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William Murchison on
CALIFORNIA SETS FIRE TO FREE SPEECH

Maria McFadden Maffucci on
FAKE CLINICS—OR FAKE FEMINISM?

Ifeoma Anunkor on
GOOD COUNSEL FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES

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RU-486: THEN AND NOW

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William Doino on
POPE PIUS XII: PRO-LIFE VISIONARY

Stella Morabito on
TRANSGENDERISM, CHILDREN, COGNITIVE CHAOS

Edward Short on
AMY WAX AND THE AMERICAN HOME

Ursula Hennessey on
SHOULD TYPE-A WOMEN PRIORITIZE PARENTING?

◆ ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ◆

Film/Booknotes: Anne Sullivan and John Grondelski

From the HLR Website: Victoria Garaitonandia Gisondi and Nicholas Frankovich

Appendices: John Finnis • Clarke Forsythe • Charles Sykes

ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

. . . long before Donald Trump appropriated the term from his critics, there was “fake news.” Broadcasting untruths to ignorant audiences is no doubt as old as the hills, but our interest here begins in the second half of the 20th century with the pummeling Pope Pius XII’s reputation took for his alleged “silence” about the Holocaust. William Doyno, a new contributor, focuses on the pontiff’s real legacy, especially those aspects dealing with issues of interest to *Human Life Review* readers (“Pope Pius XII: Pro-life Visionary,” p. 42). Welcome, Mr. Doyno.

Maria McFadden Maffucci, our editor, also addresses fake news, and how deceit is fueling an online campaign to put crisis pregnancy centers out of business (“Fake Clinics—or Fake Feminism?” p. 11). An expected Supreme Court decision in June will determine how much legal havoc abortion furies can wreak (see William Murchison’s “California Sets Fire to Free Speech,” p. 5). Ifeoma Anunkor, our McFadden Fellow, visited a home for pregnant single women and describes the real service such places provide (“Good Counsel for Mothers and Babies,” p. 19).

Meanwhile, Stella Morabito reports that transgender curricula are wreaking mental havoc on young children in public schools, where “your gender is assigned at birth” advocates hold sway over tender minds and undermine parental teaching (“Transgenderism, Children, Cognitive Chaos,” p. 49). A senior contributor to *The Federalist*, Ms. Morabito has long studied how propaganda is used to distort arguments and mold uninformed—and in the case of youngsters, unformed—minds.

Ideological formation proceeds apace. You may have heard of Professor Amy Wax of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and the high price she has paid for a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed she co-wrote advocating a cultural return to “bourgeois values.” Edward Short shows how Wax’s thinking threatens the progressive academic establishment as he explicates the revisionist work of one of its own (“Amy Wax and the American Home,” p. 59). Ursula Hennessey, on the other hand, writes about a book that put an erstwhile feminist in the progressive doghouse (“Should Type-A Women Prioritize Parenting?” p. 71). And Laura Echevarria heralds an unexpected baby-saving protocol (“RU-486: Then and Now,” p. 23).

From Anne Sullivan and John Grondelski’s reviews in Film/Booknotes (p. 77) to the HLR website blogs by Victoria Gisondi and Nicholas Frankovich that we bring you here (p. 83), this issue is packed with timely, informative material, including Richard Doerflinger’s adaptation of a paper he gave at a conference last fall (“A Distinctive Catholic Vision for Politics,” p. 31). Appendices include work by John Finnis, Clarke Forsythe, and Charles Sykes, for which permission to reprint we thank *The Public Discourse*, *National Review*, and *The Weekly Standard*.

Finally, the Summer issue will feature articles by Edward Mechmann and David Quinn, our 2018 Great Defender of Life honorees. For more information, see p. 58.

Anne Conlon
Managing Editor



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INTRODUCTION

This June, the Supreme Court will hand down a ruling on *NIFLA v. Becerra*, a case involving abortion and free speech. NIFLA, the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, a charitable organization that provides pregnancy centers and medical clinics with legal counsel, education, and training, is challenging the constitutionality of the California Reproductive FACT law (Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care, and Transparency Act), previously upheld by the court of the Ninth Circuit. The FACT law would force pro-life pregnancy centers to advertise . . . *abortion*. As Senior Editor William Murchison writes in his lead article (“California Sets Fire to Free Speech”), what the FACT law requires is “shocking enough. Imagine making Nordstrom distribute advertising flyers for Walmart.” But there is much more at play: an attempt to “elevate abortion rights” over freedom of religion and freedom of speech—and an “attempted redefinition of the American identity” itself. Legal abortion, Murchison reminds us, was not brought about by the democratic process—a majority of Americans were *against* it. What persuaded the Court majority to rule for *Roe*? It was “discussion, some hot, some cold and formal, in very public domains like newspapers, TV, and the public streets”; in other words, freedom of speech. But now that the “poor winners” have had their way, they want to shut the door on anti-abortion speech and action.

Murchison reports that the consensus even among the liberal press was that the oral arguments heard in March “went poorly for California’s lawyers,” yet, he warns, “It is never safe to predict what the U.S. Supreme Court will do, particularly in an abortion case.” As I write next in “Fake Clinics or Fake Feminists?” the Supreme Court case is the “culmination of a long harassment campaign against pro-life pregnancy centers, organized and supported by a coalition of abortion activists and profiteers, including NARAL and Planned Parenthood.” Why? Because pregnancy centers are eating into abortion profits—and even more dangerously, their existence and flourishing are influencing the culture towards life. I focus on one group in particular, Lady Parts Justice League, and its leader Lizz Winstead, as they campaign to “expose fake clinics.” The charges they make—dishonesty, lack of medical information, coercion—apply accurately to *abortion clinics*, not pregnancy centers. Like the assertion that pregnancy centers “only” care about women until it’s too late for them to have an abortion, then “cut them off, sending them away with a box of diapers and a prayer.” It’s the pro-life movement that has established maternity homes and all kinds of support for pregnant women in need, as we see illustrated in Ifeoma Anunwor’s report on her visit to Good Counsel’s home for mothers and children in the Bronx, New York (p. 19).

In 2000, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved RU-486, a drug that is typically used with a prostaglandin to bring about a chemical abortion. In “RU-486, Then and Now,” Laura Echevarria writes that it was a highly politicized approval process and a very dangerous decision—for babies, of course, and also for women. In 2016, after at least 14 women died from the drug, the FDA revised the protocols for

RU-486—making them even *less* safe and increasing the likelihood of complications leading to a surgical abortion. Abortion groups are pushing for RU-486 to be prescribed by non-doctors and even purchased via mail order! Yet Echevarria also reports hopeful news: Two pro-life doctors have developed a protocol called The Abortion Pill Reversal program, which “offers a rare chance to turn the clock back on a decision made in desperation.”

Our next two articles look at the pro-life movement and Catholics, today and in history. For 36 years, Richard M. Doerflinger directed public policy for the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. What better person, we’d say, to offer his thoughts on the “Catholic Vision for Politics” (p. 31) as it concerns the life issues. Doerflinger writes that all “Christians committed to the defense of life and justice” have every reason to feel like “strangers in a strange land” in our current “corrosive climate” of extreme divisions. Disagreement over politics has turned into “contempt” for the *person* one disagrees with—another blow to the dignity of human life. Doerflinger describes the current divisions in the Catholic Church over pro-life efforts—like that between “pro-life/pro-family” Catholics and “social justice” Catholics—and reminds us that the Church’s social vision is not either/or but “both/and.” Yes, he affirms, “Life itself is the first right we receive from the hand of God. It is the condition for all the others”; *and* “Our defense of life should blossom to efforts to help life reach its full flourishing in every area of human activity.” In the article that follows, new contributor William Doyno continues to set the record straight on the historical witness of Pope Pius XII. He was the “exact opposite” of the Nazi sympathizer he was once accused of being, writes Doyno. Pope Pius was a “pro-life visionary” whose teachings on abortion, euthanasia, and eugenics laid “the modern Church’s groundwork for promoting the culture of life.”

One of the most disturbing current attacks on the culture of life is the assault on the innocence and natural curiosity of children, writes Stella Morabito in “Transgenderism, Children, Cognitive Chaos,” p.49. The increasingly mandated transgender curriculum “forces children to focus on their ‘gender identity,’ a concept scant few would even seriously consider in the course of ordinary childhood.” Preaching that sex is “arbitrarily ‘assigned at birth’” denies “objective truth and universal reality” and amounts to “mental molestation” of children, which can stunt their development and “may induce them to hate their own bodies.” Hand in hand with such academic “fringe theories” becoming mainstream pronouncements is the knee-jerk intolerance of anyone who dares “transgress the pieties of political correctness,” so writes Edward Short in our next article, “Amy Wax and the American Home.” The recent “truth-telling” of the University of Pennsylvania Law School’s Amy Wax has unleashed the “full fury” of the thought police, which must be understood, Short writes, in the context of American academic circles’ “contempt for the very notion of marriage and the family” and the important historical concept of the home, an “immemorial human need.”

Our final article reflects on the person often seen as the heart of the home: the mother. Ursula Hennessey contributes a review essay of a controversial recent book, *Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters*, by psychoanalyst

and parenting coach Erica Komisar. In “Should Type-A Women Prioritize Parenting?” Hennessey points out both strengths and weaknesses in Komisar’s book, and she writes from experience—she has been both a working and a stay-at-home mom for her five children. As she writes, there really is no “magic mantra” or book to prepare for the “confusing and wearying” aspects of parenting—nor are there words adequate to describe the “richness and satisfaction” it gives.

In our Film/Book notes, Anne Sullivan reviews the “quietly affecting” film *Summer in the Forest*, a documentary about the extraordinary work of Jean Vanier’s international *L’Arche* movement, which provides homes and communities for the developmentally disabled. Next, John Grondelski reviews a new book, *Surrogacy: A Human Rights Violation*, by Renate Klein. Klein offers a “thorough and uncompromising feminist explanation of surrogacy’s ethical flaws,” and she argues for “abolition, not regulation,” because surrogacy harms women. Grondelski himself focuses on the other victims, the children.

Victoria Garaitonandia Gisoni’s blog “Abortion is Rumpelstiltskin,” reprinted on page 83, is our most viewed and shared blog to date! It’s a great example of how looking at the same subject from a creative angle can resonate; certainly, turning the fairy tale on its head, as Gisoni does, is an effective way to make a powerful point. Our second reprinted blog (p. 85) is about the power of social media—not always for good. Kevin Williamson, a brilliant writer who has contributed to our *Review*, was hired and then fired at *The Atlantic* because of some provocative comments he made on Twitter re abortion. Nicholas Frankovich writes an insightful reflection on what he thinks lies beneath the surface in both Williamson’s remarks and his critics’ condemnations.

* * *

The world lost a brilliant moral theologian and Christian philosopher with the death of Professor Germain Grisez last February. His life’s work, including his influential teaching on contraception and abortion, is remembered in *Appendix A* by the esteemed Oxford and Notre Dame philosopher John Finnis. In *Appendix B*, Americans United for Life’s Clarke Forsythe gives an important analysis of the Supreme Court “confusion about abortion law,” especially since the 2017 *Hellerstedt* decision has “reopened 45 years of abortion law and interpretation.” Our final appendix is a moving rejoinder by Charles Sykes to a now notorious column in the *Washington Post* by Ruth Marcus about how she would abort her own child for Down syndrome. Sykes would like Ruth to meet Gracie Jangler—a 21-year-old entrepreneur who happens to have been born with an extra chromosome. I hope you enjoy the issue, and finally, thanks, as always, to Nick Downes, whose cartoons grace our pages.

MARIA McFADDEN MAFFUCCI
EDITOR

California Sets Fire to Free Speech

William Murchison

. . . Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...

Amendment 1, Constitution of the United States

And what a swaggeringly wonderful amendment it is. And what a challenge to live by in the spirit it suggests—both open-throated and respectful; contradictory and unifying at just the same moment.

Which brings us to the much-heralded, much-watched and fretted-over case of *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra*. It actually brings us to more than that, such as the changing, shifting questions of American identity, belief, and commitment.

Becerra came on for argument before the U.S. Supreme Court in late March: a challenge to a California law requiring that crisis pregnancy centers (a term the *New York Times* mildly disparages with quote marks) publicize the availability elsewhere in the state of free or low-cost abortions. “The purpose [of the Reproductive FACT (Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care, and Transparency Act)],” according to Section 2 of the law, “is to ensure that California residents make their personal reproductive health care decisions knowing their rights and the health care services available to them.”

The clear, the compelling need was “to supplement [California’s] own efforts to advise women of its reproductive health programs.” “Supplement,” defined as conscript into the cause, with threat of fines, some 200 non-profit organizations in the state dedicated to the preservation, as contrasted with the extinction, of unborn life.

The Assembly could scarcely have been more helpful in delineating the duties associated with compliance. The required notice as to where a mother might go for a low-cost abortion was to be posted, by these non-abortion-performing women’s centers, in notices “at least 8.5 inches by 11 inches,” with printed notices “distributed to all clients in no less than 14-point type.”

Got that?—14-point; not 12-point. Love that heart-warming sound of heels clicking obediently together!

And the digital notice! Of course, the digital notice!—available to “all clients

William Murchison writes from Dallas for Creators Syndicate and is a senior editor of the *Human Life Review*. He is currently working on *Moral Disarmament*, a book examining the consequences of our moral disagreements. *The Cost of Liberty*, his biography of John Dickinson, an influential but neglected Founding Father of the United States, was published in 2013 by ISI Books.

that can be read at the time of check-in or arrival.” And on-site notices, signifying the non-availability of an abortion provider of the kind available at state-run Medi-Cal facilities. Oh, and the need to notice the notices. California takes to heart the duty to make speakers of “the primary threshold languages for Medi-Cal beneficiaries” understand that state resources guarantee the means of escape from the burden of bearing human life.

It is quite a law—large in its scope and implications. The justices will ponder and digest it, with a decision expected, so we hear, in late June: not necessarily along the lines the California Assembly would prefer. On abortion, as with other leftward-lurching policy gambits—e.g., “sanctuary” protections for illegal aliens—California may have ventured too far, too incautiously. The suspicion arises from accounts of the poor and, on the whole, unconvincing, showing made by California’s advocates in defense of a statute readily recognized as tampering with free speech rights under the First Amendment. It would be dangerous, all the same, not to wrestle with the implications of California’s decision to elevate abortion rights over those rights singled out for protection in the first couple of lines of the First Amendment: freedom of religion, freedom of speech. In California’s Assembly Bill No. 775 the two rights are entangled beyond the power, it would seem, of mortals to pull them apart.

The political effort to wrest them apart, even so, and to manage their applicability, shows what goes on in the attempted redefinition of the American identity—once, unmistakably, the identity of a free people.

We are what the government says we are; and we do what the government says we do. Such is the clear meaning of Assembly Bill No. 775.

The learned justices of the Supreme Court showed themselves, in one way or another, mindful of how large the stakes have grown in the Court’s own enterprise of creating and guaranteeing the constitutional right to abortion.

Slurp, sloops, slosh, go the justices in their hip boots, wading through the Okefenokee-like waters their own jurisprudence has loosed, and caused to spread, across the landscape. Once, the Court’s challenge was to convince Americans that with *Roe v. Wade* a new right had rightly been born, and awaited general welcome. The enterprise shaping up now is figuring out how many, and which, other rights succumb to the right to abortion.

The justices themselves are not putting the matter precisely in that light. They should. Abortion, as dug in and fortified constitutionally with trench wire and pointed stakes, and circled with anti-tank mines, bids for preeminence among Americans’ enumerated rights. As the *Wall Street Journal* observes: “The left has abandoned the idea that abortion is a private choice and now regards it as a self-evident right that everyone must subsidize.”

Think of that prospect—the extinction of unborn life as a public good of unimaginable proportions, higher in the ranking of civilizational blessings than

the right, say, to work out arguments and entanglements through discussion and debate. One can't imagine the Founding Fathers had any such notion in mind when they rose from their comb-backed Windsor chairs at the Philadelphia convention.

So what did the justices say and do as they took their first crack at *Becerra* (named for California's defendant attorney general)? It is generally agreed that the March hearing went poorly for California's lawyers, as even the *New York Times* acknowledged ("Supreme Court Warily Eyes California Law Involving Abortion and Free Speech").

Justice Anthony Kennedy, seen as the swing vote on the present case, as on so many other cases centered on claims to sexual expression, surprised many with the licks he applied to *Becerra's* back. "It seems to me that is an undue burden, and that should suffice to invalidate the statute," Kennedy said, speaking of the challenged requirement that crisis pregnancy centers, with their commitment to the saving of unborn lives, advertise the services of places with no such commitment. The California statute requires the state's 200 crisis centers not just to post notices—in up to 13 different languages and in 22-point type—remarking the availability of low-cost alternatives to healthy delivery but also to supply the phone numbers of these alternatives.

How odd, under circumstances uncommonly odd to begin with, that California neglected to make clinic operators provide Uber service whisking disillusioned clients away to such places as provide real service to women, rather than the apparently spurious concern and counsel non-abortion-providers offer. What the law does require is shocking enough. Imagine making Nordstrom distribute advertising fliers for Walmart. Such is the nature of the state's claim on the crisis pregnancy centers—with just this non-negligible difference: A human life is at stake in the choices California wishes to impose.

Marvelously enough, California's attorneys made no more favorable impression on Justices Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor—advanced liberals both—than they made on Kennedy. Kagan, for instance, objected that a series of exceptions in the challenged law made the statute seem "gerrymandered" to the disadvantage of crisis pregnancy centers and their free speech rights. The point had escaped the notice of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which green-lighted the law, but no one really had expected otherwise given the Ninth's "progressive" bona fides. In fact, the statute has few friends outside recognized pro-abortion circles.

So we'll see. But there's a lot to think about on other fronts that involve the interaction of pro-abortion sentiment with rights more congruent with American understandings of virtue and responsibility. The right of free expression, for one; and, naturally, the right to obey the commands and promptings of religious faith.

California, though not saying so, naturally, has tried setting fire to the right of free speech, and to the adjacent right of religious expression: rights allowing Americans to claim allegiance to such norms and standards as they cherish.

The thought processes of the California Assembly aren't hard to discern: Ummm, yes, very important to protect the intersections of thought and speech, tongue and mind! But look at it from our seats in the Assembly. Can't everyone see the immensity of the need for (in the language of Assembly Bill No. 775) "publicly funded family planning services and education, abortion services, and prenatal care and delivery." Cannot everyone acknowledge the effects of this need upon "[m]illions of California women?" Well!—we in the Assembly can't just sit on our hands. We must Do Something! It seems old postulates concerning deference to speech and religious rights don't work anymore. We see things, we understand things, that people used neither to see nor understand. New realities call us to new commitments or rethought commitments of old realities. Comes to the same thing.

No small number of Americans would brush off such a viewpoint as anti-democratic nonsense. Not that Americans with such powers of discernment occupy many seats in the California Assembly.

A whole new way of understanding and talking about democratic rights is on display here: coteries, factions deciding what the run of us ought to say and think and do. Not yet is the new way dominant in a land notoriously fond of personal liberties guaranteed by our constitutional arrangements. Yet what's ahead? We don't know. That's the long and the short of it.

