into a dark fog of nausea. Alone, I sob for myself, my child, the remains, the child smeared into bits by the vacuum aspirator, sucked from the warmth of my womb in a violent manner of death. I am a shriek of horror and anguish, straining with all my might somehow to reverse what cannot be reversed, what is irrevocable. I do not know, I cannot imagine, how I will be able to live with the horror of what *is*, the horror that I alone have caused.

Just two months after her abortion, Sue followed through on another decision—a "choice" that also "made sense in rational terms" and that also involved an irreversible change: she had a tubal ligation. She feared that, should she have another accidental pregnancy, "the awesome, primal power of the longing to have a baby would combine

FAITH ABBOTT

with a yearning to fill the void created by the loss of my fourth child” and “I could not choose to bear again the suffering that accompanied my abortion.” Michael’s doctor, you see, had advised him against having a vasectomy, because he was at high risk for stroke: thus the safest protection was the closing off of Sue’s fallopian tubes. (Feminist readers would think: Once again it’s the *woman* who makes the sacrifice.)

Now Sue has really let herself in for it. The loss of her prized fertility, so soon after the loss of her fourth child, plunges her into an abyss of despair. Mother Nature is no help, either, for sterilization does not terminate her reminders: every month when Sue’s period arrives, she misses again the pride she used to feel “in my female body and its awesome power to produce life,” and she must force herself to remember why she had the tubal ligation: if she got pregnant again, she was terrified that she’d be tempted to have another child

because the loss, the empty hole, left by my missing fourth child will remain intolerable. And were I to act on these feelings, . . . I would feel worse because I would still have ended the life of my fourth baby. No subsequent new life could ever replace or restore this particular child to me. My fourth child was a distinct, unique being and consequently irreplaceable. Having a child now would only mean that our decision to have the abortion was a dreadful mistake, that Michael and I could in fact have managed to care for another life.

Six months pass: ordinary life goes on, but when Sue is alone, undistracted by clients or family, “sharp blades of grief and despair . . . continue to pierce through the smooth surface of my life.” She finds herself unable to accept having made the abortion choice, even though she is glad she had the right to choose it: she seems to be immobilized, and cannot free herself, even though she believes “wholeheartedly” that she made the best possible decision in the circumstances, and even though she doesn’t believe the decision was either wrong or a mistake. Terrible feelings about her “choice” break through each of the psychological walls she’s worked hard to build, and she feels overwhelmed with hopelessness: “I will never find a way to live with the reality of having terminated the life of my unborn child.”

Here is something that might interest the research people, on both sides (it’s a pity that Dr. C. Everett Koop, our former Surgeon General, couldn’t have read the book: it might have changed his mind about

the impossibility of drawing final conclusions about the effect of abortion on women's mental health):

The strength of my belief in the "rightness" of the choice of an abortion given the context of my life and in the necessity for women to have the legal right to make the choice that I exercised enabled me to carry out my decision; but these convictions do not protect me from suffering the consequences of my choice. My convictions, strong as they are, do not enable me to construct a scaffolding that can keep me safely above the flood of feelings pounding beneath.

Twelve months pass. The First Anniversary approaches, and Sue has another fantasy. Her period is late: could it be that her fallopian tubes have healed themselves? (The doctor had said this *is* possible in rare cases.) Sue wonders if she is *whole* again—has she been blessed with another opportunity to create life? "*If so, I vow I will not make the same choice this time. This time I will choose life for myself, for my baby, life for both of our souls.*" [Emphasis mine.]

Long before the abortion, therapist Sue had been seeing a psychotherapist regularly: now when she *really* needs him, he is failing her. "Anniversary reactions are quite common," he says smugly, pleased with himself for having read up on post-abortion syndrome. He just doesn't understand; nor does Michael, who confesses that the fourth baby just hadn't had "any reality" for him. Sue seems to want forgiveness, but who is to forgive her? Her own good friends and psychology colleagues tell her three children are "more than enough" and Sue should turn her "nurturing energy" to herself. Most of all she seeks *empathy*, but doesn't find it. (*Empathy* is one of her favorite words, in its various forms such as "empathic," and in ejaculations like "Yes! I say, empathically.") The soul-crisis is now in full bloom, and

Michael and Dr. Ross blur together in my mind, becoming a single, giant, unempathic Man. Neither one . . . really wants to bear my pain nor does either one of them want to feel any himself. Where can I possibly go to find an affirmation, an understanding that something huge has happened in my life?

The primary author of one of the studies commissioned by the American Psychological Association (a professor of psychiatry) says that she "feels comfortable" about the conclusion that there is little psychological hazard for women; she cited, though, a need for further studies that would compare the effects of abortion "with that of other stressful events, such as divorce or death of a family member."

Death of a family member? Isn't this what Sue Nathanson's trauma is all about?

Michael has been in psychotherapy too: this began when he wanted help in developing a new, healthy lifestyle. He's healthy now but continues therapy because he actually does feel a bit bad about having been "unavailable emotionally" to Sue when they'd made the abortion decision; he wants to learn more about "how I could have let you down that way." This helps, but Sue knows it will take time for her hurt and anger to diminish. They have endless debates: sometimes they end up storming angrily away from each other, certain that the marriage can't survive. She says it isn't fair that *she's* the one who has to suffer: "You helped me make our baby, too! . . . You get to be the good guy who stays in therapy because his wife is so difficult, and I'm left holding the bag! It isn't fair!" Michael says he can't help it, he just doesn't have the same level of feeling that *she* does—he doesn't even *want* to have her feelings.

(This is when Sue begins to understand that she, being a woman, is rooted in feminine ground, which is linked to the physical cycles of the body, whereas Michael stands upon different, masculine ground, which is linked to spirit and consciousness, to rational principle; throughout the rest of the book we learn a lot about *logos* and *agape*.)

In all fairness, it should be mentioned that Michael *was* disturbed by the depth of his wife's anguish. He couldn't *share* the anguish, but he certainly wanted her restored to her former self; he didn't understand that such a restoration was impossible. Even Sue's capacities as a psychologist, "ordinarily able to explore my inner experience, to make sense of it, to observe states that are painful either until they are comprehensible or until they pass by" have deserted her: she can't imagine they will ever return. "The inner torment is so unbearable that the only peaceful state I can imagine is death."

Some years later, Michael (is he just naive or diabolical?) will proceed to pour salt in her wounds: he tells Sue that he feels they really *could* have managed to raise that child.(!) Sue then takes the position she says is "the least likely" for her: perhaps, she suggests, Michael feels more secure now just *because* he doesn't have the demands of four children. She reminds him that he'd be sixty years old with an adolescent, and how would that feel? Michael solemnly replies that he just doesn't know:

Maybe I'd be happy to have an adolescent. Maybe that would have given my life more meaning than anything else. After all, what else really counts

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

besides family? Loving connections to other human beings—that's what matters. You were the one who told me you read somewhere that no one who has retired ever looks back and wishes he had worked harder.

And then, a one-sentence paragraph: "I have no answer for Michael."

Sue's inner torment gets worse. She tries to exhaust herself by physical activity—running. An eleven-mile run helps, but "I can find no resting place. . . . There is only the anguish, the torment, the shredded remains of my annihilated child, my Self the murderer." She runs again the next day at noon and "A small hope surfaces: Perhaps I can die if I keep going in this heat." But she is disappointed: "I cannot drive my physical body to death. I am a Frankenstein who has transformed myself into a monster that will not die."

By now Unempathic Michael *is* really worried. He suggests they call Planned Parenthood for help. They do, and find just the right counselor: a young woman who has had an abortion, and who knows about Gestalt therapy, and who uses the technique on Sue. This is something like Musical Chairs without music and with just two chairs. First, the Angry Sue confronts the Hated Sue, in the opposite chair: "I HATE you for killing my fourth child . . . You are a MURDERER and you will NEVER be forgiven . . . I can NEVER live with you . . ." And then the two Sues switch chairs, and the Hated Sue speaks to her "agony counterpart" and all this leads to a first step in understanding and forgiveness. Next time, the Fertile Sue and the Sterile Sue have a confrontation. In the last session, Sue is instructed to visualize her unborn fourth child in the other chair. To Sue's relief, she sees no *baby*: instead, there is in the chair a sort of "shimmering life energy" and Sue exclaims excitedly: "I didn't annihilate life. . . . I only prevented this life energy from being channeled into my fourth child's body!" Then she shifts chairs and finds *herself* becoming "the embodiment of a bountiful life energy."

The therapy has helped, but "this stable place of healing and recovery" turns out to be only a plateau, not a final destination. How can Sue finally reconcile her murderous self with her nurturing self, her "powerful self-hatred" with her "powerfully suffering" self? It becomes clear that Sue the psychologist must take Sue the grieving mother on a "psychological path to wholeness." This will involve finding new concepts of apparent opposites (such as life and death) in order to understand "the terrible choice of abortion" as *sacrifice* rather than *murder* . . . and to understand how women, by nature

FAITH ABBOTT

the protectors and nurturers of the unborn, could commit infanticide and still live with themselves. Sue then plunges into much research and reading, and discovers the ancient world (around 7000-3500 B.C.) when death-wielding goddesses were among the female deities that predominated, but their worship was always linked to life and regeneration. Sue is excited by "the vast realm of female experience."

God is not mentioned: you will not find Him in the index. Apparently Sue wasn't looking for God, which is rather strange for someone who believes so strongly in *soul*. But the index lists lots of gods and goddesses. Each chapter, in fact, is prefaced by a quotation from works by experts in goddess religions, mythology, ancient cultures, etc. And the chapter on "Woman as Murderer" begins with some lines from *Pagan Meditations* by Ginette Paris:

In almost all cases, one aborts an impossible love, not a hatred. The child is sacrificed to a value that one judges at the time to be more important; either the children one has already borne, those one will have one day, or one's psychological, economic, or physical survival. . . . I believe it is time to sacrifice to Artemis [the virgin goddess of femininity] the fetus to which we are not prepared to give the best of ourselves and our collective resources.

The concept of *sacrifice* strikes a chord: later on, Sue discovers that she has become aware of yet another facet of the loss of her unborn child:

I wish now that my fourth child could have been sacrificed with my love and tears, even with my own hands . . . in the circle of a compassionate and loving community of men and women . . . and not as it was, in a cold and lonely hospital room with instruments of steel. . . . I wish now that I might then have mourned my loss openly . . . and seen my own sorrow reflected in their compassionate regard for me and for the child who could not be. My feelings would not have been less painful, my grief would not have been diminished. But I would not have been so alone.

Sue had thought her pain would begin to lessen as she gained a deeper understanding of her response to her abortion and became increasingly able to accept her "choice"—but that "special, sharp, emotional pain" she feels when confronted by the arguments of the "right-to-life" faction will simply not go away:

In my heart, I believe the accusations and condemnation of the Right-to-Life supporters have merit. I did choose to end a life, and I do feel like a murderer. I must bear responsibility for this act.

She asks herself whether every woman who chooses an abortion feels that in exercising her "right" she is rendering herself a murderer.

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

In this context she is reminded of a session she had with one of her therapy clients, Liz, who has been trying, unsuccessfully, to become pregnant. Liz confesses to Sue that she'd had an abortion nearly fourteen years ago, and now thinks she's being punished "for having taken the life of that unborn child then." Her memories of the abortion had led her, just the night before, to the private diary she'd kept at the time, wherein she'd written: "Elizabeth, you are a MURDERER. You committed MURDER on June 29, 1971." Never before had Liz "shared" that thought with anyone: she is ashamed and in tears.

Here is therapist Sue's opportunity to use her new insights. She helps Liz understand why these guilt feelings had been suppressed; they might have remained underground if she hadn't had this difficulty becoming pregnant, but now that the feelings have surfaced, she can deal with them; she's better off for having brought into consciousness her feelings of being a murderer: if this isn't faced consciously, it can remain alive in the unconscious where it may manifest itself in other ways—it doesn't just evaporate or disappear. The body recovers physically "but the experience of having taken a life, of having chosen to murder . . . remains alive in the psyche." The abortion experience may surface in ways that make it essential for the woman to face it fully and consciously, to face a deep soul-crisis. "Deep," she explains to Liz, because "it requires a permanent alteration in her cherished sense of herself And this crisis can precipitate a frightening descent into unbearable feelings." Sue should know.

One of her favorite discoveries is the Sumerian Goddess Inanna. She was a "mature queen" who ruled the Upperworld, and she had a lot of strange relatives, had problems with Demons, was turned into a corpse (but survived), and her story symbolically reflects Sue's own experience:

Through a voluntary and consciously chosen descent into her own darkness, Inanna's consciousness is transformed. Only through the death of her innocent self that knows only the upperworld of light can Inanna continue with her own psychological development, progressing not toward an impossible state of perfection but toward wholeness, in which she faces both the light and the dark side inherent in her nature. Henceforth, she must live with both.

(Can mere *mortals* live with both?)

Sue tells Liz she is coming to believe that the terrible and dark feelings of guilt needn't be self-destructive: they can provide access to "the realm of the feminine" that now remains outside our patriarchal culture. She hopes that someday

FAITH ABBOTT

our culture will evolve a new attitude, one that will enable women to bear the responsibility for choosing life or death for our offspring in a different way than is possible now. We have lived in a patriarchal culture . . . for so many years that we've lost our connection to a source-ground of feminine wisdom.

Simplifying this for Liz, Sue explains that in this patriarchal culture (where *agape* is subject to *logos*) we lack fully-developed images of womanhood, "archetypal" images that we can respect, that would serve as role models. She muses: "If only we had an image in this culture of a Goddess as well as our lonely, powerful, masculine God." Liz (now "visibly relaxed") says she hasn't come across any divine feminine images, "except for the Virgin Mary, who was saintlike, and Eve, who was a sinner!"

This, by the way, is the only time the Virgin Mary is mentioned. You'd think that Sue, who devotes many pages to "the great Mother Goddess of antiquity," might have done some research into the Mother-of-God idea—why shouldn't Mary (even as "a mythological figure") be considered a good "feminine role model"? For all Sue's enthusiasm about her newly-acquired knowledge, she admits that the very existence of matriarchal cultures is "a matter of debate"—but never mind: what is important to her, more than the facts, "is the affirmation I find in them for the personal sense of loss I have come to feel for myself of images or symbols of woman, of the feminine, that would have served to guide me through my own abortion and fertility crisis." And "In the ancient time of the Mother Goddess," Sue writes, "women were celebrated, revered, praised, and feared because in their physical bodies they symbolized or embodied all the great mysteries of our universe." Well, in the far *less* ancient times of the Virgin Mother (whose existence is far less debatable) Sue might have found one who is to be celebrated and revered and *not* feared: a much more approachable, *empathic*, feminine "image or symbol." Mary too grieved for a lost child.

There are many pages about other clients *and* colleagues with abortion-related soul-crises: Sue thinks that "women do not dare to put intense experiences into words . . . that could enable the experiences to be shared." (Are the research people aware of this?) And she suspects that abortion experiences are, more often than not, locked away as quickly as possible, so that normal life can return—also because there's no other choice: "Almost all other losses from death in this culture can be openly grieved, mourned in existing ritual forms." But soul-

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

crises *do* have the possibility of becoming opportunities for personal growth and transformation “if experienced within an empathic and compassionate human relationship, within a culture that makes room for them without judgment and condemnation.”

Sue continues her research into (and Personal Meditations about) ancient mythology, goddess religions, cross-cultural attitudes about reproduction and abortion, and so on, and at last finds her own “empathic and compassionate human relationship” when she and three colleagues form a women’s study group. After several years of exciting discoveries about early matriarchal cultures and rituals, the group focuses on Sue and decides that *she* should have a ritual. It will have four parts, all richly symbolic. Sue is overwhelmed and has a rush of ideas but is told No: *they* must plan it: she is to be kept in the dark about the details.

The ritual will coincide with the fifth anniversary of Sue’s abortion.

She can hardly wait to tell Michael what her friends have planned for her. “They’re really going to do it!” she exclaims, before she’s even out of the car. Michael asks Who’s going to do What. She explains, breathlessly, as she climbs up the steps to the kitchen, that it’s her women’s group: “They’re going to put together a ritual for me, to complete and to heal the experiences of the abortion and tubal ligation!” (One doubts those were her actual words, but that’s what she *says*.)

We do not learn what happened during the ritual, since that chapter *ends* as the women’s group leader intones (in a voice like a priestess) “The ritual begins *now*.”

That last chapter is followed by the Epilogue. Sue has learned this: that the making and the bearing of suffering are lifelong *processes*; not “finite events that are accomplished once and for all.” She writes that (researchers, take note) “the permanent place occupied by the abortion and tubal ligation continues to shift its position and meaning. . . . Sometimes events in my life elicit feelings of grief at my loss that are as immediate as if it had just occurred.”

Example: the youngest (final) child, Ben, keeps asking his mother Is she going to have another baby, “and each time I reply to his question/wish, each time I explain to him this unchangeable reality, a pang of sorrow pierces my heart.” Poor Ben gets picked on by his sisters, and says “The only family I have is you and Daddy.” As his parents try to deal with this, his mother silently wonders how her fourth baby (who would now be almost five) might have shifted this family constellation. Ben would have had a younger ally, would be an adored

FAITH ABBOTT

older brother, would not be alone to face the animosity of his sisters. At some deep place in her mind, Sue continues to track the development of her unborn child as if he or she were alive.

A former client comes back, for therapy: she is, at age forty-two, unexpectedly pregnant. She's not opposed to abortion on philosophical, political, or religious grounds but believes that, for such an unlikely pregnancy to occur, her child is "fated" to exist. Her children are grown and she doesn't relish going back to mothering; her husband has opted for abortion, but she decides against it. Her pregnancy is going well but "remains an ongoing source of anguish because so much of her does not want to care for a baby again." She brings Sue her negative feelings, and Sue thinks:

Every aspect of bearing a child that she dreads and dislikes, from feeling the changes in her body as the baby grows to anticipating the nighttime nursing and years of diapering . . . are aspects of mothering that I personally cherished and would give anything to have been able to experience one more time with my lost child.

And in the Epilogue, Sue has some last thoughts about her tubal ligation:

. . . I always remind myself that the temptation to replace my lost child by becoming pregnant again might well have been irresistible. I am not at all sure that I could have withstood the enormous pressure the temptation would have exerted. And if I had yielded to it, either consciously or unconsciously and become pregnant, I would only have been left to grieve anew for the death of my irreplaceable fourth baby.

Sue had written, in the Prologue, that she still believes her choice to have the abortion was "essential for the well-being of everyone in my family, though I wished then, and still wish with every ounce of my being, that I could have chosen otherwise."

After reading the Epilogue, the reader may suspect that Michael, and their three children, and just about *everyone* involved would also wish that Sue had chosen otherwise. And one suspects that Sue herself would be only too willing to trade all her knowledge about Sumerian culture and goddesses and rituals and so on for the life of her irreplaceable Number Four.

That one review I'd read of *Soul Crisis* had this headline: "When the 'Choice' Haunts a Woman." More apt would be "When a *child* haunts a woman," I thought, when I saw a picture of one sign at April's anti-abortion rally in Washington: "It's not a choice, it's a child." And as I thought about Sue Nathanson and the haunting, ghostlike presence of her fourth child, I remembered—because such haunting

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

tales won't go away—a short piece that appeared in the Summer, 1976, issue of the *Human Life Review*. Recently, in fact, the *Review* wanted to run it again. It had appeared, originally, on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times*; the *Times* had contacted the author, “Jane Doe,” and reprint permission was granted. But last summer the author—via the *Times*—said No.

“Jane Doe” was, like Sue Nathanson, married and the mother of three. She had juggled pregnancies and child-care with freelance jobs and had just taken a full-time job when she discovered she was pregnant with the fourth, and “A new baby would put me right back in the nursery just when our youngest child was finally school age.” Furthermore, her husband was planning a career change, and “It was time for *us*, we tried to rationalize. There just wasn't room in our lives now for another baby.” As she awaited her turn for the abortion at Women's Services, she began to panic:

Suddenly the rhetoric, the abortion marches I'd walked in, the telegrams sent to Albany to counteract the Friends of the Fetus, the Zero Population growth buttons I'd worn, peeled away, and I was all alone with my microscopic baby. There were just the two of us there and soon, because it was more convenient for me and my husband, there would be one again.

The “operation” was a success: within a week her body felt like *hers* again (“instead of the eggshell it becomes when it's protecting someone else”) and she and her husband were back to planning their summer vacation and his career switch.

And it certainly does make more sense not to be having a baby right now—we say that to each other all the time. But I have this ghost now. A very little ghost that only appears when I'm seeing something beautiful, like the full moon on the ocean last weekend. And the baby waves at me. And I wave at the baby. “Of course, we have room,” I cry to the ghost. “Of course we do.”

When I first read that non-ending, almost fifteen years ago now, I got a huge lump in my throat, and it's there again. What if Sue Nathanson had read it? What if she had read a cautionary tale such as she herself has written? I would like to think that—on the eve of her scheduled abortion—Sue would have said to the ghostlike presence at the family table: “Yes, *of course* there's enough room for you.”

Room At The Inn

Christine Allison

WHEN YOU FIRST ENTER the grounds off Hemphill Street, your mind registers: college campus. Three modern dormitories and a well-manicured lawn give you that distinct impression. The residents live in pastel-colored suites, with sleek kitchens and bathrooms. High school and college courses are offered, and leisure activities are plentiful. When study time is over, residents enjoy swimming, miniature golf, museum tours, and evenings at the ballet.

It is not until you are greeted by a pear-shaped 16-year-old girl that anything seems, well, different. One by one, you begin to see them: blondes, brunettes and redheads in all sizes, but only one shape. They are all pregnant. You have walked into a modern-day maternity home in Fort Worth, Texas. You are on the campus of The Gladney Center.

At first, the idea of a maternity home in the 1990s seems anachronistic. To the uninitiated, "maternity home" conjures visions of vast rooms filled with iron beds and sobbing young girls, images more likely to be found in romantic fiction than in the lives of modern American girls. But The Gladney Center, which is the oldest and the largest maternity home in the U.S., is equally difficult to place. Stroll through its campus and the stereotype dissolves: you hear giggling in the hallways, classroom discussions on Longfellow, bacon sizzling in a compact kitchen. Though they call it a center, it is, truly, a home.

It is also often described as the *Cadillac* of maternity homes, and for the girls who experience its services, it is, at the least, an oasis. Many of its residents describe it as "the best thing that ever happened to me."

Each year, The Gladney Center serves some 500 girls from 13 to 27 years old. No one has ever been turned away for financial reasons. Some of the girls are there because they waited too long to have an abortion; many are there because they refused to have an abortion. The vast majority of the girls are there because they have decided to place their babies for adoption, though this decision is not finalized until after the child is born.

Christine Allison, an author and journalist, contributed "A Child to Lead Us" to our Summer, 1989 issue; it was adapted for the *Reader's Digest* (June, 1990).

Yet this maternity home, which one resident giddily said is as “beautiful as a Marriott,” has no waiting list. That this particular institution has empty dormitory rooms would be surprising under any circumstances—but with more than 1,000,000 teenage pregnancies in the U.S. each year, it is a sign that something in the world of adoption has gone terribly wrong.

For politicians, “adoption, not abortion” is safe harbor in the abortion debate. President Bush, grandfather of two adopted children, seized on the phrase in his presidential campaign, and it has a nice political ring to it. After all, who could be against adoption? Surely it is better to release a child for adoption than to abort the child. And: Aren’t there a lot of married couples waiting to adopt?

On the face of it, adoption is a panacea of sorts. In a rather curious bit of symmetry, there are not only 1,000,000 teenage pregnancies each year; but also about 1,000,000 infertile married couples waiting to adopt a child.

But adoption is *not* the option of choice for pregnant teenage girls; in fact, it is seldom considered. Studies show that in teenage crisis pregnancy centers, the “adoption option” is not presented by as many as 40% of the counselors. Many pro-choice advocates find adoption the *opposite* of abortion, and are waging determined legislative battles to keep adoption out of the range of options for pregnant teens.

Of the 1,000,000 infants conceived by teenage girls in the U.S. each year, about half are raised by the teenagers themselves, with many of the children eventually removed because of abuse or neglect. Another 450,000 are lost to abortion and only 25,000 are adopted by unrelated parents.

With almost algebraic clarity, one can see what the forces of the sexual revolution, the legalization of abortion, and the relatively new acceptance of single parenting have wrought. A million teen pregnancies yearly constitute a social disaster, and demand a realistic re-appraisal of adoption, as well as a massive effort to advise pregnant teenagers that they have a choice beyond keeping or killing their child.

Until strong support is given to the third choice, *adoption*, pregnant girls who cannot vote or legally buy a glass of wine will be facing only two, crushing options: the responsibilities of parenthood or the decision to abort. For a sixteen-year old, that’s a lot to ask.

CHRISTINE ALLISON

* * * * *

Diana is a pretty blonde from Oklahoma. Her menstrual period was late, and she was getting moody. One afternoon, she broke down and told her mother and her best friend that she might be pregnant. Her mother drove her to the drug store to buy a pregnancy test. It was positive.

A few days later, screaming and cursing and insisting that she would get an abortion, Diana went with her father to the local teenage "crisis counseling" center to confirm her home pregnancy test, which was indeed positive. For an hour or so, Diana, keen on abortion, sat stony-eyed in front of a pleading counselor. The conversation was at an impasse, until the counselor asked, "Diana, who put that child in your womb?"

For Diana, who is Roman Catholic, the question hit home. Believing that her child was God's creation, she immediately ruled out abortion. She then listened for hours to a counselor who thought single parenting was "just the greatest." The counselor showed her photographs of her three-year old, and regaled her with homey anecdotes. Diana's mental pictures were not so cheery: she could envision only fatness, no dates, no college, welfare, food stamps, ugliness. She despaired.

Two issues stand out in Diana's situation: one, she made the decision not to abort her child because she understood, in an ultimate sense, that the child was not hers to destroy. Two, no one at the crisis center discussed with her the possibilities of adoption. Instead, Diana was subjected to a well-meaning volunteer who was keen on validating her own single-parenting experience.

Adoption advocates say that many counselors are *uneasy* with adoption. The feeling is often that the "adoption option" is a form of coercion, taking babies away from mothers, splitting up the most fundamental relationship in life.

Dr. Edward V. Mech of the University of Illinois (at Champaign-Urbana) recently conducted a government-funded study entitled "Orientations of Pregnancy Counselors Toward Adoption." The survey included interviews with counselors serving about 19,000 pregnant teenagers. A majority of the counselors interviewed expressed a *positive* attitude toward adoption.

But few counselors believed pregnant teens *wanted* information on adoption, which short-circuited their presentation of adoption as an alternative. Forty per cent of the counseling available *failed*

to include the option at all. The accuracy of counselor information about adoption was only 60%, suggesting that counselors have woefully insufficient information about adoption to begin with.

Thus while counselors—and especially “pro-life” counselors—do not *discourage* adoption, they evidently don’t give it enough attention. Instead it seems, the feminist reasoning that “women can do it all” becomes the most-often-stated “life option.” Single parenting is the message. We’ll teach you to diaper. We’ll show you how to make formula. The government will help you. Your family will help you. You’re a woman. You can raise your baby. *You can do it all.*

But Diana did not think she could do it all. At one of her monthly visits, she was bemoaning her situation to her obstetrician. The doctor suggested that she consider adoption, and put her in touch with The Gladney Center. The counselors at the maternity home gave Diana the first sense of hope she had since the pregnancy test turned positive. Adoption allowed her to give a life, and to keep her own. It was the solution Diana needed, and one that should have been more obvious.

Diana herself is adopted.

* * * * *

Sealed adoption, whereby the original birth certificate is sealed by the courts and the adoptive parent’s names appear on the new birth certificate, is a distinctly American invention. Adoption was never a part of English common law. In fact, no other society approaches adoption the way we do.

Adoption became a powerful force in the late 19th century, when orphan trains used to traverse the waistline of America, stopping in major cities from the East Coast to Texas, offering children to “good” families. The phrase “put up for adoption” originated from this practice; children were “put up” on platforms so families could select the child they wanted.

Newborns were not commonly adopted until the 1920s, when infant formula was invented. As nursing requirements changed, maternity homes were created so young girls could “hide away” during pregnancy. Catholic Charities, Jewish Social Services, the Crittenden family, and the Salvation Army established homes throughout the country. From the 1930s to the 1950s, they flourished.

In 1970, as the sexual revolution gained momentum, adoption

hit its peak. Thousands of girls were getting pregnant and abortions were not legal. Some 89,000 babies were adopted by unrelated families in 1970. Since 1973, the number of teenage pregnancies and abortions has skyrocketed, and the number of adoptions has plummeted.

The goal of adoption is two-fold: to provide the child with a strong, secure family life and, in the case of teen pregnancies, to allow the young girl to develop as a whole, mature and responsible person before she becomes a parent. Adoption is pro-family and pro-life and pro-woman . . . and *pro-child*. Though single parents occasionally adopt children, adoption basically fosters the value of the two-parent, traditional family.

Obviously, adoption is not the solution for every young woman who has an unwanted pregnancy. It requires delicacy to discuss adoption and, oddly, even more delicacy than is required to have a conversation about abortion. A part of our societal psyche finds it is easier to empathize with the mother who aborts the child than with the mother who places the child for adoption. For many, "how could she give away her baby?" haunts in a way that "how could she abort her baby?" does not.

Even if abortion were illegal, the number of adoptions would hardly increase to 450,000, which is the number of babies who are currently being aborted by teenage mothers every year. No one can say precisely how many lives would be saved.

The point is not to make this a nation of adoptees. The point is that the possibilities for life are enhanced when the options for life are increased. Are we talking about five lives or 50,000? Does it matter?

* * * * *

Tiffany's baby is due in a few days. She is cracking jokes. "Someone asked me what I will do after I leave The Gladney Center. I said, I don't know. Maybe I'll save the world and grow real nails, and dye my hair green." In fact, she will study drama, and work part-time. She is also going to speak on a volunteer basis to high school girls about adoption.

Tiffany was raised in a politically active household: "I was aware of the issues surrounding abortion and was vehemently against it." She even had joined her parents in pro-life marches.

Last fall, when she realized she might be pregnant, she took a home pregnancy test. "When it turned purple, I just stared. I stared

at that vial for an hour. My whole life had just jumped off the tracks.” Within a week, she was sitting in an abortion clinic. She received her initial counseling and was given a little booklet to explain the procedure.

“I had seen that same, awful booklet—which makes abortion ‘all roses’—when I was active in the pro-life movement. I was really upset, and I told the counselor that I used to march for life.”

The counselor nodded: “We get a lot of women who used to be pro-life. It’s different when it happens to you.”

Tiffany walked out, confused, suddenly realizing she couldn’t go through with it. “I tried to look five years into the future. I thought: do I want to look back and see a child that I vaccuumed out, or do I want to know that child is celebrating his fifth birthday? I was becoming weak, becoming everything that I hated. I was looking for the easy way out.”

For the female, obviously, there is no “easy” way out. In interviews with pregnant girls and young “birth mothers” (women who give birth to their children but who do not keep them), a steady stream of male ghosts make momentary appearances in conversations.

These are the boys and men whom The Gladney Centers calls F.O.B.’s: father of the baby. The F.O.B.’s are overwhelmingly non-factors in the decision-making process. The majority of males want no part of the pregnancy or the child. The girl’s letters and phone calls and don’t-you-care-at-all’s are met with disbelief and disavowal. The boys have bought the message: you’re a woman, you can do it all.

Jane (about 17) tells of her F.O.B.’s response to the big news. “He asked me to return everything he ever gave me. I got out my Hard Rock Cafe bag and put in his gifts: a wooden plaque with a country scene on it, some letters and photographs, and a paperback copy of Stephen King’s *Misery*. I met him in my car at Burger King, and he walked up to the window, took the bag, and thrust \$140 into my hand ‘for an abortion.’ All he said was: *take care of it*. I haven’t talked to him since.”

When asked why she had decided to place her baby for adoption, she said simply: “I couldn’t raise my child alone. It’s not enough just to have a mom. I want my child to have a loving father, too.

Pronouncements on the merits of adoption fall easily from the lips of politicians, but only one congressional bill even mentions

it; it is a puny bill that has received buckets of attention, mostly from those on the pro-choice side.

The legislation, which is called the Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA), appropriated this year a modest \$9 million in funding— as opposed to the \$100 million in state and federal tax dollars received by Planned Parenthood in the same period. It has also been called the “Chastity Bill” (the work of former Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama) and it is the only legislation of its kind that embodies traditional family values.

Essentially, the AFLA provides funding to schools and organizations for education and information about teenage sexuality, and it includes three “controversial” components: 1) a sexual education program which highlights abstinence as a possible means for avoiding pregnancy; 2) counseling and care services for pregnant teens, which are available only if parents agree (in writing) to be involved; and 3) counseling for unplanned teenage pregnancies which specifically includes encouraging *adoption* as an alternative to pre-mature parenting.

The “adoption option” greatly disturbs pro-choice advocates. For them, it is a monumental threat to abortion rights. Unquestionably, adoption defuses the pro-choice argument: it’s hard to speak in absolutes about a woman’s right to control her body and her life when we are basically talking about a nine-month proposition.

Thus, in 1981, when the AFLA was signed into law, slings and arrows came from every direction, with a cannon blast from the American Civil Liberties Union.

In 1983, the ACLU was engaged to attack the bill on a separation-of-church-and-state basis; the suit claimed the bill was promoting religious beliefs and values. The case went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that simply because community values and religious values happen to be the same, community values are not invalidated. The AFLA survived.

Senator Edward Kennedy, undaunted, has proposed a new bill (S. 120), which is a rewrite of the Adolescent Family Life Act. He takes the three “controversial” components described above and makes the following amendments: 1) teenage sexual activity is inevitable; birth control, not abstinence, should be stressed as the best means of avoiding pregnancy; 2) there should be no requirement for parental consent or even parental notification for teens receiving counseling and care services, and 3) pregnant teens must be given referrals to clinics which *do* offer abortion as an option.

Literature on the bill from Senator Kennedy's office states that he would regard any amendment that would "allow" grantees to provide adoption services as hostile to the legislation—whereas the AFLA, as it currently exists, *requires* grantees to provide adoption services—"pro-choice" now sounds like *no* choice?

It is interesting that the Kennedy set takes ex-Senator Denton's bill so seriously. Unfortunately, the bill's most likely defenders have not been as concerned.

Adoption advocates like the National Committee for Adoption (NCFA) are fighting vigorously to keep the bill, as it was originally written, alive. But they say it is often a lonely battle. Mary Beth Seader, NCFA vice president, says: "When we ask conservatives to support good, sound maternity programs, we find ourselves in a kind of Catch-22. They support the programs philosophically, but—among some—there is a distrust of governmental intrusion in private matters and an unwillingness to spend money. Meanwhile, the other side is spending like crazy. The result is that the common-sense, traditional family-values message doesn't get out to the very girls who need to hear it."

* * * * *

Amy was out of the hospital, and today was The Day. She couldn't decide what to wear. Finally, after pulling out almost everything in her closet, she settled on a purple blouse and some soft cotton slacks. She spent almost 45 minutes putting on her make-up. She wanted her face to be *vivid*. Poking through her jewelry case, she found some bright, dangling earrings and some bangle bracelets. Perfect, she thought. The baby could play with the jewelry if she got bored.

A case worker knocked on the door to see if Amy was ready. Together, they walked for three long minutes to the nursery. Amy's mind was racing: will she know I'm her mother? What if she cries? What if she spits up?

Amy put on a yellow paper gown, and sat down on a couch. Within moments, a nurse walked in with a tiny little girl. Amy was meeting her daughter for the first time since giving birth, a child whom—after what would be an hour and ten minutes of talking, worrying about hiccups, singing Amazing Grace ("it was the only song I could remember") and marveling at the blue eyes "that took up a whole face"—Amy would never see again.

CHRISTINE ALLISON

Just a few days before, Amy had relinquished her daughter for adoption.

"I watched as the nurse put my little girl into the crib and then wheeled her out. I cried like I never cried before and will never cry again. Before she left, I told her: Sweetie, no one loves you more than I do. But in a few days, you're going to meet your mommy and daddy. I gave you life, but they will give you a family."

Teenagers are not known to be giants of introspection. But with the kind of counseling Amy and Diana and Tiffany and Jane received through The Gladney Center, the girls are equipped to deal with the difficulty of their decision to give their children life . . . *and* a family. Their moral courage defies the modern imagination. And their simplicity and pure love reminds us that these little mothers are still, in many ways, children themselves.

The pro-life movement fights for the sanctity of life. And this life, which we hold sacred, is a life of wombs exploding, and blood rushing, and tears flowing, and blue eyes, that take up a whole face, staring back.

The young girls who choose life for their children have responded to the primeval call of motherhood, something deeper and truer than politicians and statistics and people called F.O.B.'s. Yet they will be as anachronistic as the sobbing young girls in the iron beds, unless adoption is better understood, and accepted and shared, as a loving "third" choice. The "choicers" understand it very well: choosing adoption means choosing life.

Feminism and Abortion

Martha Bayles

SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR HAS OBSERVED that "*Roe v. Wade* is on a collision course with itself." Justice O'Connor was referring to medical advances since 1973 that make it easier both to destroy potential life and to preserve it. Her meaning is vividly illustrated by those rare but disturbing cases in which a second- or third-trimester abortion yields a living infant, which must then be either killed or rushed to another part of the hospital for the latest in neonatal care.

But Justice O'Connor could just as well have been referring to the contradictions at the heart of contemporary feminism. Like the majority of Americans, I have reservations about both the pro-choice and the pro-life extremes. But I also feel that there is an imbalance between the degrees of criticism aimed at the two sides: not enough attention has been paid to the twisted logic of pro-choice rhetoric. This essay will try to redress that imbalance, by first sketching the course of recent feminist history and then dissecting some of the hypocrisies and contradictions used by pro-choice advocates to justify the absolute right to abortion.

Contemporary feminism began as a revolt against the traditional female role as it was experienced by the generation of college-educated women who in the 1950s attempted to make a full-time occupation of domesticity. To a large extent it was inspired by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which began as a survey of Friedan's former classmates at Smith and grew into a polemic about the psychological frustrations experienced by women who exchanged the relatively egalitarian world of the college campus for the "comfortable concentration camps" of middle-class suburbia. Restless and sometimes envious of their husbands' careers, Friedan's "trapped housewives" wanted to pursue the basically liberal goal of freedom and autonomy on an equal basis with men. Soon a movement arose to break out of the stifling private sphere inhabited by females and enter the breezy public forum dominated by males.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the forum. Try as they

Martha Bayles is a cultural critic who contributes a regular column to *The Wall Street Journal*. This article first appeared in *The Atlantic* (April, 1990), and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

would, the feminists of the 1960s and 1970s could not extirpate the reality of gender differences. For the radical fringe, the persistence of such differences was proof that female oppression was the most deeply ingrained injustice in history—"metaphysical cannibalism," Ti-Grace Atkinson called it. But mainstream feminists did not feel drawn to this sisterhood, which was based on hatred for the essential experiences of womanhood. Beginning in the universities, many of them sought ways to accept gender differences without sacrificing equality.

From Equality to Superiority

These efforts at first had an unassailable logic. Objecting that the apocalyptic visions of the radicals dehumanized women as passive victims, scholars in the field of women's studies began upgrading the image of traditional womanhood in history, literature, and the social sciences. The political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain describes the process this way:

Another strain of feminist thought, best called "difference feminism," questioned the move towards full assimilation of female identity with public male identity and argued that to see women's traditional roles and activities as *wholly* oppressive was itself oppressive to women, denying them historic subjectivity and moral agency.

For some feminists, this upgrading led to a new acceptance of domesticity. For others, it led to a new and more subtle radicalism, as they persuaded first themselves and then the university that the differences between the sexes extended to modes of thinking—not just in women's studies but in every other subject, from aardvarks to zymology. And lest this new difference be confused with the old one that relegated women to mental inferiority, a number of scholars were on hand to suggest that the female mode was superior.

One influential book was the psychologist Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982). Gilligan concluded, from a study of moral reasoning in both sexes, that men reason from public-oriented ideas of individual rights and fair play, while women reason from private-oriented ideas of responsibility and caring for others. When the book was published, some of Gilligan's Harvard colleagues observed that this distinction—between justice and mercy, broadly construed—is as old as the Western philosophical tradition. At the same time, other scholars were reminding feminists that an idealized notion of nurturing, peace-loving womanhood was the keystone of both

the nineteenth-century bourgeois family and the “moral uplift” movement that spawned helping professions like social work.

But these comparisons were spurned by those academic feminists who preferred to believe that social science had proved the existence of a separate, and morally superior, female mind with a distinctive set of values. Once upon a time university women had argued that scientific reason had no gender, and that aesthetic imagination was androgynous. But no longer. It wasn't in their interest. Instead, they had every incentive, material and otherwise, to join the feminist guild and subscribe to this new strain of feminist thought—best called “superiority feminism.” Here feminism took an unfortunate turn, because a sense of superiority is hard to control. It is one thing to upgrade the image of heroines in Victorian novels, and quite another to adjust your opinion of unliberated housewives, Bible-quoting ministers, and conservative Republicans lobbying against the Equal Rights Amendment.

When it comes to politics, feminists still claim today, as Friedan claimed in 1963, that the frustration of the few is shared by the many. Yet even back in 1963 this claim was mistaken, because the peculiarly stifling circumstances described in *The Feminine Mystique* simply didn't obtain for most women. And today, despite a rise in female employment and a decline in family stability, there are still a great many women who spend their married lives in the same community where they grew up, who don't aspire to college and career, and, perhaps most important, who don't envy their husbands' work experience. The majority of men and women who must earn their living in ways that are not especially stimulating or enriching still embrace the ideal (if not always the reality) of women's providing for their families what Christopher Lasch has called a “haven in a heartless world.”

To sum up, in the family and the workplace feminists deny the legitimacy of gender-based divisions of labor. “We are individuals,” they intone, “and our role in homemaking and breadwinning must be identical to that of men.” In the academy, however, feminists deny the possibility of gender-free research. “We are women,” they intone, “and our values and thought processes are different from and better than those of men.” For a long time this inconsistency showed up only when an especially ornery antifeminist—or perhaps the house-husband of a professor of women's studies—compared

the two separate spheres. But today it shows up in the heat of political debate, as pro-choice activists switch back and forth between the two kinds of feminism to defend the absolute right to abortion. Few activists take time to ponder the contradiction between a feminism that denies gender and one that institutionalizes it. Like most political actors, they use rhetoric for its persuasiveness, not its logic. But as I hope to show in my discussion of pro-choice reasoning, doublethink is not all that persuasive.

Who Owns Whose Flesh?

The original pro-choice argument is rooted in the classical liberal affirmation of every man's right to own his own body. Critical of liberalism for its failure to extend this right equally to women, pro-choicers define abortions as the essence of every *woman's* right to own *her* own body. In *Abortion & The Politics of Motherhood*, Kristin Luker's 1984 study of attitudes on both sides of the abortion debate, one activist put it this way: "we can get all the rights in the world . . . and none of them means a doggone thing if we don't own the flesh we stand in."

The obvious objection to this argument is that a fetus is not just part of a woman's body. For a while pro-choicers tried to meet this objection by dehumanizing the fetus. Some still do. For example, Jane Hodgson, the Minnesota physician who is currently challenging that state's parental-notification law before the Supreme Court, told *The Washington Post* that one way to reassure a patient after a first-trimester abortion is to show her the pan of "uterine contents." Dr. Hodgson also refers to the object of such a procedure as "a few embryonic cells." By using such phrases the seventy-four-year-old Hodgson is echoing the tones of an earlier era. In the face of the passionate rhetoric of the pro-life movement, to say nothing of public opinion, which has never wavered in its support of tighter restrictions on later abortions (a position that does not deny the fetus humanity so much as assign it greater weight as it becomes more likely to develop into a child), pro-choice activists have nothing to gain from using such clinical and dehumanizing language.

The more up-to-date pro-choice arguments are rooted in superiority feminism's elevation of the "private" morality of women over the "public" morality of men. In this spirit pro-choicers define abortion as an intensely *personal* experience that no man can judge. Bella Abzug anticipated this view in 1980 when she attacked Jimmy Carter's

“‘personal’ objections to abortion” as “biologically inappropriate.” With this phrase Abzug reveals the bogus logic of declaring the subject of abortion off limits to men. Since when has biology determined the arenas in which human beings can make moral judgments?

In a similar vein pro-choicers define abortion as a family matter that is no business of politicians. Thus the claim, made before the Supreme Court by the American Civil Liberties Union, that the Minnesota law requiring notification of both parents in cases of teenage abortion “tramples on the integrity of families.” And thus Planned Parenthood’s insistence that cuts in federal funding for abortion counseling are “an outrageous assault on the American family.”

To clarify the doublethink in such rhetoric, consider the language used by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court last year in ruling against two pro-life activists who tried to prevent an abortion on a comatose woman named Nancy Klein. The abortion had been sought by Klein’s husband, in consultation with her parents and her doctor, in the hope that it would increase her chances of recovery. The court said that “absolute strangers to the Klein family, whatever their motivation, have no place in this family tragedy.”

Appropriate though this language may be to the unhappy case of Nancy Klein, it is also misleading, in exactly the same way that the pro-choice activists’ pro-family, anti-government rhetoric is misleading. “Absolute strangers” are not the only people who “have no place” in abortion decisions. If Klein had not been in a coma, she would have been legally entitled to decide between destroying and preserving this particular unborn life without consulting either its father or its grandparents. All the pro-family rhetoric in the world cannot change this blunt fact. After *Roe v. Wade* abortion is not a family decision. It is the decision of one class of individuals—pregnant women—who have been designated, in Orwell’s pithy phrase, “more equal than others.”

The Materfamilias

Granted, there is nothing new about vesting a class of people with life-or-death power over their families. Such is the original definition of patriarchy. In ancient Rome, for example, a great many political, economic, and religious powers resided in the male heads of tribes, clans, and households. Among these was the power to commit infanticide. If a newborn was deemed healthy and supportable by the paterfamilias,

it was initiated into the family with the proper rites. If not, it was smothered or drowned.

In Rome infanticide was not considered murder, any more than abortion is considered murder by the majority of Americans today. But the Romans regarded infanticide as a very grave act, which is why it could be performed only by the paterfamilias. In the sense that our present abortion law vests the pregnant woman with the power to commit a similarly grave act, it's tempting to dub her the "materfamilias." But of course she is nothing of the kind. The stern powers of the paterfamilias were fused with stern duties, such as atoning for crimes committed by the members of his household. In the organic metaphor we've inherited from the Romans (by way of Christian views of natural law), the "members" and the "heads" of families and other social institutions are bound by ties so powerful that they can be severed only by a kind of amputation.

Since the seventeenth century this organic metaphor has been challenged by liberalism's depiction of social institutions not as organisms made up of consanguine parts but as contractual arrangements between consenting individuals. The feminists' complaint against liberalism is that it has never, despite its contractual ethos, stopped conceiving of the family as an organic institution. As the political philosopher Susan Moller Okin has put it, liberalism still takes a "prescriptive view of woman's nature and proper mode of life based on her role and functions in a patriarchal family structure." That is why the chief goal of feminists like Okin is to restructure the family as a totally contractual arrangement from which anyone, but especially any woman, may withdraw at will.

But is this goal morally defensible? There's a very good reason why liberalism has never stopped seeing the family as an organic institution. Beginning with John Locke, liberalism has understood that not all human ties are contractual—most notably the tie between a parent and a child. Locke distinguished between legitimate political power, which may extend to life and death because it derives from the consent of the governed, and parental power, which may extend only to preserving the life of the child, because it does not, and cannot, derive from the consent of the child.

This crucial distinction collapses every time pro-choice arguments flip-flop between the language of individual rights and that of nurturant femininity. Pro-choicers begin by asserting equal rights for women—a line of reasoning that challenges the organic basis of family

relationships. But equal rights are not enough when it comes to abortion, a decision that must balance women's rights against those of others, such as fetuses and family members. So pro-choicers define women's rights as more than equal, on the grounds that female decision-making partakes of a special moral wisdom. But what is the source of that wisdom? Not women's character or achievement as individuals but their membership in a class whose nature it is to care for other—a definition of womanhood that is nothing if not organic.

Bring on the Bull

By such maneuvering, pro-choice advocates can usually avoid admitting that the relationship between a woman and a fetus is not contractual. But if not contractual, then it must be organic—an outcome that leaves pro-choicers with only two options. They can deny the humanity of the fetus, which (as we've seen) is both unpopular and unproductive. Or they can change the subject.

Because the comparison between maternal and fetal consent favors the fetus, the logical solution is to shift to a comparison that favors the woman—that is, between the degrees of consent exercised by men and women having sex. In its wisdom (which has remained remarkably consistent over the years), public opinion tolerates legal abortion in cases of coercive sex, such as rape and incest. But this consensus isn't good enough for those pro-choice activists who have an overriding rhetorical need to stress female, as opposed to fetal, helplessness. Their hypocrisy peaks when, after granting women life-and-death power over the unborn, they depict sexual relations as beyond women's control—the rhetoric that harks back to the old militant equation of sex and rape, as expressed by the activist who told Kristin Luker that without abortion, women would have “about as many rights as the cow in the pasture that's taken to the bull once a year.”

This is not to suggest that the activists counsel sexual restraint. Like most “progressive” people, they have a horror of appearing prudish. Nor do they want to revive the old double standard that gave men more sexual liberty than women. Yet their dislike of male irresponsibility makes it tricky to advocate similar behavior in women. Perforce, they resolve the conflict by taking the “me first” ethic of the sexual revolution and cloaking it in the “caring” verbiage of superiority feminism. Here is Luker's summary of the pro-choice view of sex:

MARTHA BAYLES

Because mobilizing such delicate social and emotional resources as trust, caring, and intimacy requires *practice*, pro-choice people do not denigrate sexual experiences that fall short of achieving transcendence. They judge individual cases of premarital sex, contraception, and infidelity according to the ways in which they enhance or detract from conditions of trust and caring. In their value scheme, something that gives people opportunities for intimacy simply cannot be seen as wrong.

Does this mean that when Hank Williams sang "Your Cheatin' Heart," he was really singing about a practice mobilization of delicate trusting and caring resources by a person given an opportunity for intimacy? More likely, Hank meant that the human objects of trust, caring, and intimacy shouldn't be batted around for practice, like so many interchangeable tennis balls. Since the main purpose of such verbiage is to rationalize self-indulgence, it's no wonder that such verbiage also dominates feminist discussions of the higher morality of abortion.

Family Pictures

Take Carol Gilligan's pivotal study of "concepts of self and morality" in a group of women considering abortion. There's nothing objectionable about her claim that women faced with unwanted pregnancies tend to weigh "selfishness" against "responsibility." But there's plenty objectionable about her tortured efforts to interpret abortion as *always a responsible decision*. According to her discussion, the women who were Catholic concluded that the "honesty and truth" of their own desires was worth more than the Catholic "conventions that equate goodness with self-sacrifice." The single women, mired in dead-end affairs with exploitative Don Juans, decided that destroying their lover's potential offspring was a way of affirming their self-esteem. And one twenty-nine-year-old married woman reasoned that it was selfish to bear her child and adult to abort it.

In Gilligan's view, a woman is not permitted to put the needs of other people first, because "self-sacrifice" is the linchpin of female oppression. Instead, she is expected to ascend to a higher level of enlightened self-regard, where the act of putting her own needs first is tantamount to striking a blow for women's freedom. But what if the other people involved are also women? Consider the scenario of the pregnant teenager who decides, against the wishes of her mother, to abort a female fetus. In the one instance, she is depriving an older female of a grandchild. In the other, she is depriving a younger female of life. Compared with such deprivations, the idea of striking

a blow for women's freedom seems pretty abstract, impersonal, and public—rather like Gilligan's stereotype of male moral reasoning.

The above scenario may not be typical, but neither is it as lurid as the picture of the American family currently being drawn by pro-choice activists opposing the various state laws that are trying, in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision, to restore the attenuated interests of other family members in the life of the unborn. Again, the goal of pro-choice rhetoric is to emphasize female helplessness. But because the battleground is now the family itself, the rhetoric of abuse and violation gets applied to the parents of minors seeking abortions. In a full-page ad in *The New York Times*, Planned Parenthood explains "What's Wrong With Parental Consent" as follows: "Indeed, after hearing evidence of family conflict and brutal violence, an appeals judge wrote 'compelling parental notice . . . is almost always disastrous.'"