Under the old, familiar dispensation, changes of the grand sort rarely came about through governmental coercion; they came about, much more often, through the perturbations of private forces, with government intervening mainly to make sure peace and tolerance got the upper hand over violence and hatred. Humans being humans, the old dispensation sometimes failed to work according to blueprint. Nevertheless, conversation and conciliation commonly achieved more than government directives to say this or that.

Consider abortion, and the state of things in 1972, prior to *Roe v. Wade*. Public opinion (or suchlike) affirmed through democratically enacted legislation the undesirability or, as some said then, and would still say, the evil of abortion. Along came the Supreme Court the following year, declaring democratic opinion, in this instance, to be wrong and mistaken.

The amazing thing about *Roe*—well, one among many amazing things about such a decision—was the Court's dismissal of embodied democratic opinion. The people weren't to have their way. The people, it seemed to the Court majority, were just plain wrong. They required being set straight on the Court's discovery that abortion can be a very worthwhile thing. End of discussion.

Wait, however—what was it that brought the Court majority to this point if it was not discussion, some hot, some cold and formal, in very public domains like newspapers, TV, and the public streets of the proposition that abortion should be allowed? Freedom of speech, and of religious expression, had brought about this end. Now the door would be shut.

The success of the *Roe* plaintiffs in using free speech against the anti-abortion laws has not brought the perfect enjoyment the plaintiffs had imagined. The First Amendment sets no expiration date for arguments, and the arguments against the *Roe* decision and its outcomes have continued, as we know. There is no need to enumerate them. The point most worth noting is the backflip on free speech practiced by those who prevailed in *Roe*. Speech was good for *them*; but it has not served their constant purpose, that—apparently—of bringing all Americans into agreement with them.

We have heard, since grade school, of poor losers. We see in California evidence of the opposite type—the poor winner; the winner who just can't see any reason the world doesn't fall in behind his arguments, now that, in official circles, they have prevailed. The reason might be—it certainly is in the present case, I maintain—that the official circles are mistaken; that they judged wrongly and, accordingly, stand in danger of losing the ground they have held for so long.

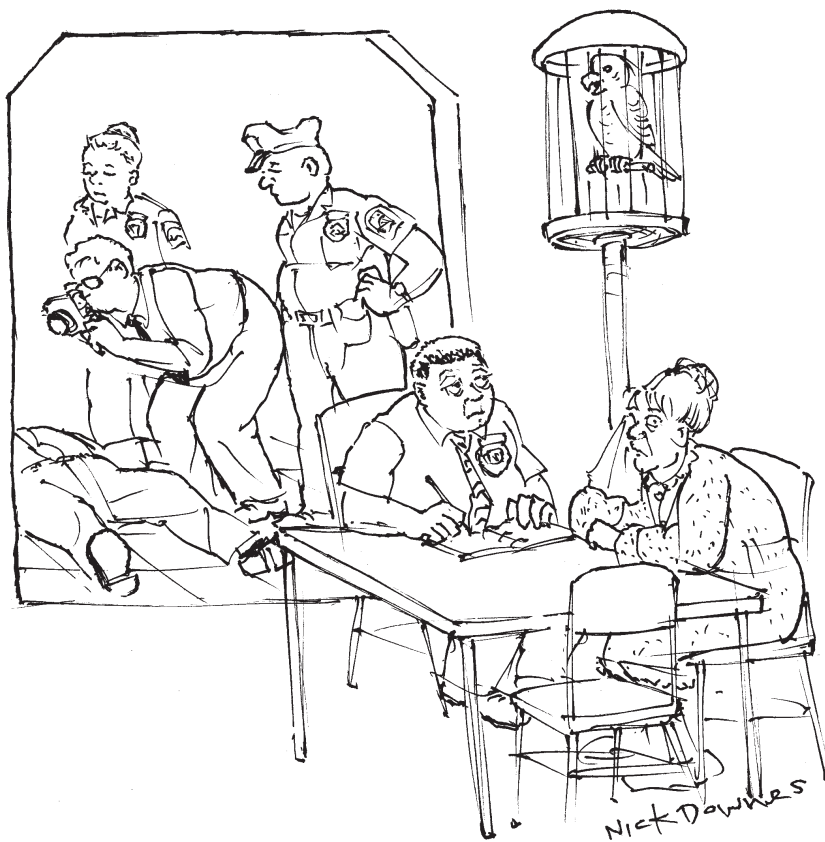
They don't clamp down exactly on others' right of expression; however, they force their own speech to the fore, as with Assembly Bill No. 775. Using the power of the state, they implicitly contradict opponents of their viewpoint, and dragoon them into joining their side, like it or not.

Strong-arm tactics such as those California attempts are the less prepossessing on account of their interference not just with the free-speech but also with the free-religious expression rights of those who defend unborn life. The Supreme Court may not take notice of this defect in the mechanism of Assembly Bill No. 775; those defects, nevertheless, are plain. Faith in the sovereign purposes of God as Creator of life is not up for exclusion from the public square: not while the First Amendment (not to mention the sovereign purposes of God) remains a solid part of our inheritance. Assembly Bill No. 775 imposes secular standards on crisis pregnancy centers: making them, in spite of their religious faith and understandings, advertise for the secular purpose of steering pregnant women into the arms of the state.

It is never safe to predict what the U.S. Supreme Court will do, particularly in an abortion case. Yet the problems with Assembly Bill No. 775 cast a shadow over the First Amendment—whose removal for a time at least Americans of various convictions on the abortion issue should be pleased to see.

Roe v. Wade was not—I think, I hope—meant to turn our constitutional arrangements inside out, whatever the Court's odd understanding of how legitimate

rights come to be recognized and affirmed. If Assembly Bill No. 775 escapes Supreme Court censure or rebuke, non-Californians are in for experiences of like kind: new, very official attempts to make sure all Americans know unofficially what a blessing was *Roe*. Or if we refuse to know any such ridiculous thing, we may be instructed officially to behave as though we knew it. The difference is small. We should look closely, carefully. It matters.



"No, Erma, no. Don't Shoot—AWWWK!"

Fake Clinics—or Fake Feminism?

Maria McFadden Maffucci

On the morning of March 20, in freezing rain, opposing groups of protestors held competing rallies at the steps of the Supreme Court to mark the day oral arguments would be heard in *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates* (NIFLA) v. *Becerra*, a free-speech case involving abortion. NIFLA, an organization that supports pro-life pregnancy centers nationwide, is challenging the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals' upholding of the 2015 California Reproductive FACT law (Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care and Transparency), which would require pro-life medical clinics to advertise (in a large-size font and in as many as 13 different languages) where women can obtain low-cost abortions. The law would further require pregnancy centers that are not medical clinics to declare this in super-size fonts on the premises and in all advertisements.

This Supreme Court case is the culmination of a long harassment campaign against pro-life pregnancy centers, organized and supported by a coalition of abortion activists and profiteers, including NARAL and Planned Parenthood. Since the 2016 elections there has been a surge in online efforts to recruit activists and donors, especially through the website and social media presence of ExposeFakeClinics.com.

The motivation is clear: As the website says, “Currently in the United States, there are close to 4,000 pregnancy centers, compared to 780 abortion providers.” There are, in other words, thousands of privately-funded pregnancy centers offering free services, goods, and support to women and their families, compared to 780 abortion businesses worried about their bottom line. And they *are* worried: According to LifeNews, the national trend has abortion businesses closing at a higher rate than new clinics opening¹; meanwhile, in addition to creating and supporting pro-life pregnancy centers, pro-life organizations have been actively publicizing the locations of federally supported clinics that offer full healthcare (except abortion) for women.²

Pregnancy centers in the U.S. today range from non-medical clinics that provide pregnancy tests and counseling, to licensed medical clinics that offer ultrasounds, medical testing, STD testing and treatment, and referrals for prenatal care and parenting classes. But according to ExposeFakeclinics.com, these

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distinctions are irrelevant: They are all “fake clinics” that:

Do NOT provide comprehensive reproductive health care—or much of any “health care” at all! Instead, they use phony ads to trick pregnant people into making an appointment, promising “free ultrasounds” or “pregnancy support.” Once inside, people are lied to, shamed, and pressured about their reproductive health decisions, often delaying their procedure or pushing them past the deadline for a legal abortion altogether.

Encouraging visitors to the site to help “end the deception,” Expose Fake Clinics introduces a “toolkit” for activism: Review “fake clinics” online, “Click and ‘Like’ accurate” reviews, take to the streets and protest, and spread the word. . . . And of course, donate to the cause.

Expose Fake Clinics was kicked off with a national “week-of-action” last July 17-26 by Abortion Access Hackathon and Lady Parts Justice League, along with over 30 reproductive rights organizations. At the forefront of the movement is the Lady Parts Justice League (LPJL), which is largely the “baby” of comedienne, co-founder, and former head writer of *The Daily Show*, Lizz Winstead. In fact, Winstead and LPJL organized the bus trip to Washington, D.C., for the March 20 Supreme Court rally, where Winstead was a prominent speaker.

Lady Parts Justice, funded in 2012, is the political arm of the newer, tax-deductible “charity” Lady Parts Justice League, which describes itself as “a coven of hilarious badass feminists who use humor and pop culture to expose the haters fighting against reproductive rights.” LPJL’s branding is all gynecological, in mockery of a politician who once used the “lady parts” euphemism, so their mascot is a fuzzy stuffed uterus named Eunice, their events across country are the Vagical Mystery Tour, and awards are the Golden Probes . . . you get it. Because Winstead is a comedienne, many of the events are comedy nights that get mainstream media support and attention. Recently Winstead hosted a telethon fundraiser, “Life Is a Living Nightmare: A Telethon to Fix It,” that featured *Star Wars* actor Mark Harmon and abortionist Willie Parker. Almost four hours of “bizarre content” included abortion charades—and in one such charade, comedienne Sarah Silverman declared, of a law preventing aborted fetuses from being used in manufactured food products, “If anything has ever made me want to eat an aborted fetus, it’s this law.” She also mocked a law that called for burying aborted fetuses, saying, “F’cking funerals for f’cking aborted fetuses? I would like to speak at those funerals. He lived the way he died. He died the way he lived. The size of a sesame seed with no discerning brain function.”³

Who Is Lizz?

In August, my colleague and I attended a free Lady Parts Justice League event about the “Fake Clinics” movement, part of the “Speak Up Rise Up” storytelling festival on the lower East Side of Manhattan. Lizz Winstead opened the event by recounting her own experience with teen pregnancy and a “fake

clinic.” The youngest child in a big Catholic family in Minnesota, Lizz became pregnant the first time she had sex (because using birth control would have involved two sins). Terrified, she saw an ad on a bus for pregnancy help. The place she arrived at looked homey and warm at first, but then she noticed that there were religious posters and imagery on the walls, but no medical information. A woman there, she says, gave her a pregnancy test, which came back positive, and then offered two options—have the baby and keep it or have the baby and give it up for adoption. Lizz headed out of there, but not before hearing the woman call after her, “Remember, it’s mommy—or murder.” She got back on the bus, she says, and found a real abortion clinic.

Winstead knows the power of a good story; this story, it turns out, has a life of its own as a Big Abortion money engine. In 2012, Winstead went on a reproductive rights fundraising tour for NARAL and Planned Parenthood, ending many events with a reading of “All Knocked Up” (included in her 2012 book of essays *Lizz Free or Die*, and pretty much word for word what we heard that evening at Speak Up). After the “Lizz: your choices are mommy or murder” comment, Lizz writes:

I walked out. She had just reaffirmed everything I now feared. I am a dumb bitch. I am a dumb whore. And a criminal.

She defined me. This woman on this gray winter day in 1979, she looked at me, a completely clueless 17 year old girl, right in the face and confirmed, “Your life is insignificant.” How could she say she was pro-life when she wasn’t pro *my* life?⁴

On that evening at Speak Up, Lizz did not reveal any details about her actual abortion experience (nor, as far as I can find, has she done so publicly anywhere else).

The Speak Up Rise Up festival event in New York City was remarkable for its vulgarity (a raffle to support the cause awarded a vibrator for first prize) and its virulent hatred of religion, especially Catholicism. Time and time again pregnancy centers were referred to as dark, evil, creepy, and shaming—because of their religious foundations. (To see a really disturbing video of this kind of anti-religious rhetoric, see “Crisis Pregnancy Centers” on Full Frontal with Samantha Bee.⁵) Lizz recounted clerics “christening” a pregnancy center like it was some sort of evil ship launching, with holy water standing in for champagne. The depth of her hatred against the Catholic Church makes greater sense if you read more of the “Messays,” as she dubs them, that make up her book. Winstead is a furious and sort of cliché’d ex-Catholic. Born the youngest of five children, she describes growing up in a huge extended family where “there were always babies around.” Her family was like the “Costco of procreation,” and she seemed to forever be going to baby showers (which she hated) and given baby dolls (which she despised). We learn many things that disturbed her

about the Catholic faith of her parents, from finding out that her beloved dog would not go to heaven, to resenting not being allowed to become an altar boy so she could rake in money serving at weddings and funerals: “Why wouldn’t I be allowed? It’s not like part of the job was hauling around anvils, and those dresses the boys wore were pretty much unisex. It didn’t seem like the penis came into play. (Don’t go there.)”

She found all the religious imagery in her home creepy and wrote that, “to the day she died,” her Mom “had more pictures of Jesus hanging on her walls than she did me.” There is some poignancy offsetting the book’s snark: It is clear Lizz loved her parents and grieved their deaths keenly. She writes that while her parents hated her abortion advocacy, they were at the same time proud of her courage. And she dedicated her book to her parents: “My mom and dad didn’t live to see this book come out. I hope it would make them proud. I would be shattered for any outcome shy of that.”

In an online interview:

So, my mom, super Catholic, very upset that I had an abortion, very upset, was like, “I really want you to not write about the abortion in your book.” And I was like, Mom, I know this has been a bone of contention in our relationship but I hope that you think I was a good daughter. And she was like, “Yes, yes, but I just worry about your mortality and I just think that I just really need you to make peace with God about your abortion...” and my sister whispers in my ear, “Which one?”

I was like, “Just shut up! Are you seriously in my ear saying ‘which one’ right now?!”⁶

In Winstead’s final chapter, “Somebody Had to Say It,” she explains that she became a crusader for abortion access because she was noticing a disturbing trend: There were “good abortions,” which happened because “you got pregnant during a horrible sexual circumstance,” making you a victim; and then there were “bad abortions,” which happened because “you got pregnant for any other reason.” But “the reality is, we are a country who has sex. We f’ck and we like it, and sometimes that leads to unintended pregnancy.” She has hitched her career wagon to what she calls a “medical procedure that should always be safe and legal, because it will always be necessary.”

For Lizz, whose career has taken some hits (she was also a founder of the now defunct Air America Radio), this advocacy seems to fulfill several needs: a job, publicity, and the opportunity to be that “bad girl” who underneath it all is actually a “shero” for women. Or Womenn.

What are the Claims of “Fake” Clinics?

Let’s start with deception. It is true that many pregnancy centers deliberately seek out locations next to abortion clinics and use similar names so that women may mistakenly enter their doors. This is a matter of some debate in the movement—but most support this temporary deception as a means of saving lives.

An example is The Hartford Women’s Center in Connecticut, a particular target of Lady Parts Justice League that was featured in a video shown at the New York City event and also posted on ExposeFakeclinics.com. In the video, two young women, “Amber and Jackie,” sip wine as they talk about how terrible fake clinics are: They set up shop literally next door to an abortion clinic and “use a similar name and EVEN the same font!” The video flashes to a photo of a directory sign featuring The Hartford Women’s Center and Hartford GYN—along with two or three other businesses (all in the same typeface and font). The Hartford Women’s Center is only about 20 feet from the NARAL affiliate abortion clinic (whose motto is “Abortion: 100 percent of what we do”).⁷ As we learned at Rise Up, a posse from NARAL turned up one day to attend a meeting at Hartford GYN and they walked into the Hartford Women’s Center by mistake!

That is less likely to happen in the future, because last fall LPJL traveled to Hartford and painted a “yellow brick road” to the abortion clinic. This took place in the week of action beginning October 23; which is interesting, because on October 21, a woman was removed from Hartford GYN by ambulance. You can hear the actual 911 call via Operation Rescue, which monitors abortion clinics.⁸ A registered nurse, Madeline, called to request an ambulance for a patient with “excessive bleeding.” When asked if the patient was conscious, Madeline replied, “she is sedated, under procedure.” The ambulance was dispatched under “Priority 1,” which designates the most urgent of cases.

So perhaps the “yellow brick road” LPJL painted actually *does* help women? It makes it crystal clear where the ambulances should go. Except that this ambulance was directed to drive around to the “back parking lot.”

Amber and Jackie, the women sipping wine in the video, warn that the “fake” clinics try to scare women away from abortion with false information, like the “crazy ass lies” that there is a link between abortion and breast cancer, infertility, and depression (all assertions made by pro-choice investigative journalist Punam Kumar Gill in her recent documentary, *Hush*).⁹ To abortion promoters, accurate facts about fetal development are also “fake,” though the science is clear and irrefutable. They accuse pregnancy centers of misrepresenting the age of the unborn child when they show women sonograms; but it is the sonogram images *themselves* that really scare abortion activists, as studies have shown that what really turns pregnant women and their partners away from abortion is the overwhelming effect of seeing their own child’s sonogram picture.

One of the most egregious lies Amber and Jackie spout is this: “At the worst of the worst of these places, they will string women along, promising them help with childcare and diapers right up until they reach the legal limit for abortion. Then cut them off, sending them away with a box of diapers and a prayer, leaving them to fend for themselves.” While of course no one can vouch for every

pregnancy center in the U.S., it is clear that the majority of them offer a tremendous amount of help to women who choose to continue their pregnancies. Most offer parenting classes, diapers and baby clothes, and aid in applying for various forms of government assistance. And most are associated with maternity homes that will house pregnant women and other children, some for up to a year or more. (For a profile of one such home, see Ifeoma Anunkor's "Good Counsel for Mothers and Babies," page 19). In addition, many centers offer post-abortion counseling—whereas, on the pro-abortion side, post-abortion regret is just another "lie" that Expose Fake Clinics attacks.

What Has the Fake Clinics Movement Accomplished?