Never mind the deliberate confusion of "parental consent" with "parental notice." Just look at the model of family life offered by pro-choice activists and their allies as the basis for law. On the one hand, minors should have complete sexual license, because younger people need to practice those all-important skills of trust, caring, and intimacy. On the other hand, parents should be kept in the dark, because older people cannot be trusted to refrain from brutal violence. A favorite variation on this theme is the tale of the molesting father who murders his daughter after learning that she is pregnant with his child. The activists don't want the law to make provisions for these grim exceptions; they want it to enshrine them as the rule.

Fewer Females?

We now arrive at the real legacy of feminist doublethink, with its contempt for the values of the unliberated majority and its misplaced faith in the superiority of female moral reasoning. Substitute "feminist superiority" for "female superiority," and the actual tendency of the movement becomes clear. Not only does feminist doublethink accord women the exclusive power to terminate potential life while absolving them of any responsibility for having conceived life in the first place; this doublethink also extends its influence, by way of the helping professionals and judges under its sway, over the poor, the confused, and the underaged, who are urged to heed the feminist message over the advice of their own families.

Nor is this power being exercised in the name of a clearly defined

MARTHA BAYLES

kinship group, as was the power of the Roman paterfamilias. Rather it is being wielded in the name of all women, a category that includes not only the majority of people who disagree with the pro-choice position on abortion but also half the potential lives being aborted. It's a measure of feminist fanaticism that only recently have pro-choice activists announced their unwillingness to defend abortion as a method of sex selection. Perhaps it occurred to them that sex-preferential practices have historically favored the male, and that by sanctioning such abortions, they are quite likely causing fewer females to be born. If this was their reasoning, then it's time to stand back and watch feminism collide with itself.

Conservatism against Itself

Christopher Lasch

THE QUESTION BEFORE US is whether cultural conservatism is compatible with economic liberalism, the political philosophy of capitalism. Since the answer will depend, in the first place, on just what is meant by cultural conservatism, I propose to begin, not with an abstract definition of this term, but with an analysis of the way in which conservative values enter the current controversy about abortion—the best example of the cultural conflict that is polarizing American society.

Kristin Luker's study of the abortion controversy shows that it originates not in abstract speculation about the rights of the unborn but in opposing views of the future. "I think people are foolish to worry about things in the future," an anti-abortion activist declares. "The future takes care of itself." Another woman active in the pro-life movement says that "you can't plan everything in life." For the pro-choice forces, however, the "quality of life" depends on planned parenthood and other forms of rational planning for the future. From their point of view, it is irresponsible to bring children into the world when they cannot be provided with the full range of material and cultural assets essential to successful competition. It is unfair to saddle children with handicaps in the race for success: congenital defects, poverty, or a deficiency of parental love. Teenage pregnancy is objectionable to advocates of legalized abortion not because they object to premarital sex but because adolescents, in their view, have no means of giving their offspring the advantages they deserve.

For opponents of abortion, however, this solicitude for the "quality of life" looks like a decision to subordinate ethical and emotional interests to economic interests. They believe that children need ethical guidance more than they need economic advantages. Motherhood is a "huge job," in their eyes, not because it implies long-range financial planning but because "you're responsible, as far as you possibly can be, for educating and teaching them . . . what you

Christopher Lasch, a professor of history at the University of Rochester, is the author of *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The Minimal Self*. This article first appeared in *First Things* (April, 1990), a new "Journal of Religion and Public Life," and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

believe is right—moral values and responsibilities and rights.” Women opposed to abortion are not convinced that financial security has to be seen as an indispensable precondition of motherhood.

“The values and beliefs of pro-choice [people] diametrically oppose those of pro-life people,” Luker writes. Pro-life activists regard motherhood as a demanding vocation and resent the feminist disparagement of housework and motherhood. They agree that women ought to get equal pay for equal work in the marketplace, but they do not agree that unpaid work in the home is degrading and oppressive. What they find “disturbing [in] the whole abortion mentality,” as one of them puts it, “is the idea that family duties—rearing children, managing a home, loving and caring for a husband—are somehow degrading to women.” They find the pretense that “there are no important differences between men and women” utterly unconvincing. They believe that men and women “were created differently and . . . meant to complement each other.” Upper-middle-class feminists, on the other hand, see the belief in biologically determined gender differences as the ideological basis of women’s oppression.

Their opposition to a biological view of human nature goes beyond the contention that it serves to deprive women of their rights. Their insistence that women ought to assume “control over their bodies” evinces an impatience with biological constraints of any kind, together with a belief that modern technology has liberated humanity from those constraints and made it possible for the first time to engineer a better life for the human race as a whole. Pro-choice people welcome the medical technologies that make it possible to detect birth defects in the womb, and they cannot understand why anyone would knowingly wish to bring a “damaged” child, or for that matter an “unwanted” child, into the world. In their eyes, an unwillingness to grant such children’s “right not to be born” might itself be considered evidence of unfitness for parenthood.

For people in the right-to-life movement, this kind of thinking leads logically to full-scale genetic engineering, to an arrogant assumption of the power to make summary judgments about the “quality of life,” and to a willingness to consign not only a “defective” fetus but whole categories of defective or superfluous individuals to the status of non-persons. A pro-life activist whose infant daughter died of a lung disease objects to the “idea that my baby’s life, in a lot of people’s eyes, wouldn’t have been very meaningful. . . . She only lived twenty-seven days, and that’s not a very long time, but whether

we live ninety-nine years or two hours or twenty-seven days, being human is being human, and what it involves, we really don't understand."

Perhaps it is the suggestion that "we really don't understand" what it means to be human that most deeply divides the two parties to the abortion debate. For liberals, such an admission amounts to betrayal not only of the rights of women but of the whole modern project: the conquest of necessity and the substitution of human choice for the blind workings of nature. An unquestioning faith in the capacity of human existence, ultimately the secret of creation itself, links the seemingly contradictory positions held by liberals—that abortion is an "ethical private decision" and sex a transaction between "consenting adults" but that the state might well reserve the right to license pregnancy or even to embark on far-reaching programs of eugenic engineering.

The uneasy coexistence of ethical individualism and medical collectivism grows out of separation of sex from procreation, which makes sex a matter of private choice while leaving open the possibility that procreation and childrearing might be subjected to stringent public controls. The objection that sex and procreation cannot be severed without losing sight of the mystery surrounding both strikes liberals as the worst kind of theological obscurantism. For opponents of abortion, on the other hand, "God is the creator of life, and . . . sexual activity should be open to that. . . . The contraceptive mentality denies his will, 'It's my will, not your will.'"

If the abortion debate confined itself to the question of just when an embryo becomes a person, it would be hard to understand why it elicits such passionate emotions or why it has become the object of political attention seemingly disproportionate to its intrinsic importance. But abortion is not just a medical issue or even a woman's issue that has become the focus of a larger controversy about feminism. It is first and foremost a class issue.

Lower-middle class culture, now as in the past, is organized around the family, church, and neighborhood. It values the community's continuity more highly than individual advancement, solidarity more highly than social mobility. Conventional ideals of success play a less important part in lower-middle class life than the maintenance of existing ways. Parents want their children to get ahead, but they also want them to be good: to respect their elders, resist the temptation to lie and cheat, willingly shoulder the responsibilities that fall to

their lot, and bear adversity with fortitude. The desire "to preserve their way of life," as E. E. LeMasters writes in a study of construction workers, takes precedence over the desire to climb the social ladder. "If my boy wants to wear a goddamn necktie all his life and bow and scrape to some boss, that's his right, but by God he should also have the right to earn an honest living with his hands if that is what he likes."

Sociologists have observed, usually with a suggestion of disapproval, that working people seem to have no ambition. According to Lloyd Warner, working-class housewives set the dominant tone of cultural conservatism. They adhere to a "rigid" and "conventional" code of morality and seldom dare to "attempt anything new." Proposals that seem to represent "departures from the conventional way of doing things" meet with their automatic condemnation. These housewives clearly have a "strong determination to do their tasks well" and derive "deep satisfaction from discharging their responsibilities to their families and to their friends," but they take no interest in long-range goals. "Their hopes are basically centered around carrying on [and] take the form of not wanting their present routine disturbed—they want to continue as they are, but, while doing so, better their circumstances and gain more freedom."

Anthony Lukas makes the same point, without censure, in his remarkably even-handed account of the Boston school wars of the mid-seventies. Lukas contrasts the "Charlestown ethic of getting by" with the "American imperative to get ahead." The people of Charlestown, deserted by the movement of more ambitious neighbors to the suburbs, have renounced "opportunity, advancement, adventure" for the "reassurance of community, solidarity and camaraderie."

Upper-middle-class observers cannot conceal their contempt for what they see as petit-bourgeois fatalism. An essay attempting to explain "Underutilization of Medical-Care Services by Blue-Collarites" notes that social classes in America are divided by contrasting conceptions of the body. "It is as though the white collar class thinks of the body as a machine to be preserved and kept in perfect functioning condition, whether through prosthetic devices, rehabilitation, cosmetic surgery, or perpetual treatment, whereas blue-collar groups think of the body as having a limited span of utility: to be enjoyed in youth and then to suffer with and to endure stoically with age and decrepitude." One might suppose that working-class realism should be morally preferable to the upper-middle-class conception of the

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

body as a machine requiring “perpetual treatment.” The authors of this article, however, draw the opposite conclusion. A stoic acceptance of bodily decline, they argue, reflects a “damaged self-image.”

An analysis of recent cultural conflicts reinforces the conclusion prompted by exposure to conservative traditions of political and social thought, that the essence of cultural conservatism is a certain respect for limits. The central conservative insight is that human freedom is constrained by the natural conditions of human life, by the weight of history, by the fallibility of human judgment, and by the perversity of the human will. Conservatives are often accused of an exaggerated esteem for the past, but it is not the moral superiority of the past so much as its inescapability that impresses them. What we are is largely inherited, in the form of gender, genetic endowment, institutions, predispositions—including the universal predisposition to resent these constraints on our freedom and to dream of abolishing them. What was called original sin, in a bygone age, referred to the most troubling aspect of our natural inheritance—our natural incapacity for graceful submission to our subordinate position in the larger scheme of things.

No doubt conservatives have been too quick to confuse submission to the natural limits on human freedom with submission to established political authority. The existing distribution of political power is not ordained by nature, let alone by heaven; but it does not follow, because our institutions can be modified by an act of collective will, that we can become anything we choose or even that we can alter the political conditions of our existence without paying a price. The value of conservatism lies in the understanding that those who seek to escape the past forfeit any hope of coming to terms with it and expose themselves to an unexpected return of the repressed; that we can never wholly overcome our origins; and that freedom, accordingly, begins with an acknowledgment of the constraints within which it has to operate.

Conservatism is not necessarily authoritarian and hierarchical in its implications. If conservatives are insufficiently critical of existing institutions and the traditions behind them, it is because their understanding of human fallibility makes them see the need for structures that discipline the rebellious heart and at the same time provide moral support in the midst of life’s uncertainties and disappointments. The same appreciation of human weakness and rebellion has egalitarian

implications that can counter the tendency to equate social order with hierarchy.

Another countervailing tendency in conservative thought is the preference for local over centralized authority. Precisely because conservatives understand how easily we succumb to temptation, the temptations of power most of all, they try to see to it that power is dispersed as widely as possible. A sense of limits reveals itself, in another way, in the conservative belief that we love and respect particular individuals, not humanity as a whole, and that the seductive promise of universal brotherhood is a poor substitute for local communities in which the holders of power are immediately accountable to their neighbors.

If conservatism is understood to imply a respect for limits, it is clearly incompatible with modern capitalism or with the liberal ideology of unlimited economic growth. Historically, economic liberalism rested on the belief that man's insatiable appetites, formerly condemned as a source of social instability and personal unhappiness, could drive the economic machine—just as man's insatiable curiosity drove the scientific project—and thus ensure a never-ending expansion of productive forces. For the eighteenth-century founders of political economy, the self-generating character of rising expectations, newly acquired needs and tastes, and new standards of personal comfort gave rise to a form of society capable of indefinite expansion. Their break with older ways of thinking lay in the assertion that human needs should be regarded not as natural but as historical, hence insatiable. As the supply of material comforts increased, standards of comfort increased as well, and the category of necessities came to include goods formerly regarded as luxuries. Envy, pride, and ambition made human beings want more than they needed, but these "private vices" became "public virtues" by stimulating industry and invention. Thrift and self-denial, on the other hand, meant economic stagnation. "We shall find innocence and honesty no more general," wrote Bernard Mandeville, "than among the most illiterate, the poor silly country people." The "pleasures of luxury and the profit of commerce," according to David Hume, "roused men from their indolence" and led to "further improvements in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade." Both Hume and Adam Smith argued that a growing desire for material comforts, wrongly taken by republican critics of commerce as a sign of decadence and impending social collapse, generated new employments, new wealth, and a

constantly rising level of productivity.

Smith did not hesitate to call attention to the morally problematic features of the new order. Because he was so confident that the beguiling prospect of universal abundance would sweep aside any lingering objections to its ethical implications, he could afford to acknowledge that liberal capitalism was fueled by ambition, vanity, greed, and a morally misplaced respect for the “pleasures of the vain and empty distinctions of greatness.” In the “languor of disease and the weariness of old age,” the moral insignificance of worldly goods appeared in its true light, according to Smith, since neither possessions nor even the beauty and utility so widely admired in “any production of art” proved capable, under conditions of adversity, of bringing true happiness. Man seldom looked at the matter in this “abstract and philosophical light,” however, and “it is well that nature imposes upon us in this manner,” Smith wrote in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in a passage that alluded for the first time to the “invisible hand” that leads men to accumulate wealth and thus inadvertently to serve as social benefactors in their pursuit of deceptively attractive but ultimately empty possessions. “It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind.”

The philosophers of plenty, even if they remained untroubled by the “deception” at the heart of their system, could not entirely suppress the more practical reservation that a social order founded on the promise of universal abundance might find it hard to justify even the minimal sacrifices presupposed by an otherwise self-regulating economy. Hume pointed out that an ethic of abundance might weaken even the residual inclination to defer gratification. Human beings “are always much inclin’d to prefer present interest to distant and remote,” he observed; “nor is it easy for them to resist the temptation of any advantage that they may immediately enjoy.” As long as “the pleasures of life are few,” this form of temptation did not pose a great threat to social order. Commercial societies, however, could be expected to intensify the pursuit of “feverish, empty amusements”; and the “avidity . . . of acquiring goods and possessions,” Hume warned, “is insatiable, prepetual, universal, and indirectly destructive of society.”

In the nineteenth century, the hope that commerce would make men “easy and sociable,” not acquisitive and rapacious, came to rest largely on the institutionalization of deferred gratification supposedly

provided by the family. Nineteenth-century philanthropists, humanitarians, and social reformers argued with one voice that the revolution of rising expectations meant a higher standard of domestic life, not an orgy of self-indulgence activated by fantasies of inordinate personal wealth, of riches painlessly acquired through speculation or fraud, of an abundance of wine and women. That a commercial society fostered such ambitions troubled them no end, and it was to counter this tawdry dream of success, this unbridled urge to strike it rich, that proponents of a more orderly economic development attached so much importance to the family. The obligation to support a wife and children, in their view, would discipline possessive individualism and transform the potential gambler, speculator, dandy, or confidence man into a conscientious provider. By tying consumption to the family, the guardians of public order hoped not only to stimulate but to civilize it. Their confidence that new standards of comfort would not only promote economic expansion but level class distinctions, bring nations together, and even abolish war is impossible to understand unless we remember that it rested on the domestication of ambitions and desire.

In the long run, of course, this attempt to build up the family as a counterweight to the acquisitive spirit was a lost cause. The more closely capitalism came to be identified with immediate gratification and planned obsolescence, the more relentlessly it wore away the moral foundations of family life. The rising divorce rate, already a source of anxious concern in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, seemed to reflect a growing impatience with the constraints imposed by long-term responsibilities and commitments. The passion to get ahead had begun to imply the right to make a "fresh start" whenever earlier commitments became unduly burdensome.

Economic development weakened the economic as well as the moral foundations of the "well ordered family state" so highly prized by nineteenth-century liberals. The family business gave way to the corporation, the family farm—more slowly and painfully—to a collectivized agriculture ultimately controlled by the same banking houses that had engineered the consolidation of industry. The agrarian uprising of the 1870s, '80s, and '90s proved to be the first round in a long, losing struggle to save the family farm, enshrined in American mythology, even today, as the sine qua non of a good society but subjected in practice to a ruinous cycle of mechanization, indebtedness, and overproduction.

Capitalism's relentless erosion of proprietary institutions furnishes the clearest evidence of its incompatibility with anything that deserves the name of cultural conservatism. There is obviously a good deal to be said, from a conservative point of view, for the institution of private property, which teaches the virtues of responsibility, workmanship, and self-subordinating devotion to humble but indispensable tasks. Twentieth-century capitalism, however, has replaced private property with a corporate form of property that confers none of these moral and cultural advantages. The transformation of artisans, farmers and other small proprietors into wage-earners undermines the "traditional values" conservatives seek to preserve.

Even the "family wage," the last attempt to safeguard the independence of the producing classes, has gone the way of the family business and the family farm. It is no longer an unwritten law of American capitalism that industry will attempt to maintain wages at a level that allows a single wage to support a family. By 1976, only 40 percent of all jobs paid enough to support a family. This trend reflects, among other things, a radical de-skilling of the work force, the substitution of machinery for skilled labor, and a vast increase in the number of low-paying unskilled jobs, many of which, of course, are now filled by women. It also reflects the triumph of a consumerist ethic that encourages American males to define themselves not as breadwinners but as sybarites, lovers, connoisseurs of sex and style—in short as playboys, to use Hugh Hefner's revealing term. The idea that a man has an obligation to support a wife and family is just as distasteful to the editors of *Playboy* as it is to militant feminists, who have their own reasons for rejecting "family values."

The family wage was itself a poor substitute, even when practice conformed to theory, for proprietorship. In the early nineteenth century, it was almost universally agreed that democracy had to rest on the widest possible distribution of property ownership. After the Civil War, the emergence of a class of wage-earners—men and women with little hope of acquiring property—raised serious questions about the future of democracy.

Even those who had no quarrel with capitalism, like E. L. Godkin (editor of the *Nation* and the New York *Evening Post*), admitted the justice of the working man's aversion to "wage slavery." "The receipt of wages," Godkin noted in 1868, ". . . is regarded by the world as a badge of dependence, of social and moral inferiority." A man who worked for wages became a "servant, in the old sense

of the word—a person who has surrendered a certain portion of his social independence.” The objections to wage labor, Godkin added, were “very similar to those which may be alleged against the exclusion of a large proportion of the population from participation in the work of government . . . Until the working classes take an intelligent and active part, that is, participate with their heads as well as their hands in the industrial operations of the day, our social conditions must be pronounced unsound.”

Godkin, a nineteenth-century liberal whose social instincts were thoroughly conservative, did not flinch, at least at first, from the implications of his position. The only way to preserve the moral advantages of individual proprietorship under modern conditions of production, he argued, was some form of cooperative enterprise. Otherwise “the owners of capital and the owners of labor must form two separate and distinct classes,” each with its characteristic pathology—a snobbish and unwarranted sense of superiority in the one, servile habits of dependency in the other.

Godkin’s only mistake lay in supposing that cooperative enterprise could flourish under a fully developed system of capitalist production. When hardpressed farmers formed cooperatives in order to hang onto their land and avoid sinking into tenancy, the banks crushed their movement by withholding credit. The embattled farmers, organizing themselves as the Populist party, then sought credit from the federal government. This initiative too was defeated with help of conservatives like Godkin, who were horrified by the suggestion that the state could legitimately interfere with the laws of supply and demand—the first step toward communism, in their view.

What conservatives did not seem to understand was that the laws of supply and demand had already been abrogated by a whole series of policies that discriminated in favor of large business corporations at the expense of every other interest. In effect, governmental policy, not only in the United States but in other industrializing countries as well, subsidized one form of cooperation—the multi-million dollar corporation—while discouraging others. Neither small-scale property ownership nor its moral equivalent, cooperative enterprise among small producers and craftsmen, could flourish without the support of state policies far more radical than anything conservatives were prepared to consider.

Most conservatives, in fact, did not pursue the matter even as far as Godkin did. They did not admit the need for cooperation

in any form. They thought of the corporation itself as if it were an individual under the law. They individualized workers as well, refusing to concede the need for working-class organization in any form. They clung to the delusion that wage-earning was only a temporary condition and that any worker could easily become a capitalist if he was determined to succeed. The pretense that proprietorship was still open to anyone with the requisite ambition discredited conservatism in the opinion of serious thinkers.

Herbert Croly, the founding editor of the *New Republic* and a guild socialist of sorts, summed up the whole question of proprietorship very clearly in 1914, at the same time that he explained what was wrong with the conservative answer. In an earlier America, "pioneer or territorial democrats," as Croly called them, "had every promise of ultimate economic independence, possessed as they were of their free-holds." But the private "appropriation of the public domain rapidly converted the American people from a freeholding into a wage-earning democracy" and raised the central question to which modern societies had not yet found the answer: "How can the wage-earners obtain an amount or a degree of economic independence analogous to that upon which the pioneer democrat could count?" Welfare programs, Croly argued—insurance against unemployment, sickness, and old age; measures enforcing safe and healthy conditions of work; a minimum wage—represented a very partial answer at best. Conservatives objected that such reforms would simply promote a "sense of dependence," and this criticism, Croly admitted, had a "great deal of force." The conservatives' own solution, however—"that the wage-earner's only hope is to become a property owner"—was so deeply inconsistent with the whole trend of modern industrialism that it was difficult to treat it "with patience and courtesy." The claim that saving and self-denial would enable workers to become proprietors was utterly unconvincing. "If wage-earners are to become free men"—and "the most important single task of modern democratic social organization" was to make them free men—something more than exhortations to work harder and spend less were going to be required.

That most conservatives have contented themselves with such exhortations provides a measure of the intellectual bankruptcy of twentieth-century conservatism. The bankruptcy of the left, on the other hand, reveals itself in the left's refusal to concede the validity

CHRISTOPHER LASCH

of conservative objections to the welfare state. The only consistent criticism of the "servile state," as it was called by Hilaire Belloc, came from those who demanded either the restoration of proprietorship (together with the the drastic measures required to prevent the accumulation of wealth and property in the hands of the few) or the equivalent of proprietorship in the form of some kind of cooperative production. The first solution describes the position of populists like Belloc and G. K. Chesterton; the second, that of syndicalists and guild socialists, who briefly challenged social democrats for leadership of the labor movement in the period immediately preceding World War I. According to Georges Sorel, the superiority of syndicalism to socialism lay in its appreciation of proprietorship, dismissed by socialists as the source of "petit-bourgeois" provincialism and cultural backwardness. Unimpressed by Marxian diatribes against the idiocy of rural life, syndicalists, Sorel thought, valued the "feelings of attachment inspired in every truly qualified worker by the productive forces entrusted to him." They respected the "peasant's love of his field, his vineyard, his barn, his cattle, and his bees."

That Sorel spoke of these possessions as things "entrusted" to man shows how radically he differed from Marxists, who shared the liberal view of nature as so much raw material to be turned to the purpose of human enjoyment. But he differed also from conservatives, who made a fetish of property ownership as such, not seeing that its value lay only in the encouragement it gave to craftsmanship, which could be encouraged in other ways. "All the virtues attributed to property would be meaningless without the virtues engendered by a certain way of working." It was not ownership so much as the opportunity for invention and self-reliance that made work interesting, and the same advantages could be recreated in factories, Sorel thought, once the workers themselves began to exercise responsibility for the design of production.

The syndicalist critique of capitalism carried real authority, because it rested on the insight that capitalism could not deliver on the promise that made it morally attractive in the first place—the promise of universal proprietorship. Syndicalists and guild socialists saw that slavery, not poverty, was the real issue, as G. D. H. Cole put it. They saw that the reduction of labor to a commodity—the essence of capitalism—required the elimination of all the social bonds that prevented the free circulation of labor. The destruction of the medieval guilds, the replacement of local government by a centralized bureaucracy,

the weakening of family ties, and the emancipation of women amounted to “successive steps in the . . . cheapening of the raw material of labor,” all achieved under the “watchword” of progress. Whereas Marxists accepted the collectivizing logic of capitalism and proposed simply to collectivize production more thoroughly, syndicalists, populists, and guild socialists condemned modern capitalism for profoundly conservative reasons—because it required (in the words of A. R. Orage, editor of *New Age*) the “progressive shattering to atoms of our social system.”

In the twentieth century, conservatism has incongruously allied itself with the free market, including the free market in labor. What passes for conservatism, in other words, has allied itself with the very forces that have brought about the “progressive shattering to atoms of our social system.” The defense of conservative values, it appears, cannot be entrusted to conservatives. If conservatism implies a respect for limits, localism, a work ethic as opposed to a consumerist ethic, a rejection of unlimited economic growth, and a certain skepticism about the ideology of progress, it is more likely to find a home in the populist tradition than in the free-market tradition of mainstream conservatism.

¶ It is suggestive that the American right owes much of its recent success to its claim to stand in the populist succession. Spokesmen for the new right present themselves, like the populists of old, as the enemies of wealth and privilege, champions of the “average man on the street,” in the words of George Wallace: the “man in the textile mill,” the “man in the steel mill,” the “barber” and “beautician,” the “policeman on the beat,” the “little businessman.” The right’s attack on the “new class” invokes social classifications steeped in the populist tradition, appealing to the “producing classes” to rise up against a parasitic class of professional problem-solvers and moral relativists. Thus William Rusher refers to the emergence of a “‘verbalist’ elite,” “neither businessmen nor manufacturers, blue-collar workers or farmers,” as the “great central fact” of recent American history. “The producers of America,” Rusher says, “. . . have a common economic interest in limiting the growth of this rapacious new non-producing class.”

The importance of “social issues” in the rise of the new right—abortion, affirmative action, busing, education, the media, liberal “permissiveness”—has often been noted. These issues dramatize the

conflict between the family-centered culture of the lower middle class and the enlightened culture of upper-middle-class professionals. No doubt racial resentments have also contributed to the rise of the new right, but to see nothing more than a "white backlash" in the rejection of liberalism is to miss the class antagonisms underlying the cultural civil war. What is being rejected is not just racial liberalism but the whole "culture of critical discourse," as Alvin Gouldner has described the outlook of the new class—the impatience with constraints imposed by the past, the belief that personal and intellectual growth demands a repudiation of our parents, the eagerness to question everything, the habit of mockery and irreverence. Petit-bourgeois values, as we have seen, are directly opposed to the enlightened ethic of personal liberation and self-discovery. They are the product of experiences that are more likely to foster an awareness of the limits that thwart human aspiration than a sense of endless possibility. It was these petit-bourgeois values that informed the populist tradition in the past and now find expression in the cultural politics of the new right.