The fake clinics movement has raised funds for the abortion industry. Beyond that, it is unclear how successful they have been. Some of the movement's efforts have been embarrassing—for them. Take their online reviewing tactics. While Lizz encouraged those of us at Rise Up to get together for reviewing parties, to drink wine and help each other write online reviews, some activists who took their advice were betrayed by their enthusiasm. One woman with the user name "access Columbus" posted "well over 100 negative reviews on pregnancy centers' Google My Business profiles, starting with Columbus Ohio, and moving steadily through the Midwest and even up into Canada." Each review used the same words, claiming that the center was "a religious facility masquerading as a medical facility. This is a FAKE CLINIC." The pregnancy centers notified Google, which ended up removing over 40 negative reviews.¹⁰ In general, pregnancy centers still fare well on Google, and come up in online searches more plentifully than abortion clinics. The reason for this, as Pregnancy Help News explains, is that "Google prioritizes—as much as any other factor—actual feedback from former clients via its Google My Business. While close to 99 percent of former pregnancy center clients turn into veritable evangelists—and many start volunteering at the centers right away—the opposite is true of abortion businesses."¹¹

Protests can be annoying and can intimidate women who may want to visit the pregnancy centers, but in general they are not effective. As Thomas Glessner, president of the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, said, "These centers exist in every major community in the country" and are well-known in the community; thus when "the other side tries to create hysteria over the work of prolife centers the campaign is usually greeted with a big yawn from the public at large." Sometimes protests can also royally backfire, as was the case at the ABC Women's Center in Middletown, CT, last July during the week of action. According to the then-Client Services Manager, Christina Marie Bennett, they were alerted ahead of time of a planned protest. When a group of women arrived outside ABC's door with signs about fake clinics, they were met on the other side of the door by employees, volunteers, and clients of ABC, who were

holding signs that said: “I am not a Fake Nurse”; “I am not a Fake Sonographer”; and “ABC helps my family.”

When NARAL came, they brought signs that said, “Abortion is Healthcare” and the commonly used, “My body, my choice.” They yelled and chanted about fighting the stigma and stopping “fake clinics.” At one point, this group of people (notably all Caucasian) began chanting the phrase, “Stay woke,” a phrase signifying awareness of the struggles facing the Black community. As a Black woman, I had to laugh, because their chant was the exact opposite of what they were doing. We had a beautiful, diverse representation of women and men countering their attack. We had Black and Latina clients expressing through their signs that our center has changed their lives for the better.¹²

The weapon that can really hurt pregnancy centers is legislation involving heavy fines (and ridiculous requirements). Several cities and states have attempted restrictive laws—such legislation succeeded in New York City, but didn’t hold up to a federal challenge in Baltimore, for example. In Hartford, CT the city council authorized a law that would require Hartford Women’s Center to identify itself as a non-medical clinic, even though it has licensed nurses and sonographers who work under a doctor’s supervision. But the council blinked because of *NIFLA v. Becerra*, and the law won’t go into effect until July 1—at which point (we hope and pray) it will be moot. Both sides are waiting anxiously for the ruling, which will come down in June, though initial reports are that even the liberal Supreme Court justices were skeptical about the constitutionality of the FACT law.

Fake Clinics or Fake Feminism?

Winstead and her cohorts protested a pregnancy center last summer dressed as early feminists from the time of Susan B. Anthony, which is kind of short-sighted, as history records that the early feminists were passionately against abortion.¹³ Pro-abortion activists like to say that pro-life feminism is not a thing. But pro-life feminists insist that, as a billboard funded by WhatAbortionReallyIs.com says: “Abortion is fake feminism.”

Why? Destiny Herndon-De La Rosa is the founder of New Wave Feminists, an organization that burst upon the scene in 2012 (which described themselves as “Badass. Pro-Life. Feminist.” before LPJS came out with their “coven of hilarious badass feminists.”) Asked how she can be pro-life and feminist, Herndon-De La Rosa put it this way:

We talk about smashing patriarchal constructs because they are the epitome of “might makes right.” When only men held all of the power and status, those that wanted to were able to control our bodies and use aggressive violence against us whenever they saw fit. In many parts of the world this is still a reality for too many women. This type of mentality MUST be smashed, not imitated.

Yet here we are, doing that exact same thing to our status-less, voiceless, non-consenting unborn children simply because we are bigger and stronger and they are the weak and powerless ones this time.

Abortion takes our newfound liberation and uses it not to protect the weak and vulnerable but instead to perpetuate the very violence we were once oppressed by ourselves.¹⁴

Lady Parts Justice League's brand of feminism is an in-your-face abortion lovefest. It glorifies irresponsible sex and proposes raunchiness and sick comedy as an avenue of social justice. The Expose Fake Clinics campaign, while it may in part be an effort by women sublimating post-abortion regret to rationalize abortion, is at its base a terrifically well-funded effort to protect the billions of dollars made annually by the abortion industry. Big Abortion is the evil, creepy, and shameful reality that needs to be exposed.

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Good Counsel for Mothers and Babies

Ifeoma Anunkor

It was a brisk and bright day in December when I arrived at the Good Counsel Home in the Bronx, New York. The first thing I noticed when I entered the large brick building were the festively decorated hallways, stocked with Christmas gifts for the mothers and children who now were going about their day in an atmosphere of holiday joy. I was met by Doris Canela, the house manager, and Vanessa Thomas, a case manager, who gave me a tour of the home and told me about the organization.

Good Counsel Homes—there are five in the New York metropolitan area and one in Alabama—provide temporary housing for expectant or new mothers for up to 18 months. Women find GCH—which collaborates with various agencies and the New York City shelter system to ensure that homeless pregnant women do not sleep in the streets—through word of mouth, referrals, and online searches. There is a hotline, and an intake team for callers, and there is always a person on hand to speak with them. A chat box is available online; messages are answered within 24 hours. Good Counsel’s policy is to accept any and every woman who is homeless—whether she is pregnant or has just given birth—even if she struggles with mental health issues or substance abuse. If a homeless mother contacts GCH but there is no room available, staff will make sure she has a place to stay, even if a chapel in one of the homes has to become a temporary bedroom. Then, if there is not sufficient space to sustain her, or if there are more appropriate programs for the mother’s needs, GCH will arrange to transfer her to another venue.

GCH has a policy that no mom will give birth alone. If family cannot accompany the expectant mother, a case manager or staff member will be her companion, as GCH believes the birthing process should be a beautiful memory for the mother and as stress-free as possible. GCH also encourages breastfeeding for those who are able and provides a lactation consultant to assist the new mothers. A typical day for a mother at GCH begins between seven and eight o’clock, when she gets up to feed her baby and prepare breakfast for any other children she has (many GCH residents have more than one child). She then has a morning meeting with her assigned case manager, who helps her schedule pre- or post-natal appointments, arrange care for her children, and look for job training or educational advancement opportunities. Mothers who have just given birth

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keep a clear schedule for six to eight weeks for the recovery process and to bond with their babies.

After this maternity leave period, every mother must participate in some sort of productive activity for 30-40 hours a week—in education, work training, or volunteering. Full-time childcare is provided in the house, allowing mothers to prepare to become self-sufficient and eventually move into a place of their own. These activities usually conclude by around four o'clock, at which time the mothers return to the house. Each day, one mother, with the help of staff, cooks dinner for the house residents. The other mothers are able to spend this time with their kids, pick older children up from school, and help with homework. Dinner, served at six o'clock, is a time when women can share a meal and talk together, connecting and forming friendships.

Life-skill classes lasting an hour are held each evening beginning at 8 p.m., and cover a range of topics such as job interviewing skills, parenting, and nutrition. The day then winds down with free time in the family room, where mothers socialize and children play together. Everyone is to be in their rooms by 11 p.m.

GCH encourages the spiritual growth of the parent and child. Although it is a Catholic organization, mothers are encouraged to seek the spiritual practice of their own preference, and no particular religious affiliation is required, even for the staff. For instance, several mothers attend local Protestant churches within walking distance from the home. Weekly Bible studies are held at the home as is a monthly Catholic Mass which the mothers are expected to attend.

For mothers who have had abortions in the past, GCH is a judgment-free zone, offering post-abortion counseling for those who seek it through its Lumina Program. Counseling is also offered for victims of domestic violence, and they are referred to lawyers or social workers who can help them. Women with other legal issues are also referred to appropriate agencies for assistance.

Since GCH only provides temporary housing, success there means that by the time a mother's stay at the home has ended, she is self-sufficient and has found her own housing. Therefore, much effort is spent on preparing mothers to be on their own. The staff teaches budget planning. GCH enrolls mothers in housing lotteries and works with them to find apartments. If staff does not think an area is safe and healthy, they will not encourage a woman to move there—there is no rush to get mothers out of the home.

Everyone who comes to GCH without a job leaves GCH with a job. New York City is an expensive place to live and GCH takes very seriously its responsibility to equip women with the job experience and tools they need to financially support themselves and their children.

Mothers will always find an open door at GCH. The Exodus Program is for any mother who, after she leaves, finds herself in need of basic necessities such

as pots and pans and diapers because she has fallen on hard times. The Exodus Program also helps women wanting to further their education. And it includes some home visits. Mothers are invited back for every major holiday event. For mothers who move away from the Bronx, GCH connects them with homes in Connecticut, Staten Island, New Jersey, etc. for support should they need it.

The home I visited in the Bronx models GCH's commitment to taking care of women who need it. On the first floor are intake and case management offices, a laundry room, and a residential office where all the weekly schedules and mailboxes for each mother are kept. On the second floor is a chapel, and rooms for classes. There is a dining room with large round tables for a communal dining experience. Next to the dining room is a well-stocked pantry open to mothers. The house also has a daycare center called Genesis, which is divided into two areas, newborns and toddlers at one end, and older children at the other. When I visited, the home was housing 14 women and 19 children, including a mother with four children occupying the largest room. Every room has a bed, dresser, closet, and crib. Family rooms are available for mothers with more than one child; there are shared bathrooms on each floor. The finished basement has a space where computers are available for women to use and more classrooms.

During my visit, I was able to interview two residents. "Marsha," originally from New Jersey, came to meet me with her newborn and one of her sons, who was lively and happy. She discovered GCH while Googling for temporary emergency shelter; she had three young children and was pregnant. Marsha's application and interview were successful and she immediately moved from New Jersey to the Bronx home. Around the eighth month of her pregnancy, she went into early labor. She rushed to the hospital, but to avoid a premature birth, doctors did not induce labor and sent her back to the home. The intense contractions continued for six weeks, with her going back and forth to the hospital several times. Finally, she delivered a healthy baby girl. In addition to her newborn daughter, she has 5-year old, 4-year old, and 2-year-old boys. Marsha told me that what she appreciated most about the home was the sense of family she experienced. While she developed friendships and a special bond with the other mothers, the kids played together and made fast friends as well. On a typical day at the home, Marsha would be up at 6 am to get her two oldest children ready for school. One of them she took to school while the other took a school bus. She would tend to the two smallest ones throughout the day in the house. Around 2 p.m. she would pick up her kids, then help them with their homework. She had them in bed by 7 p.m. Weekends at GCH are free days, during which mothers decide what to do. Marsha told me she enjoyed taking her kids on a variety of different outings.

The second woman I interviewed was "Yvonne," who came to talk to me

carrying her 4-day-old newborn. In contrast to Marsha, her delivery was relatively uncomplicated, with labor lasting only four hours and five minutes. Yvonne found out about GCH on Google as she was searching for housing through PATH (Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing). Her rent had been raised so high that she had to choose between paying it and eating. Due to an unsympathetic landlord and her fiancé losing his job, she moved into a single women's shelter, but when she became pregnant she had to leave. She applied for housing with PATH and Good Counsel. Her application status with PATH was uncertain, and GCH provided better housing for a longer period of time than PATH offered. However, GCH was full at the time and encouraged her to keep them updated regarding PATH housing. After several weeks, the status of Yvonne's PATH application was confirmed: New York State had determined that she was *not* homeless. She was given a MetroCard and \$25 and told she would have to leave the PATH housing premises. That same day, GCH informed her that they would take her in as an emergency even though there was no room available. Four months later, a room opened up and she is now on maternity leave at GCH. To this day, Yvonne is grateful for how everything worked out in her favor, and she's glad that she never gave up. She is most grateful for the peace of mind she now has because she has a place to live. As she put it, "I can go out, and come back in to rest and not have to worry because I have a roof over my head. I have resources for food, I am able to relax and not have worries about getting kicked out and having to live on the street." Those worries are daunting for anyone, but for a pregnant woman, almost unbearable. Yvonne is also grateful for the community of women around her at GCH. She is learning a lot from them, picking up tips about motherhood.

During my visit, I learned from both staff and mothers the importance of the community Good Counsel provides to women who otherwise might be cast aside by society—a kind of community which is crucial if the pro-life movement wants to show that saving children is in the best interest of everyone.

Good Counsel Homes are residential care facilities for homeless expectant and new mothers and their children, founded by Chris Bell and the late Fr. Benedict Groeschel in 1985. GCH now has six locations: four in the state of New York, and one each in New Jersey and Alabama. GCH has a national 24/7 helpline (800-723-8331).

RU-486: Then and Now

Laura Echevarria

On September 28, 2000, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the use of RU-486 in the United States as an abortion drug. Taken in combination with a prostaglandin, the RU-486/prostaglandin chemical abortion method was hailed by pro-abortion groups as a breakthrough and condemned by pro-life groups as deadly for unborn babies and potentially deadly for their mothers as well.

At that time I was the spokesperson on RU-486 for the National Right to Life Committee, and I was interviewed by CBS about what could happen if a pro-life president were elected:

The elections “may very well have an impact on what happens with RU-486 in the future,” says Laura Echevarria of the National Right to Life Committee. “A new FDA commissioner will be appointed. If the drug is deemed to be dangerous, the FDA may review RU-486 and its application. . . . Certainly that looks like that’s a possibility already.”¹

However, any review of RU-486 that *might* have taken place internally at the FDA did not lead to the drug’s removal from the market.

In fact, the FDA has taken the opposite approach.

In 2016, after the loss of at least 14 (mothers’) lives since the drug was approved, the FDA revised the protocols for RU-486—but not to achieve increased safety. The original dosage was 600 mg of RU-486 given orally in three 200 mg tablets, followed by two 200 mcg tablets of misoprostol (a synthetic prostaglandin that induces labor) given as late as 7 weeks into a pregnancy (counted from the last menstrual cycle). The 2016 FDA-revised protocols decreased the dosage of RU-486 to 200 mg total and increased the dosage of the misoprostol to 800 mcg. The FDA also extended how late the drugs could be given—from 7 weeks to 10 weeks from the last menstrual period.² The change in the protocols actually increased the potential for harm to women, especially since the “efficacy” of RU-486 decreases as a woman’s pregnancy progresses. Approving this method for women three weeks further along in their pregnancies thus increases the likelihood that they will need a surgical abortion following an incomplete or failed chemical abortion.

What is RU-486 and How Does It Work?

To comprehend how RU-486 works and the dangers it poses, it is vital to

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understand the role of hormones in the early pregnancy process.

When sperm and egg unite, usually in the fallopian tube, a human embryo is formed and then travels down the fallopian tube to implant in the uterine lining. This happens at the mid-point in the menstrual cycle, and a woman often does not become aware of being pregnant until she has missed her period—approximately two-and-a-half to three weeks later. A baby’s heart begins to beat about 18-22 days after conception—about the time that most women find out they are pregnant.

To sustain a pregnancy before the placenta forms, the *corpus luteum*, which is the now-empty capsule in the ovary that contained the mature egg before it was released, produces progesterone, a hormone that thickens the uterine lining and increases the nutrients available for the growing embryo. The *corpus luteum* will continue to produce progesterone until the placenta forms by 10 weeks of pregnancy.

The simplest explanation for how RU-486 works is that it is an antagonist of progesterone. It interferes with the function of progesterone and its ability to create a hospitable environment for the embryo. RU-486 effectively starves an embryo of the nourishment it needs. What it commonly does or (in more extreme cases) may do to the body of the woman taking it will be discussed after taking a closer look at the politicized process that got it approved.

Highly Politicized Approval Process

From the start of the Clinton Administration, the FDA experienced strong encouragement to hasten RU-486’s approval. Judicial Watch, which in 2006 obtained documents through the National Archives at the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, Arkansas, found that

President Clinton ordered the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the FDA to coordinate the marketing of RU-486 as his first official act in office. Within one month, the FDA Commissioner had met with the RU-486 manufacturer and parent company.

Judicial Watch also noted:

The FDA was compromised in its role as an objective reviewer of the safety and efficacy of the drug because of its active role in brokering a deal between pharmaceutical firms and an abortion rights foundation. (The five standard requirements for certifying a drug “safe and effective” were circumvented to rush RU-486 to market.)³

Even some pro-abortion scientists were unhappy with the unseemly haste of the process. One of these, Dr. Renate Klein, a researcher, biologist, and outspoken RU-486 opponent, explained in a 2013 interview that she was:

[C]oncerned over the initial approval processes for RU 486 in France more than a decade ago, citing incomplete trials including the large numbers of women who dropped

out. These flaws were widely documented in the 1990s and heavily criticised [sic] by America's Food and Drug Administration (FDA). However this important body which regulates drugs in the USA nevertheless relied on the French flawed trials, documented by the FDA, and data to approve the drug's use in the US after the pro-choice Clinton Administration insisted on fast tracking the registration of RU 486 via an accelerated approval process normally limited to drugs that treat life-threatening diseases.⁴

In *RU 486: Misconceptions, Myths and Morals*, Dr. Klein and co-authors Janice G. Raymond and Lynette J. Dumble (all feminists who support abortion on demand) expressed their concerns about the mechanism of RU-486 and its immediate and long-term impact on women's health:

RU 486 interacts with both the hypothalamus and the pituitary and, as researchers admit, the relationship between the pituitary and the hypothalamus is "poorly understood." RU 486 interference with the hypothalamic-pituitary axis may thus have unexpected and possibly unnoted effects on the body's metabolism.⁵

In other words, there is evidence that RU-486 works broadly in the body—not just in the reproductive system—and that it consequently has a more widespread impact than just as an antagonist for progesterone in pregnancy. Unfortunately, women undergoing RU-486 abortions often do not return for follow-up visits, and researchers are not currently tracking any long-term effects on women who take it.

Dangers Still Exist

None of the dangers associated with the RU-486 protocol were mitigated by its approval or by the changes in protocol for administering it. The RU-486 abortion protocol can cause extensive bleeding, and the misoprostol used to complete the abortion can have a variety of dangerous side effects. The FDA warns that,

Women should expect to experience vaginal bleeding or spotting for an average of 9 to 16 days. Women report experiencing heavy bleeding for a median duration of 2 days. Up to 8% of all subjects may experience some type of bleeding for 30 days or more. In general, the duration of bleeding and spotting increased as the duration of the pregnancy increased.⁶

In 2012, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a *Reuters Health* article citing Planned Parenthood data from 2009-2010 regarding RU-486 abortions:

Of the 233,805 abortions during the study period, 385 women had a serious side effect, including 238 who sought ER treatment, 135 who were admitted to the hospital, 114 who had a blood transfusion and 57 who required intravenous antibiotics. All of those women survived.⁷

According to the FDA, RU-486 is contraindicated for women with a suspected or confirmed ectopic pregnancy, chronic renal failure, long-term corticosteroid

therapy, a history of allergic reaction to mifepristone, misoprostol, or other prostaglandins, hemorrhaging disorders, or inherited porphyria. If a woman has an IUD, it must be removed before an RU-486 abortion can be performed. The most common reactions reported during the U.S. trials “were nausea, weakness, fever/chills, vomiting, headache, diarrhea, and dizziness.”⁸

Since RU-486 was released onto the market, other adverse events have been reported in connection with its use, including post-abortion infections, pelvic inflammation, anemia, allergic reactions, syncope, hypotension, tachycardia, uterine rupture, and ruptured ectopic pregnancy.⁹

With any chemical abortion, there is a risk of extensive, heavy bleeding and the possibility of an incomplete abortion. If the abortion is incomplete, the woman often needs to have a surgical abortion to complete the process; in some cases, however, she can instead take an additional dose of misoprostol. The FDA protocols allow for a second dose of 800 mcg of misoprostol *if* the unborn child is no longer alive (confirmed through ultrasound) *and* contractions have not expelled the now-dead baby. In the instructions for the second dose, the FDA warns, “There have been rare reports of uterine rupture in women who took Mifeprex and misoprostol, including women with prior uterine rupture or uterine scar and women who received multiple doses of misoprostol within 24 hours.”¹⁰

Although RU-486 starves an unborn child of nutrients, by itself it has not been shown to cause birth defects or have an impact on the long-term development of the child. However, misoprostol, the prostaglandin most commonly used to cause contractions after RU-486 has starved the unborn child, is known to cause birth defects. According to the FDA drug safety data, “Several reports in the literature associate the use of misoprostol during the first trimester of pregnancy with skull defects, cranial nerve palsies, facial malformations, and limb defects.”¹¹

Despite all these dangers, pro-abortion groups are pushing to have RU-486 prescribed by physician assistants, nurse midwives, or telemedicine, and even purchased through mail order.

Consider the ACLU, which has filed a lawsuit in Hawaii to force pharmacies to stock the drugs. If the suit is successful, the drugs could be obtained by a prescription that could be called in without a doctor’s appointment—putting young women at risk by allowing them to skip the crucial doctor’s appointment that assesses them for contraindications.¹²

Or there is a recent study in the journal *Contraception* conducted by Gynuity Health Projects that concluded that ordering RU-486 and misoprostol online is a safe and effective way of acquiring the drugs.¹³ Never mind that some of the packages in the study were damaged and none came with instructions; in addition, mail ordering the drug bypasses the evaluation of a physician. (Gynuity’s pro-

abortion donors and collaborative partners include Planned Parenthood Global and the International Consortium for Medical Abortion [ICMA]. Its president was once a director at the Population Council—the organization responsible for importing RU-486 into the U.S.)¹⁴

Even more alarming is SB 320, proposed legislation in California that would require all health centers at public universities there to make RU-486 abortions available. Pro-abortion groups argue that those who staff the health centers have been trained in abortion and can dispense the drug combination. What they do not say is that health centers on campus cannot provide such necessary screening as confirming an ectopic pregnancy via ultrasound, nor can a health center deal with the life-threatening conditions that can occur with an RU-486 abortion.

In addition, SB 320 would provide pro-abortion groups with a direct role in the implementation of the legislation, since it calls for the state to “hire appropriate individuals or contract with an external organization” to consult on planning and implementation as well as the training of staff at college campuses.¹⁵

RU-486: The Hope in the Reversal Process

Many women mistakenly see abortion as their *only* “choice”—most often because of a lack of emotional support or financial resources. During the interval between the administration of RU-486 and misoprostol, a woman may come to regret her decision and wish she could undo it. Fortunately, for the woman who does change her mind within that window, there is a protocol that offers a very good chance of saving her baby.

The Abortion Pill Reversal (APR) program was developed after a couple of pro-life physicians were approached by patients who had taken RU-486 and then changed their minds before they had taken the second drug, misoprostol. According to the APR website, in 2006 Dr. Matthew Harrison in North Carolina was contacted by a patient who wanted to halt her abortion after she had taken RU-486. Knowing that RU-486 deprives an unborn child of nutrients by blocking progesterone, Dr. Harrison reasoned that introducing high doses of progesterone might reverse the abortion process. He was correct—and the baby was saved.

Three years later, in 2009, Dr. George Delgado with the Culture of Life Family Services in California received a call from a sidewalk counselor in Texas who had a client on the phone line who had taken RU-486 and regretted it. Dr. Delgado explained to a doctor not far from the client his idea of a reverse protocol using progesterone. Since then, the APR program has grown, saving over 300 babies that we know of nationwide. As I write, 150 women are still pregnant after embarking on the APR program and taking the progesterone doses recommended in the reversal protocol.¹⁶

In 2012, George Delgado, M.D., and Mary L. Davenport, M.D., published their abortion pill reversal process in the *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*. Using the protocols developed at that time, Delgado and Davenport described giving 200 mg of progesterone intramuscularly every day over 2 weeks to 6 patients (a 7th patient was lost to follow-up). Of the 6 patients, 4 successfully delivered healthy babies. Of the two patients whose pregnancies did not successfully continue to term, one abortion occurred within three days of ingesting RU-486 and after two doses of progesterone. The second abortion occurred after the ingestion of the first dose of progesterone, but it was not clear when the RU-486 dose had been ingested. In one of these cases, neither the treating physician nor the abortion clinic that administered the RU-486 were able to determine if there had ever been a viable pregnancy.

The Abortion Pill Reversal protocols have since been refined, and as I write, the oversight of the Abortion Pill Reversal Program has been transferred to Heartbeat International, which trains pregnancy resource centers around the world. Under Heartbeat, the program will expand and connect the many women nationwide who want to halt their RU-486 abortions with the medical people who can help them.

Marie Stettler, the nurse manager for Culture of Life Family Services who has been overseeing the physician assistants, nurses, and others with medical backgrounds that man the hotline, explains that volunteers take a medical history over the phone and find out when the client ingested RU-486, where the client lives and can travel, and whether the client is experiencing any bleeding or cramping. They then contact a physician in the patient's area (who can prescribe enough progesterone to last a week) and work to schedule an appointment with that physician within 24 hours. At that time, the doctor will assess how far along the pregnancy is and if the baby is still living. If the baby is alive the patient will continue to receive doses of 800 mg of progesterone orally for the first 3 days and then 400 mg a night orally for the rest of the first trimester. In addition, ultrasounds are taken every two weeks to check the viability of the pregnancy.¹⁷

Stettler understands where these scared young women are coming from, as she recounted in a July 2017 interview with the *New York Times*:

In late October 2015, a month before graduation, she found out she was pregnant. . . . She thought about how a pregnancy would affect the nursing career she was so close to starting. She didn't want to marry her boyfriend or be attached to him forever through co-parenting. And being a single mother, she feared, would make it harder to attract the kind of "good Catholic guy" she hoped to settle down with eventually. About a week later, she made a decision that nearly one million American women make each year: She would have an abortion. After reading about the abortion pill online, she made an appointment at a Planned Parenthood clinic a block from her downtown apartment. She would rather face her forgiving God, she thought, than her anti-abortion family and friends. "I didn't

want the baby, but I also didn't want to have the abortion," she said. "I just wanted it all to not exist, which is kind of what the pill allows a woman to think can happen."¹⁸

Many of the young women who call the hotline hope for the same thing—to be “unpregnant,” and—for some of them, taking the abortion pill seems to make the process feel more “natural”—like a miscarriage.

But despite Planned Parenthood's recent attempt to equate a miscarriage and abortion—quoting feminist author Danielle Campoamor in a tweet on Twitter—just about the only similarity is a dead baby.¹⁹ Some women (including Stettler) regret taking RU-486 almost immediately:

When Marie Stettler called the reversal hotline back in 2015, a nurse quickly made her an appointment with a local doctor who would give her progesterone the next morning. On the way home from her first treatment, hopeful, she stopped and bought a bottle of prenatal vitamins. But three days later, she started bleeding heavily. The pregnancy was over. Stettler struggled with grief and guilt for months.²⁰

Because the nurse who helped her with the reversal process stayed in touch, Stettler began volunteering with the hotline. Today she helps other women who face circumstances like her own.

Conclusion

Fortunately, RU-486 did not precipitate the enormous increase in the number of abortions nationwide that pro-life groups initially feared. The prediction by Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion groups that chemical abortions would make up 30 percent of all abortions within 3 to 4 years of approval also failed to materialize.²¹ However, according to the CDC, as of 2014, RU-486 abortions make up approximately 22.6 percent of all abortions.²² And that number is climbing. Out of roughly 1.2 million abortions a year in the United States, RU-486 abortions make up more than 250,000. Of those women, the FDA estimates that 8 percent—or over 21,000—will experience heavy bleeding of 30 days or more. Up to half the women who take RU-486 will experience dizziness, headache, and vomiting, with nearly 75 percent experiencing nausea.

And these are considered “normal” side effects of the RU-486 abortion regimen. For some women, the severity of the side effects will put them in the hospital. And unfortunately, there is no way to predict how an individual woman will respond to the RU-486 abortion method.

Upsetting as the effects of RU-486 are on women and their unborn children, APR offers a rare chance to turn the clock back on a decision made in desperation. Within that crucial interval between the initial dose of RU-486 and misoprostol, the progesterone regimen in the Abortion Pill Reversal protocol gives a woman a strong chance of saving her child—but only if she is aware that the protocol exists. For the woman who regrets her abortion and reaches out for help, the reversal protocol can literally be a life saver.

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A Distinctive Catholic Vision for Politics

Richard M. Doerflinger

Christians committed to the defense of life and justice have every reason today to feel like strangers in a strange land. Consider the following.

In 2016 we endured one of the most divisive national elections on record, in which supporters of each candidate said the other was untrustworthy and unfit for office—and many strongly suspect that both sides were right. Since then, partisan distrust and polarization have not healed but worsened to the point that almost nothing can get done in Congress, and each party seems largely concerned with tripping up the other.

Each end of the political spectrum has its extremist groups, such as Antifa on the Left and the Ku Klux Klan and other white nationalists on the Right. Each is willing to use violence, and anyone who disagrees with one extreme is likely to be tagged as an activist for the other. Neither group has much use for the religious freedom of Christians, or for the Catholic Church's vision of the dignity of each human being. The Klan is anti-Catholic as well as racist, and was once involved in efforts to prohibit Catholic schools by law; activist liberal groups ally themselves with the abortion industry, and want to prohibit those committed to Catholic teaching on marriage from operating bakeries and florist shops.

Such hatreds along political lines are aggravated through the social media—to such a sickening extent that one horrible mass shooting at a nightclub prompted online comments like “Well, at least many of the victims were gay.” Another shooting, of a conservative congressman who ultimately recovered, was greeted by comments that the shooter should have had better aim. And America's worst-ever mass shooting led one CBS executive (who was later fired) to opine that at least the victims were country music fans and therefore probably Republicans.

As economist and social commentator Arthur Brooks has said, the problem here is not division or disagreement, or even anger—lively and even passionate disagreement are inevitable and can be healthy in a free society. What is prevalent now, he says, is “contempt,” which he defines as “the conviction of the worthlessness of another human being.”

The dignity of each human life has been under attack in a variety of ways for many years. Now the place where it is most denied is the arena of political debate

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itself—the public square that we must enter to make our arguments about human dignity at all.

Where did we get this corrosive climate, in which people can ignore contrary arguments about any issue simply by asserting the worthlessness of any human being who gets in the way of their own goals and desires? Theories will differ. Personally I would offer this: We have had one of the world's most extreme policies allowing the destruction of unexpected or inconvenient unborn children for over four decades now. We are one of only seven nations allowing abortions after the fifth month, putting us in the same league as China, Vietnam, and North Korea. We are the only Western nation that still regularly uses the death penalty as a response to crime. In recent decades there have been powerful and well-funded campaigns, successful in five states and the District of Columbia, to have society declare that a good way to get rid of the problems of terminally ill patients is to assist them in getting rid of themselves. And for half a century we have been inundated with a “sexual revolution,” fueled by pornography that has poisoned minds at every level of our society from presidents, legislators, and Hollywood producers to the most callow youth on our college campuses. Two generations of our people have been taught that other people—especially girls and women—can be treated as objects of exploitation by those who are more powerful—most often irresponsible boys and men. Isn't it likely that these developments have led some people to think they have a right to treat inconvenient other people as worthless compared to themselves?

But that is a description of our society when it is at its worst. What about those of us who are, for example, members of the Catholic Church?

We do not yet have armed camps. But we do have divisions, of three kinds.

The first is the divide between “pro-life/pro-family” Catholics and “social justice” Catholics. Each group has found a more sympathetic ear for its priority issues in one political party or the other; and from associating with that party, each has experienced the temptation to endorse what that party says in areas where it parts from the Church's vision.

In the 1980s, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Joseph Bernardin tried to address this divide through a “consistent ethic of life,” uniting the Church's opposition to abortion and euthanasia with issues such as unjust war and capital punishment. These stances, he said, form a “seamless garment” of respect for life. Catholics could specialize in tackling one issue or another, but should always respect and support those advancing other issues.

This message had some positive effects. It also ran into problems. Some pro-abortion politicians declared themselves “pro-life,” saying they supported most of the seamless garment, though Cardinal Bernardin himself publicly rejected that misuse of what he was saying. Some Catholics reacted to this development

by attacking the consistent ethic itself for undermining the Church's effort to protect unborn children.

Cardinal Bernardin was grieved by this. He abandoned the term "seamless garment" because it could be misused to imply that all issues affecting human life are equally fundamental. But he did not win a consensus in favor of his effort to bring the Church's moral concerns about life and dignity under one umbrella.

That brings us to the second divide, between those who support *different ways* of uniting all the Church's policy stances. Some have embraced the "seamless garment" or "consistent ethic" idea. Others prefer the image proposed in the U.S. bishops' 1998 statement *Living the Gospel of Life*: Some build their house on a firm foundation, whereas others build their house on sand and it is washed away. Our call always to respect innocent human life at its most defenseless, and never destroy it, is the foundation stone for the house of human dignity. Other issues are the walls and crossbeams of the house, but they can't stand without the foundation.

Now we have two images for our public commitments, each taken from the Gospels: The seamless garment that the Roman soldiers cast lots for as Jesus was crucified, in Chapter 19 of John, and the house built on rock that Jesus speaks about in Chapter 7 of Matthew.

This is the divide I see on Facebook among some of my more sophisticated Catholic friends.

Which approach do the U.S. bishops take? Here's what they have said in the most recent edition of a document (now titled *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*) that they have issued at the beginning of each presidential election season since 1976:

Two temptations in public life can distort the Church's defense of human life and dignity:

The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed.

The second [temptation] is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions as a way of dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. [Among these threats the bishops cite environmental degradation, racism and other unjust discrimination, pornography, the plight of those suffering from hunger or lack of health care, and others.]. . . . Although choices about how best to respond to these and other compelling threats to human life and dignity are matters for principled debate and decision, this does not make them optional concerns or permit Catholics to dismiss or ignore Church teaching on these important issues. Clearly not every Catholic can be actively involved on each of these concerns, but we need to support one another as our community of faith defends human life and dignity wherever it is threatened. We are not factions, but one family of faith fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ. . . .

The bishops add that the principles of the Church's social teaching

provide a moral framework for Catholic engagement in advancing what we have called elsewhere a “*consistent ethic of life*” Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing, and health care. . . . If we understand the human person as the “temple of the Holy Spirit”—the living house of God—then these issues fall logically into place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. *All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house's foundation.* (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 22).

So the bishops are saying it's both/and. This should not be surprising in a church that has been called the Church of Both/And: faith *and* works, Scripture *and* Tradition, word *and* sacrament, truth *and* charity. The Church's social vision is comprehensive, and it begins by seeing that human life is inviolable. Its ethic is consistent, but not homogeneous. It makes distinctions, but not divisions.

To put it more simply: Life itself is the first right we receive from the hand of God. It is the condition for all the others. If I say you have a right to vote, but I can kill you when you try to get to the voting booth, you don't have a right to vote. In fact, if we don't have an innate right to life simply because we exist as members of the human family, none of us really has basic human *rights* at all—we have only privileges, based on various qualities that can be greater or lesser, and can come and go as we pass through different stages of life. And direct attacks on life are especially grave when they are aimed at those who are most defenseless, at either end of the life span, and when they are practiced by those who should be the first defenders of life—one's own family, and members of the healing professions.

But if life is fundamental because it is the condition for all other rights, a major reason I am defending it is to make all those other rights possible. Our stance in defense of life should blossom into efforts to help life reach its full flourishing in every area of human activity. It is true that the walls of the house cannot stand without the foundation; it is also true that without walls, the foundation doesn't look like much of a house.

Therefore in their recent *Faithful Citizenship* documents, the bishops have distinguished “single-issue” voting from “disqualifying issue” voting:

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet if a candidate's position on a single issue promotes an intrinsically evil act, such as legal abortion, redefining marriage in a way that denies its essential meaning, or racist behavior, a voter may legitimately disqualify a candidate from receiving support.

There is a third and final divide. It is the divide between myself, along with the people I am addressing above—all of us who are passionately concerned

about defense of life, social justice, in fact public “issues” in general—and most Catholics, even most churchgoing Catholics.

These Catholics seldom fall into warring pro-life and social justice camps. They come to Mass for spiritual sustenance, an encouraging word, a haven from conflict. They see secular politics becoming an increasingly nasty battleground and they want none of it. This leads many of them to cry: “No politics in church!”

Often parishioners—and even pastors—do not draw a clear distinction between electioneering (supporting or opposing candidates) and taking a position on public policy issues. That distinction is important both legally and theologically. But the confusion is understandable in light of our society’s politics of personality and the current broad appeal of “ad hominem” arguments.

Our faith does call us to uphold the human dignity of others, beginning with the most vulnerable, and that demands our unified action for the common good. But it is not hard to understand why Catholics do not want partisan warfare in their parish.

Advocates for life and justice like myself have to involve more of our fellow Catholics. Imagine what a distinctive contribution would be made to our political culture if even one-tenth of churchgoing Catholics were committed to speaking out regularly on the Church’s concerns. To achieve that goal of broader agreement and participation, however, advocates like me need to ask ourselves whether we sound like party operatives, or messengers for a Gospel of life and love.

In what follows I want to suggest three ways that Catholics can make a distinctive contribution to the Church and to politics in our increasingly divided society, a contribution that promotes a comprehensive culture of life.

First, let us be Catholic first.

Being Catholic first means seeing all issues on their merits as moral concerns, not through a partisan lens, and understanding how all of them are joined at their root in God’s unconditional love for each and every human being.

This is what Pope Francis has championed—not so much a consistent ethic, as a call to dig deeper than ethics. He has said we must get back to basics, appreciating how all our specific moral concerns are grounded in God’s boundless love for each and every person and our call to love and forgive others as God loves and forgives us. We must learn to *see* others as God sees them, as his beloved children, beginning with those whom others fail to see. When we fail to see our neighbor as someone with the same inherent worth as ourselves, we become pawns in a “throw-away society” that ignores and discards the poor, the unborn, and the elderly.

From this attitude of openness to others, this openness to life, we can see how

our moral teachings are joined at their root.

For example, abortion and immigration are seen as very different issues, dividing the secular political parties. One is a fundamental issue concerning the direct taking of human life; the other is about the plight of people fleeing poverty, persecution, and terrorism abroad.