The cultural populism of the right is a populism largely divested of its economic and political content, and it therefore does not address the issue that ought to engage the imagination of conservatives: how to preserve the moral advantages of proprietorship in a world of large-scale production and giant organizations. This question poses such formidable difficulties that attempts to grapple with it can easily lead to frustration and a sense of futility. Nevertheless, it is an inescapable question, and not only for cultural conservatives.

The dominant ideology in the West, the ideology of progress, has always rested on the expectation that economic abundance would eventually give everyone access to leisure, cultivation, refinement—advantages formerly restricted to the wealthy. Luxury for all: such was the dream of progress at its most compelling. Even if this were a morally desirable goal, however, it is no longer a feasible goal, since the resources required to sustain universal affluence, hitherto imagined to be inexhaustible, are currently approaching their limit. A more equitable distribution of wealth, it is now clear, requires at the same time a drastic reduction in the standard of living enjoyed by the rich nations and the privileged classes.

Under these conditions, the old ideal of a competence—a piece of earth, a small shop, a useful calling—becomes a more reasonable as well as a more worthy ambition than the ideal of abundance.

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

In the populist tradition, “competence” has rich moral overtones; it refers to the livelihood conferred by property but also to the skills required to maintain it. The ideal of universal proprietorship embodies a humbler set of expectations than the ideal of universal consumption, universal access to a proliferating supply of goods. At the same time, it embodies a more strenuous and morally demanding definition of the good life.

How to revive it, under social conditions that make it more desirable than ever but insitutionally almost inconceivable, ought to be the main subject of contemporary political debate. Our grandchildren will find it hard to understand, let alone to forgive, our unwillingness to raise it.

“The vision of life that wins my vote”

Malcolm Muggeridge

I RECENTLY RECEIVED a telephone call telling me that a lady who was standing as an independent pro-life candidate in the Croyden by-election would welcome an opportunity for a talk.

As I am an ardent supporter of the pro-life movement, I readily agreed to a meeting, and asked her to tea.

She duly arrived—a small, vivacious Scottish lady named Marilyn Carr. There was just one thing about her that I did not notice immediately—she had no arms, but managed most ingeniously to make her ten toes deputise for the ten fingers that she hadn't got.

When I asked her if her armlessness was due to her mother having taken Thalidomide during her pregnancy, she smiled, and said the suggestion was flattering in that, if true, it would make her younger than she actually is.

In fact, she was born armless, with little buds where the arms should have come. As the doctor who delivered her put it—and he must have had a gift for poetic imagery somewhat rare in his profession—her arms had budded but never bloomed.

Today, the chances of such a baby surviving would be very small indeed. Someone would surely recommend letting her die of starvation, or otherwise disposing of her.

Thus, Marilyn is a living witness to the pro-life cause; in herself an embodiment of life triumphant, challenging the right of any one human being to decide that another, whether an unborn or born child, whether a fatally ill or senile old person, has no right to go on living in view of circumstances—economic or physical or mental—not conducive to a worthwhile life.

It is the difference between the quality of life and the sanctity of life.

The former being seen in how far the individual concerned may be assumed to be capable of enjoying life, or contributing to life, of exercising the responsibilities of a parent, wage-earner, a husband or wife.

Malcolm Muggeridge is *the* Malcolm Muggeridge, England's world-famous author and journalist. This article first appeared in the London *Daily Mail* (Oct. 15, 1981), and was previously reprinted, with the author's permission, in our Spring, 1982 issue.

The latter being seen in terms of the potentialities existing in every single human being, young or old, well or sick, intelligent or stupid, from the moment of conception to the moment of death.

Are human beings to be culled like livestock?

No more sick or misshapen bodies, no more disturbed or twisted minds, no more hereditary idiots or mongoloid children. Babies not up to scratch to be destroyed, before or after birth, as would also the old beyond repair.

With the developing skills of modern medicine, the human race could be pruned and carefully tended until only the perfect blooms—the beauty queens, the Mensa IQs, the athletes—remained.

Then at last with rigid population control to prevent all the good work being ruined by excessive numbers, affliction would be ended, and maybe death itself abolished, and the evolutionary process have reached its ultimate destination in a kingdom of heaven on earth.

Against this vision of life without tears in a fleshly paradise stands the Christian vision of mankind as a family whose loving father is God, all of whose members, whatever physical or mental qualities or deficiencies they may have, are equally deserving of consideration, and whose existence has validity, not just in relation to history, but in relation to a destiny reaching beyond time and into eternity.

This is the vision that has buoyed up Western Man through the Christian centuries; inspired his art and literature and music, the building of the great cathedrals, formulated his *mores*, sanctified his saints and mystics.

And the symbol of that vision?—not the quality of life as expressed in the colour supplements, but a stricken body nailed to a cross, and signifying affliction, not as the enemy of life, but as its greatest teacher and enhancement.

Between these two visions we have to choose. Which side are we on? All the signs are that the choice has been made in favour of an earthly paradise. At least the media tell us so. Yet I wonder. There is one sign at least in the opposite direction that I find impressive.

Probably the best known woman, certainly the best loved, in the world today is not one of the stage or cinema pin-ups, nor even Mrs. Thatcher, but Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

The work for which she has received the Nobel Prize, and which has made her famous, is all in the opposite direction from the consensus.

She and her Sisters of Charity think it worthwhile to bring in

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

dying derelicts from the streets of Calcutta so that before they die, even just for half an hour, they will know what Christian love is.

Equally they bring in babies abandoned, maybe in dustbins, and cherish them.

Thinking of the sanctity of life, there is one scene that always comes into my mind. It occurred when I was walking with Mother Teresa through her children's clinic in Calcutta when we were making a TV programme about her and her work.

"Is it really worthwhile," I asked her, "to salvage these babies when India has such an excess of them?"

For answer, she just picked up one of the babies, a little girl so tiny that it seemed extraordinary that she could live at all. With a kind of glory in her face, and holding the baby up, she said: "See, there's life in her."

So there was, and that life for ever sacred, for ever to be cherished, since that life, as all life, belongs not to our tawdry little plans but to the mighty purposes for which we and our little Earth and the universe in which it is set, came into existence.

Abortion: Questions and Answers

John J. O'Connor

OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEARS I have been asked many questions about life and abortion by many well-meaning people. Today I still find that many good people are confused. They really believe they are doing the right thing—or, at least, the best thing—when they support, or encourage, an abortion. Such is certainly the case with some parents who love a daughter and, as they put it, “don’t want to see her life ruined by an unintended pregnancy.” I believe the same is true of a number of social workers and other advisers of the young, who believe that in promoting abortions they are performing a truly humane service, to the mothers of the unborn, to unborn babies whose lives they feel will not be happy (especially if they will be poor), and to society at large.

I received a letter recently, for example, from a set of anguished parents. Their talented young daughter is all set for college, but she has become pregnant. They tell me they are encouraging her to have an abortion because they don’t want to see her career ruined. They say they are afraid abortion is a “sin,” but that it would be a worse sin if their daughter couldn’t go to college, “just because she made a mistake and got pregnant.” I know many people feel that way.

Then there are those who honestly believe it is only “fair” to permit pregnant girls or women to decide for themselves whether to carry or to abort a baby. They say: “A woman should have control over her own body. Nobody has the right to invade her privacy.” They see free choice in all things as an essential characteristic of the American way of life, and regardless of how they, themselves, see abortion, they do not feel they have the right “to impose their beliefs on others.”

There are at least three other kinds of people who consider abortion acceptable. There are those who believe that a baby in the womb is not really fully human, that only with birth does the baby achieve this status. Others believe that because the law permits abortion, it must be morally acceptable. Then there are those—and I believe they are many—who simply don’t think about the subject at all. They don’t see it as a serious issue. It has never personally touched

Cardinal John J. O’Connor, as everybody knows, is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York. These 23 “Questions and Answers” on abortion first appeared in a special edition of *Catholic New York* (June 14, 1990), and are reprinted here with permission.

their lives. Or perhaps they deliberately refuse to think about it because they would only become further confused.

While one finds a certain number of Catholics holding various of these positions, it's probably necessary to add another category altogether for those who argue that they are good Catholics, but believe the Church is wrong in its position on abortion, or that the Church has no right to "dictate" to them on this matter. I would distinguish this group from those Catholics who simply don't know or don't understand what the Church teaches or why.

One can be compassionate and understanding about all these positions, but sadly nothing changes the objective reality: abortion kills babies in their mothers' wombs. It pains me to say that, as I know it pains all people of good will, but it is the tragic reality. And there is another tragic reality that has nothing whatever to do with compassion, and that is that abortion is big business, netting hundreds of millions of dollars for abortionists.

I know that many are offended by the use of the word "killing." Actually, it is the word used in a famous editorial published in 1970 in the California Medical Association Journal:

"Since the old ethic has not yet been fully displaced it has been necessary to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing, which continues to be socially abhorrent. The result has been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception and is continuous whether intra- or extra-uterine until death. The very considerable semantic gymnastics which are required to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life would be ludicrous if they were not often put forth under socially impeccable auspices. It is suggested that this schizophrenic sort of subterfuge is necessary because while a new ethic is being accepted the old one has not yet been rejected." (Emphasis added.) (From California Medicine, 113:67, 1970.)

This editorial was not written to oppose abortion. It was simply an exceptionally frank warning to doctors that they had better adopt the new ethic and gear up for the brave new world of abortion ahead of them. As the editorial pointed out, some real twisting of words would be required to make people forget that abortion is the taking of human life. In other words, they would have to come up with another word for "killing," if they were ever to make abortion socially acceptable. But a change in words, unfortunately, does not change the reality.

In any event, it seems to me time to list some of the questions I have been asked about abortion, and to try to suggest some answers, recognizing that some may require lengthier and more complicated

answers than space permits, and that there are many other questions that might be asked. Following that, I would like to propose some ways of helping to restore a sense of sacredness about the life of the unborn and indeed, of all human life.

1. What is abortion?

This can sound like a foolish question. But it is my experience that there are a number of young people who undergo abortions and do not understand what is happening to them. As a matter of fact, doctors who perform abortions generally prevent the woman or girl from seeing what is happening, and pro-abortion organizations have consistently resisted any legislation which would require that a young girl be told what an abortion is, or be required to wait even 24 hours before having an abortion.

The important thing, perhaps, is to emphasize what abortion is not. Abortion is not merely the removal of some tissue from a woman's body. Abortion is not the removal of a living "thing" that would become human if it were allowed to remain inside the woman's body. Abortion is the destruction of an unborn baby.

A new human life begins as soon as the egg has been fertilized. Science reveals without question that once the egg is fertilized every identifying characteristic of a brand-new human being is present, even the color of the eyes and the hair, the sex and everything else. Pregnancy is the period for this new human life to mature, not to "become human"—it already is. This is why the Church considers abortion the killing of a human being, and why the Second Vatican Council called it an "unspeakable crime."

The World Medical Association adopted in September 1948 the Declaration of Geneva: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, from the time of conception; even under threat I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity." In October 1969 the International Code of Medical Ethics stated: "A doctor must always bear in mind the importance of preserving human life from the time of conception until death." Again in 1970 the World Medical Association reaffirmed its position by way of the Declaration of Oslo: "The first moral imposed upon the doctor is respect for human life as expressed in the Declaration of Geneva: 'I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the first moment of conception.'"

In 1974 the Declaration on Procured Abortion (by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) stated: "Respect for human life is called for from the time that the process of generation begins. From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new

human being with its own growth. It would never be made human if it were not human already . . .” This declaration was ratified by Pope Paul VI, who confirmed it and ordered it to be promulgated.

When the Church uses the phrase “procured abortion” it means, in nontechnical terms, deliberately terminating a pregnancy at any stage before the child in the womb can live outside the womb.

2. Don't the majority of Americans support abortion?

Based on my experience, the majority of Americans do not support abortion on demand. For example, most Americans would not support abortion in cases where a woman does not want a baby of a particular sex. The majority of those who support abortion seem to limit that support to cases of rape, incest or when the life of the mother is in jeopardy. Certainly there are polls which seem to suggest that the majority do favor abortion and abortion funding. Many who feel that if they are a minority they must be wrong can feel intimidated by these findings. We must remember, however, that the timing of a poll, the kinds of questions asked, who asks the questions, and who is asked, all influence the results. This has been demonstrated frequently in relation to polls on abortion.

Polls, however, whatever the results, do not determine what is morally right or wrong. If abortion is the taking of innocent life, it is wrong, no matter what the polls might say, or how many people might vote for it.

Despite some recent reports of psychological studies, I personally receive letters from all over the United States from women who have suffered the pain of an abortion, or who, in the moments shortly before having an abortion, came to see that abortion is the killing of a baby. These letters are deeply moving, and most end by encouraging me to continue to speak out, and to do whatever I can to help restore a sense of sacredness of the child in the womb.

Some feel that the right to be born is dependent on being *wanted*. They suggest that if a mother does not want her baby, the baby will be deprived of love, care and nurturing and may even be subject to abuse. Yet, how many unplanned children have been born to parents who initially did not want them, but whose attitudes changed completely to total acceptance and love? How many unwanted children have made enormous contributions to the world, as musicians, writers, doctors, entertainers, teachers, parents, or in other capacities?

Is an unborn baby to be denied the right to *life* because it is not *wanted*? Candidates for political office spend much campaigning time and often a great deal of money in trying to convince voters who *don't* want them to vote for them. Is an unborn baby to be

denied even the opportunity to have someone plead with a mother to let the baby live, wanted or not? Is the unwanted baby to be denied the opportunity given to millions of refugees who have been admitted to the United States?

Mother Teresa of Calcutta is world famous for her concern for the poor, the abandoned, the dying, the homeless, the institutionalized, the forgotten. Far from seeing a solution to the problems of such in abortion, however, she startled the world by her address when she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. One of the most important statements she made is, "Today the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion."

For Almighty God there is no such thing as an "unwanted baby." Every one is made in His image and likeness and is uniquely part of the Divine Plan. If there is a woman *anywhere* who does not "want" her baby, I plead with her to nevertheless let that baby live. A great number of people want that baby as does the Church—we *love* that baby from the moment it is conceived.

For it was you who created my being,
Knit me together in my mother's womb,
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation.

(Psalm 139)

3. Why do people in the pro-life movement want to change the law?

Some people argue that changing laws will not eliminate abortions. It is certainly true that a change of heart is more important than a change of law. What is forgotten, however, is that the law is the great teacher. Children grow up believing that if a practice is *legal*, it must be *moral*. Adults who live in a society in which what was illegal and believed to be immoral is suddenly declared legal, soon grow accustomed to the new law, and take the "new morality" for granted. In fact, many people seem to fear that if they don't support the new law and the "new morality" it has introduced, they will be considered undemocratic and "unAmerican."

It is amazing, for example, how smoking habits have been turned around. With the deluge of media advertising and the strict legal limitations put on smoking in places like New York City, many people now even feel embarrassed to smoke in public. Suddenly, with new laws in jurisdiction after jurisdiction, smoking is seen as less acceptable than ever before—actually immoral and irresponsible in the eyes of many. Now a law is being proposed that a state should divest itself of all investments in tobacco companies. There is no question: law and changes in law constitute a mighty force if there is a determination to enforce it.

I have no doubt that a change in the law would go a long way toward changing the attitude of Americans toward the rights of the unborn, at least over the long haul. It is effective regarding virtually every other issue. For example, in 1966 at the White House Conference on Civil Rights, then Solicitor General of the United States Mr. Thurgood Marshall (now a Justice of the Supreme Court) had this to say about the effect a change in law can bring about:

“Of course law—whether embodied in acts of Congress or judicial decision—is, in some measure, a response to national opinion, and, of course, non-legal, even illegal events, can significantly affect the development of the law. But I submit that the history of the Negro demonstrates the importance of getting rid of hostile laws and seeking the security of new friendly laws . . .

“Provided there is a determination to enforce it, law can change things for the better. There’s very little truth in the old refrain that one can not legislate equality. Laws not only provide concrete benefit, they can even change the hearts of men, some men anyway, for good or evil . . . The simple fact is that most people will obey the law and some, at least, will be converted by it.”

There are those who argue that we can not legislate morality, and that the answer to abortion does not lie in the law. The reality is that we do legislate *behavior* every day. Our entire society is structured by law. We legislate against going through red lights, smoking in airplanes and restaurants, selling heroin, committing murder, burning down peoples’ homes, stealing, child abuse, slavery and a thousand other acts that would deprive other people of their rights. And this is precisely the key: law is intended to protect us from one another regardless of private and personal moral or religious beliefs. The law does not ask me if I personally believe stealing to be moral or immoral. The law does not ask me if my religion encourages me to burn down homes. As far as the law is concerned, the distinction between private and public morality is quite clear. Basically, when I violate other people’s rights, I am involved in a matter of public morality, subject to penalty under law.

Is it outlandish to think that laws against abortion might have *some* protective effect? It is obvious that law is not the entire answer to theft, arson, child abuse, or shooting police officers. Everybody knows that. But who would suggest that we repeal the laws against such crimes because the laws are so often broken?

4. If abortion were again declared illegal, wouldn’t many women risk their lives in back alley abortions?

It should not be taken for granted that merely because an abortion is performed legally, it is performed under medically favorable

circumstances, in sterile operating rooms, by expert physicians. Stories of "botched" abortions are sadly plentiful. That many abortions are carried out by highly competent doctors under clinical conditions as physically safe for the mother as in other forms of surgery can not be questioned. But legality is no guarantee of safety or concern.

The question itself suggests that a pregnant woman must have an abortion for one reason or another. Obviously, there will always be people who will take their own route to try to solve their problems, but legalizing abortion has encouraged many women to follow the abortion route because it now seems respectable. They would never have considered an *illegal* abortion.

Who can do more than speculate about what *might* happen? If we turn to the pre-1973 record, even the highest estimates of abortion annually were but a tiny fraction of the million-and-a-half a year since 1973, the year abortions were legalized for the nation.

I quote Dr. Bernard Nathanson, M.D., once the hero of the abortion movement, now firmly committed to the right to life of every unborn. In his book, "Aborting America," Dr. Nathanson addresses the question of "back alley" abortions:

"The favorite button of the pro-abortionists is the one showing the coathanger, symbol of the self-induced abortion and the carnage that results from it, or the similar problem of botched illegal abortions done by 'back-alley butchers' . . .

"How many deaths were we talking about when abortion was illegal? In NARAL (National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws) we generally emphasized the drama of the individual case, not the mass statistics, but when we spoke of the latter it was always '5,000 to 10,000 deaths a year.' I confess that I knew the figures were totally false, and I suppose the others did too if they stopped to think of it. But in the 'morality' of our revolution, it was a *useful* figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics? The overriding concern was to get the laws eliminated, and anything within reason that had to be done was permissible. Statistics on abortion deaths were fairly reliable . . . but not all these deaths were reported as such if the attending doctor wanted to protect a family by listing another cause of death. In 1967 . . . the federal government listed only 160 deaths from illegal abortion. In . . . 1972, the total was only 39 deaths. Christopher Tietze estimated 1,000 maternal deaths as the outside possibility in an average year before legalization; the actual total was probably closer to 500."

Are 1,000 deaths meaningless? Are 39? Of course not. *One* death is meaningful. But once again, the mothers involved could have chosen not to abort. Moreover, there is no guarantee that they would have

survived legal abortions either.

Can there really be any doubt that legalization has multiplied the number of abortions almost infinitely beyond anyone's expectations? I go back to what I said above about smoking. Who would ever have believed that the day would come that smoking, such a widespread habit, would be so severely restricted by law—and in relatively such a brief period of time? Have the advertising campaigns and the governmental regulations reduced smoking? Remarkably.

God forbid that making abortion illegal would result in the death of even one woman. It seems to me that the way to avoid such is to help make life livable for *every* pregnant woman and help make her bringing her baby into the world a socially desirable event, in which she is praised rather than condemned.

5. Why did the bishops hire a communications firm? Don't we read and hear enough about abortion in the media?

I could answer this simply by quoting from a letter I received only one week ago. I am quoting verbatim:

"I am writing to express my appreciation of the decision of the American Catholic bishops to give financial support of up to \$5 million to the pro-life movement. I was told this money is being raised to hire a professional media firm to 'get the truth out.'

"As a woman who has been through the abortion experience and who knows others who have been through it repeatedly, I am particularly aware and grateful. It is not something I would wish on anyone. Its repercussions are widespread, packed with emotion, and sometimes despair. This may be true to a greater or lesser degree according to the woman, her history, and/or her personality type. But the abortion experience is just one more hardening of the heart. Hardening my heart to my own flesh conditions me to do it to others and even justifies it in my mind. This is the kind of subconscious thinking, and feeling, and rationale that the abortion experience has the capability of fostering. Also, the woman may become almost hopelessly self-destructive through alcoholism, drug addiction or bulimia, to name a few. In addition, I wonder is it just a coincidence that aborted women I know have gone through tumultuous relationship after relationship and have had trouble initiating, developing, and sustaining happy, healthy, workable ones?"

"To get the truth out." That's precisely the reason. The fact is that we *don't* read and hear enough about abortion in the media. One of the most serious problems facing the pro-life movement is the way much of the press reports this issue. For the most part, for example, for whatever reason, the media have habitually used the term "anti-abortion," instead of "pro-life," for people who believe

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

in the right to life for the unborn. Yet those who support abortion are labeled "pro-choice." Even to change the emphasis in terminology would be worth the effort of a professional communications firm.

I have given countless interviews to the media in an attempt to share with people what our efforts are all about, but have fallen short of the mark. I support the right of the media to make whatever editorial judgments they deem appropriate. But it is critical that our positions are really understood if they are to be reported evenhandedly and without bias.

Additionally we have to try to assure that pro-life news stories are not buried—in the middle of a newspaper, or as a 30-second sound bite in the middle of a newscast. Fairness in reporting on pro-life issues is imperative. Some courageous journalists—even some who disagree with the pro-life position—have made the effort to report in an unbiased manner. It is hoped that a professional communications campaign will encourage many more journalists to do the same.

For example, I have frequently repeated in public addresses, in writing and in press conferences, the offer I make in 1984 about any woman who is pregnant and in need coming to the Archdiocese of New York for free assistance. In the almost six years since I made that offer—during which time many women have been helped at great cost to the archdiocese—I have seen a reference to it only *once* in the secular press, and even then in only one newspaper. It is frustrating, to say the least, when the Church is constantly accused of not doing anything for women while programs such as this exist not only here in New York, but in similar efforts around the country.

What we believe about life is truly good news. I believe that every person has the right to know about that good news, to be given a fair representation of what we're about, and then to study our position and, hopefully, recognize not only the reasonableness of the position, but also the charity and love which it proclaims.

It would be unfair to suggest that the failure to get the word out is only because of the bias of the press. As a Church, we have not, in my judgement, broadly disseminated our belief that every human life is sacred because made in the image and likeness of Almighty God and that our concern for the unborn flows from this fundamental belief. If this is to change, and with it the hearts of all people of good will, we will have to improve our means of educating people, including more widespread preaching of the issue of human life. In the first instance we must concentrate on instructing Catholics about the principles regarding human life. In my experience, I have found people very responsive once they understand what it is we're

JOHN J. O'CONNOR

talking about when we discuss abortion: the taking of an innocent human life.

In my judgement, most of the criticisms against the communications campaign are misleading and unfair. To insist, for example, that the monies to be used in communicating the message about life should be used for the poor, or to help pregnant women, to combat racism, etc., is to assert arbitrarily that human beings who are *visible* deserve support more than human beings who are *invisible*. Further, it is a rehash of the gratuitous assertion that the Church ignores other needs. (It is amazing, for example, to read that if the Church were serious about racism, it would put this money into that battle, instead of into abortion. The black bishops of the United States have called abortion genocide against blacks. What could be more racist than genocide?)

There are more than one and one-half million unborn babies put to death every year in the United States. If we spent two dollars to let the world know about each one, that would be three million dollars—the cost of the current contract with the communications company. Actually, the money is coming from a Catholic organization, and not from the Church or people at large. If it were coming from the Catholic people of the United States, it would mean less than six cents per Catholic!

I find most amazing of all, however, the objection to using modern means of communications. If we didn't have sound systems in our churches, hardly anyone would ever hear a homily. In printing religious textbooks we rely on the most clever graphics the publishers can find to get the message across. Prior to the year 1454 A.D., the Bible was available essentially only in rare manuscript form. Then came Gutenberg and movable type. Suppose the Church had said: "No way we are going to let the Holy Bible be published on such a modern invention"? The greater number of people in the world would never have had a Bible in their hands. Is it less important to spread the word on unborn babies? Are we not to use the best method we can find to publicize what is happening to them?

Our Lord never used a telegram or a fax machine. He never flew in an airplane or even rode in an automobile. Who is to say he would not do so were he walking the earth today?

Is it fair to demand that the Church not use newspaper ads, for example, to try to protect human life, when organizations like Planned Parenthood use them to promote abortion?

I really suspect that from the very outset the announcement of the communications campaign was misinterpreted, intentionally or unintentionally. The campaign has been portrayed by its critics as

an effort to elect or defeat candidates for political office. In no way is that its intention. It is not a political campaign. It is a *communications* campaign to publicize the truth about human life and abortion.

When our message is heard—the message of life and love for both mother and child—I believe most Americans, whatever their religious persuasion, will want to join in a commitment to the sacredness of every human life.

6. But do Catholics have the right to impose their beliefs on others?

Life is a right which must be acknowledged by a civil society as a given; it is never the concession of the state. Indeed, the state has as its primary purpose the defense of the lives of its citizens; Thomas Jefferson called it, “the first and only legitimate object of good government—the care of human life, and not its destruction.” Those who are weakest or most defenseless have traditionally been given even higher degree of protection. As former Speaker of the House Thomas P. O’Neill Jr. said, quoting the truly noble words of Senator Hubert Humphrey, “The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, the handicapped.” Human life must be protected from its inception until natural death; any other point which is determined by law is purely arbitrary and wrongly allows the state to take upon itself mastery over human life.

Those who accuse the Church of imposing its beliefs on others assume that the Church’s teaching on human life has been created by the Church. Not so. All who accept the Ten Commandments, that is, Divine Law, know that it is never lawful, under any circumstances, deliberately or directly to take the life of any innocent human being. (This is one of the key principles, for example, in the tradition of “Just War”—it is never “just” to attack innocent civilians.) Unborn babies are innocent of any aggression against anyone.