But in both cases, the Gospel calls us to the same attitude: We should welcome the stranger, the neighbor whose very life may depend on us. “Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels” (Heb 13:2). We must *see* those who suffer from our lack of concern. Consider, for example, which has done more to lead Americans to a pro-life stance: being argued with, or *seeing* ultrasound images of the unborn children whose lives are at stake?

Yes, the “unplanned” unborn child makes demands on parents, who need our help in meeting their responsibilities. Yes, in dealing with immigrants we must stop terrorists from entering our country.

But as Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, a leading voice on immigration, says of abortion: “Not one of us . . . has the right to decide who can live and who can die and when that time will come.” And as Professor Robert George, a prominent advocate for the unborn child, says: “The way to fight terrorists is not to close our doors—or our hearts—to their victims.”

Catholics should seek out and encourage and *become* examples like these, people willing to confound the partisan stereotypes and show this broader vision.

Working for the U.S. bishops’ conference for 36 years, I found that this vision provides you with a new freedom, and an opportunity to achieve things no one else can achieve. For example, when Bart Stupak and other pro-life Democrats in Congress became gravely concerned about the way pro-life issues were being treated in their own party’s health-care-reform proposal in 2009, they turned to the bishops’ conference as the most influential organization sharing both their goals—universal access to health care, and respect for life and conscience. They saw the other major pro-life groups as more tied to the Republican Party, and in any case many of these groups were opposing the health-care bill on other grounds. Ultimately, to the surprise of many observers, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives approved a health-care bill incorporating the Stupak amendment on these issues. (The fact that this was not the version enacted into law as “Obamacare” was due to other developments, recounted below.)

Or take the Supreme Court’s 1984 decision in the Grove City College case. The Court gave a narrow interpretation to a federal law against discrimination on the basis of sex known as Title IX. This law had, among other things, struck a blow against the trend among institutions of higher education to provide

ample funding for men's but not women's athletic teams. But the Court read this law's civil-rights protection as narrowly applying only to a particular department receiving federal funds, not the entire institution.

Liberals and some conservatives in Congress agreed to amend the law to clarify its intended broad scope. But it soon became apparent that the law was harmfully vague in another way: Federal courts had begun to interpret any failure to fund elective abortions in student clinics and health coverage as "sex discrimination," so that even pro-life students must be required to fund such abortions through their student fees.

The Catholic bishops' conference, as a pro-life member of the major civil-rights coalition dedicated to amending Title IX, was in a unique position. The bishops supported a legislative solution, *and* insisted that the underlying law must be made "abortion-neutral"—otherwise, by expanding the reach of the entire law, the bill would be expanding coerced involvement in abortion. This led to an intense debate, because most other organizations in the coalition were either uninterested in this issue or supportive of "abortion rights." It took four years, but the Church stood its ground—and prevailed. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988 applied Title IX's protections to all departments of educational institutions receiving federal funds, *and* corrected the past misuse of this law to force institutions to support abortion. The bishops' conference supported the final bill; when conservative groups persuaded President Reagan to veto the bill, the bishops helped provide the two-thirds vote in both chambers of Congress to override that veto. That law remains valid today.

When I began working for the bishops' conference in 1980, the director of its Government Relations department explained to me the unique way this organization navigated through Washington, D.C.'s partisan climate. He told me our goal was to have no permanent friends, and no permanent enemies. Of course it is the former goal that has been easier to achieve.

This does not mean Catholics should be uninvolved in politics. We should be involved, and may even seek leadership roles. Both parties need the Church's vision of the human person, and both fall short of that vision in different ways. But we always need to ask ourselves: "Do I want to lobby my church to see things the way my party does, or lobby the party to come closer to the Church's vision? Am I Catholic first?"

If the answer to that last question is yes, we will engage in public life without giving ultimate allegiance to party or political ideology—we will be "in the world but not of the world." Our guiding star will be a comprehensive Gospel of life.

This consistent attitude of openness to others will also call us to respect and to listen to those who disagree with us—including Catholics and others who think their favorite issue is more urgent than our own.

And we will take on the risks of following in the footsteps of our Master when we enter that public world. We will have to remind ourselves (especially during seasons like the 2016 election campaign) that he had his garment ripped from him, and was crucified between two thieves.

Second, we need a sense of perspective. We need to “take the long view.”

Common sense tells us that success and failure are equal aspects of human life. “Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes it rains.” Political victories and defeats are the most fleeting of all, especially in a democracy where key players are replaced every few years. And the ultimate consequences of political acts may not be what we expect.

In the Obamacare debate, the House’s passage of an improved bill was ignored by the U.S. Senate, which passed its own more problematic bill in 2010—and told the House it could not change it in any way, that it must choose between the Senate version and failure to pass any health-care bill. Senator Ted Kennedy had passed away and been replaced by a Republican who opposed the bill, depriving the Senate of the 60th vote needed to pass any health-care legislation. While pro-life groups might have rejoiced at the election of a new senator who would sometimes vote with them, the change of personnel drove Senate leaders to a “take it or leave it” ultimatum favoring their own bill—and led House leaders to place enormous pressure on pro-life Democrats to abandon their quest for a bill that preserved longstanding federal policies on abortion funding and conscience rights. A further irony is that pro-life political action committees, feeling betrayed, then successfully targeted these Democrats for defeat, aggravating the false image of the pro-life position as a concern of only one party. The Catholic bishops have continued to support the goal of universal coverage while urging that this coverage should be genuinely universal (including immigrants), should respect conscience rights, and should conform to longstanding precedents on abortion funding such as the Hyde Amendment.

As a more positive example, take President Bill Clinton’s repeated vetoes of a ban on partial-birth abortion in the 1990s. Abortion advocates hailed his actions as a great victory for them. But the bishops’ conference joined the nearly successful effort to have Congress override his veto. The president’s impasse with Congress kept this issue alive, and kept before Americans the image of a developed child pulled backward from the womb and brutally killed.

Even “pro-choice” lawmakers like Senator Daniel Moynihan saw this as infanticide, and polls showed a clear majority of Americans identifying as “pro-life” for the first time in many years. The next Congress and president enacted the law, which was upheld by the Supreme Court and remains in place today. The abortion industry’s apparent victory was shortsighted and short-lived.

This does not mean we should praise bad policy decisions because they might

ultimately turn out well. But a setback can lead smart and dedicated people inside and outside Congress to take the long view, to consider how to take the lemons and make lemonade. Ideally they do not waste much time announcing the end of the world, demonizing those who disagree, or alienating potential allies by their angry rhetoric, before getting to work.

This is common sense. What does a Catholic perspective add to it?

Ours is the longest of long views. To use a phrase coined by Spinoza, we need to see things “from the viewpoint of eternity.”

This does not mean failing to take issues seriously. Injustices like abortion, racism, and disdain for the poor are not political footballs, but offenses against human beings made in the image and likeness of God. People promoting these endanger their immortal souls. Such matters are of penultimate importance.

The only thing more important is that God judges us all, loves us all and commands us to love one another as the condition for eternal life with him.

I have known advocates for these issues who do not understand this. For them, each victory is a triumph, each defeat an invitation to despair. And there is no middle ground. They push away friends as well as opponents, rejecting incremental progress as a form of betrayal. They are prone to bitterness and early burnout.

We Catholics deal with the most serious concerns on earth, but each of us plays only a humble role. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful.”

The ultimate victory—a victory over death itself—has already been achieved by One who deserves our full devotion. Oddly, people who remember this are also more effective in improving society. Their sense of perspective doesn’t let them gloat over victories, or despair over defeats. They simply keep getting the job done, or getting the part of the job done that is within their power.

Third, we must project a spirit of love and mercy into political life.

We all ask ourselves at times whether anything we do for life and justice will have a lasting impact.

The Second Vatican Council gave an answer in its document on the Church in the modern world. The kingdom of God is not in our power to build directly—“deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away.” But we foreshadow that kingdom when we promote human dignity, freedom, and community. What will endure into eternity is “charity and its fruits” (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 39). The key to lasting change is love.

Pope Francis has reminded us that another name for love is mercy. The saying “Hate the sin but love the sinner,” taken from a letter written by St. Augustine, is at the core of how Jesus transformed sinful situations.

The Council applied this principle to social conflict. Even when listing crimes that poison civilization, such as abortion, torture, and genocide, it made the

startling claim that these “do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury” (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 27). The innocent victims are received into God’s loving arms; the perpetrators risk their souls. And as Jesus reminds us in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, ultimately we should not fear those who can only kill the body—we should fear what will send body and soul into Gehenna (Mt 10:28, Lk 12:4).

In short, we hate the sin *because* we care about the sinner. To reach those who are doing wrong, we must begin by loving them.

I was happy to see that the 2017 March for Life in Washington featured messages like “Why not love them both?” Vice President Mike Pence declared to the crowd: “Let this movement be known for love, not anger . . . for compassion, not confrontation.” Women considering abortion, he said, must be met “with generosity, not judgment.” The theme of the January 2018 march was “Love Saves Lives,” and President Trump’s speech to the crowd hailed the March for Life as “a movement born out of love.” We do not hear these themes from Antifa or white nationalist groups.

The bishops of the United States have long understood the need for love and compassion in this cause. The faith community most staunchly opposed to abortion leads the way in offering support for those facing problems during pregnancy. And it offers healing and reconciliation for those who have been involved in abortion through its Project Rachel program.

When former abortionist Bernard Nathanson became a Catholic many years ago, he said he was attracted to the church not because it says abortion is wrong—he had figured that out for himself when he was an atheist—but because it says there is forgiveness for what he had done. And former abortion clinic employees who have repented and joined the pro-life movement have said they did so because the pro-life people praying outside their clinic, who expressed concern for them and said they could change their lives, showed more genuine care for them than their employer and colleagues had.

In South Africa, after decades of apartheid, leaders found that becoming one society required a plan for “truth and reconciliation”—acknowledging on all sides violent acts and the motives behind them, and then granting amnesty so people could forgive each other and move forward.

When we forgive someone, we free that person to consider what we are saying without defensiveness or self-recrimination. We break the cycle of distrust and hatred. And we free ourselves to see the best way to lead that person to the truth, not the way to maintain our own superiority and self-righteousness. Or as Reformed theologian Lewis Smedes has said, “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”

Love and mercy are now in short supply in our country. Even many who carry signs declaring that “Love trumps hate” seem to have more hate than love for

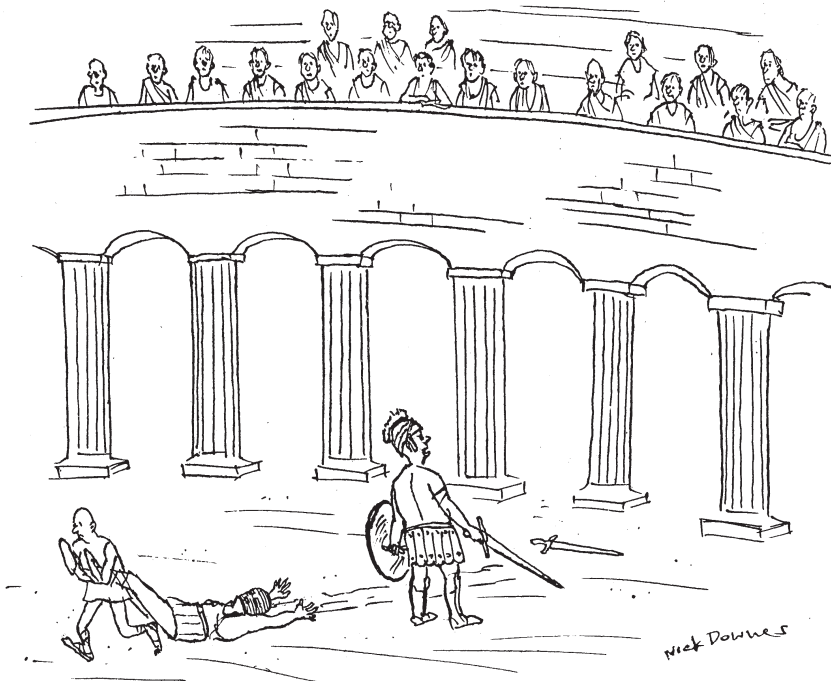
those with opposing views.

This presents a challenge and opportunity for Catholics. We can model an approach that begins with genuine love and respect for everyone. If we do that, we will certainly stick out from the crowd.

We should be the first to hear people's real worries and fears, cool their tempers, correct exaggerations, and build bridges for dialogue. Only then might we find ways to work together for the good of all.

So what is the take-away message from all this? First, our public involvement needs to be rooted in our *faith*, and from this solid foundation we can assess, criticize, and reform the ideologies around us. Second, we need the sense of perspective regarding victories and defeats that comes from our *hope* in the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over death. And third, we need to make *love* into the basis for our policies, and an integral part of the *way* we communicate with those who disagree. These of course are the three theological virtues cited by St. Paul in his epistles. The keys to our public engagement should be faith, hope, and love, these three—and the greatest of these is love.

Love and mercy in politics? It's so crazy it just might work. I know of nothing else that is likely to do so.



"For my next slaying, I'll need a volunteer from the audience."

Pope Pius XII: Pro-Life Visionary

William Doino

When Pope Pius XII died in 1958, he was honored throughout the world. His twenty-year pontificate, encompassing World War II, was recognized for its efforts on behalf of peace, defense of human rights, denunciations of political evil, and humanitarian interventions for persecuted peoples. His qualities as a man of exceptional charity and deep spirituality were also praised by those who knew him best.

Just five years later, however, Pius XII's reputation came under fierce attack. A provocative play, *The Deputy*, appeared in Germany, accusing Pius of remaining silent during the Holocaust, and financially profiting from the Third Reich. But the exact opposite was the case—Pius XII *did* speak out against Nazi atrocities, and Vatican finances were utilized during the War to assist the Allies, not the Nazis. Far from being “Hitler's Pope,” Pius XII was among his strongest enemies—and a member of the anti-Nazi Resistance, which repeatedly tried to overthrow Hitler and end the Holocaust.

Today, no reputable historian takes *The Deputy* seriously, and Pius XII's reputation is being steadily restored. But there is no doubt that the attacks against Pius misled many people, causing even his supporters to focus on the wartime aspects of his papacy, to clear his good name. That fact has left other essential areas of his pontificate largely unexplored. But a fresh look at them reveals a man of even greater dimensions—not only a cultural prophet, but a pro-life visionary as well.

Pius XII's rich body of moral and social teachings contain a treasure of perennial truths which were of vital importance during his time, and have grown even more so in our own.

When Pius XII was elected in 1939, there were ominous signs of war, and no issue consumed him more than protecting human life against its mass destruction. As a young papal nuncio in Germany, during the First World War, Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII) had already witnessed its epic carnage, and hoped humanity would never have to endure such suffering again. Like a recurring nightmare, however, Pius XII saw a new and even more calamitous war emerging—so did everything he could to stop it. As Church historian Phillip Hughes comments: “In the critical seven months between [his] election and the outbreak

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of the War, Pius XII made as many as six public appeals to the peoples of the world, reasoned, impassioned . . . the appeals of an experienced statesman and man of affairs, of a mind and heart filled with pity at the thought of what horrors lay before millions of innocent people.”

On August 24, 1939, as Hitler was ready to invade Poland, Pius XII made one last fervent plea, proclaiming “Nothing is lost by peace. Everything may be lost by War”; and warning belligerents, “Empires which are not founded on justice are not blessed by God.” He also implored “the strong” to “hear us that they not become weak through injustice”—earning praise from famed correspondent William Shirer for “pointing the finger at Hitler.”

Pius XII’s dramatic appeal has often been quoted by his successors, the latest being Pope Francis: “The heartfelt appeal of Pius XII still resonates today as timely as ever: ‘Nothing is lost by peace. Everything may be lost by War.’ When we listen again to these prophetic words, truly we realize that history is the ‘*magistra vitae*’” [history is life’s teacher].

But in 1939, the fate of mankind was consigned to the wicked: Pius XII’s prophetic warnings were ignored, the Second World War came, and with it an unprecedented conflagration of death and destruction. Even during the War’s darkest hours, however, the Pope did not slacken in his efforts to obtain a just and lasting peace. In the first sixteen months of the War, there were as many as thirty more public appeals from Pius, while agencies he created were set up across Europe to care for the War’s countless victims. Setting the historical record straight, papal scholar Michael Walsh affirms:

Both the Pope personally and the Church gave considerable help to Jewish (and other) refugees, and Pius twice unequivocally condemned the extermination of the Jews. [In his 1942 Christmas address, and his allocution to the College of Cardinals the following June]. It must be remembered that complaints about the Pope’s “silence” came only long after the War. In its immediate aftermath, people remembered his assistance to the victims of persecution, his pleas for peace, and his championing of human rights.

But even before Pius XII denounced the Holocaust, which provoked the wrath of the Nazis, Pius had condemned the Nazi euthanasia program, which formed the origins and springboard of the Third Reich’s genocide against the Jews. As Michael Burleigh recounts in his highly regarded history of the Third Reich, “On 2 December 1940, Pope Pius XII unequivocally condemned the killing of ‘life unworthy of life,’” and this pivotal statement was soon followed by a series of impassioned sermons by the German Catholic Bishop of Munster, Clemens August Graf von Galen, who similarly condemned the Nazis’ euthanasia program.

Significantly, when the War finally ended and the prosecutors at Nuremberg arraigned the Nazis for their unspeakable crimes, these efforts by the Pope and

his spokesmen to prevent and then fight the horrors of World War II were explicitly commended.

Pius XII's love for human life as a precious gift from God, as well as his commitment to the Church's just war tradition, are what motivated him to speak out against Hitler and the Holocaust; and the same reasons led Pius XII to lay the modern Church's groundwork for promoting a culture of life.

To appreciate the impact Pius XII has had, both upon the Church and society, consider that the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Church's most recent ecumenical Council, cites Pius XII more than any other pope in history. Further, since Vatican II, Pius XII's teachings, both in official Church documents as well as secular outlets, have been frequently referenced—often on the most burning issues of our time.

In its *Declaration on Procured Abortion* (1974), the Vatican documented the Church's strong opposition to abortion, from biblical times to the present, and singled out Pius XII's pro-life convictions for praise: "The statements of Pius XII are express, precise and numerous; they would require a whole study on their own. We quote only this one, to the St. Luke Union of Italian Doctors of November 12, 1944, because it formulates the principle in all its universality: 'As long as man is not guilty, his life is untouchable, and therefore any act directly tending to destroy it is illicit, whether such destruction is intended as an end in itself or only as a means to an end, whether it is a question of life in the embryonic stage or in a stage of full development or already in its final stages.'"

Pius XII is also cited in the Vatican's declaration against euthanasia (1980), as well as its recent instructions on palliative care for the gravely ill, outlined by Pope Francis and Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Secretary of State. Both men made a clear distinction, as did Pius, between the evil of euthanasia and the moral legitimacy of allowing someone to die a natural death, after every effort has been made to save them, and provided basic means of nourishment and support continue to be given.

Pius XII's best-known teaching on these interrelated issues was his "Address to Midwives," given on October 29, 1951. Upholding the fundamental right to life, he was as outspoken as could be: "Every human being," he declared, "even the child in the womb, has the right to life *directly* from God and not from his parents, not from any society." Therefore, "there is no man, no human authority, no science, no 'indication' at all—whether it be medical, eugenic, social, economic or moral—that may offer or give a valid judicial title for a direct deliberate disposal of an innocent human life."

On euthanasia, Pius expanded upon what he had taught during the Nazi era:

The direct destruction of so-called "life without value," already born or still in the womb, practiced extensively a few years ago, can in no way be justified. Therefore, when this practice was initiated, the Church expressly declared that it was against the natural law

and the positive law, and consequently that it was unlawful to kill, even by order of the public authorities, those who were innocent, even if, on account of some physical or mental defect, they were useless to the state and a burden upon it. The life of an innocent person is sacrosanct, and any direct attempt or aggression against it is a violation of one of the fundamental laws without which secure human society is impossible.

What is so striking about these words is not only their force, but the time Pius XII said them. In 1951, abortion was widely abhorred and restricted, as was euthanasia, especially after the Nazis had brutally employed both to “purify” the human race in their ruthless quest to create “the new man.” Yet Pius XII feared that far more civilized societies would again be tempted to employ them, under the guise of compassion or social convenience. This is precisely what has occurred: Abortion has become commonplace and justified on the Orwellian grounds that it is “safe”—ignoring the brutal killing of the unborn child—and “mercy killing” has spread like wildfire.

Pius XII’s pro-life vision is symbolized by his opposition to unjust wars, abortion and euthanasia, but can also be found in many other statements, notably about the death penalty, nuclear weapons, sexuality, and the scientific manipulation of life.

Drawing on Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition, Pius XII taught that the the death penalty, in principle and in certain clearly defined circumstances, is just—a teaching that has been cited often by proponents of capital punishment. What is rarely mentioned, however, is that Pius never taught that the death penalty was *mandatory*, even in the worst cases of criminality; nor is it usually acknowledged that Pius warned against the penalty’s flagrant abuse and urged society to consider mitigating factors in evaluating punishments for capital crimes.

In a message to the Italian Association of Catholic Jurists, on December 5, 1954, Pius XII warned:

According to the nature of the case, the judge must consult outstanding specialists on the capacity and responsibility of the presumed criminal, and must also consider the findings of the modern sciences of psychology, psychiatry and character study. Where there still remains a grave and serious doubt, despite all these precautions, no conscientious judge will pronounce a sentence of condemnation, particularly when there is a question of an irrevocable punishment, such as the penalty of death.

Even in cases where guilt was beyond doubt, Pius XII is known to have opposed the practical application of the death penalty, such as when he asked for clemency for condemned Nazi war criminals and intervened on behalf of the Rosenbergs, convicted of committing Communist espionage for the Soviet Union. The latter of course were executed, as were many war criminals, so Pius XII’s appeals against the death penalty usually went unheeded. But that he

made them at all—notwithstanding his horror at the crimes involved—speaks to his restraint on the issue, conveying his belief that, while capital punishment is defensible, it is better to grant God the final say on the deaths of criminals, not imperfect, and possibly capricious, courts. That view has subsequently grown much stronger among many pro-life leaders, even as they’ve made necessary distinctions between innocent, vulnerable human beings who’ve been aborted or euthanized and convicted murderers on death row.

An issue of even greater consequence for humanity is the possession and use of nuclear weapons. As early as 1943, Pius saw that scientists were describing how nuclear power could produce enough energy to surpass all the electric power plants in the world. But he said it was essential that that power be employed for peaceful purposes, “otherwise the consequences could be catastrophic... for the whole planet.”

Two years later, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, finally bringing World War II to a close. But Pius XII, who longed for peace and victory over evil as much as anyone, had grave concerns about the way the War ended—with the obliteration bombings of civilian populations—calling the nuclear bomb “the most terrible weapon that the human race has ever conceived.”

Even many who supported the controversial bombings agreed with his concerns. It is a measure of Pius XII’s balanced and sensitive teachings about war and its proper conduct that he has been cited by both conservatives and progressives, who, for all their differences, share Pius XII’s deep concern about preserving peace in a nuclear age.

As his pontificate continued, and new challenges arose, Pius XII became astonishingly prescient about the cultural forces that were about to be unleashed in post-War society.

A case in point are his many speeches on science and technology, praising these disciplines for the many benefits they bring, but also fearing their use for malevolent purposes. In 2015, illustrating Pius XII’s precise concerns, CNN ran a story entitled, “The Slow Crawl to Designer Babies,” subtitled, “In Vitro to Gene Editing,” commenting: “As genetic technology improves, there will be many more ways for us to choose the kind of child we have. The question is, will we?”

The article goes on to note that “nontraditional pregnancies” were already being pushed in the 1940s, but that Pius XII strongly denounced them “for taking the Lord’s work into their own hands”—a position the Church continues to maintain.

Another example is a remarkable 1945 address Pius XII delivered to the Catholic Women’s Associations, in which he spoke about the Church’s obligation to defend the personal and professional dignity of women—in a world increasingly

trying to exploit them—and the complementary nature of the sexes. As if he was responding to both secular feminists and opponents of traditional marriage—decades before they coalesced—Pius XII said: “As children of God, man and woman have a dignity in which they are absolutely equal,” adding “we have in fact ourselves insisted, that, for the same work and the same service rendered, women have a right to equal pay with men.” Far from urging them to remain servile, Pius encouraged women to exercise their influence: “*This is your hour, Catholic women. . . . Public life needs you.*”

The Pope cautioned, however, that “man and woman cannot maintain or perfect this equal dignity of theirs unless they respect and make use of the distinctive qualities which nature has bestowed on each sex.”

These unique physical and spiritual qualities, Pius continued, “are indestructible” and so natural in their complementarity that one cannot disrupt them without doing harm to “nature itself.” These arguments have since come to the fore, as those of us who believe in the truth and sanctity of traditional marriage have built upon them.

And with words powerfully applicable to those who now claim that gender is fluid and changeable, rather than an immutable gift of God, Pius XII proclaimed: “These peculiar characteristics which distinguish the sexes are so obvious to everybody that nothing short of willful blindness, or a doctrinaire attitude as disastrous as it is utopian, can ignore or fail to see their importance in the structure of society.” These views are virtually identical with the teachings of Pope Francis and other world leaders who’ve strongly challenged gender theory and ideology—except that Pius XII highlighted his arguments *over seventy years ago*.

Pius XII’s teachings to men were equally insightful, none more so than when he spoke to them about their duties toward God, society and women:

Young Catholic men, you desire to be truly and completely what you profess. . . . And your faith can be firm and luminous only if you know it with a knowledge that is clear and intimate, not superficial and confused. It is alive if you live according to its teachings and keep the Commandments of God. The young man whose holidays are sanctified by his having met whatever task or difficulty is in his path . . . who is truthful and loyal, who is quick to help the needy, who respects girlhood and womanhood and has the strength to shut his eyes and his heart to all that is impure in books, pictures and films—that young man shows that he does truly possess a living faith.

How much grief and misery could the world have avoided—from the cultural revolution of the Sixties to the pornography epidemic to the “#MeToo” generation of sexual harassment and abuse—had modern men simply heeded these words of papal wisdom?

As inspiring as Pius XII’s teachings are, he knew they could only be sustained if there was mutual trust and unity among people of different backgrounds and

beliefs. That is why he spoke out so strongly against racism in his first encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (1939), and on behalf of migrants in his Apostolic Constitution, *Exsul Familia Nazarethana* (1952). The latter, in fact, has become the magna carta of papal teaching on refugee issues and remains an important teaching document, as endangered refugees and migrants continue to be isolated across the globe, and the targets of divisive rhetoric.

At the heart of Pius XII's vision of a healthy, pro-life society, as Dr. Anna Rowlands notes, is "the basic Augustinian point that the final purpose of human government is to achieve a proximate peace that enables human persons as individuals and members of communities to seek basic, corporate, moral and spiritual wellbeing. This peace, even though imperfect, is something of real divine significance and he names it 'integral peace.'"

When one reviews Pius XII's teachings on life, dignity, and the unity of the human race, one can see why he is so esteemed by those who share his values, and understand why they remain so relevant "yesterday, today and forever."



"Believe me, I'm still trying to get over eighth grade gym class, myself."

Transgenderism, Children, Cognitive Chaos

Stella Morabito

Why do small children so often ask “Why?”?

The groundbreaking work of the renowned Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980), may offer some illumination. Piaget identified four basic stages of child development. These little “whys” guys are in stage two: the “Pre-operational Stage,” which lasts from age two to seven. According to Piaget, this is an extremely critical period during which the child, while rapidly acquiring language skills, is not yet capable of apprehending logic and lacks the ability to comprehend other points of view. At this stage, children are able to form ideas based in reality as well as in fantasy. Their constant questioning begins around age four. By now they are instinctively aware of the vastness of knowledge, and become intensely curious about everything around them. They want to know exactly how things work. The bud of a child’s ability to reason is just now beginning to bloom—if parents and teachers *allow* it to bloom.

I apply the cautionary “if” because Piaget’s pioneering work and wisdom seem to have been downgraded, if not buried, in recent decades. Perhaps the most extreme example of the turning-inside-out of his profound insights on the gestational phases of cognition is the injection of queer theory into the field of child development. The focus of queer theory, according to one proponent, Annamarie Jagose, is the study of mismatches between sex, gender, and desires.¹ For a long time, queer theory as an academic field was dismissed as fringy. But more recently it’s become wildly influential, as we can see from the mushrooming of sex-education curricula designed to introduce preschool and K-12 children to the adult world of sexual orientations, practices, and gender identities.

The transgender (or LGBT) curriculum forces children to *focus* on their “gender identity,” a concept scant few would even seriously consider in the course of ordinary childhood. But by forcing them to focus on it, activists are unleashing the power of suggestion—and coercive persuasion—in credulous youngsters. One of the basic rules of persuasion, according to Robert Cialdini, a world-renowned authority on the subject, is summed up in his statement, “*What’s focal is causal.*” In his bestseller *PRE-suasion*, Cialdini explains:

It’s no wonder that we assign elevated import to factors that have our attention. We also assign them causality. Therefore, directed attention gives focal elements a specific kind of initial weight in any deliberation. It gives them standing as causes, which in turn gives them standing as answers to that most essential of human questions: Why?²

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In other words, out of sight, out of mind. But focus on something, and it's on your mind. Focus on it continuously and it's continuously on your mind, and hence you will fit it into your worldview. Clearly, "what's focal is causal" is a major principle of advertising, propaganda, mass agitation, indoctrination, and any other means of influence and persuasion.

For several years now the internet has been teeming with examples of transgender propaganda and agitation, pushed hard on children and adults alike. Role models for kids include teen celebrity Jazz Jennings, who claims he has "a girl brain but a boy body."³ The book *I Am Jazz* is a staple of LGBT classroom instruction for young children. There is a TV show about Jazz to further immerse the young viewer. The transgender lobby has also made a point of promoting schoolteachers such as Mr. Robert Reuter, who in 2014 returned to his Washington, D.C., elementary school after summer vacation as "Ms. Rebecca Reuter."⁴ From Brooklyn, New York, to Long Beach, California, many public libraries are now featuring drag queens who read to toddlers during story times.⁵ Transgender activists, including their allies in pediatrics, warn all of us that the simple declaration of "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" at birth could later traumatize the child.⁶ In fact, *Slate* magazine ran an article a few years ago entitled "Don't Let the Doctor Do This to Your Newborn," warning against sex designations at birth.⁷ And it doesn't end there. A movement is underway to make that mindset universal by urging parents never to disclose the sex of their newborn to anyone, even the child.⁸ Indefinitely. Some jurisdictions, like Washington State, now allow birth certificates to be issued with no sex designation.

Advocates of transgender ideology have been working for decades to get into the classrooms of younger and younger children. Today the media is saturated with reports and stories detailing how transgenderism—spawned from queer theory—has become *de rigueur* in public education. Pro-transgender curricula—such as one called "Social and Emotional Learning"—are being adopted by schools at a steady clip. A growing disrespect for child development is apparent as we watch this imposition of transgender "awareness," in which children are basically told to figure out for themselves if they are male or female—or something else. In fact, according to the American Psychological Association, which for decades has been fast-tracking the LGBT agenda, "gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male or female or something else."⁹

Of course such curricula are justified by proponents as an anti-discrimination measure to protect transgender children. However, the premise of all transgender law is that in a sense we are *all* transgender. Just try telling transgender advocates that your own sex was not (from their point of view) arbitrarily "assigned at birth" by doctors and parents after a quick glance at genitalia. They will insist you are dead wrong and some will make it their business to try to shut

you up. That is because the success of the transgenderism project depends on the propagation of the sex-is-assigned-at-birth fallacy.

No matter how it is justified, the deliberate invasion of children's minds with this ideology is an act of mental molestation that stunts their cognitive growth. Gender ideology—eschewing both objective truth and universal reality—interferes with human cognitive development by seeking to cut off important “Why?” questions. There's a lot more to a child's burst of curiosity than the thrill of discovery. By asking “Why?” children are trying to find their compass. They're hard at work assembling the mental framework they need in order to navigate the world in all of its complexity. A question such as “Why is the sky blue?” is what eminent Oxford professor of philosophy Daniel Robinson might call “pre-philosophical,” revealing the “philosophical disposition of a rational being” striving to bring order out of chaos and to find structure. Along similar lines, the heroine of Yevgeny Zamyatin's dystopian novel *We* states: “Children are the only bold philosophers. And bold philosophers will always be children.”

Healthy young minds are filled with imagination and the zest for discovery. At the same time, children long to know what is *real*. And they yearn for security, especially as they are navigating the line between imagination and reality. A recent study confirmed that the ability of a child to distinguish between fantasy and reality plays a major role in his or her ability to overcome nighttime fears.¹⁰ In fact, unbridled imagination can be very scary, as any parent knows when comforting a child who is experiencing a nightmare.

But perhaps even scarier is when a trusted source, such as a teacher or school administrator, suppresses a child's ability to discern reality, thereby disrupting or aborting a natural pre-philosophical process. One way this is done is by depriving children of the fixed identity of their own body—by essentially telling them there is no physical, biological reality inherent in their sex. Rather, since their sex was merely “assigned” to them at birth, it is not fixed and can be in fact “reassigned” if desired.

Invading the minds of children with such ambiguities about their physical bodies at a critical time in their cognitive development doubtless has a destabilizing effect. Young children are highly suggestible. By telling them they are not male or female unless they “think” they are, gender ideologues force-feed kids a cruel diet of doubt. Ironically, it all relies on stereotypes: A boy is a girl in this world, if he thinks he fits the signs of a girl—the stereotype—in terms of his preferences in toys or clothing. And a girl can no longer just be a tomboy if she prefers boys' games and clothing. By insisting there is no reality in a child's physical sex, transgender propaganda stunts children's development and may induce them to hate their own bodies.

We can find ample proof of child suggestibility in criminal law cases. Especially instructive are cases from the 1980s and 90s of alleged sexual abuse and

satanic rituals at preschools, most infamously, the allegations concerning the McMartin preschool in Manhattan Beach, California. Several members of the McMartin family were accused of abuse in a protracted trial (it lasted from 1987 to 1990) that relied on the testimony of young children. On record as the most expensive trial in history, it resulted in no convictions. Transcripts of interviews conducted by social workers with children revealed a method of questioning that was extremely suggestive as well as repetitive. Children were asked to role-play about the alleged events, an exercise that can artificially plant a “memory” in a child’s mind. Social workers applied other overbearing techniques, such as repeatedly telling children to reconsider any claim they had made of *not* having been abused, insisting that they “try harder to remember.”¹¹ The suggestibility was so strong—resulting in false allegations—that these interviews became central to the theory of false memory syndrome.

A strong whiff of the McMartin travesty can be detected in how proponents use the suggestibility of children to promote transgenderism. Consider also how the ideology pits schools—and society at large—against families when parents don’t get with the program. For example, in February 2018, in Hamilton County, Ohio, a judge stripped parents of custody of their teenage daughter, who said she identified as male, because they were against her use of testosterone and other hormones to transition to male.¹² When parents resist pressure to comply with the agenda, children are forced to choose sides: Do they remain loyal to their parents and risk school-sponsored rejection from teachers and peers alike? Or do they simply go along, hoping this Faustian bargain will offer them peace? Are they permitted to ask “Why?” No. Today’s education establishment essentially tells them to keep quiet and find a way to live in the chaos without a compass.

This brazen war on children is happening at least in part because the culture of death de-values the lives of children. There is no shortage of examples. We saw it in the Center for Medical Progress’s 2016 expose of Planned Parenthood’s cashing in on organ harvesting from aborted babies. We see it in the treatment of human embryos as commodities for research. We see it in the 90 percent abortion-rate “solution” for unborn babies diagnosed with Down syndrome. We see it in the hiring of surrogate mothers, especially as they typically sign contracts to abort in the event of “defects.” And no more does Planned Parenthood pretend that abortion should be “rare.” Instead, they are calling for mandatory enthusiasm, as reflected in a (since deleted) tweet from a Pennsylvania affiliate declaring: “We need a Disney princess that’s had an abortion.”¹³ And with the Supreme Court’s 2015 *Obergefell* decision sanctioning same-sex marriage, children are no longer entitled to have both a legal mother and a legal father.

Based on all of the above—and so much more—it’s no wonder that children could be tempted to grab onto anything that might give them a sense

of survivability in a world that increasingly turns its back on them. And the transgender movement has been conditioning children for a long time. Though it's more obvious today, we can go back 20 years and note LGBT celebrities being featured in children's television programs. Ellen DeGeneres and Rosie O'Donnell, for example, made appearances on *Sesame Street* in the 1990s, softening the ground for the eventual mainstreaming of lesbianism even though the women hadn't yet "come out." It came as no surprise when *Sesame Street* itself came out last year on LGBT Pride Day with the announcement of its support for the LGBT agenda. The net effect of those earlier exercises was to condition children—in their preschool years—with the standardization of homosexuality. That in turn would pave the way for transgenderism (and its ultimate byproduct, which is a sexless society).

It wasn't always like this. Ironically, at the same time Ellen and Rosie were hosting *Sesame Street*, the public television series *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* was helping kids to accept their bodies "just the way they are." Fred Rogers (1928-2003) repeatedly made a point of clarifying for children that the sex difference between male and female (that much maligned "gender binary") is not only real, but good.

Rogers understood that when children, often around the age of three, discover those sex differences, they want to know "Why?" And they want to be able to put a name to the difference: girls and boys, women and men, as well as the distinction of the genitalia itself. Then, when they ask that most transcendental of questions: "Where did I come from?" they can learn that this sex distinction is the instrument by which they exist. This knowledge, grounded in physical reality, helps children adjust their compass so that they can carry on with life and all the rest of its grand discoveries.