Abortion is also forbidden, however, by Natural Moral Law, which governs *all* peoples, of all religions. The Greek playwright Sophocles, and the Roman official, Cicero, spelled out the universal character of Natural Law long before Christ. Our own Declaration of Independence was declared, not on the basis of a particular religion, but on the basis of Natural Moral Law. It appealed to “the Laws of nature and of Nature’s God,” and on this basis declared it *self-evident* that all are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that the first of these is the right to life.

To argue on the basis of Natural Moral Law takes us back to

the question of whether the unborn is human. If it is human, it is in the very nature of things that we should not deliberately destroy it, just as it is in the very nature of things that we have no right to go around killing children already born. No one ever hears a woman who learns she is pregnant say: "I am going to have a fetus." She says: "I am going to have a baby." It would be "unnatural" for a mother to put her baby to death after birth. It goes against the very nature of things. If the baby is a baby before birth to destroy it is equally unnatural. Yet science today, and not only religion, reveals without reasonable doubt that an unborn baby is a baby. The other night I heard a woman arguing on television that it is "unnatural" to take the skin off an animal in order to make a fur coat. The program went on to talk about how cruel we are to raise foxes and minks for that purpose. Is it only the destruction of an unborn human being that is considered "natural"?

7. Isn't it un-American to deny people the right to choose?

No one has a right to choose to put an innocent human being to death. The use of ambiguous language and euphemisms has been tragically successful in switching the emphasis from "life" to "choice," so that those who are trying to defend life are accused of trying to deprive people of choice. The argument then becomes: "In a pluralistic society, what authority do you have to deprive me of my reproductive rights?" Reproductive rights, however, are not the issue; killing human beings is.

The Church understands that there are circumstances in which some people believe that abortion is the lesser of evils. They believe, for example, that it would be better to have an abortion if a baby will be born retarded or deformed; or if a mother is poor, or already has several children; or, as we noted above, if a young girl's education or career would be disrupted by a baby, or her reputation damaged. (Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood is quoted as saying, "the most merciful thing a large family can do to one of its infant members is to kill it." "Grand Illusions: The Legacy of Planned Parenthood," by George Grant. Wolgermuth & Hyatt. 1988)

The Church recognizes that many hardships can occur with a pregnancy. But there is a fundamental principle which must always prevail: The end never justifies the means if the means are evil. In other words, no matter how difficult the alternatives, they can not justify the direct killing of an innocent human being. What kind of world would it be if were not faithful to that principle? Where would the killing stop?

Many people reject capital punishment. Yet before capital punishment

is administered to someone who is charged with a heinous crime like murder, he or she is first tried by jury and found guilty. Yet, many who reject capital punishment accept, support, and consider it a “right” to take the life of an innocent unborn baby, who has never had a trial, or been found guilty. To the Church this is inconsistent.

American laws deny the right to kill innocent human beings, or even various “endangered species,” like certain fish, birds or animals. Why is it “un-American” to argue against the “right” to kill the unborn? The Church mourns the ravages of the environment, pollution of the air, the rivers and lakes and oceans, the poisoning of wildlife, the potential of nuclear war and an accompanying holocaust. But sheer common sense, if not mercy for the helpless, demands that a society address before all else the destruction of its own children.

Some people say abortion is a right because it hasn't been proved that the unborn is human. Even some who accept the fact that the unborn is fully human, however, insist that a woman's “right” to have an abortion prevails over the right of the unborn to live. For example, a recent poll found that 76 percent of the women questioned believe that abortion is *murder*, yet 55 percent of the women who considered abortion murder still assert that it is a woman's *right*. Can there really be a “right” to commit murder? Is it “un-American” to say that no one has a right to commit murder?(Incidentally, I neither use nor encourage the use of the term *murder* for abortion. Here I am simply quoting the word used in the poll.)

The same frightening inconsistency is at work in the euthanasia movement, with many people believing that the elderly, the cancer-ridden, the deformed, the retarded should be “put out of their misery,” because their “quality of life” doesn't warrant their continuing to live. But unfortunately there is, at times, another subtle, anti-Catholic bias at work in this whole argument. Some people still believe Catholics are second-class citizens, who owe their allegiance to a foreign power (the pope), and are dangerous to the “American way of life.” To such people, it is acceptable for non-Catholics, or Catholics who dissent from Church teaching, to do everything they can to promote abortion, including influencing public officials to pass pro-abortion legislation. Those who support “abortion rights” are considered perfectly American in using the media, advertising and other means to promote abortion.

Catholics and others convinced that the *unborn* has rights, and should be allowed a free choice—that is, to choose life—are branded, on the contrary, as “un-American.” Is that fair?

8. Hasn't Church teaching changed on the subject of abortion?

The Church has never changed its teaching that abortion is evil.

What has confused some people is that the Church's *penalty* for abortion has changed from time to time. Pope Paul VI declared that the teaching of the Church about the morality of abortion "has not changed and is unchangeable." Although some people point out that Saint Thomas Aquinas thought the soul did not come to the fetus ("ensoulment") until sometime after conception, the fact is that he considered abortion gravely sinful even *before* this time. He taught that it was a "grave sin against the natural law" to kill the fetus at any stage, and a graver sin of homicide to do so after ensoulment. Our present Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, clearly stated the consistent teaching of the Church in 1979 when he said:

"I do not hesitate to proclaim before you and the world that all human life—from the moment of conception and through all subsequent states—is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of god. Nothing surpasses the greatness or dignity of a human person . . . If a person's right to life is violated at the moment in which he is first conceived in his mother's womb, an indirect blow is struck also at the whole of the moral order, which serves to ensure the inviolable goods of man. Among those goods, life occupies the first place . . . And so we will stand up every time that human life is threatened. When the sacredness of life before birth is attacked, we will stand up and proclaim that no one ever has the authority to destroy unborn life." (Homily on the Capitol Mall, Washington, D.C., October 7, 1979.)

It is unfortunate that some Catholics in the United States, sometimes under the guise of "pluralism," assert that Church teaching on certain critical moral issues is open to individual opinion. In the case of abortion this is simply not so. The Church teaches that abortion is a grave moral evil. This is the unquestionable teaching of the Church, *the* Catholic position. Those who disagree are simply rejecting the teaching of the Church. In so doing they are not presenting the authentic Catholic position.

9. What is the Church's current penalty for abortion?

Current Church law states: "A person who procures an abortion, where the effect follows, incurs an automatic excommunication." (Canon 1398) This law is normally interpreted to include the adult woman who knowingly has the abortion and anyone who assists willingly and directly, such as the doctor, the nurse or others. Recently, the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law (January 19, 1988) ruled that the "abortion" mentioned in Canon 1398 embraces the "killing of the fetus in whatever way or at whatever time from the moment of conception." In such

cases, the excommunication occurs immediately after the knowing and willful act of the individual. The excommunication occurs without any action by the bishop. (Excommunication means, basically, that one is cut off from full communion with the Church and is forbidden to receive any of the Sacraments except Penance, which requires confession and rejection of one's sins, an act of penance, and reconciliation with the Church).

Automatic excommunication is to be distinguished from penalties that individual bishops might impose on those who support abortion in a general way. There are impermissible forms of cooperation, inconsistent with being a practicing Catholic, which give active scandal within the Church and within society. In such cases, Church law gives the bishop the authority to impose excommunication on an individual. Should the Church exercise public sanctions against such a person, obviously the purpose would be to counteract scandal: that is, to make clear to the world that it does not approve such conduct. But it must be understood that in the final analysis excommunication is the choice of the individual excommunicated; it is not the choice of the Church.

To have the power to impose penalties and to use that power, however, are two different things. The Scriptures say: "I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live." And our Lord speaks of letting wheat and weeds grow side by side until the harvest time, when the weeds will be burned, but the wheat used for bread. The purpose of penalties is not simply to punish the wrongdoers. Penalties are intended to encourage the faithful as well as to deter wrong-doing.

Sometimes, however, if ordinary Catholics see a prominent individual ignore the Church's teaching and go unpunished by the Church, they are confused and scandalized. At the same time, the Church does not want to make "martyrs" out of individuals by punishing them. It is up to the local bishop to use his best judgment concerning particular cases in his area.

Where Catholics are perceived not only as treating Church teaching on abortion with contempt, but helping to multiply abortions by advocating legislation supporting abortion, or making public funds available for abortion, bishops may decide that, for the common good, such Catholics must be warned that they are at risk of excommunication. If such actions persist, bishops may consider excommunication the only option. Undoubtedly bishops would engage in considerable prayer and discussion before moving in such a direction.

Some bishops, wanting to avoid imposing severe penalties like excommunication, are beginning to impose lesser penalties, which

do not separate public wrongdoers from the communion of the faithful, as does excommunication, but serve as warnings and help to reduce scandal. For example, some bishops have directed that no one who supports abortion, or holds that abortion is a right, or a matter of choice, may speak at Catholic functions (except, perhaps, at an academic symposium where both sides of the issue might be fairly presented), receive honorary degrees, be appointed special ministers of the Eucharist, serve as lectors in church, or be otherwise honored by the Church.

One significant reason a number of bishops are taking such steps is that they want to make clear that an individual's position on abortion does make a difference to the Church. The Church can hardly be expected to treat those who publicly violate its teachings in serious matters the same as those who observe such teachings.

10. Don't some Catholics claim that they "personally oppose" abortion but that they can not "impose" that belief on others?

A peculiar problem has arisen over the past three decades, particularly involving Catholics in political life. The problem stems from the positions, "I am personally opposed to abortion, but can not impose my morality on others," or "I can not permit my personal beliefs to deprive a woman of her right to choose." The "personally opposed" phrase says, in effect: "In public life I will act indistinguishably from someone who sees abortion as a positive social good, but please know that I will do so with personal regret." This regret is hardly effective, since, whatever its intention, it serves the agenda of those who actively favor abortion. It seems to me that the "personally opposed, but" position is equivalently a "pro-choice" position. In November of 1989, the bishops of the United States unanimously resolved that "No Catholic can responsibly take a pro-choice stand when the 'choice' in question involves the taking of innocent human life." Pope Leo XIII, remembered as the great champion of the labor movement, repudiated such a position over a hundred years ago when he taught:

"Further, it is unlawful to follow one line of conduct in private and another in public; respecting privately the authority of the Church, but publicly rejecting it: for this would amount to joining together good and evil, and to putting man in conflict with himself; whereas, he ought always to be consistent, and never in the least point nor in any condition of life to swerve from Christian virtue." (*Immortale Dei*, November, 1885)

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith addressed the question of political action related to abortion in its "Declaration on Procured Abortion" (Nov. 18, 1974). This declaration not only condemns the immorality of all direct abortion (n.7), it commends all positive efforts to combat its causes "including political action, which will

be in particular the task of law.” (n.26) Further, the declaration is most explicit that one can never obey a law which is in itself immoral, “nor can one take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law, or vote for it,” nor can one “collaborate in its application.” (n.22) On the contrary, “it is at all times the task of the State to preserve each person’s right to protect the weakest.” (n.21)

It seems to me that those who say, “I am personally opposed to abortion but I will not impose my moral or religious beliefs on others” have the obligation to demonstrate that their position is not rooted simply in political expediency.

I can not judge anyone’s conscience, but surely I may ask if a public official is being morally consistent if he or she personally believes abortion is killing, but simultaneously believes his or her office requires supporting it, funding it, or refusing even to work for legislation opposed to it. While it is true that there are varying political strategies for changing any law which allows the unborn to be killed, in my view, it can not be seriously debated that the law *must* be changed.

As much as I want to be understanding of the complexities of political life and its responsibilities and pressures, and not jump to harsh conclusions, I simply can not find anything in authentic Catholic teaching that can support a “personally opposed, but” position. Nor can I find it consistent with Catholic teaching or the Natural Moral Law to support abortion in any way, by legislation, a call for funding, or silence born of a refusal to seek a reversal of legislation supporting abortion. It does not seem harsh to suggest that if we are to call ourselves Catholics, we should be acting in consistence with Catholic teaching. I would think that to be simply a matter of integrity. I would think it a requirement, as well, as for those who are not Catholic, at least to think through the real meaning of abortion and how it violates nature and the Natural Moral Law, which is not a question of religious faith.

St. Thomas More, who was an accomplished statesman and exemplary Catholic, had the courage to withstand the pressure of “privatizing” his conscience. And while he remained committed to his king, his first obligation was to Almighty God. What greater thing could be said of a statesman than what Thomas More said prior to his death, “I die the king’s good servant, but God’s first.” Catholics in political office must also have this commitment to serve the state; but service to God must always come first.

11. The Church forbids the use of birth control. What does the Church offer as an alternative?

With all the talk about Catholics imposing their morality on others,

it is fascinating to note that anti-contraception laws of 19th-century America were passed by Protestants for a largely Protestant America. It is startling to read:

“When a committee of the Federal Council of Churches endorsed in 1931 ‘the careful and restrained use of contraception by married people,’ a Washington Post editorial replied, ‘Carried to its logical conclusion, the Committee’s report, if carried into effect, would sound the deathknell of marriage as a holy institution by establishing degrading practices which would encourage indiscriminate immorality. The suggestion that the use of legalized contraceptives would be “careful and restrained” is preposterous.’” (“Fifty Questions on Abortion, Euthanasia and Related Issues,” by Charles E. Rice, Cashel Institute, 1986.)

Birth control and abortion are not “equal evils,” except when abortion is used as “birth control.” Contraception prevents the conception of life. Abortion destroys life already conceived. There is clear evidence that certain devices *called* contraceptives, such as the IUD, do not prevent conception. They work as “abortifacients;” that is, they destroy the fertilized ovum. In other words, they are a means of abortion, not contraception. Except for efforts to exclude abortifacients, I do not know a single Catholic bishop who would favor civil legislation against birth control. It is either ignorance or trickery to pretend that the bishops would try to bring about legislation.

The position of the Catholic Church is quite clear on this matter. Family planning is not only a right; in certain circumstances it is an obligation. The question is one of the *means* used. The Church does not accept the use of *artificial* means. The Church encourages, supports, teaches and helps finance Natural Family Planning. NFP is a highly reliable and easy-to-learn method of planning a family. It involves the observation and interpretation of the natural bodily signs (fertility signs) in order to determine accurately when a child can or can not be conceived. NFP supports the Church’s total vision of the dignity of the human person and of the unitive and procreative dimensions of marriage.

It is unfortunate that some people no longer consider abstinence an “option” in family planning. Love, patience, and even sacrifice are required in giving up sexual relations for a period of time but this can help marriages grow stronger. Periodic abstinence can be a selfless expression of love for a spouse and family.

The Church is not dedicated to a world without sex and the legitimate joys it can bring to those who engage in sexual activity responsibly in marriage. The Church teaches very explicitly that married couples need not intend to conceive a child to enjoy the sexual relations

of marriage. It sees the sexual as beautiful, sacred, meaningful, joyous. It would add what some others might deny—that it must also and always be *responsible*.

12. Isn't the Church's position on abortion anti-woman?

I can understand why such allegations find a degree of acceptance. First, there is a carry-over from other issues, such as the question of the ordination of women, and of the role of women in the Church in general. Secondly, there is the reality that bishops and priests are themselves unmarried and do not have personally the demands of marriage and the responsibilities of children. A third reason is that so many homilies and published denunciations of abortion seem to focus almost exclusively on the responsibilities of women. Men seem to go unscathed, or even unnoticed. Other such arguments could be raised, all seeming to demonstrate that the Church and the bishops are biased against women, and this bias affects their view of abortion.

I am familiar with these sentiments and sincerely believe that the Church's position on abortion is totally unrelated to such issues. On the contrary, the Church sees in abortion a grave exploitation of women, particularly of the poor and minorities. One reason for this is that the immediate cost of an abortion is seen as less than the long-range cost of support for mother and child.

We see, too, the ease with which fathers of unborn children can evade long-range responsibilities by encouraging abortions. Rather than "liberation" for women, we see women used for mere gratification, then encouraged to undergo the risks of abortion and the years of emotional trauma that many women feel after an abortion. I note, as well, that the overwhelming number of those who perform abortions are men. Many male doctors, I am sure, sincerely believe that they are acting in the best interest of their patients. There is no doubt, however, but that abortion has become big business and that relatively few abortions seem to be performed without a fee even by those sympathetic with the poor. It is interesting also to note that unborn female children are aborted as freely as unborn males, without protest that this is anti-woman.

Another important point: most pro-abortion organizations argue that the pro-life movement is a bishop's movement, or a male-dominated movement. This is far from the truth. Eighty percent of pro-life activists are women. Recently I read an excellent paper on the subject by an organization of highly educated women, called "Women Who Affirm Life, Inc.," headquartered in Boston. It responds to the false stereotype of "the narrowness of so many in the pro-life movement,

their tactics, their nonacceptance of the consistent ethic approach, their lack of compassion, their alliances with groups that often are very anti-Catholic in other areas, their lack of civility, and so on.”

The paper states:

“This characterization fails to recognize the work of over 3,400 pro-life organizations, staffed primarily by women volunteers, who provide compassionate care and assistance to women facing crisis pregnancies. Many thousands of others, from a wide variety of backgrounds, devote themselves to pro-life education and public policy advocacy. Rather than narrowness and nonacceptance, this work is conducted with reason, dignity and respect for the views of others.”

That men, too, suffer because of abortion, however, is illustrated by the bitter reply of a man standing outside an abortion clinic with his pregnant wife. When asked by a sidewalk counselor if he wanted help, he answered, “No, I’m only the father.”

13. What about abortion in cases of rape or incest?

Some evils are what we call *intrinsic* evils, that is, evil in themselves, so that no circumstances can justify them. Direct abortion is such an evil. For example, a mother of a pregnant teenager does not want her daughter to have an abortion because of the emotional and spiritual damage it will cause her daughter. At the same time the mother does not want her daughter to have a baby and perhaps have to give up her future dreams. Is there a legitimate choice here? Can abortion be considered a “lesser evil”? No, it is an *intrinsic* evil. It simply can not be morally justified.

This principle holds even in regard to rape or incest. An unborn baby is an innocent human being who has committed no crime, regardless of how conception came about. It is never morally right to destroy an innocent human being.

It is true that many in the pro-life movement temporarily settle for “imperfect” law, that is, law which permits abortion under severely limited circumstances, such as in cases of rape or incest. Such legislation is “supported” only as the lesser of evils and those who support it will continue to work toward legislation which prohibits the killing of any unborn for *any* reason.

This does not imply that abortion in cases of rape or incest is less of an “intrinsic” evil than in other cases, or that pro-life people accept it as a *morally* lesser evil. One might call it a *legally* lesser evil. It implies that at a particular point the political reality may be that it is impossible to bring about *legislation* that prohibits all abortion. In such circumstances, moral theologians point out that

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

it is better to achieve "imperfect" legislation that may save the lives of a great many unborn babies now, while continuing to work strenuously for "perfect" legislation that may save the life of every unborn baby at some future date. In my judgment, it is unfair to accuse those who fight for imperfect legislation, as the best they can get at a given time, of "sacrificing the lives" of those unborn they know they can not protect at the same time. I personally know public officials who have spent their entire political lives fighting to protect *all* unborn children. To date they have not been successful, but I thank God that they have succeeded in protecting huge numbers. Moreover, they have helped keep alive in our country the belief that all abortion is evil. They have helped keep the entire pro-life movement alive. Many of them have consistently risked their political futures to do this, and have taken bitter abuse from the pro-abortion movement. For anyone in the pro-life movement to accuse them of "trading off" babies conceived by rape or incest, as though they were callous to the sacredness of human life, or simply trying to protect themselves politically, would be unjust, uncharitable and terribly counterproductive to the cause of life.

The conflict over imperfect law has definitely been divisive to the pro-life movement. It seems to me that our goal must always be to advance protection for the unborn child to the maximum degree possible. It certainly seems to me, however, that in cases in which perfect legislation is clearly impossible, it is morally acceptable to support a pro-life bill, however reluctantly, that contains exceptions if the following conditions prevail:

A. There is no other feasible bill restricting existing permissive abortion laws to a greater degree than the proposed bill;

B. The proposed bill is more restrictive than existing law, that is, the bill does not weaken the current law's restraints on abortion; and

C. The proposed bill does not negate the responsibility of future, more restrictive laws.

In addition, it would have to be made clear that we do not believe that a bill which contains exceptions is ideal and that we would continue to urge future legislation which would more fully protect human life. I recognize that some in the pro-life movement may consider it politically or strategically unwise to take the course outlined above, but that is a matter of prudential judgment. It is not a matter of supporting intrinsic evil as such.

I agree with and strongly encourage the following from the Joint Committee on Bio-Ethical Issues of the Catholic Bishops' Conference

of Great Britain:

“In a society which widely permits and procures abortion (e.g. by publicly funding it), some may judge that justice and the common good are most fittingly served by campaigning uncompromisingly for the ‘politically impossible:’ full equal legal protection for the unborn. Others may judge it right to concentrate on pressing for a measure of protection which is less than complete but which is greater than that accorded by today’s unjust law and has, they consider, a better prospect of being soon enacted and brought into force.

“Those who chose the stricter course should not adversely judge those who promote imperfect legislation, provided that the actions and attitudes of the latter are consistent with all other guidelines . . . Nor should those who promote imperfect legislation make adverse judgments on those whose preference for the stricter course seems to hinder the pursuit of the politically possible. Either group’s adverse criticism of the other may undermine the common effort—to extend the equal protection of the law to all.” (Briefing 89, Vol. 19, No. 14, July 7, 1989.)

14. Can aborted babies be baptized or given Christian funerals?

Yes. Canon law directs us to baptize a miscarried or aborted fetus if there is any chance he or she may still be alive. (Canon 871) Catholic funeral rites include special funeral prayers for children who die before baptism, which can be used in the case of a miscarried or stillborn child. American bishops have held funeral and burial services for unborn children killed by abortion.

In the Archdiocese of New York we have a burial plot at Gate of Heaven cemetery called the Guardian Angel’s Plot for the burial of children who died after birth or before birth. This includes babies who were miscarried or aborted.

15. Don’t the bishops neglect the needs of women and children and the poor because of a preoccupation with abortion?

At the outset it must be noted that the Church does consider abortion the most important issue of our day. The resolution on abortion unanimously endorsed by the bishops of the United States in November, 1989 reads, in part: “At this particular time, abortion has become the fundamental human rights issue for all men and women of good will.” At any rate, I’m sorry, but I must call the question a “red herring.” It’s like telling a fireman who is trying to save lives in a fire that he should really be worrying about apartheid in South Africa, even while putting out fires in New York.

The Church not only “worries” about many issues in addition to abortion, but spends hundreds of millions of dollars on them—

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

like trying to keep schools and hospitals open, treating persons with AIDS, taking care of the physically and emotionally disabled, the retarded, the deaf and the blind. The bishops have published powerful pastoral letters on war and peace, on the economic and social order, on racism. Bishops including myself have testified before the Congress on housing and homelessness, on nuclear weapons, on injustices in Latin America.

But the question is particularly misleading when it implies that bishops don't do anything to make abortion "unnecessary." In the Archdiocese of New York, for example, as I have noted above, it was announced publicly on Oct. 15, 1984, and has been repeatedly announced publicly ever since, that any girl or woman, of any religion, race, color or ethnic background, from anywhere, who is pregnant and in financial need, can come to the archdiocese and be provided medical care, hospitalization, legal and counseling help and related assistance. If she wishes to keep her baby after birth, she is helped to do so. If she wishes to have the baby adopted, arrangements are made accordingly. Many other dioceses provide similar critical help. The Church does not condemn the girl or woman who has had an abortion. On the contrary, she is treated with compassion and love. There are post-abortion counseling programs, such as Project Rachel. There are programs for both fathers and mothers of aborted babies such as "At Peace with the Unborn," to help them get over the traumatic effect abortion has on their lives, if sometimes only in hidden ways.

I am deeply concerned about women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant. I have talked with many such women and have received countless letters from others so I know of their fear and often their loneliness. Many times they are abandoned by the father of their unborn child or they are ostracized by embarrassed family members. There are heavy financial concerns and nagging uncertainty about the future.

This is why I believe all efforts of the pro-life movement must include greater support and assistance to women in crisis pregnancies. To support life it is necessary to be actively involved in addressing the many problems which tempt those in crisis pregnancies to abortion, such as poverty, homelessness and sometimes abuse—physical and other forms of abuse—by men.

The Church throughout the country does a great deal to encourage decent housing, to strengthen families, to take away the stigma of being a "single parent." We also provide parenting programs which include prenatal care for the unborn.

Some people simply don't *know* the extent of charitable activities

in which the Church is engaged. Some people, however, seem not to want the world to know. It would show how false many of their charges are. It is obvious that everyone could do more to help the poor. The millions of dollars spent by most states in funding abortions could help considerably to advance programs for pregnant women, prenatal care, sound education, and so on.

One major alternative to abortion is adoption. It is sad, indeed, that so many couples who are childless are unable to adopt children because of abortion. Since 1973, some 25 million unborn babies have been put to death. Millions of those babies, whatever their color, race or ethnic background, or even the state of their health, could have been adopted by couples who have been on the waiting lists of adoption agencies for years. It is a tragic irony that in some hospitals some doctors will be working desperately, using all their skills, to save the life of an unborn baby, while in other sections of the same hospitals unborn babies are being destroyed.

The sad truth is that a great number of babies are deliberately aborted, not because their mothers are in serious financial need, or confronted with grave problems. They are aborted because they are inconvenient. That's what is meant by abortion on demand, and for all practical purposes it is the law of this land.

The Church has always had as its primary concern the poor and the weak. The efforts of the Catholic Church on numerous social and human rights issues—including war, housing, racism, drug addiction and so on—have been applauded by many, including non-Catholics. These efforts will continue. We feel a special urgency, however, in opposing abortion because it is the killing of the most defenseless in our society, the unborn.

16. Church and State are separate in America. Aren't the bishops interfering in politics?

Bishops have every right and duty to be involved in *public policy*, which is a different thing altogether from politics, both because they are bishops and because they are American citizens.

All citizens should express themselves on the moral dimensions of public policy issues. Those citizens who are generally perceived as "moral leaders," such as the bishops, have a special obligation to do so. People expect bishops to denounce unjust war and aggression, to plead for the homeless, to denounce drug traffic, racism and so on. Bishops are criticized if they remain silent about such issues.