One of Mr. Rogers's most helpful songs for toddlers would likely get him banned from public television today. Called "Everybody's Fancy," it helped children understand and accept the reality of the binary sex distinction between male and female. In the song, Rogers made clear that this sex distinction was good and natural and that *we should all be happy just the way we are*. His point was that everyone's body is "fancy" in its own way and that's just fine. The song began: "Some are fancy on the outside. Some are fancy on the inside. Everybody's fancy. Everybody's fine. Your body's fancy and so is mine." He didn't mince words when he sang: "Boys are boys from the beginning. Girls are girls right from the start." In fact, after each of those lines in the song, Mr. Rogers would speak to his young audience: "When you're born a boy baby, you grow up to be a bigger boy and then a man . . . When you're born a girl baby, you grow up to be a bigger girl and then a woman." He also noted that "Boys grow up to be the daddies. Girls grow up to be the mommies."

Acceptance of one's physical body was just a part of Mr. Rogers's larger goal, which was to help children learn how to navigate that often frightening line between reality and imagination. With songs like "You can Never Go Down the Drain," Fred Rogers could see the world through the eyes of a child who might fear being sucked down the bathtub drain as a whirlpool formed. Mr. Rogers was so tuned in to a child's need to know what is real versus imaginary that he made a constant point of distinguishing between each realm. First he would invite children to come with him to explore his neighborhood—the neighborhood of reality—with its shopkeepers, bakery, and barber shop, for example. Then, when it came time to visit "The Neighborhood of Make-Believe," he would tell his audience exactly what they were going to "make believe" that day. He did not ventriloquize when he held a hand puppet. And he even had a transition vehicle—a little trolley—that would delineate the realms of reality and imagination as it traveled between each.

Today the transgender lobby—which is backed by the lion's share of the media, academia, and Hollywood—is planting a fake premise into law, a premise that shoots down Mr. Rogers as all wrong. The premise, again, is that everybody's sex is arbitrarily "assigned at birth." And if you dare to disagree, you are immediately smeared as a bigot and a "transphobe." Any child in a mass public school who innocently questions the premise that his or her own sex is arbitrarily "assigned at birth" risks rejection and ridicule. Sadly, this sort of bullying increasingly comes with the local school board's seal of approval.

Consider the case of a first grader in California at the beginning of the 2017 school year. She saw a classmate on the playground and simply greeted him by the name she knew him as the year before. She didn't know that over the summer he decided to identify as female and had given himself a girl's name. So the six-year-old was promptly called into the principal's office for "mis-gendering" her fellow student. After questioning her for an hour, school officials determined that her nefarious greeting could be officially classified as an accident. Understandably, the little girl was confused about why she had been reported to the principal, and came home, her mother said, crying and traumatized by the treatment she had received.¹⁴

Teenage girls—anxious not to be smeared as bigots—are deferring to another trend: teenage boys claiming to identify as female competing in girls' high-school sports. These boys-who-identify-as-girls are, predictably, winning handily in such sports as track and field and wrestling. This goes directly against the spirit of Title IX, the 1972 Act of Congress intended to promote girls' equality in education, including athletic programs. And it means that more girls don't make the cut. It also means that at least some athletic scholarships intended for girls will inevitably go to males who identify as female.

Meanwhile, kids are trying valiantly to read the tea leaves: What's real? What's not? Am I real? Does my body matter? Should I hate it? Will people like me better if I'm a boy? Will they like me better if I'm a girl? Maybe I should act like I'm both? Or neither? Who will be my friend? Why can't I ask any real questions in school without everybody getting mad at me? Why do people seem so mean? Why is it okay with the school when other students call me names because I don't like being told I'm not really a boy or a girl? Do teachers think my parents are bad people because they don't agree with what the school's teaching? What is a human? Am I human? What can I do to make myself seem more human to others?

With the sowing of such confusion and enforced conformity, reports of growing levels of anxiety and depression in schoolchildren shouldn't surprise us. Nor should it surprise us if more kids are claiming to be transgender these days. After all, they can see how the transgender condition is being treated as super cool, not only in their public schools, but in pop culture. In addition to Jazz Jennings, the media celebrates a cavalcade of transgender pop icons, including Caitlyn Jenner, Laverne Fox, Chaz Bono, and Chelsea Manning. (Even the Wachowski Brothers, who produced and wrote the phenomenally successful *Matrix* film trilogy, have apparently decided to become part of the Matrix themselves, since they both now identify as transwomen.) It's not only the power of suggestion at play here. A very clear message to children is that they can gain protection from bullying if they identify as transgender. Many of today's anti-bullying programs (such as the Obama Administration's "It gets better" campaign) are based solely on identity politics. Being transgender, then, affords children protection from the sorts of social rejection that are all too pervasive in mega-school environments—protection they are unlikely to receive otherwise.

As public-school bureaucrats have subjected children as young as preschool to the delusional transgender project, there's been considerable fallout in society at large. Social engineers are far more concerned with making sure boys and girls are using the same toilets and locker rooms than they are with their academic progress. And we are all being forced to pay homage to their crusade. College campuses require it. Human resources departments—particularly at large corporations like Lockheed Martin and a thousand others—have for years been in the business of training employees to get with the transgender program or get fired over any slight a transgender fellow employee might perceive.

Consider a 2016 New York City law levying fines up to \$250,000 against individuals and businesses for the crime of mis-gendering someone. Mis-gendering can mean any type of speech that allegedly causes the transgender person discomfort, often the use of an "incorrect" pronoun. But getting the pronoun right can be an impossible task, since the "correct" pronoun can fluctuate from moment to moment for anyone who identifies as "gender fluid." At that time,

the mayor's office issued a list of 31 genders sanctioned by the City's Commission on Human Rights.¹⁵

The cases above are not outliers. They represent a profusion of incidents in which thought-policing is manifesting itself more and more in America under the guise of anti-discrimination. And it's happening with a ferocity no reasonable person would have expected just a few years ago. The odds seem to be stacked against parents who question the recent flood of school policies requiring children to embrace the transgender program. The biggest school districts in the nation started pushing it especially hard on the heels of President Obama's 2015 "Dear Colleague" letter, which took the form of a memo, issued by the Department of Education, instructing that all public restrooms and locker rooms be open to both sexes, or federal funding would be at risk.¹⁶ At this time, it remains to be seen whether the department, now under the leadership of Secretary Betsy DeVos, will revisit the matter.

Meanwhile, to give just one example, many parents in Fairfax County, Virginia, have been confronting their school board regularly to protest this outright war on their children. And they are doing so in the absence of many other parents who would join them except for being cowed by political correctness. Transgender activists and their "allies" routinely smear parents who resist the transgender agenda as "bigots" and "haters." And they have the weight of media and celebrities behind them when they do so. This has the intended chilling effect on those parents who perhaps rationalize their inaction by telling themselves that it won't affect their kids if they just lie low. But they are gravely mistaken if they think silence will buy them or their children protection. Indeed, this is a war on children's tender minds and emotions, pitting them against their families and their own biology. With the exception of two courageous members, the reaction of the current 12-member Fairfax County School Board to these parents has been one of outright arrogance.

The fact that transgenderism is being imposed on small children in their tender years of cognitive development is cruel beyond words. The quote I referenced at the beginning of this article from Yevgeny Zamyatin's dystopian novel *We*—about children being the boldest philosophers—gives us another way to think about all of this. The heroine also says: "Tell something to children. Tell them the whole thing, right to the end, and they'll *still* ask: 'Then what? What happens next?'"

Before their minds are muddled by social experimenters, children seem always to want to know how things will turn out later, even after you've said "The End." Indeed, they are resilient and curious. But only by protecting them from those who would cripple their minds and disable their capacity to think their own thoughts can we preserve hope for their future, their happiness, and their wholeness. It's the only way we can help all of them—including those who say

they are transgender—to grow up into thinking adults. Only by standing up to this insanity can we protect a child’s resilience and the resilience of the human spirit that the innocent child embodies.

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Amy Wax and the American Home

Edward Short

Many of my readers are doubtless aware of the controversy that arose when Prof. Amy Wax of the University of Pennsylvania Law School recently published an op-ed piece in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* co-authored with Prof. Larry Alexander of the University of San Diego Law School entitled, “Paying the Price for the Country’s Breakdown of Bourgeois Culture.” In the piece, the authors noted how: “Too few Americans are qualified for the jobs available. Male working-age labor-force participation is at Depression-era lows. Opioid abuse is widespread. Homicidal violence plagues inner cities. Almost half of all children are born out of wedlock, and even more are raised by single mothers. Many college students lack basic skills, and high school students rank below those from two dozen other countries.” The authors then turned their attention to America’s abandonment of the moral strictures once considered axiomatic for anyone wishing to become a responsible adult: “Get married before you have children and strive to stay married for their sake. Get the education you need for gainful employment, work hard and avoid idleness. Go the extra mile for your employer or client. Be a patriot, ready to serve the country. Be neighborly, civic-minded and charitable. Avoid coarse language in public. Be respectful of authority. Eschew substance abuse and crime.” In a subsequent op-ed piece in *The Wall Street Journal*, Prof. Wax noted how:

These norms defined a concept of adult responsibility that was, we wrote, “a major contributor to the productivity, educational gains and social coherence of that period.” The fact that the “bourgeois culture” these norms embodied has broken down since the 1960s, we argued, largely explains today’s social pathologies—and re-embracing that culture would go a long way toward addressing those pathologies. In what became the most controversial passage, we pointed out that some cultures are less suited to preparing people to be productive citizens in a modern technological society, and we gave examples: “The culture of the Plains Indians was designed for nomadic hunters, but is not suited to a First World, 21st-century environment. Nor are the single-parent, antisocial habits prevalent among some working-class whites; the anti-“acting white” rap culture of inner-city blacks; the anti-assimilation ideas gaining ground among some Hispanic immigrants.

In light of the anarchy and chaos that now characterize our social order, these might seem fairly indisputable contentions. Yet the indignation they provoked was revelatory. As Prof. Wax attested,

A raft of letters, statements and petitions from students and professors at my university

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and elsewhere condemned the piece as hate speech—racist, white supremacist, xenophobic, “heteropatriarchial,” etc. There were demands that I be removed from the classroom and from academic committees. None of these demands even purported to address our arguments in any serious or systematic way. A response published in *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, our school newspaper, and signed by five of my Penn Law School colleagues, charged us with the sin of praising the 1950s—a decade when racial discrimination was openly practiced and opportunities for women were limited. I do not agree with the contention that because a past era is marked by benighted attitudes and practices—attitudes and practices we had acknowledged in our op-ed—it has nothing to teach us. But at least this response attempted to make an argument. Not so an open letter published in *The Daily Pennsylvanian* and signed by 33 of my colleagues. This letter quoted random passages from the op-ed and from a subsequent interview I gave to the school newspaper, condemned both and categorically rejected all of my views. It then invited students, in effect, to monitor me and to report any “stereotyping and bias” they might experience or perceive. This letter contained no argument, no substance, no reasoning, no explanation whatsoever as to how our op-ed was in error.

Subsequently, the dean of the law school advised Prof. Wax to take a leave of absence before removing her from the teaching of first-year law courses altogether. Although she was ostensibly removed from these duties for remarks she made about the advisability of affirmative action, neither the dean nor her critics have managed to refute the grounds of her concerns. In response, one trustee of the law school, Paul Levy, resigned in protest, telling President Amy Gutmann apropos Prof. Wax: “For her colleagues to gang up on her in a letter of outright condemnation without giving any reasons demolishes the façade of open intellectual debate at the Law School.”

For some, Prof. Wax is being pilloried for transgressing the pieties of political correctness. “She is controversial for no other reason than that she always speaks the truth as she sees it,” her co-author Prof. Alexander told a reporter. This is only partly true. Prof. Wax is controversial because she articulates views profoundly anathema to the progressive academy, and not only when it comes to affirmative action. She has also questioned the advisability of treating abortion as a right. One can see this in a review she wrote of a book entitled *Why Have Children? The Ethical Debate* by Prof. Christine Overall of Queen’s University, Ontario. “Overall accepts almost without argument that reproduction belongs firmly in the realm of ‘rights,’” Prof. Wax remarks.

In general, and with carefully defined exceptions, people should be able to refuse to have children, and should not be prevented from having them. Few in the Western world, whatever their political stripe, would today question these fundamental precepts. What is more problematic is her treatment of the hard cases that strain the principle. She gives long and careful consideration to disagreements between biological parents over whether to continue a pregnancy and allow a child to be born. Taking a distinctly feminist tack, and consistent with current law that views abortion as a right that is individual, fundamental, and virtually absolute, she insists the mother’s prerogative always trumps the father’s. The father can never prevent the mother from obtaining an abortion or insist that she have one.

In response to this now legally entrenched tenet, Prof. Wax wonders why the book under review scarcely makes any mention of marriage. (Indeed, the word is not even in the index.) That Prof. Overall ignores marriage shows how entirely she and the progressive academy she reflects have abandoned a norm that ensured for centuries not only the stability but the very possibility of family life.

Traditionally, marriage carried implicit premises and promises. “Only if you marry me and stand by me can you count on me to bear and help raise your children.” Charles Murray once suggested that marriage should form the sole channel through which men’s rights and responsibilities toward women and children are recognized. Women and their offspring could not call upon unmarried fathers to support them, and unmarried men would have no power over or access to their children without the mother’s consent. This draconian suggestion certainly comes at some cost to innocents, but its logic is a bracing reminder that an individualistic and rights-based approach too often gives short shrift to the social systems that promote virtuous behavior.

This is not the sort of thing that one usually hears from law professors in liberal law schools. Yet in order to understand the full fury that Prof. Wax’s truth-telling has unleashed, it is necessary to appreciate the contempt for the very notion of marriage and the family that now reigns in American academic circles.

II

This was made plain to me when I recently had occasion to dip into a new title in the prestigious Oxford History of the United States, *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896* by the Stanford Prof. of History Richard White. There, I was intrigued to find that the theme the author identifies as running throughout his period is the theme of home. This, for a number of reasons, struck me as an intriguing contention. America, after all, in this tumultuous period, was emerging from the profound calamity of the Civil War; it was struggling to put the war-ravaged South back together again; it was expanding westward; it was discovering the fabulous wealth that single-minded money-making could amass in an era, when, as Henry James observed, the “inconveniences” of life came to be seen as “frictions . . . comparatively easy to salve, wounds directly treatable by the wash of gold.” The period, in other words, was one of almost continual dislocation and yet that it was also a period consumed by the desire for home says a good deal for an immemorial human need.

Prof. White opens his chapter entitled “Home” with a revelatory passage that sets the stage for a long disquisition on what he regards as the real nature of this need:

With the war won, the soldiers in the volunteer units—the vast bulk of the army—were ready to muster out, and most officers wanted no part of occupation. Even as the army expanded across the South, its numbers diminished. Both the North and South had used the rhetoric of home—perhaps the central symbol of the age—to justify the Civil War,

and with the fighting done, Union soldiers clamored to go home. Even more significantly, the country could not afford to maintain a million-man army.

The use of the word “rhetoric” here is striking. Of course, no one can read Abraham Lincoln—perhaps the best rhetorician that America ever produced—without recognizing that his rhetoric is inseparable from his most deeply held values. Whenever he has something important to say, he deploys the resources of rhetoric to say it with *élan*. One can see this in something he said to a Southern woman who asked that her husband be released from a prisoner-of-war camp on the grounds that he was a religious man. After releasing the Confederate soldier, Lincoln told the woman:

You say your husband is a religious man: tell him when you meet him, that I say I am not much of a judge of religion, but that, in my opinion, the religion that sets men to rebel and fight against their government, because, as they think, that government does not sufficiently help *some* men to eat their bread on the sweat of *other* men’s faces, is not the sort of religion upon which people can go to heaven.

Conversely, when journalists or their fellow polemicists in the academy refer to “rhetoric,” what they tend to have in mind is deceit or delusion, and this is clearly the sense in which Prof. White understands the term. For him, nineteenth-century America’s preoccupation with the home was an exercise in mass self-deception. Moreover, he is careful to signal to his audience that he writes his history in compliance with what he regards as the benefits of “diversity” and “multiculturalism” against which Prof. Wax has run so spectacularly afoul. “Immigration made the United States, in today’s parlance, diverse and multicultural,” the historian writes, “even as the country tried, and failed, to bridge the racial chasm that slavery had created. Then, as now, large numbers of native-born Americans did not regard diversity as a good thing, and the arrival of Catholic and Jewish immigrants spawned a nativist reaction.” Fair enough, but if political correctness is the criterion by which Prof. White judges the period, where does the theme of home fit into this scheme of judgment?

Americans assessed these changes in terms of the home, a symbol so ubiquitous and seemingly so bland that it can vanish while in plain sight. The home became the beating heart of an expansive political program that would create black homes, impose “proper” homes on Indian peoples, exclude Chinese (deemed both a threat to American homes and incapable of creating their own), and expand the white home into the West. Home embodied all the gendered and racialized assumptions of American republicanism and the American economy. It originally provided a site of horrendous violence and repression, which the perpetrators always cast as self-defense. The struggle over Reconstruction, as well as the class struggle that emerged in the 1870s, ended up as a struggle over the home. Invoking the gendered home involved seizing a weapon of considerable power.

For Prof. White, in other words, the home was synonymous with everything that made nineteenth-century America contemptible, even though he is

constrained to acknowledge that it also happened to be the backbone of the country's growth and prosperity.

The production of homes was the ultimate rationale for the economy, for the nation itself, and for the public policies and the activist government embraced by Republicans. Ultimately the Republic rested on homes . . . The Homestead Act underlined the connections between creating homes and economic development, but then so too did the tariff, which Republicans promoted as ensuring high wages, which allowed workingmen to establish and maintain homes. Americans thought it impossible to have too many homes.

The note of mockery here is palpable, but so too is the assurance of a man who knows that he is addressing a largely progressive audience that will entirely agree with him. Indeed, so convinced is the historian of the inerrancy of his progressive lights that he even makes use of poor Lincoln to point his politically correct morals. For Prof. White, Lincoln is implicated in the "false rhetoric of home" for holding up his rise from a humble log cabin to national prominence as proof of the benefits of virtuous enterprise. "Lincoln spoke in a familiar idiom of progress and self-reliance," the professor contends, "and the home was both the product and the site for the reproduction of these values. Unless the work of American males produced homes, they were not men. Unless women helped create and control a domestic space, they could not be true women. Without the home, the country could not reproduce republican citizens." To suggest that Lincoln was somehow guilty of what our progressives call "gender stereotyping" is bad enough but to suggest that there was something nefarious about the country's relying on the home to produce her citizenry is too absurd. Yet here, as elsewhere, Prof. White always produces politically correct reasons to try to justify his bizarre charges: "Homes sheltered and largely confined girls, who were not encouraged to explore a larger world, and prepared boys for a life of independence . . ." Gender inequality, in other words, is the Professor's grounds for objecting not only to the nineteenth-century American home but the President whose imperturbable leadership restored the Union at a time when deep divisions threatened its extinction.