Why are bishops criticized only when the public policy question involves abortion? Why would I be praised for encouraging the mayor, the governor, the Congress and the president to intensify the war on drugs, but criticized if I urge the same regarding abortion?

Actually, many bishops find that local political leaders want to involve them, the bishops, in various public policy matters, rather than vice versa. Political leaders want bishops involved in community action. It is, again, only when abortion is involved that some political leaders complain about bishops.

This brings up the “single issue” question. Bishops are told they should not criticize a political candidate for simply being “pro-abortion,” or favor a candidate simply for being “pro-life.” It is argued that a candidate’s entire record, his or her entire set of attitudes must be considered.

There are several things to be said about this. First, with the staggering increase in abortion in less than 20 years, other issues, important as they are, are secondary to this direct taking of human life.

Secondly, in regard to many other issues, the question is one of public policy *strategy*, a question of the best way to do things. But abortion is not a question of mere strategy, or of how best to accomplish a particular public policy objective. Abortion—*every* abortion—is the destruction of human life. There is no “best way” of destroying human life. That is an absolute.

For example, everyone can argue that we need a stronger police force. How is that achieved? That’s a matter of strategy. For example, some might recommend raising taxes. Others believe that higher taxes will ruin the economy and result in a very high rate of unemployment. Are they right or wrong? That’s an economic judgment more than it’s a moral judgment. Many such examples could be given. In reality, aren’t “single issues” always driving forces in American political life? Doesn’t the state of the economy or employment strongly influence thinking? Could any candidate win office today who favored a return to slavery, even if he had a wonderful record in regard to all other issues? Could a candidate win who supports drug traffic? Suppose a candidate said the vote should be withdrawn from women? Clearly, these *are* “single issues” which many people consider serious enough that no other qualities of a candidate would compensate. Why is it wrong, then, to look at abortion in this light, if one believes that abortion is the taking of innocent life?

As a matter of fact, an interesting development has taken place since the famous Webster decision of the United States Supreme Court, which gave states new latitude in restricting abortions. The very day the decision was announced, leaders of the pro-abortion movement were threatening political office holders on national television: “Take away our right (to abortion), and we will take away your job.” That is certainly a “single issue” approach! We have seen a boycott threatened against a potato crop, then against an entire

state because of proposed legislation restricting abortion. On May 28, 1990, *The New York Times* reported that the National Abortion Rights Action League "has jumped into" a certain state's gubernatorial race, vowing to defeat the only candidate who opposes abortion. This was generally perceived as a call for "single issue" voting. This phenomenon has clearly swept the country in the 1990 primaries.

In a day in which it can prove very embarrassing to a candidate if it is learned that he belongs to a country club that excludes blacks or women, it should be reasonable enough to ask a candidate if he excludes the right to life to the unborn. Strange. He can not be "pro-choice" about a country club, but he can be "pro-choice" about human life. Obviously, it would be a grave and foolish error to vote in favor of a candidate only because he or she opposes abortion, if such a candidate favors some other gross immorality, or is incompetent to serve.

The bishops have repeatedly stated publicly that they do not encourage the development of a "religious bloc" of voters. They try to urge people to discern the morality of positions and vote their conscience, recognizing that some moral problems are more important than others. It is not for the bishops, however, to recommend particular candidates.

17. Shouldn't the Church lose its tax-exempt status for involving itself in the politics of abortion?

As noted in answer to the question above, to be concerned with public policy is quite different from engaging in political activity as this term is commonly understood. As a Catholic bishop I have neither forfeited nor renounced my rights and obligations as a citizen. Moreover, as a bishop I am tasked with presenting the teaching of the Catholic Church unambiguously and with integrity.

While various other religious sectors speak on abortion without harassment, Catholic bishops are often declared "un-American" when they speak about the issue. This is not consistent with the American constitutional protections of religious freedom and free speech.

It would be interesting to learn if other organizations which are tax exempt—including those which are pro-abortion—are challenged in this area. I wonder if there may not be some which engage in outright political activity and are never questioned.

We recognize that there are limitations upon our involvement in helping to shape public policy. I am frequently asked by pastors and others what is lawful without endangering the Church's status.

At the risk of oversimplification, I might suggest that the general guidelines in this area have been expressed by one writer in just a few words:

"Issue-oriented speech is entirely proper under the (Internal Revenue)

Code's framework and is further protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. The difference really boils down to *people* vs. *issues*. In the political arena, Church groups may not support or oppose *people*; they are encouraged, however, to support or oppose *issues*.

18. Why does the Church seem more critical of Catholics than of others?

There are several reasons for this. Space permits mentioning only a few. First, it seems logical that those who call themselves Catholics, especially "practicing Catholics," would be expected to accept and support all church teaching, particularly on those matters which the Church itself obviously considers critical. There can be no doubt that the Church considers abortion critical. As noted above, the Second Vatican Council calls it an "unspeakable crime." How can a Catholic, in good conscience, in any way support an "unspeakable crime"? It is not the nature of Catholicism for Catholics to be able to "pick and choose" which substantive teachings they accept or reject.

Secondly, the Church must be careful to avoid the appearance of being exploited by Catholics who might be tempted to use their Catholicism to their own advantage, for example, for political purposes, while actually ignoring Catholic teaching. There are cases on record, for instance, of Catholics who have campaigned for public office on the basis of a "pro-life" position, even making sure to publicize pictures taken with bishops or with the Holy Father; then, after election, they have supported "abortion rights."

Thirdly, there are Catholics who argue that the Church is wrong in its teaching on abortion, and attempt to convince other Catholics accordingly, for example, in newspaper advertisements, or in developing networks that call themselves Catholic, yet are devoted to "abortion rights." If the Church failed to criticize such persons, the implication would be that their arguments are valid. Such Catholics are really rejecting the authority of the Pope, the councils and the bishops to determine what is authentic Catholic teaching. This is an attack on the very nature of Catholicism.

19. But what of non-Catholics who support "abortion rights"?

First, it must be clearly stated that many Jews, non-Catholic Christians, Muslims, and even people of no religious persuasion completely reject abortion and the concept of "abortion rights." Because the Catholic Church is highly visible and its true teaching on abortion is "monolithic," it serves as an excellent "whipping boy." Moreover, it must be candidly admitted that there is still enough anti-Catholic

prejudice in the United States, and enough fear that the Church wants to take over political power, that some support "abortion rights" as a protest against the Church.

Secondly, many non-Catholics of good will, as many Catholics, have not thought through the entire issue of abortion. They really don't think of it as the killing of babies who are just as human as children already born. Many don't even realize that the current law permits that a nine-month old unborn baby can be legally, deliberately aborted, up to the very last minute before birth. There has been so much "abortion rights" propaganda that many people really do believe that abortion is simply the removal of a piece of tissue from a woman's womb.

Thirdly, as noted above, there are some who believe that the unborn is not yet fully human, and that an abortion is therefore not the killing of an innocent being. The Church believes that while it must respect the positions of all persons of good will, in such a critical matter as the defense of human life it must try to convince everyone that the unborn is human, and must try to convince legislators and others to protect the unborn precisely as they protect all other persons. The Church feels the same obligation to contribute to the protection and care of everyone in society, of whatever religion.

20. Suppose all candidates support "abortion rights"?

In good conscience one could refrain from voting altogether. In some instances, this might be best, even though voting is normally a moral obligation. Or one could try to determine whether the position of one candidate is less supportive of abortion than that of another. Other things being equal, one might then morally vote for a less supportive position.

If all candidates support "abortion rights" equally, one might vote for the candidate who seems best in regard to other issues, hoping that one day he or she could be persuaded to become pro-life.

21. Isn't the Church concerned that its opposition to candidates who support abortion will prevent people from voting Catholics into office?

Recently I was warned by a prestigious newspaper that I had become too "political" in the 1984 presidential campaign, and that I had threatened the status of Catholics in political life—which they claimed had been hard won by President John F. Kennedy. But when Mr. Kennedy became president he had to promise the world that his Catholicism would never influence his political positions.

I understand the question, but I believe there is an essential piece missing. If a Catholic must renounce what he or she believes in

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

conscience in order to be elected for office, then we are back to the days of "no Catholic need apply." It must be remembered that we are not talking about a public office holder demanding that all Americans go to Mass on Sunday, or not eat meat on Friday. We are talking about an individual who bases his or her moral decisions not simply on the desires of the majority, but on what he or she believes is right and just. The formation of the conscience that allows those decisions to be made responsibly is aided, in part, by religious training and belief. I know that there are many good Catholics in or running for public office who will not allow anti-Catholic or pro-abortion pressures to force them to renounce what they believe. And more, I believe that good Catholics, good Jews, good Muslims, good Protestants and good people of no religious faith can hold public office, represent the people, and make morally sound judgments in office. That's how this thing called the United States of America started. When the moral and spiritual are excluded from government we are doomed to failure.

22. What about pro-life people who demonstrate in front of abortion clinics, show pictures of aborted babies or use similar means to protest the killing of the unborn?

St. Paul tells us that we are each called to fulfill a particular role in the world; together we form the Body of Christ. In the pro-life movement, there are varying tactics used to advance the cause of life. The overwhelming number of people in the pro-life movement are good people, very ordinary people. Women, men, children, the golden aged: they are people united in their belief that the killing of the unborn is evil. The methods they use to make all people aware of the evil of abortion differ, their motivations and aims do not.

While indiscriminate use of intrauterine photography and grim pictures of aborted babies may under some circumstances be inappropriate, I can not share the view of those who discredit their use altogether, or indict those who allegedly use them for "scare" tactics. If, after all, one is convinced that the unborn is an appendage, or "fetal wastage," such pictures should hardly prove frightening. It's only if you really believe they are *babies* or are afraid other people will believe they are babies, that you feel threatened by them. The photograph of the self-immolating bonze, aflame in Saigon, was flashed around the world and awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Pictures of My Lai in Vietnam were reproduced endlessly to show the horror of the conflict and what some believed to be habitual atrocities perpetrated by American armed forces. Many believe that it was the televising of such pictures, bringing them into American living rooms, that brought about revulsion against the war, and eventually

JOHN J. O'CONNOR

forced the United States to withdraw from Vietnam. The mass suicides in Jonestown, Guyana, voluntary or forced, were televised repeatedly and displayed in magazines and other media throughout the world. Televised pictures of Chinese tanks rolling into Tiananmen Square and killing students horrified the world, and at least temporarily changed the relations between the United States and China. Frequently the ravages of starvation among people of the Third World, as in Ethiopia, are presented vividly and starkly, as were pictures of the "boat people" and of those devastated by the earthquake in Romania in 1989. In all such instances it seems to be assumed that such shocking visual confrontations will somehow help reduce repetitions of the horrors they convey, or encourage people to help the helpless. No one is more helpless than the unborn.

A significant example of the constructive use of pictures of aborted babies is found in the congressional testimony of former Congressman Lawrence J. Hogan, sponsor of a human life amendment. Appearing before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, Congressman Hogan stated:

"Until a few years ago, I really did not think much about abortion. It did not mean very much to me. I somehow equated it with birth control. My brother, Dr. William Hogan, who . . . is with me today, and is an obstetrician, had been trying to discuss abortion with me, but I kept putting him off, saying that it was not a popular political issue.

"Finally, one day he came to my house and showed me some color pictures of what unborn babies look like. I saw what some people call a chemical reaction, sucking a thumb. I saw perfectly formed human babies just a few weeks from conception. I saw the pictures of the 21-week-old fetus, a little girl, who survived out of the womb. I saw other little babies who did not survive. Some were scalded red from saline solution which flushed them from the womb. I saw others torn apart by a suction machine. But, in the material taken from the machine, I could see a little foot and a little hand. I was stunned. I was shocked. And I was bitterly ashamed.

"I do not know what I really thought abortion was. I just did not think very much about it. But certainly I did not think we were killing babies. How could I have been so stupid?

"If we are not killing babies in abortion, what are we doing?"

I am neither recommending any particular tactic nor encouraging controversial procedures in order to raise the level of awareness about the tragedy of abortion. But I refuse to indict those frustrated individuals whose dedication to defending the helpless is ridiculed and condemned, not only by some who favor abortion, but even

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

by some who oppose abortion. Some consider pro-life activists to be fanatics, and in the long run harmful to the cause they espouse. Such criticism is too frequently substituted for demonstration of real concern on the part of critics themselves. It is often much easier to demand that pro-life activists control their emotions and engage in reasonable discussion than it is to take an active part oneself in advancing such discussion or in otherwise attempting to defend the lives of the unborn.

It must be remembered that those who choose to demonstrate in front of abortion clinics, or who are even willing to be arrested and go to jail, believe with all their being that every unborn baby is a sacred human person. The killing that occurs daily in this country—to the tune of 4,400 babies a day—goes overwhelmingly unnoticed. People who take a strong public stand against this killing are dedicated to keeping the issue alive: abortion kills a human being.

I have never supported violence. I would publicly disclaim anyone who attempted to insert violence into the pro-life movement, or encouraged it in any way. But I have deep admiration for all those who, in conscience, participate non-violently to oppose the killing of the unborn.

23. Why don't we have prayers at every Mass to proclaim life and discourage abortion?

Perhaps I should have begun with this question, instead of concluding with it, because it is so important. In my view, we need to intensify our prayer activity more than any other activity in the pro-life movement. All life begins with and belongs to God. It is to God we must appeal to give us the wisdom and courage to address the problems that lead to abortion, and to help us understand the sacredness of every human life. It is to God we must appeal, as well, for the gift of compassion for those who are victims of abortion, not only the unborn, but the women who have abortions, the fathers of the unborn, the families of all. It is to God we must appeal to give the world an understanding of love and unselfishness.

Because of the importance of prayer to the cause of life, I have begun the formation of a religious community, Sisters of Life, who will spend several hours each day in prayer for life, particularly the life of the unborn. In regard to prayers at Mass, I agree. I would certainly like to see mention in the Prayers of the Faithful at every Mass, to remind both adults and children of the sacredness of every human life, the evil of abortion and the need for help and compassion. As chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, I have arranged for the development of a special votive Mass—a pro-life Mass. The draft must now be studied

JOHN J. O'CONNOR

by our Liturgical Committee, then, if approved, sent to Rome for approval. The Church is careful about new prayers or Masses, as it should be.

To me, every Mass is already an expression of the fullest meaning of life. Christ assumed our human nature while remaining divine. When we receive Him in Holy Communion, we receive "Body and Blood, soul and divinity." In a real sense, we human beings are "divinized." Moreover, His death on the Cross, that marvelous act of love, is renewed for us spiritually in the Mass, and we are reminded that in marriage, a husband and wife lay down their lives for each other as Christ laid down his life for each one of us. A pregnant woman literally gives her life for the unborn within her, who is fed by and through her body and blood and very being. Christ died to give us life. He respected our lives here on this earth, and not only as we will live them in eternity. Hence, He fed the hungry, and gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and raised the dead to life. No prayer is filled with such reverence for life as the prayer we call the Mass.

EDITORS NOTE:

We thank Cardinal O'Connor for his permission to reprint this section of his abortion statement, which he prefaced with the following statement:

The following edition of "From My Viewpoint" is provided for Catholics in the Archdiocese of New York. Other readers, in New York and elsewhere, may find it of some interest, but I wish to make clear that I offer it as Archbishop of New York to try to meet needs within my own archdiocese. I do not offer it in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is not intended to represent that committee, and does not pretend to speak for the Bishops of the United States.

We regret that we were unable to provide here the final section of the document, which outlines a "series of pastoral suggestions" as to how concern for the unborn might be demonstrated. It includes specific suggestions for parents, educators, those in the religious, medical, and legal professions—as well as readers involved in politics and/or the media.

The Art of “Listening”⁹⁹

James Hitchcock

The decision of the American Catholic bishops to hire a public relations firm to influence opinion about abortion balances in part the incalculable amount of favorable free publicity which the pro-abortion movement has for years enjoyed at the hands of journalists who, as Fred Barnes of *The New Republic* has observed, write as though they are “a wholly owned subsidiary of the ‘pro-choice’ movement.”

A common tactic of those pushing for radical change in society is to preempt “compassion” for themselves. The media are usually more than willing to accept such rhetoric at face value and to present radical feminists, among others, as “caring,” “sensitive,” and “thoughtful,” endlessly telling stories of how they suffer at society’s hands.

The stories they tell are not always false—no one denies that pregnancy can involve serious hardship for women. The falsity of the rhetoric lies rather in the fact that the media allow favored groups to arrogate all suffering to themselves. Those on the other side are never allowed to claim it nor, in the case of the unborn, is anyone allowed to claim it on their behalf.

Radical feminists within the Catholic Church practice this technique very successfully, to the point where the American bishops are about to issue a letter officially acknowledging their systematic mistreatment of women and begging forgiveness, their exercise in self-castigation the result of a process in which the voices of women who have different feelings about the Church were systematically filtered out.

The proposed episcopal letter does state that women cannot be ordained to the priesthood, and it yields no ground on abortion. However, feminists, with some logic, find the bishops’ position incoherent. If bishops admit that they are minions of a “patriarchal” and “oppressive” church, how can they in good conscience deny feminists the two symbolic victories they most crave—ordination to the priesthood and the right to “control their own bodies?”

Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee is one bishop who, although he dismisses the proposed letter for various reasons (partly

James Hitchcock, a professor of history at St. Louis University, is a well-known author and frequent commentator on Catholic affairs.

because it does not go far enough), has sought to go as far as possible in responding to the "agony" of pro-abortion women. In May he issued a 5,500-word document which comes closer than any bishop has ever done to making "pro-choice" an acceptable Catholic position.¹

Archbishop Weakland has an unusual background for an American archbishop. A Benedictine monk, he served as abbot of a monastery in Pennsylvania, then as world-wide head of the Benedictine order in Rome (although the Benedictines are extremely decentralized, and the "abbot primate" has little authority). He was made archbishop of Milwaukee in 1977; since then he has rarely missed an opportunity to talk about his difficulties with official Church teaching and policy, and he has made feminism one of his particular causes.

On the face of it, Archbishop Weakland's statement on abortion is merely a routine example of the rhetoric of "compassion." Before framing the document, he spent considerable time talking with women who expressed a wide range of opinions on the subject. Then, moved by the "thoughtful sensitivity" of those who could not fully accept Church teaching, he felt compelled to endorse their concerns. In one view, therefore, if the archbishop must be faulted, it is merely for an excess of compassion, allowing his heart to rule his head.²

In fact, however, the process by which the archbishop reached his conclusion seems to have been highly rational, even contrived, the elaborate ritual of "listening" performed merely in order to buttress a pre-ordained conclusion.

In preparing their letter on women, most American bishops organized a series of "listening sessions" at which women were invited to appear and talk about their relations to the Church. Not surprisingly, radical feminists seized the opportunity to attack the institution as "sexist" and "patriarchal," and orthodox women found themselves excluded from the hearings, which were organized by women who were often militant feminists.

Archbishop Weakland, however, found the reverse to be true in Milwaukee with regard to abortion. After holding a series of public hearings, he discovered that most of the women who appeared and spoke with fervor were strongly pro-life and begged him to reaffirm Catholic teaching.

It might be thought that a Catholic prelate would have been gratified with such a response, and might have concluded that women in the pews must feel very strongly on the subject to have come forth in such numbers. Instead, Archbishop Weakland announced his

disappointment in not having heard all the voices he expected to hear, and said he would remedy that defect by meeting privately with selected individuals, a remarkably candid admission that he had been “listening” only in order to hear certain things and would continue the process until he finally heard what he wanted to hear.

Women who were pro-life later said that their strongly-expressed opinions were not reflected in the archbishop’s final document. In particular was this true of women who had actually had abortions and deeply regretted it—the archbishop’s summary of what he heard did not so much as acknowledge their existence.

Whom precisely he consulted privately in order to broaden his understanding is unknown. However, the director of Planned Parenthood in Milwaukee claimed (absurdly) that 90 per cent of her staff are Catholic and that many of them had spoken with the archbishop.³

Faced with flatly-contradictory positions about abortion, most of them espoused with considerable fervor, the archbishop, as a man of self-proclaimed compassion and openness, might have been expected to produce a bland document affirming traditional teaching but attempting to “reach out” to those who do not accept it. Instead he donated all his compassion to the “pro-choice” side and gave the back of his hand to those whose position was ostensibly the same as his own.

One of the curious features of his statement was the way in which it prescinded from the debate over abortion which has been raging for at least twenty years. Taken at face value, the archbishop’s position is based almost solely on what he heard from talking to women on an individual basis, and owes nothing to what anyone outside Milwaukee, 1990, might ever have said or written on the subject.

Although personal knowledge is valuable, relying on it exclusively can be just as distorting of reality as ignoring it, and it would be almost impossible to think of another public position paper—on whatever subject, from whatever source—that prescinds so willingly from the accumulated body of information on the subject.

In explaining why he did not simply commission an opinion poll of Milwaukee women, the archbishop said he wanted to hear “real” voices. Again, it was a legitimate point but a distorting one: by prescinding from the question how many, or what percentage, of Catholic women hold pro-abortion views, he left himself free to decide which voices, amidst the babble of conflict, were the authentic ones.

But a careful reading of the final document suggests that he had

not ignored the literature on the subject quite as completely as he implied. Several critics, notably Father James Burtchaell of the University of Notre Dame,⁴ criticized the claim the “the Church’s official position has been clear for decades now” when in fact there has been remarkable consistency about abortion in Catholic teaching since earliest times. Archbishop Weakland, who prides himself on his intellectual attainments and his sophisticated approach to issues, could scarcely be unaware of that fact, but it has long been a ploy of “pro-choice” Catholics to insist that the official position was forged only recently. (Ironically, even most militant feminists give it more antiquity than the archbishop, usually dating it from the nineteenth century.)

By ostensibly confining his inquiry to particular women who spoke to him directly, the archbishop also distorted the issue in other significant ways. He claimed, for example, to have heard no one who espouses the morality of unrestricted abortion and reported that even those who are “pro-choice” indicated that they do not think abortion is “a good in itself” (an amazingly weak moral formulation about something the Second Vatican Council called “an unspeakable crime”). As other critics also pointed out, Archbishop Weakland gave new respectability to the term “pro-choice” by defining it as something less than abortion on demand. (He wrote confusingly about “abortion on demand, without grave cause,” an oxymoron in that “abortion on demand,” as Father Burtchael pointed out, precisely means “without any required justification.”) While inviting a “dialogue” about abortion, the archbishop in effect defined as nonexistent the core of the pro-abortion movement, which insists that the action involves no moral problems of any kind and can be performed for any reason. Prolifers who took the archbishop’s invitation to dialogue at face value would find themselves rudely surprised and frustrated, when they encountered adversaries whom he had assured them do not exist.

Dialogue implies a status of equality among the participants, and it might be thought that Archbishop Weakland felt constrained to speak respectfully of those who support abortion merely in order to engage them in discussion. But the most peculiar feature of his statement was not the respectful things he said about those who promote something the Catholic Church condemns in the strongest terms, but the equally disrespectful things he said about the pro-life movement. In this regard his statement almost might have been written by the National Abortion Rights Alliance itself.

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

Thus to the archbishop the rhetoric of the pro-life movement “seems simplistic,” and he resolved that he would never again be “so glib” as to speak of the moment of conception or of the opportunity for pregnant women to give up their children for adoption. (The reference to the process of conception was further evidence of the intellectual confusion in the document—the archbishop could make a valid statement on the subject only by consulting scientific authorities, not by listening to what individual women might or might not tell him. His rhetoric suggested that he had never before inquired about the nature of conception and heard about it for the first time from those attending his “listening sessions.”)

The ritual of “listening” which the archbishop adopted was intended to signify his humility before the “lived experience” of particular women, an experience which he, as a male and a priest, could not really share. Thus in the entire document he allowed himself scarcely the smallest censure of those who rejected Catholic teaching. To do so would have been to violate the atmosphere of “faith and trust” which he found among them. Those who expressed their support of abortion, however qualified, were defined as “faithful women” whose opinions had to be treated with the utmost respect even by those who might disagree with them.

But the archbishop gave himself an exemption from granting the same respect to those women who accept the teachings which he himself ostensibly supports. Besides accusing them of being simplistic, he found them “abrasive,” “uncivil,” “judgmental,” and “narrow,” so much so that “good priests” are embarrassed to be associated with the pro-life movement. (This claim was an amazing one, implying as it did that “good” priests remain silent in the face of what they know to be serious moral evil, for fear of losing face by joining with the wrong allies.)

As do all movements, the pro-life movement has its share of people to whom the archbishop’s adjectives might apply. Whether this was true of those who actually attended his “listening sessions” is open to question. But, if it was, it is equally likely that “pro-choicers” demonstrated similar excesses of zeal, excesses which the archbishop was more than willing to overlook. (Once again his studied ignoring of the larger debate permitted him to avoid encountering the truly hateful rhetoric which militant pro-abortionists routinely employ.) The archiepiscopal letter clearly implied that the failure of “civility” in the debate is mainly due to attitudes on the pro-life side.

But the most significant point was not whether particular pro-life women struck the archbishop as abrasive and narrow, but the fact that in dealing with them he allowed himself the luxury of male condescension. He did not simply take their words at face value, as he did with pro-abortionists, and did not even content himself with registering his disagreements with their tone and style. He rather took upon himself the task of interpreting their stated beliefs in ways they themselves would not accept. In this he presumed to know them better than they know themselves, to recognize as pathologies what these women (the "listening sessions" were restricted to women) take to be signs of their moral health.

The heart of this condemnation was Archbishop Weakland's "disturbing" discovery that pro-life Catholic women had been deeply influenced by Protestant fundamentalism, and especially by its "narrow" approach to scripture. The claim has an immediate false ring about it, since one of the discernable differences between the Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant approaches to moral issues is precisely the belief of the latter that they need to offer scriptural arguments for every position they espouse, whereas Catholics tend to rely on some implicit or explicit version of the "natural law" idea, which states that moral principles are knowable by human reason. (Catholic pro-lifers often rely simply on common sense—pointing to the appearance and behavior of the fetus to prove their case.) The archbishop's claim to have heard fundamentalist voices coming through Catholic mouths thus seems at best disingenuous.

The claim, however, carried with it an implied and chilling threat. So bothered was the archbishop by the fundamentalists' influence over Catholic women that he announced his intention to meet with his priests to discuss ways of counteracting it. The implication was not merely that the archbishop has reservations about the pro-life movement but that he will use his episcopal authority to undermine it, through the clergy of the archdiocese directly subject to his authority.

The charge of "fundamentalism" is the standard tactic now employed in America against people who believe in traditional, family-centered moral values. Those who employ it feel themselves under no obligation to prove their assertion, or even to define precisely what the term means. They can rest secure in the knowledge that the "opinion-makers" in American society will give full weight to an insult implying ignorance and bigotry. In his characterization of the pro-life movement Archbishop Weakland showed himself more than willing to employ

this tactic. His charge also reveals what was probably the governing passion of his statement in the first place. In some ways the key passage in the document is the contrast between the “two kinds of women” he encountered in his discussions:

I could not help but notice strong cultural differences that seemed to accompany the positions taken on abortion. Women who saw their identity as women in child-bearing, in raising a family, in being a homemaker, tended to be stronger in their convictions and stances on the pro-life spectrum. Those who saw child-bearing as important, but only one aspect of their full identity as women and were concerned about developing other aspects of their gifts through involvement in the world and society, tended to be more open on the issue. I could not help but reflect on the fact that the latter group seemed to dominate on our college faculties and could represent the thinking of many of the younger women they came into contact with.

This pregnant passage (pun intended) lends itself to almost endless exegesis in explaining the extreme discomfort some Catholics feel about the pro-life movement even when they profess to believe in its principles. As the archbishop implied, this is in part a cultural war, in which to some people the most important thing is not the issues but being seen in the company of the right armies.

As elsewhere in his statement, Archbishop Weakland’s summary of the factual situation is open to question. Many young women are militantly anti-abortion, because they are themselves of child-bearing age. Although hinting that his critics are all uneducated *Hausfraus*, the archbishop knows that among the most articulate of them is a young woman theologian, Monica Migliorino Miller. Finally, women in the pro-life movement are by definition among those concerned about “developing their gifts” in the larger world, since they have created and sustained one of the most successful grass-roots social movements in American history. All this was ignored by the archbishop, who was offering his readers (especially, it might be supposed, those in the secular press) a broad wink and the expressed lament, “You know what those people are like!”

Although Archbishop Weakland’s monastic background might seem likely to have given him an austere and cloistered attitude to the world, he has in fact been perhaps the chief of the handful of self-consciously “progressive” American prelates who have made no secret of their dissatisfaction with certain official Church teachings. Not long after coming to Milwaukee he published a disdainful evaluation of an encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI, the pope who had recently elevated him to the archbishopric,⁵ and he has been equally disdainful

JAMES HITCHCOCK

of the revised Code of Canon Law enacted by the Church several years ago.⁶

Even before the recent statement on abortion it was obvious that he values the good opinion of those who hold properly "advanced" views on controversial subjects, and feels uncomfortable with those whom the media have branded as reactionary. He had already shocked, saddened, and angered anti-abortionists in 1986 when he willingly signed a document presented to him by pro-abortionists in Milwaukee, gratuitously denouncing "violence" on the part of pro-lifers against abortion clinics.⁷ (Delighted abortionists burred, "He gave us much more than we ever hoped for.") Later he said that he had intended his strictures to apply to those who use "violence" against military installations also, but it was hardly surprising that the media did not notice that opinion, if indeed it was his opinion, nor has it caused him to criticize the anti-war movement at any time since.

In 1985 he was made chairman of the bishops' committee to draft a pastoral letter on the state of the economy, an odd choice given his professional training in music, and one rumored to have been designed to throw a mantle of episcopal protection over a prelate thought to be in bad graces in Rome. The letter on the economy was as carefully orchestrated as the "listening sessions" on abortion, and espoused predictable liberal positions on most matters, without much regard for either the apparent success of Western capitalism or the apparent intellectual and material bankruptcy of other systems.⁸

When it suits him, Archbishop Weakland is effectively able to present himself to the public as the soul of moderation, humility, and a pleasing diffidence to the opinions of others. However, as in the abortion statement, these amenities are granted almost exclusively to those on the "left." Towards those he has branded "fundamentalist" he often shows not even the pretense of courtesy or open-mindedness. He once warned a convention of Catholic journalists, for example, not to print letters from conservative Catholics who are retarding the cause of progress,⁹ and when a Milwaukee woman wrote him a courteous letter concerning sex-education materials being used in his archdiocese, he replied (in writing) that he was instructing all archdiocesan agencies not to answer any of her queries and accusing her of being "un-Christian." He concluded by advising her "to be more concerned about your own holiness, than by setting yourself up as a quasi-infallible office to preserve the faith as you perceive it." (Among other curious features, the sex-education program being

protested informed students that “occasional” acts of marital infidelity are not to be regarded as extremely serious, adultery being a “developing” area of theological discussion.)¹⁰

Ordinarily such a way of dealing with the faithful would bring down immense public wrath on the head of an archbishop, as reflecting the worst kind of clerical authoritarianism. But such outbursts are probably less spontaneous losses of temper than calculated tactics—liberal Catholic prelates know that by and large the media not only tolerate but support authoritarian methods used on behalf of “change,” even as they condemn far milder measures employed by “conservative” prelates. A century ago Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, greatly admired by many of today’s liberal American bishops, learned the technique of using the secular press against his ecclesiastical enemies, and it can be fairly said that today Archbishop Weakland understands, better than any other American bishop, the way in which the media lionize Catholics willing to talk publicly about the narrowness of Church teaching. In such a game, an archbishop is a major prize.

Calling career-oriented women “more open” on the abortion issue was a curious and revealing phrase. He might have written “more liberal,” “more permissive,” or “more uncertain,” but in contemporary social discourse “openness” is an unmitigated good, so that in principle those women who favor abortion on demand would be the “most open” of all and should receive the archbishop’s highest praise. Implicitly he accepted the argument that the morality of abortion does not turn on the life of the unborn child but on the “freedom” with which individual women approach the question.

What pro-lifers found most dismaying about the statement was the fact that in all those 5,500 words there was not a hint of compassion for the unborn. Despite his proclaimed empathetic approach to the question, and his rejection of dry statistics, he discussed the issue in the abstract, with no attention to what actually occurs in an abortion. (Indeed the very method of “listening” precluded any such consideration, since the unborn cannot speak for themselves.)

Archbishop Weakland did permit himself one passage of criticism of the pro-abortionists but, characteristically, it made a currently fashionable point. Instead of lamenting pro-abortion women’s apparent insensitivity to the claims of the unborn, he reproved them mildly for their “cartesian” (after the philosopher Rene Descartes) dualism of mind and body, in which the body is treated as a possession over

JAMES HITCHCOCK

which its "owner" has absolute control. (Extreme mind-body dualism is generally disapproved in today's "holistic" cultural atmosphere, and many liberals would be more embarrassed to have fallen into that trap than to be thought insensitive to unborn children.)

Archbishop Weakland does not give the impression (except when dealing with recalcitrant conservatives) of being an impulsive man, and the scenario which led up to the publication of his letter seems to have been planned and organized for a period of some months. In actual content it says nothing which many other people have not said often before, and more effectively. Its sole importance lies in its being said by a Catholic archbishop, and to be fully understood it must be situated in the present American Catholic context.

Common liberal wisdom now has it that the anti-abortion movement is in decline and that most Americans are "pro-choice." (Without bothering to analyze the nuances of public opinion, Archbishop Weakland accepted the pro-abortion argument that pro-lifers have "failed" to persuade their fellow citizens.) Much of this is wishful thinking, since the movement continues to win impressive political victories in many parts of the country and is within striking distance of overturning the key court decisions which originally established "a woman's right." That a Catholic archbishop should endorse this orchestrated pessimism, at the moment when the movement has a realistic possibility of victory, is itself highly curious.

But throughout the 1980s it has been the successes of the pro-life movement, not its failures, which have exercised many liberal Catholics, including many clergy. The movement first proved it had to be taken seriously when it scored impressive electoral victories in 1980 and 1982, and when it became a key element in the Reagan coalition, achieving a political respectability its opponents had disdainfully denied it. (In America, nothing brings respectability more quickly than success.)

Catholic liberals were especially angered when Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York publicly rebuked Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, in 1984. Shortly afterwards Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago undertook the first in a series of lectures (still in progress, from time to time) in which he called for "a consistent ethic of life" by all Catholics, extending to military preparedness, capital punishment, and a range of other social and economic issues. In effect Catholics were told they cannot simply be anti-abortion but have to prove repeatedly

that they are “pro-life” by supporting as much as possible of the left-liberal Democratic agenda.¹¹

Whatever its intentions, the demonstrable effects of Cardinal Bernardin’s position have been to throw a fog of confusion over the abortion issue. Are Catholics justified in being “single-issue” voters? Does the Church condemn capital punishment? Is the traditional theory of the just war still legitimate? Although Cardinal Bernardin’s advice to the Catholic people tends to trail off into vagueness when he is pressed for answers to these and other questions, one implication of his words seems to be that in each situation Catholics should weigh the abortion issue against a range of other issues and, since very few politicians fit the cardinal’s “Seamless Garment,” make a choice between them.

Accompanying this agenda has been constant guerilla warfare directed against the pro-life movement by Catholics who profess to believe in its goals but find the movement itself so narrow, fanatical, and “unloving” that those goals must be abandoned lest the methods succeed.

There is a contradiction at the heart of the liberal Catholic approach to abortion, namely, feminism. Militant assertiveness on the part of “liberated” women is now an integral part of liberalism, as deeply entrenched as the welfare state, racial equality, or any of the more traditional liberal positions. Despite occasional talk about “pro-life feminism,” most feminists define the absolute “right” to an abortion as fundamental to their liberation, the final “non-negotiable” issue.

Catholic liberals have scarcely missed a step in keeping up with the feminists but, to the degree that they also profess to be anti-abortion, they find themselves in a hopelessly contradictory position. In typical fashion, Archbishop Weakland “listens” not to hear the voices of “women,” as he claims, but the voices of feminists. When he heard other female voices, they disconcerted him and provoked his denunciation of “fundamentalism.”

The call to “moderation” in tactics and rhetoric is one which, in any situation, can be considered on its merits. Archbishop Weakland’s call is a less than constructive contribution to the debate both because it singles out pro-lifers as the main reason “dialogue” cannot occur and because there is no evidence whatever that pro-abortionists wish to compromise, or that they would take seriously a new pro-life “moderation.” (More likely they would interpret the latter as further evidence that the movement is failing.)

The call for “moderation” is also highly unrealistic in its understanding of the American political process. There is little evidence that movements achieve their goals by demonstrating their sweet reasonability. On the contrary, every successful movement of recent decades—racial equality, feminism, environmentalism, “gay rights,” among others—has proceeded through uncompromising assaults on its adversaries; if it pushes strongly enough, in time it is accommodated. Compromise, if it occurs, takes place only after the movement demonstrates its will to press its agenda uncompromisingly. Thus in purely political terms, Archbishop Weakland’s advice was very bad advice indeed.

After a Milwaukee *Sentinel* headline proclaiming “Weakland: Pro-choice Could Be Ok,” the archbishop protested that he indeed supports the teaching of the Church and never questioned it. In a technical sense this might be true—he nowhere said that “abortion might be compatible with Catholic teaching,” but he certainly gave broad hints that the doctrine needs to be reconsidered, and he gave no support to those who have been struggling to uphold it, often at considerable cost to themselves.

The archiepiscopal statement might be considered an ecclesiastical equivalent of the familiar political ploy of the “trial balloon,” whereby someone in a position of authority makes public comments hinting that particular policies might be changed, gauges the intensity of public reactions, then denies having ever questioned the policy, if reaction is too negative. On the record he still supports official policy, but effectively the seeds of doubt have been planted in the public mind. For years pro-abortionists will be able to cite Archbishop Weakland’s words, without any subsequent “clarifications” he might have made, as proof that even some archbishops do not agree with the official teaching.

With absolute predictability, Archbishop Weakland’s statement brought him the applause of the secular media and, according to the Milwaukee press, a standing ovation from the clergy of his archdiocese at a subsequent meeting. Clergy were allowed to submit written questions to the archbishop but, according to the press, not a single one was critical of his remarks.¹²

An African deacon present on the occasion later wrote to the press to say that by no means all the clergy joined in the ovation, that many were disturbed by the archiepiscopal remarks. However, to the degree that he was applauded, Archbishop Weakland exemplifies the irony of today’s “courageous” Catholic—public statements interpreted

as in defiance of Church teaching are praised for their “courage” even as they inspire almost nothing but public encomia.

The converse of this is that, in the minds of many liberal Catholics, there is no fate worse than being pilloried in the liberal media. The disapproval of Rome can be endured, even perhaps celebrated, but the disapproval of the “enlightened” segments of public opinion is a misfortune to be avoided by any means possible. Whatever Archbishop Weakland may have intended by his statement on abortion (and numerous previous statements on other subjects), he could be assured, from the beginning, of the media’s approval. In the Old Testament, prophets were sometimes killed because they told the people unpalatable truths. In today’s religious atmosphere a “prophet” is one whose preaching conforms closely to opinion polls and newspaper editorials.

At least in part Archbishop Weakland’s statements on abortion must be seen as an attempt to counteract the frequent statements on the subject by Cardinal O’Connor, who is by far the most courageous and outspoken American prelate, and whose location in New York City has given him a “bully pulpit” from which to speak. Without ceasing, Cardinal O’Connor has affirmed the Catholic teaching on controversial moral issues, and he has repeatedly rebuked Catholic politicians who support legalized abortion. For this he has paid a high price in hostility, even the sacrilegious invasion of his cathedral by homosexual thugs. When Cardinal O’Connor suggested that pro-abortion Catholic politicians risk excommunication from the Church, he was savagely attacked by New York journalists and politicians.

Many Catholics, including some bishops, are embarrassed not at the vituperation and blatant anti-Catholicism of the critics but by prelates not suave enough to understand that they can make peace with liberal opinion simply by flashing the proper signals. Archbishop Weakland has done this for years quite masterfully, to the point where he is in effect the ideal “media bishop,” one who never by word or deed implies that he intends to implement those Catholic teachings which are at odds with prevailing secular wisdom.

The media do give some attention to those who uphold official teaching, but usually label such people “conservative” or “right wing” as a way of informing the audience that such opinions are not to be respected. This was the tactic of the Milwaukee press relative to a television program on which several Catholics criticized the

archbishop's position. (In view of Archbishop Weakland's belief that everyone who differs with him is a "fundamentalist," it was inconvenient that one of his critics was the Jesuit theologian Donald J. Keefe of Marquette University, one of the most sophisticated theologians in the United States.¹³ Among other things, Father Keefe pointed out the way in which the very word "fundamentalist" is now used as an all-purpose condemnation without precise content.)

If Archbishop Weakland really was misunderstood about the morality of abortion, his statement could be faulted for severe lack of clarity, since not only his critics but his admirers thought he intended to make a break with Catholic doctrine. Local representatives of Planned Parenthood were enthusiastic, while the fanatically pro-abortion Marquette theologian Daniel Maguire (a former priest) was among those who called the statement "prophetic." Frances Kissling, head of a "letterhead" organization called Catholics for a Free Choice, which is funded by various pro-abortion groups, called it a "breakthrough."¹⁴

It was indeed a "breakthrough" in that it went considerably farther than any other bishop had ever done in suggesting that the Catholic abortion doctrine is not absolute. By contrast, Cardinal Bernardin's various statements have addressed political strategy almost entirely, while merely assuming the immorality of abortion. Daniel Maguire considered Archbishop Weakland's statement a definite improvement over Cardinal Bernardin's various *formulae*, since Archbishop Weakland, in Maguire's view, does not equate abortion with genuine moral evils like capital punishment. (For Maguire, there are no moral problems of any kind with abortion.)

But in a sense Archbishop Weakland's statement can be viewed as a natural extension of the Chicago prelate's. Cardinal Bernardin too has been critical of the pro-life movement and its "narrowness," arguing that many people of good will would support the movement if its members showed themselves more reasonable. The effect of Cardinal Bernardin's formula, whatever may have been his intention, has been to protect pro-abortion Catholic politicians from political pressure, and to provide them with a measure of moral respectability. Archbishop Weakland wrote of the obligation to give politicians "as much latitude as reason permits," a curiously pragmatic position for someone seeking to exercise the "prophetic office."

The Milwaukee press reported that Archbishop Weakland had received statements of support from Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

of Detroit, Bishop Raymond Lucker of New Ulm (Minn.), Bishop Walter Sullivan of Richmond, and Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville, a revealing quartet in terms of ecclesiastical politics.

Bishop Gumbleton and Bishop Sullivan occupy the far left of the American episcopal bench, and Bishop Gumbleton has been arrested in demonstrations against military bases. They would hardly support Archbishop Weakland if they thought his strictures against “violence” were directed at anti-war demonstrators as well as pro-lifers. Their support was also further evidence, if any was needed, of the complete unravelling of Cardinal Bernardin’s “Seamless Garment”—as Bishops Gumbleton and Sullivan take more and more radical stands on other issues, they become steadily more “moderate” on abortion. Whereas they find civil disobedience an appropriate strategy for what is “important,” anti-abortionists are simply told to trust their politicians to do the right thing.

Bishop Lucker is chairman of the American bishops’ committee on religious education and as such has been openly critical of the Vatican’s proposed new “universal catechism.” This past spring he participated in public meetings at which the catechism was attacked.

Archbishop Kelly is a former general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference, the bishops’ official national organization. He succeeded Cardinal Bernardin in that office and was rumored to have been Cardinal Bernardin’s candidate to be archbishop of New York before now-Cardinal O’Connor was appointed. Archbishop Kelly is thus at the core of the American episcopal establishment.

Archbishop Kelly is not an impulsive man, and his support for Archbishop Weakland was no doubt carefully considered. It signifies that the “moderate middle” of the American episcopacy welcomes Archbishop Weakland’s “breakthrough” and will attempt to give it respectability.

The abortion question has further implications beyond the moral issue itself. One is the behavior of politicians who seek to avoid its full moral implications, and to them Archbishop Weakland has offered a blank check to deal with the issue, or not deal with it, as they see fit. He urges Catholics to trust in the inherent moral wisdom of their elected officials and not to judge them by any higher moral criteria.

The second, more hidden, issue is ecclesiastical power. Archbishop Weakland is the chief spokesman for the wing of the American hierarchy

which as much as possible acts independently of Rome—which is busy constructing a semi-autonomous “American Church” with its own theology and its own morality.

Cardinal Bernardin ostensibly represents a middle ground in this division, while Cardinal O’Connor represents those bishops firmly loyal to Rome. Thus the Chicago prelate is often portrayed as valiantly holding a fractured church together as best he can. But once again, Archbishop Kelly’s public support for Archbishop Weakland suggests that Cardinal Bernardin’s laboriously stitched “Seamless Garment” is intended to encompass the position Archbishop Weakland has now expressed.

This past Spring the Loretto nuns of Denver issued a statement officially announcing that they are “pro-choice” and, when Archbishop J. Francis Stafford of Denver stated that such a thing is impossible, one of them responded flippantly, “Of course a Catholic can be pro-choice. I am.”¹⁵

In 1984, a number of nuns signed a statement in the *New York Times* also affirming their “pro-choice” opinions. The Vatican announced disciplinary action against the signers, but gradually, over a period of several years, all but two were “cleared,” even though some of them stated publicly that they had not changed their opinions. The two absolute recalcitrants were to be expelled from their religious community, but even this action was eventually rescinded, and they resigned voluntarily.

The experience seemed to show that the Vatican lacks either the will or the power to take action against blatant public denials of official teaching by Church personnel, and there were rumors that influential American bishops had intervened on the nuns’ behalf. The statement by the Loretto sisters obviously resurrects an issue which was supposedly closed and, although Archbishop Stafford expressed his strong disapproval of their position, the nuns also said that they had been assured that no disciplinary action would be taken against them. Thus, among its other functions, Archbishop Weakland’s statement on abortion can be seen as a gauntlet thrown down before the Vatican, intended to demonstrate that even archbishops are not bound by Church doctrines they find troublesome. It is likely that he will attract a growing number of episcopal supporters.

Since the early 1980s the Vatican has been appointing visibly more “conservative” bishops in the United States than was the case in the previous decade, Cardinal O’Connor being the chief example.

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

But few have his boldness. (Bishop John J. Myers of Peoria issued a very strong statement on the moral obligations of Catholic politicians shortly after Archbishop Weakland's appeared.¹⁶) Although liberals complain bitterly about these appointments, thus far these "conservative" bishops have not become the dominant collective voice in the national hierarchy, and do not even try to be. Except for Cardinal O'Connor, most of the bishops who dominate public discussion are on the liberal side, as conservative bishops merely watch the action passively.

A few weeks after Archbishop Weakland's statement on abortion, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a strong statement, approved by Pope John Paul II, insisting that there is no "right to dissent" on the part of theologians. Clearly, if theologians enjoy no such right, even less do bishops. But, unless the Vatican shows itself to be firmer in action than it has hitherto been, Archbishop Weakland's bid to make "pro-choice" a respectable Catholic position will indeed succeed.

NOTES

1. "Listening Sessions on Abortion: a Response," *Origins*, XX, 3 (May 31, 1990), pp. 33-39.
2. Archbishop Weakland has announced that the text of the testimony will also be made available to the public.
3. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 21, 1990, I, p. 13.
4. *National Catholic Reporter*, June 15, 1990, pp. 4, 20.
5. *Ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1978, p. 11.
6. Quoted in *The Wanderer*, Dec. 6, 1984, p. 8.
7. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 12, 1988, p. 1; *Milwaukee Journal*, July 13, 1986, p. 1.
8. Published by the United States Catholic Conference (Washington), 1985.
9. *The Wanderer*, June 14, 1984, pp. 1, 8.
10. Copy of Archbishop Weakland's letter in possession of the author. For excerpt from the sex-education program, see the *National Catholic Register*, Apr. 12, 1981, p. 6.
11. For a critique of Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment" see Hitchcock, "The Bishops Seek Peace on Abortion," *HLR*, X, 1 (Winter, 1984), pp. 27-35; "The Seamless Garment Unfolds," *HLR*, X, 4 (Fall, 1984), pp. 15-30; "The Catholic Church and Abortion," *HLR*, XII, 1 (Winter, 1986), pp. 59-78; "Catholic Pluralism," *HLR*, XII, 4 (Fall, 1986), pp. 39-49.
12. *Milwaukee Journal*, May 23, 1990, p. B5. The letter of Deacon Petre Nkumba appeared in the *Journal* several days later.
13. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1990, pp. 1, 7.
14. *National Catholic Reporter*, June 15, 1990, pp. 4, 20; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 21, 1990, I, p. 13.
15. *National Catholic Reporter*, May 18, 1990, p. 2.
16. *Origins*, XX, 5 (June 14, 1990), pp. 65-72.
17. *National Catholic Reporter*, June 22, 1990, pp. 1, 5.

APPENDIX A

[The major portion of the following commentary first appeared, under the title below, in the "Other Views" section of the National Catholic Reporter (June 15, 1990). Father Burtchaell kindly sent us his original text, which we reprint here in full. We have italicized what did not appear in the NCR version; the several words in brackets were added to his original. The author, a Holy Cross Father, is a Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, and a prolific writer of books and articles on religious affairs.]

Weakland letter 'biased and ignorant'

James Burtchaell

Rembert Weakland has been a strength in our bench of bishops, and it was characteristic of his personal style of concern that he would hold six "listening sessions" in his archdiocese of Milwaukee to expose himself to opinion and testimony on the vexed subject of abortion. The criticism he has received for inviting open statements is undeserved. If criticism is due—and regrettably it is—it is for incompetence and bias.

The official summary records a variety of misleading statements, *such as that poor women are the most likely to abort (aborting women correspond economically to the national sexually active population) and that abortions have doubled since Roe v. Wade (a more reliable estimate would put the increase at three to five times the rate before 1973).*

In the archbishop's own letter, however, there are many gaffes, and here they are more painful to acknowledge. When he writes of "abortion-on-demand without grave cause" one is embarrassed, since abortion-on-demand means "abortion requiring no cause." The church's teaching on abortion, we are told, "does not have the support of many Catholics, especially of many women." Yet polls have consistently shown women more disapproving of abortion than men; as for Catholics, their views on abortion have been shown to be in direct proportion to their religious practice: active Catholics tend to be prolife; non-practicing Catholics, to be prochoice (the same holds true for other religious groups).

But it gets worse. The archbishop claims, on the one hand, that there is no moral consensus on abortion. But he then ostensibly acknowledges a prochoice consensus beyond what even the National Abortion Rights Action League would claim: abortion is "to almost all members of our society, a needed or preferred choice." This, from a distinguished archbishop who can read, is ignorance to the point of malfeasance. Surveys since the early 1960s have consistently shown that about three-quarters of all Americans disapprove of abortion in virtually all circumstances. It is a choice that neither public, American or Catholic, considers "needed or preferred." That may not be a consensus, but it is a firmer majority than is likely to support the Weakland-drafted pastoral letter on the economy.

When Archbishop Weakland turns from assessing public opinion to

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

conveying Catholic moral wisdom, we might hope for better. Not so. "The Church's official position has been clear for decades now: abortion is seen as the taking of human life and, thus, morally wrong," he writes. Decades? The *Didache*, perhaps as early as the first century, enjoins: "You shall not murder a child by abortion, or kill a newborn." Those who do "are killers of children, destroyers of God's handiwork." This immediately became the normative teaching in the church—centuries, not decades, ago.

His treatment of recent doctrine is no less unfortunate, as when he offers his understanding of the U.S. bishops' consistent ethic of life, "showing that all life is sacred and that, thus, the taking of even one life is a serious moral decision, whether it be through abortion, war or capital punishment." The bishops specifically refused to reject the doctrine of justified, defensive warfare within their schema; they objected to capital punishment for reasons different from those touching abortion; and the direct killing of the innocent by abortion they did not call a "serious moral decision"; they said it was always gravely wrong.

We would usually praise a busy archbishop for writing his own public statements. But when presented with a text that no competent consultant can have drafted or even reviewed, we are not well served.

The document easily incorporates some of the phrases and rhetorical tactics that abortion advocates have labored for years to craft. Despite the archbishop's call to forgo slogans, he describes permissiveness towards abortion as "a more open stance," apparently refers to abortion as "cutting off [a] part of the body," and refers to a pregnancy as distressed simply by dint of its being "unplanned." Conception, he reports in the standard Planned Parenthood formula, "is a long process, not a moment."

The letter is especially objectionable in its disdainful treatment of prolife advocates. One most insistent theme throughout the hearings is that abortion is something on which we must refrain from making judgment. The archbishop agrees: "We must all avoid being judgmental. It is important to keep the discourse on the subject itself and not on unproven motivations that one may suspect lead others to take the positions they take." (One would have thought that six hearings and a archiepiscopal statement would have had no more desirable goal than the shaping of moral judgments.) But Archbishop Weakland's commitment to nonjudgment does waver whenever he characterizes prolife people. They tend, he discerns, to be women whose sole interest is to be homemakers, uninterested in "developing other aspects of their gifts through involvement in world and society." Their "narrowness" is objectionable, "their nonacceptance of the consistent life ethic approach, their lack of compassion . . . their lack of civility." "Aggressive, ugly, demeaning, fundamentalist, unwholesome . . ." the adjectives flow on. Concluding his nonjudgmental appraisal of those who defend the unborn, Archbishop Weakland locates his precise grievance; he feels "uncomfortable with much of the rhetoric used by

APPENDIX A

prolife literature, since it presupposes that all who have other points of view are insincere and evil people.”

Immediately after the release of his report, the archbishop was accused of deviation from Catholic teaching. Yes, he immediately admitted to the press, a pro-choice view *is* reconcilable with our faith. This “clarification” left much to be desired, since the archbishop had ventured to make “prochoice” into a most malleable category, including everything from abortion-on-demand to “recognizing the freedom with which the Creator has endowed women and men with good conscience to face all moral questions.” This is a prochoice assemblage that could honor Antigone or Lizzie Borden, Tom Paine or Josef Mengele as its patrons. As for the church’s teaching that the unborn are to be protected without compromise, the archbishop sees it lacking support “because it seems to be too simplistic an answer to a complicated and emotional question and does not resolve all the concomitant problems surrounding the issue raised in a pluralistic society . . .” Yet it almost resembles the gospel.

Questions are naturally raised about who was permitted to speak and how they were listened to. No men were permitted to testify at these hearings, and the summary exhibits nothing more repeatedly than an explicit hostility towards men. The archbishop chose as his summarizer a woman whose abiding hostility towards men is well known; Whether the report displays her bias or the actual animus of the witnesses, the reader cannot tell. This reader cannot recall such sustained, gender-based animosity in any other significant American Catholic document of our day. The summary also repeatedly characterizes prolife speakers appealing conservatively to church doctrine. Yet Milwaukee is a national center, with Project Rachel and the National Center for Post-Abortion Reconciliation, of competence and understanding in the problems of rehabilitation after abortion. The savvy these women would bring to the hearings would be primarily experiential, yet their voices (which they claim were vocal at the sessions) are muted in the record. Listening is hardly worthwhile if speakers are silenced. The fact that the archbishop publicly expressed disappointment at the large numbers of prolife women who attended, does not reinforce confidence in the written summary.

What is *Archbishop Weakland’s* own teaching? His letter is entirely concerned with the plight of mothers, but it never once speaks on behalf of children at risk. It is as if one were to write a letter on the injuries awaiting illegal immigrants—after listening with sympathy only to the grievances of their employers. Nowhere—**nowhere**—does he speak on behalf of the ultimate victims. It is not surprising, then, that the first request for a copy of the archbishop’s response is reported to have come from the office of [*New York*] Governor [*Mario*] Cuomo.

APPENDIX B

[The following syndicated column was issued June 19, 1990, and is reprinted here with the author's permission (©1990 by Universal Press Syndicate).]

Cuomo and the Cardinal

Joseph Sobran

New York's Archbishop John Cardinal O'Connor has ignited another furor by warning Catholic politicians who support abortion that they may face excommunication. The reaction has been a study in civic and theological illiteracy.

Consider, first, Congressman Charles Rangel, a Democrat who represents a district in Harlem. A nominal Catholic who favors abortion, he is so incensed by the cardinal's statement and by his own recent disinvitation to speak at a Catholic school that he is threatening to cut off the Catholic Church's tax exemption. Mr. Rangel is to the temporal realm roughly what the Reverend Al Sharpton is to the spiritual. He is grunting something about the cardinal's having violated the separation of church and state—an offense only the state can commit.

Then there is Miss Amy Pagnozzi, a columnist for the *New York Post*, who accuses the cardinal of conducting an "inquisition." She apparently can't tell the difference between an inquiry into one's private views and a response to one's publicly proclaimed position. A walking example of the failure of Catholic education, she goes on to explain that excommunication means "your eternal soul is condemned to hell."

Actually, it doesn't. It means that you are denied Holy Communion until you set yourself right with the Church.

Communion is the Catholic Church's holiest sacrament. Catholics hold that when the priest consecrates the bread at mass, it becomes the Body of Christ. They believe that it is a serious sin to take this sacrament unworthily.

Now refraining from promoting homicide is a very modest condition to impose for the reception of something so sacrosanct as the Body of Christ. If you don't believe that the bread becomes the Body of Christ or that killing a human fetus is homicide, very well, you have no problem; but you don't belong in the Catholic Church. Try the Unitarians down the street.

But the *New York Times*, in a editorial, accuses Cardinal O'Connor of imposing a "religious test" on politicians. The accusation, it must be admitted, is true. But why is it an accusation?

The Constitution forbids religious tests for public office. It doesn't forbid religious tests for religions. There's a difference—subtle and elusive, no doubt, but real, if you squint and look hard. An atheist has a perfectly good civil right to run for office. He has no right at all to claim membership in the Catholic Church.

APPENDIX B

We face the perplexing question: why do so many advocates of the right to choose refuse to choose? Why do they insist on having it both ways? Why are they so covetous of the Catholic label they do so much to make meaningless?

The cardinal's statement is being widely construed as directed against Governor Mario Cuomo, the past master of Catholic equivocation: the Catholic for people who don't like Catholicism. A.M. Rosenthal of the New York *Times* praises his "moxie" in fighting "not anti-Catholic bigots but a prince of his church." Exactly. Mr. Cuomo is the sort of Catholic whom anti-Catholic bigots would approve of. When fanatical homosexuals disrupted St. Patrick's Cathedral last December, Mr. Cuomo could barely bring himself to criticize them. Defending his church is not his specialty, though he reputedly keeps a portrait of St. Thomas More on his office wall, presumably to throw darts at.

Mr. Cuomo is in the position not of More, the witness for the Church against the state, but of Henry VIII, who aggrandized state power at the expense of the Church. He also has Henry's sanctimonious habit of insisting that his self-serving acts are conscience-driven, and Henry's way of feeling persecuted by mere disapproval.

What Cardinal O'Connor has done is simply to protect the integrity of the Church against false labelling. Any organization, to subsist, must be able to define itself and to expel traitors. What's amazing in this case is that so many of the traitors think they are martyrs.

APPENDIX C

[The following syndicated column appeared in the *New York Daily News*, April 25, 1990, and is reprinted here with permission. (©1990 by Universal Press Syndicated).]

Making the anti-abortion argument

William F. Buckley, Jr.

Cardinal O'Connor is having a hard time. He'd be expected to have a hard time, since much of his mission requires him to tell people that they shouldn't do what they want to do. The Mosaic code is mostly a string of negatives, in that way resembling the Bill of Rights ("Thou shalt not . . ."). But O'Connor, unlike his predecessor, is given to the blunter mode of expression. Although he is careful to be diplomatic—"When you oppose abortion, people think you're not a person of flesh and blood. I've never indicted or condemned anyone in my life for an abortion. I don't think that everybody in a different camp from mine is a bad person"—he ends up by saying: "With abortion, I think you've reached the crunch point. A human life is a human life."

The current focus of criticism is the tentative decision of the cardinal, in his role as chairman of the Committee for Pro-Life Activities of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, to pay the public relations firm of Hill & Knowlton \$5 million to devise a national campaign that will alert everyone, but primarily Catholics, to the human life point of view. Why do Catholics need to be alerted? The cardinal responds that the average Catholic receives only a few hours of religious education and that that education has to take on "the whole spectrum of Catholic" thought. That plus one or two sermons per year is how much even Catholics are exposed to.

Not enough, he seems to be saying, and what they hear is not well enough put. This raises the question of the extent to which teaching is a forensic art. What the Cardinal is saying, if one understands him, is that there are techniques by which people are persuaded by arguments that, put less than as well as possible, leave them unmoved.

The founder of Hill & Knowlton, long dead, told me 20 years ago that he had given his secretary instructions not to put on his desk any letter "from you"—me—in the month of February. He laughed uproariously. February is the month of the year when subscribers to my journal, *National Review*, receive a letter asking for contributions. John Hill was saying that after a few years of succumbing to my pleas, he found it easier to resist exposing himself to pleas than to run the risk of sending in a few hundred dollars. That was a fine act of professional recognition of the art of solicitation.

The State of California has plunked down on cigaret smokers a further 25-cent-per-pack tax. About \$28.6 million per year of the money raised by that tax will be spent on radio, television and newspaper commercials. And who will write those commercials? Not the lieutenant governor, nor, I bet, the head

APPENDIX C

of the Sierra Club. The job will go to professionals.

Now this raises the interesting point: Must we assume that professionals are the best advocates? Obviously there are exceptions.

If it happened that I had been smoking cigarets at the time, I am certain I'd have stopped smoking five minutes after hearing Yul Brynner, from his deathbed, pleading with smokers not yet dead to stop, lest what was about to happen to him, happen to them.

The initial reaction to O'Connor's decision is to ask: Isn't it odd that, among the 40 million or 50 million Americans devoutly opposed to abortion (probably a majority are Catholic, but the pro-lifers include millions of Protestants and Orthodox Jews), there isn't enough forensic talent to turn over the problem of communicating the anti-abortion point of view? We must not assume that the anti-abortion position has not been argued profoundly at an intellectual level: There is, just for example, the quarterly *Human Life Review*, and Judge John Noonan's book "A Private Choice." But at the popular point of view? If there is an efficacious way of saying: Stop smoking (California is banking millions of dollars per year on it), mightn't a formula be contrived, by people who devote themselves professionally to verbal formulation, to say, "Stop killing fetuses"?

Isn't the effort worth it? About 350,000 people are killed every year by tobacco, and four times as many by abortionists.

APPENDIX D

[The following first appeared as a Commentary column in the newsletter catholic eye (May 24, 1990), to which Father Canavan is a regular contributor. He is also an editor-at-large and contributor to this journal. This article is reprinted with permission (©1990 by the National Committee of Catholic Laymen, Inc.)]

Handling the Easy Cases

Francis Canavan

What would I do about abortion if I had the power? The first answer to that question is that I don't have that power, I am never going to have it, and I don't want it. In a constitutional democracy, no one, and no single group of persons, has the power to make and enforce laws. Under a constitution and within its bounds, democratic government is government by the consent of the people acting by majority, which is presumed to be the larger and sounder part of the people, at least in the long run.

That consideration should take care of the liberal cant about not imposing our moral beliefs on others. I cannot impose my moral beliefs on anyone, and most certainly not living, as I do, in the City of New York, where no candidate has a chance of election to high public office unless he lays his hand on his heart and vows never to do anything to restrict in any way the sacred right to abortion. Nor could all American Catholics together impose their beliefs on an unwilling people, even if we were a monolithic bloc, as we obviously are not.

Let us rephrase the question, then. What would I do about abortion if I were in high public office as, say, the governor of a state or the mayor of a city, or the majority leader of one of the houses of a state legislature? I would carry the people with me as far as I could persuade them to go in restricting abortion. More than that I could not do, and my task would be one of persuasion, not of imposition.

I don't mean, of course, that I could do nothing until I had persuaded Molly Yard, or the American Civil Liberties Union, or the editorial board of the *New York Times*. They are only part of the American people, and not by definition the larger and sounder part. Like the rest of us, all they can do is to try to persuade their fellow citizens, at least if the U.S. Supreme Court follows through on the indication it gave last summer that it is now willing to let the people have something to say on the legality of abortion.

In my effort to persuade, I would begin at the beginning, not at the end. I would not start, that is, by proposing a constitutional amendment to prohibit or restrict abortion. Such a proposal will be successful, if ever, only at the end of a long process of getting the American people to face and to think seriously

APPENDIX D

about what abortion is and what we have done (or have had done to us) by the present legalization of abortion on demand.

To begin at the beginning is to talk about the existing situation: one and a half million abortions every year, which terminate almost a third of all pregnancies, and have killed more than 20 million babies since *Roe v. Wade*. If I were asked, as I surely would be, what I would do about pregnancies due to rape or incest, I would reply by asking another question: Are you willing to do anything to reduce the 1.5 million abortions performed in this country every year?

If not, why not? Even according to Planned Parenthood's research arm, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, rape and incest account for only about one per cent of all abortions; they are not the major issue in the abortion controversy. If, however, you agree that abortion on demand should be reduced, then work with us to put some effective limits on it. When we get to the end of the line and face the "hard cases," we can disagree—but let's get there first and, in the meantime, stop talking as if rape and incest were the only reasons for abortion.

One advantage of beginning at the beginning is that it breaks the abortion issue down into more specific issues on which it is possible to get the people to support legislation. William McGurn has explained in *National Review* (December 22, 1989):

Most Americans would be suspicious of a politician who favored allowing their 13-year-old daughters to have abortions without the parents' consent when these same girls can't get their ears pierced without parental permission. Most Americans would look askance at a candidate who opposed giving American women the same extensive information about abortion that they can get on every other operation. Most Americans would be horrified by a candidate who believed it was okay for someone to have an abortion if she was hoping for a boy and proved to be carrying a girl. Most Americans would not give their vote to someone who argued for abortion into the late stages of pregnancy. Above all, most Americans would find something extreme in a party that was shown to oppose all these restrictions on abortion.

The second and more important advantage of taking this approach is that it keeps the abortion issue alive. Abortion is at bottom not merely a legal, or even a constitutional issue, but a moral one. Richard John Neuhaus has concisely stated it in the new monthly journal, *First Things*: "Who shall live? Who shall die? Who does, and who does not, belong to the community for which we accept common responsibility?" That is an issue of the most profound *public* moral importance.

But it would fade out of the consciousness of many people as an issue of public morality if we passively accepted the present legal situation, in which abortion is a purely private choice. To keep it in the public forum as a moral

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

issue that involves the community as such, it is necessary to make it a legal and therefore a political issue, however much politicians wish it would go away. To make it a political issue, it is further necessary to propose the kind of legislation to which the larger and sounder part of the people are now, at this moment, willing to agree, and with which politicians will find it difficult to disagree. When the leaders of the people won't lead, the people have to get behind and push them.

APPENDIX E

[The following column appeared in the New York Post (June 9, 1990) and is reprinted here with the author's permission.]

Doc Kevorkian's Suicide Machine

Patrick J. Buchanan

This past week, in a Detroit suburb, Dr. Jack Kevorkian climbed into his Volkswagon van with 54-year-old Janet Adkins, and drove off to a public park. There, he hooked up Mrs. Adkins, who suffered from early Alzheimer's, to his homemade suicide machine.

A syringe in her arm, Mrs. Adkins pushed a button that sent two fluids into her body. One left her unconscious, the second stopped her heart. Her last act, said Dr. Kevorkian, was to rise as though to kiss him, and say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

A modern love story.

Kevorkian's lone regret: The dawdling medical examiner did not rush Mrs. Adkins' body to a hospital.

"You could have sliced her liver in half," he said, "and saved two babies, and her bone marrow could have been taken, her heart, two kidneys, two lungs, and pancreas."

Good old Doc Kevorkian, always thinking of somebody else.

Was there any more distinction, I asked him, between hooking up Mrs. Adkins to his suicide machine and leaving a loaded .45 on her bed table? None whatever, he cheerfully conceded.

Dr. Kevorkian may have trampled all over the Hippocratic oath, but he has the courage of his convictions, such as they are. We doctors, he says, have a duty to assist our "patients with death."

While easy to recoil at the seeming callousness of Kevorkian, it is hard to deny he is on the cutting edge of social change.

Thirty years ago, Americans argued over whether it was moral for a woman, whose fetus had been deformed by thalidomide, to have an abortion. Now, abortion is a constitutional right; and we argue over the morality of denying food and water to deformed infants.

Few may acknowledge it, but we are far along in a process that is altering the character of our nation.

The first, critical step was to deny that all life is a gift from God, and that no man can take it; and to assert, instead, our right to decide when a human being is a "person." We did that in *Roe v. Wade*.

The second step was to assert that some persons are better off dead, such as comatose victims of accidents whose agonized loved ones want to stop the feeding.

The third step is to assert a "right to die," and a concomitant duty, to assist

individuals who seek to exercise it. This is the position of Dr. Kevorkian and of The Hemlock Society; and it has led logically to step four:

If it is reasonable for Mrs. Adkins to choose death, is it not equally reasonable for us to choose it for those who cannot make the decision themselves, i.e., the incurably insane and terminally ill who do not even enjoy the quality of life of Janet Adkins, who could play tennis right up until she got into that van?

In Holland, they have crossed this stage; lethal injections are being given to the unaware elderly who arrive sick at hospitals.

Indeed, if a lethal injection is the dignified way out for Mrs. Adkins, why is it not also a dignified way out for the homeless, who, enfeebled, rummage through garbage cans for food? (To quote Dr. Kevorkian, "What kind of life is that?")

And, if Mrs. Adkins' decision was rational, why is it not equally rational to ask all those with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and terminal cancer to consider the same "final option." Perhaps Dr. Kevorkian has, in his machine, the final solution to the AIDS problem?

We are not that far away from entertaining such ideas.

Some environmentalists applaud China's one-couple, one-child policy, where forced abortions and femicide—the killing of female infants by parents who wanted a boy—are common. In California, Dianne Feinstein, candidate for governor, was forced by a feminist inquisition to recant her view that abortion for sex selection should be restricted.

Fetal farming—pregnancies and abortions to give us spare parts for research and sick patients—is openly discussed.

Once all the other frontiers have been crossed, the final one is the great leap forward by the state, when it declares that, just as a mother has the right to terminate the life of her unborn, just as a family has the right to pull the plug on grandparents, so the state has a right to rid itself of those who threaten the social organism.

In our lifetime, Germany, Russia, China and Cambodia have crossed this final frontier of 20th Century man.

Inexorably, we reach the fundamental question:

Is there a higher law, call it God's law, or natural law, to which man-made law must conform, or be invalid?

And, if no higher law exists, upon what moral ground did we stand to condemn the German doctors whose "crimes against humanity" consisted only of doing to the feeble-minded exactly what we seek to do today?

"Who are you to impose your morality upon me!" is the taunt Dr. Kevorkian throws up at his critics. It is a taunt that rulers through the ages have thrown down at the victims.

APPENDIX F

[The following "Editorial" first appeared in ALL About Issues (April, 1990) and is reprinted here with permission of the author, who is the magazine's Managing Editor (© 1990 by American Life League, Inc.).]

Plus Ça Change . . .

Jeffrey Rubin

Introduction: When fragments of ancient scrolls curiously without any writing on them were discovered last summer in a cave near the Dead Sea, a suggestion that they might be a kind of primitive videotape was greeted with jeers by archaeologists. The laughter stopped, however, when a team of M.I.T. technicians reproduced vivid computer-enhanced sound and images from one of the fragments. Now being converted to VHS format for commercial release, the so-called Dead Sea Videoscrolls reportedly contain invaluable documentation of early Jewish history and culture, including on-the-spot news coverage of key Old Testament events. Following is a transcript of one of those news reports, as translated from the original Hebrew.

Anchor: Good evening, I'm Benjamin bar Joseph.

After 40 days and nights atop Mt. Sinai, the Hebrew leader Moses finally descended today, bringing with him what many of his followers took as an unwelcome surprise: a set of strict written moral directives from their god, Yahweh. Dubbed the Ten Commandments, the new regulations are said to forbid idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, adultery and a host of other popular practices, and are already being challenged by critics as unrealistic and undemocratic. Live at the scene is our religion editor, Mordecai ben Levi. What's the situation there, Mort?

Reporter: Well, Ben, the mood of this crowd has gone from festive to foul in a hurry, as many who only hours ago were reveling in drunken abandon are now expressing their outrage at this latest assault on their most cherished rights and freedoms. In a just-issued statement, the Sinai Civil Liberties Union has condemned the new rules as "an unprecedented intrusion of religion into public affairs," and warns that the bans on blasphemy and lying will have a chilling effect on free speech. Angry idolaters led by the dissident priest Aaron have vowed to fight for their rights through a newly-formed opposition group, Hebrews for the Golden Calf; and a coalition of artisans has greeted the prohibition on graven images with cries of "Censorship!" Meanwhile, militant adultery-rights activists have accused God of fostering what they term "institutionalized adulterophobia," and are demanding His immediate resignation. And finally, concerning what promises to be the most controversial Commandment—"Thou shalt not kill"—a spokesperson for Chosen People for Choice has announced new poll results showing that while most Jews say they are personally opposed to murder, they also believe it should remain lawful,

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

except when they are the victim.

Anchor: Tell us, Mort: Just what effect, if any, will these regulations have on behavior? Should we expect to see less vice and more virtue?

Reporter: That seems unlikely, Ben. Most observers are skeptical that a handful of rules engraved on tablets are really going to stop people from sinning. Pro-choicers, for instance, argue that killing has been a part of every culture in every age, and that the real question is not whether murders will continue, but whether they'll be performed by back-alley butchers or by qualified professionals in a safe, sterile environment.

Anchor: I understand too, Mort, that even some religious leaders are unhappy with the Commandments.

Reporter: That's true, Ben, and though none were willing to speak for the record, several told me privately how disturbed they were that God did not consult them during the drafting process. A common criticism is that the Commandments as written lack "nuance" and fail to reflect recent trends in mainstream moral theology; another is that their tone is too judgmental, and may hurt efforts to reach out to young people and others who feel religion no longer answers their needs and concerns.

Anchor: It sounds like the discontent is pretty near universal. Is there anyone you've spoken to who *welcomes* the new rules?

Reporter: Well, yes, Ben, some religious conservatives have expressed their faith in God's wisdom and their desire to abide by His will, but these are mostly reactionary bigots with no minds of their own who, thankfully, account for only a small minority.

Anchor: What's the chance then that the majority of Hebrews will just choose to ignore God and follow their own consciences?

Reporter: My sense is that's exactly what will happen, Ben. Dissatisfaction with God had been growing lately anyway; today's move only deepens resentment at what many regard as His excessively paternalistic style and His unfortunate propensity to impose His morality on others.

Anchor: What about Moses? Can his leadership survive this crisis?

Reporter: My guess at this point is no. Moses was of course an immensely popular leader back when he led his people out of bondage, but in the many months since of wandering in the desert his approval ratings have plummeted. And now this latest gaffe has made it all too easy for his rivals to portray him as out of touch. I expect he'll be gone by Rosh Hashanah.

Anchor: Thank you, Ben. (to camera) When we come back, we'll find out why some environmentalists are calling for tough new restrictions on miracles—"Manna from Heaven: The Cleanup Continues."



This cartoon appeared in the *London Spectator* (14 April 1990) and is reprinted here with permission (©The Spectator 1990).

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Subscriptions: *The Human Life Review* accepts regular subscriptions at the rate of \$20 for a full year (four issues). Canadian and all other foreign subscribers please add \$5 (total: \$25 U.S. currency). Please address all subscription orders to the address below and enclose payment with order. You may enter gift subscriptions for friends, libraries, or schools at the same rates.

Additional Copies: this issue—No. 3, Volume XVI—is available while the supply lasts at \$5 per copy; 10 copies or more \$3 each. We also have a limited number of copies of all other 1987-89 issues (available at \$4 each). We will pay all postage and handling.

The latest Bound Volume—1989—is now available at \$50 the copy, while our supply lasts. Send your order to the address below.

Earlier Volumes: while several volumes are now in very short supply, we can still offer a complete set of volumes for the first 15 years (1975-1989) of this review for \$700 the set. The volumes are indexed, and bound in permanent library-style hardcovers, complete with gold lettering, etc. (they will make handsome additions to your personal library). Individual volumes are available while our supply lasts, at \$50 the volume. Please send payment with order; we pay all postage and handling.

Special Notice: we also have available copies of *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* by President Ronald Reagan, which has been published in a hardcover book by Thomas Nelson Publishers. The book includes the complete text of the President's essay (which first appeared in the Spring, 1983, issue of this review). To order send \$7.95 per postpaid copy.

The Human Life Review is available in microform from both University Microfilm International (300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106) and Bell & Howell (Micro-Photo Division, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691).

Address all orders to:

**The Human Life Foundation, Inc.
150 East 35th Street
New York, New York 10016**



News

Release...

***Human Life Review* features special section of Cardinal John O'Connor's 'Excommunication' statement plus Nat Hentoff on 'Changing the Odds' in The Abortion War and James Hitchcock on Archbishop Rembert Weakland**

New York City, Aug. 1: The new issue of the Human Life Review (Summer '90) features the text of New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor's controversial "23 Questions and Answers on Abortion."

The Cardinal's lengthy (some 15,000 words) statement made national headlines when the media zeroed in on his brief (63-word) discussion of the possibility of "excommunication" for Roman Catholic politicians who support abortion, describing it as a "threat" to New York Gov. Mario Cuomo and others.

In a related article, James Hitchcock, a well-known Catholic historian, describes the very different abortion statement, issued by Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland, which contained sharp attacks on "pro-life" Catholics, whom Weakland calls "abrasive," "uncivil," "judgmental" and "narrow."

In the lead article, Village Voice Columnist Nat Hentoff argues that anti-abortionists have been ineffective because "The pro-life side has been too kind and gentle in this battle" while "The truth is usually neither."

In other featured articles, Faith Abbott tells the story of a woman doctor who refuses to forget the "fourth child" that she aborted. And Christine Allison asks why -- when 1.6 million babies are aborted yearly in America -- there are still a million couples who cannot adopt a baby.

Martha Bayles, a Wall Street Journal columnist, writes on "Feminism and Abortion," charging that "Pro-choice" arguments "reflect the ambitions, hypocrisies, and contradictions of contemporary feminism." Professor Christopher Lasch puts the abortion conflict in the larger context of "cultural conservatism" and wonders if the anti-abortion mentality is "compatible with economic liberalism."

Columnist Joseph Sobran writes on "Cuomo and the Cardinal" -- a commentary on Cardinal O'Connor's "Excommunication Pastoral" -- and Francis Canavan., S.J. tells how he would handle the "easy cases" before the vexed rape/incest dilemmas.

For further information contact: Maria McFadden, Managing Editor
The Human Life Review
150 East 35th Street
New York, NY 10016
Tel. (212) 685-5210