III

As any even cursory acquaintance with American social history in this period will demonstrate, the professor is on shaky ground when he suggests that the inequality in American life was somehow prejudicial to women. In *The American Scene* (1905), James called attention to a distinguishing aspect of the nineteenth and indeed the twentieth-century American social order:

From the moment it is adequately borne in mind that the business-man, in the United States, may, with no matter what dim struggles, gropings, yearnings, never hope to be anything but a business-man, the size of the field he so abdicates is measured . . . It lies there waiting, pleading from all its pores, to be occupied—the lonely waste, the boundless

gaping void of “society” . . . Here it is then that the world he lives in accepts its doom and becomes, by his default, subject and plastic to his mate; his default having made, all around him, the unexampled opportunity of the woman—which she would have been an incredible fool not to pounce upon. It needs little contact with American life to perceive how she has pounced, and how, outside business, she has made it over in her image.

In her classic *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1835), Frances Trollope observed that what initially segregated American men and women was not gender inequality but the fondness of American men for chewing tobacco and spitting. “I hardly know any annoyance so deeply repugnant,” Trollope confessed, “as the incessant, remorseless spitting of Americans,” which “made male colloquy so difficult to endure.” American women often had no alternative but to segregate themselves if they were to avoid having their long dresses catch the spittle of their uncouth companions. Later, Alexis de Tocqueville and William Dean Howells would join James in noting how incapable America’s businessmen were of helping to shape and civilize America’s fledgling social order. Indeed, Prof. White quotes a passage from the autobiography of Charles Francis Adams, the son of John Quincy Adams, who makes no bones about the reasons for this incapacity.

I have known tolerably well, a good many “successful” men – “big” financially—men famous during the last half-century and a less interesting crowd I do not care to encounter. Not one that I have ever known would I care to meet again, either in this world or the next; nor is one of them associated in my mind with the idea of humor, thought or refinement. A set of mere money-getters and traders, they were essentially unattractive and uninteresting.

As this shows, the late nineteenth-century American adult male became something of a drone, with the result that it was the American woman who, perforce, gave the country its social life, its manners, its tone. In his novel *The Bostonians* (1886), James has his character Basil Ransom inveigh against what he sees as the “feminization” of American culture, after speaking with the book’s heroine Olive Chancellor:

I am so far from thinking, as you set forth the other night, that there is not enough woman in our general life, that it has long been pressed home to me that there is a great deal too much. The whole generation is womanised; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it’s a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don’t soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been. The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is—a very queer and partly very base mixture—that is what I want to preserve, or rather, as I may say, to recover . . .

This may be unfair to American women but it is hardly the fulmination of an oppressive patriarch who has somehow unjustly benefited from gender inequality.

On the contrary, Ransom's complaint is that there was too little patriarchy in America. Thus, Prof. White's attempts to interpret the life of the nineteenth-century American home through the lens of gender inequality are scarcely convincing.

IV

If many of the women in nineteenth-century America were deceived or deluded enough to imagine the home a desirable, fulfilling, even liberating institution, Prof. White is careful to remind his readers that "a minority regarded it—insofar as it was based on the marriage contract—as a source of fundamental inequality." And here he duly reaffirms the prejudices of the progressives of our own age with whose views he so entirely agrees:

The great symbol of such inequality was the legal doctrine of coverture, under which the wife lost her legal identity with marriage. In a society supposedly devoted to free labor, coverture merged the labor of the wife with the person of her husband and deprived her of the ability to make any contract after agreeing to the marriage contract. Elizabeth Cady Stanton posed the challenge directly in 1868: "If the contract be equal, whence come the terms 'marital power,' 'marital rights,' 'obedience and restraint,' 'dominion and control'?" According to man's idea, as set forth in his creeds and codes, marriage is a condition of slavery." Stanton went to the heart of the paradox of the republican home. The home—the cultural, social, and economic basis of American freedom and democracy—was, she said, based on slavery and the abrogation of contract freedom. The home depended on marriage, and marriage demanded the legal subordination of women.

Coverture is a far more complicated matter than this jaundiced *précis* would suggest. Introduced into feudal common law by the Normans, it enshrined the Christian principle that husband and wife are a single entity—or a single soul, as Hugh of Saint Victor (1096-1141), one of the most eloquent advocates of the principle, avowed. Critics might charge that that single entity was the husband since the wife was regarded as under the authority and protection of the husband, but this belies the import of the passage in Scripture from which the principal derives: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24) Then, again, what Prof. White and most critics of the legal principle fail to acknowledge is that it always admitted of lively exceptions and, in fact, was rarely invoked for the oppressive purposes that critics claimed. Many women, for example, throughout England and North America, where varying forms of coverture obtained, could possess rights over property, enter into separate commercial contracts, and interact with the courts. Moreover, throughout the centuries, courts applying equity jurisdiction in cases of coverture significantly qualified the principle. At any rate, it was a far more nuanced, indeed noble principle than Prof. White gives his readers to understand. Hugh certainly recognized as much when he described its essence:

The two [husband and wife] . . . become one soul. This is a great mystery. It refers to

God and the soul. See now the nature of the contract by which they bind themselves in consented marriage. Henceforth, and forever, each shall be to the other as a same self in all sincere love, all careful solicitude, every kindness of affection, in constant compassion, unflagging consolation and faithful devotedness. And this in such a way that each shall assist the other as being one's own self in every good or evil tiding, the companion and partner of consolation, thus proving that they are united in trial and tribulation. Finally, each one shall attend outwardly to the needs of the other's body, taking it as being his and her own flesh, to cherish, and so shall they also attend inwardly to love for the heart, as though it were his and her own to keep in peace and quiet (as far as lies within them) without worry. In this way they shall dwell in the peace of a holy society and the communion of a sweet repose so that each no longer lives for self, but for the other. Thus each shall live for self even more happily and blessedly. Such are the good things of marriage . . .

In omitting any mention of this traditional view of marriage—which was the view shared by most women in nineteenth-century America—Prof. White reveals how bereft his work is of historical perspective. In his handling of marriage and the American home, he shows again and again that he has undertaken his study less to understand his nineteenth-century subjects on their own terms than to co-opt them to serve the interests of twenty-first century progressives. Prof. White, in other words, writes an American version of Whig history, in accordance with which all American history is shown to culminate in the triumph of progressivism, and anything that does not comport with that triumph is treated as not only retrograde but reprehensible.

Of course, Prof. White cannot entirely ignore the fact that most of his nineteenth-century subjects had fairly positive views of marriage and the home, but he can only acknowledge them grudgingly.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Harriet Beecher Stowe conflated home, religion, morality, safety, and freedom. When George escapes slavery and reunites with his wife and child in an abolitionist Quaker home, Stowe wrote: “This, indeed, was a home—home—a word that George had never yet known a meaning for; and a belief in God, and trust in his providence, began to encircle his heart, as, with a golden cloud of protection and confidence, dark, misanthropic, pining; atheistic doubts, and fierce despair melted away before the light of living gospel breathed in living faces, preached by a thousand unconscious acts of love and good will . . .”

However critical of the American home, Prof. White recognizes its centrality: “All the major developments of the Gilded Age had to pass, one way or another, through the doors of the home, which sat at the juncture of politics, public policy, gender relations, racial relations, social reform, the economy, and child-rearing.” Nineteenth-century Americans may have “sentimentalized the home, but they were also coldly realistic about its power. It was the political and social ground that could not be ceded.” Yet, for Prof. White, the American home gave rise to “other concepts—manhood and womanhood” and what “was disappearing from common use by the end of the century, a competency or competence.”

(A *competence* was the financial wherewithal necessary to maintain a home, which a husband would necessarily strive to attain in order to support his wife and children.) And all of these “concepts” reinforced the patriarchal nature of the American home, despite the fact that the home tended to be ruled by women. “Americans gendered the home as a female space,” Prof. White remarks, “but they also defined manhood around a very simple test: the ability to maintain and protect a family home.” Again, Prof. White is at pains to claim that gender inequality, that most ineradicable of progressive bugbears, was of the essence of the nineteenth-century American home.

By referring to the home as a *concept*, Prof. White reveals his refusal to acknowledge its intransigent realities. A concept is an artificial, man-made, eminently malleable thing. It can be defined, in other words, in accordance with the specifications of the powerful as the powerful see fit. For Prof. White, if benighted patriarchs defined home in one way in the nineteenth-century, enlightened progressives can redefine it in the twenty-first century. This is the animating conviction behind all of the social engineering of progressive ideology: The progressives can remake marriage, the family, the home, womanhood, manhood or gender *per se*—and make them better. Or, at least, *equal*, after their own abstract, ruthlessly Jacobin lights.

V

Of all of the patriarchs that Prof. White singles out in his text, on none does he pour more scorn than Anthony Comstock, the moral crusader who made it his business to oppose pornography, contraception, and abortion. H.L. Mencken had fun castigating the postal inspector for trying to root out vice in his incorrigible compatriots, but he also saw the genuinely moral source of the man’s crusade. “He was a man of manifold virtues, and even his faults showed a rugged, Berserker quality that was sneakingly charming. . . .” Mencken wrote. “The Lord was always back of him, guiding and stimulating his fighting arm.” Certainly, in a society that promotes vice as zealously as our own, Comstock’s denunciation of the evils of vice might not seem quite as risible now as it once did.

Nevertheless, holding Comstock up to derision gives Prof. White a pretext for coming to the defense of abortion, which he sees as liberating wives and mothers immured within the patriarchal prison house by enabling them to take control of their “reproductive rights,” however anachronistic invoking those abstractions might be in any nineteenth-century context. Thus, Prof. White may admit that “The numbers are unclear,” but this does not prevent him from asserting that “contemporaries estimated abortions at one to every five or six live births in the 1850s,” and basing his assertion on the rather tenuous evidence that “A Michigan Board of Health estimate in the 1880s claimed that one-third of

all pregnancies ended in an abortion.” Despite the tenuousness of his evidence, Prof. White is confident that “For all the uncertainties, the signs point to women voluntarily controlling their fertility.” Nineteenth-century American women, in other words, were as keen on abortion as twenty-first century progressive women, and this despite the fact that “Many doctors . . . joined the attack on abortion.” Why doctors did so he does not say, though he seems to fault them for taking exception to the quack theories of those intent on trying to avoid moral responsibility for killing unborn children in the womb. For example, he points out that doctors “broadened the definition of abortion by attacking the belief in quickening, which did not mark a woman as truly carrying a child until the point when she felt the fetus move in her womb, usually at about three months. A woman seeking a miscarriage before then did not abort because she wasn’t yet considered to be carrying a child.” Here, if Prof. White sides with the quack theorists when it comes to “quickening,” he does not give any medical or, indeed, ethical reasons as to why he does so. Instead, he resorts to treating the doctors as though they were simply engaged in a kind of male bullying. “Between 1860 and 1890, forty states and territories outlawed abortion, with most rejecting the quickening doctrine. The clashes between women and an increasingly influential male medical profession over reproduction and abortion were signs that the division of the home . . . was growing unstable. A gendered guerrilla war had erupted along domestic boundaries.”

To try to justify this startling claim, the professor notes that it was during the Gilded Age that men began to join clubs in ever increasing numbers, which he regards as emblematic of the patriarchal villainy that overtook the country. That these clubs might have had something to do with refining men and making them more appreciative of female society does not enter into his polemical calculus. Instead, he claims that this “gendered guerilla war” gave rise to a larger war over how nineteenth-century American history as a whole should be interpreted.

The era began with the universal conviction that the Civil War was the watershed in the nation’s history and ended with the proposition that the white settlement of the West defined the national character. Changing the national story from the Civil War to the West amounted to an effort . . . to evade the failure of Reconstruction. . . . But too much had changed, and too much blood had been spilled in the War, for such a simple story of continuity to be fully persuasive . . . A vision of a country unachieved lingered, and quarrels over what should come next remained unresolved.

Of course, many other quarrels pertaining to America’s past and future remain unresolved, though if progressives like those clamoring for Prof. Amy Wax’s ouster had their druthers they would be resolved soon enough and not in a way favorable to her or to anyone else who sees home not as a construct of malign patriarchy but as a blessing from God. However these matters are resolved, the stakes are high, including as they do not only questions regarding the home

but the family, the state, marriage, gender, education, affirmative action, child rearing, abortion and civic discourse. This is why the critics of Prof. Wax are so vehemently intent on having her muzzled. Like Prof. White, they are defending an ideology that wields immense power in nearly every sphere of American life; but that they have been forced to do so against a most undauntable lady whose criticisms are unanswerable only makes their defense more desperate.

In her reaffirmation of the moral norms that ensure the flourishing of the family, Prof. Wax is reminiscent of Pope John Paul II, whose clarion witness to the “communion of the home,” although first written in 1994 in his *Letter to Families*, is as apposite as ever.

During the Year of the Family, prayer should first of all be an encouraging witness on the part of those families who live out their human and Christian vocation in the communion of the home. How many of them there are in every nation, diocese and parish! With reason it can be said that these families make up “the norm”, even admitting the existence of more than a few “irregular situations.” And experience shows what an important role is played by a family living in accordance with the moral norm, so that the individual born and raised in it will be able to set out without hesitation on the road of the good, which *is always written in his heart*. Unfortunately various programmes backed by very powerful resources nowadays seem to aim at the breakdown of the family. At times it appears that concerted efforts are being made to present as “normal” and attractive, and even to glamourize, situations which are in fact “irregular.” Indeed, they contradict “the truth and love” which should inspire and guide relationships between men and women, thus causing tensions and divisions in families, with grave consequences particularly for children. The moral conscience becomes darkened; what is true, good and beautiful is deformed; and freedom is replaced by what is actually enslavement. In view of all this, how relevant and thought-provoking are the words of the Apostle Paul about the freedom for which Christ has set us free, and the slavery which is caused by sin (cf. *Gal 5:1*)!

VI

Since our progressive professoriate has played so instrumental a role in dismantling the family, it behooves us to know how it became so powerful and so doctrinaire, and here Prof. White supplies an unwittingly damning answer. It was critics of *laissez-faire* economics within Germany’s late nineteenth-century universities who lay the groundwork for the progressive professoriate’s hegemony by linking the interests of the progressive academy to those of the progressive state. “Society acting through the state needed to impart morality to an economy that, if left unchecked, rewarded greed and spawned disorder and injustice,” Prof. White explains.

German professors told their American students that humans were social animals shaped by the very traditions and institutions that they created. True human life was not the private life embraced in the American worship of the home, but rather the public life and entertainments that evangelical Americans so distrusted. Social welfare was not the responsibility of the family, but rather of society as a whole. In the 1880s, even as Bismarck

attacked socialists, he simultaneously adopted state social insurance schemes and protectionism. American feelings about this active state were mixed. The benign face of the German state was in the clean streets; the dark side was worrisomely visible in the ubiquitous police, the standing army, the antidemocratic stances of German professors, and the restrictions on what could be thought and said. It was not as if Europe introduced them to state intervention and regulation—that already existed at home—but it provided them with new ways to think about it. They returned to the United States with a wider sense of the world and new vocabularies for talking about events in their own country.

What Prof. White omits to mention is that, in deciding how America's "un-achieved" vision should be resolved, our progressive professoriate has not hesitated to impose restrictions of their own on what can be thought and said in their now inveterately illiberal precincts. Prof. Wax can certainly vouch for that. She can also vouch for the fact that the "belief that political force determines objective reality has characterized totalitarian regimes worldwide and throughout history—regimes that are responsible for untold amounts of human misery. That mindset is dangerously inconsistent with the kind of free society Americans have painstakingly built and defended over many centuries, at the cost of blood and treasure. Perhaps we no longer want such a society. But we relinquish it at our peril."

To have so principled and so incisive a legal scholar as Prof. Amy Wax making the case for our traditional American liberties in an academy so antagonistic to them is a great boon. She is fighting the good fight and we should continue to fight it with her.

Should Type-A Women Prioritize Parenting?

Ursula Hennessey

My husband recently emailed me some baby photos of our eldest child, who is now a teenager. I hadn't seen the pictures in quite a long time.

"Remember this person?" he wrote. "I do."

Honestly, I didn't. The chubby cheeks, puzzled brow, and blonde wisps fit the family mold, but I must admit that I didn't know that wee cherub in the pictures very well at all, because I didn't spend a lot of time with her.

I went back to working full time six weeks after she was born. I had a good job as a teacher in a private elementary school, and also tutored on the side for extra money. Most days I was out of the house from 7:15 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Many days I'd leave again around 7 p.m. for graduate school classes. In the summers, I tutored and doubled up on classes. I kept up this routine even after baby Number Two came along a couple of years later.

Erica Komisar would not have approved. Her recent book, *Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters* (2017), is built on the premise that moms should be present, ubiquitously, for those three critical early years of life for all babies. "For the past thirty years, researchers have been studying mothers and children across different cultures," Komisar writes, "and their findings have confirmed what I and my fellow psychoanalysts and therapists have seen in our practices: that infants and toddlers who have the constant and consistent presence of an attentive and sensitive mother are more likely to be emotionally and psychologically healthy children and adolescents."

My family is almost the perfect testing ground for the soundness of this proposition. I was pretty much absent during the critical first three years with my two oldest children. When my third child was born, I went back to teaching part-time and stopped taking classes. Eventually, as my husband's career began to take off, I opted to become a full-time stay-at-home mom. In the years since, I've given birth to two more babies—five in total, if you're keeping score, ranging from 14 down to 18 months—and I haven't held a full-time job for eight years.

So far, the Hennessey kids seem pretty typical. I don't note any major social or emotional problems. Sure, this one is distracted. That one can be defiant. Another has some anxiety. I don't see any of it tracking along the lines that

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Komisar has drawn, with the ones who missed out on mommy's constant care early on appearing needy or maladjusted and the ones who had my full presence and attention appearing balanced and healthy. Then again, they are all still quite young. It's early days.

It does seem plausible that some of society's serious issues are sown in childhood. Komisar, in fact, is addressing more than just absent moms—she believes everyone should prioritize the proper care of babies. She quotes a 2003 report, compiled by pediatricians, researchers, and mental health professionals, which concluded, “The declining mental health of many US children is a pressing issue that plays a substantial role in many of today's emerging physical problems, psychosomatic and psychosocial disorders and has pronounced and long-lasting effects on both children's lives and society.”

This message is hardly more urgent than today, when the mental health of violence-prone teens is at the forefront of our national conversation. It is not popular or appropriate after a school shooting—like the Valentine's Day 2018 one in Parkland, Florida, that is still fresh in my mind as I write this—to point out that more moms should stay home with their kids. Yet Komisar's book—chockful of science and anecdotes from her practice—is extremely convincing on this point. “There has been an increase of 400 percent in mental illness in children and adolescents in the past decade,” Komisar notes, pointing also to the connection of working moms returning to work, as I did, mere weeks after giving birth. Employers have grown friendlier to maternity leave, but the culture hasn't changed all that much. Missing work—for any reason—is still frowned upon. “Look at Yahoo!,” Komisar writes. “In 2013 the company lengthened its maternity leave policy, but CEO Marissa Mayer took only a two-week leave after giving birth to twins. What kind of message does this send to female employees?”

When I worked, I was lucky that my husband could be the children's primary caregiver while taking classes in graduate school and juggling a few internships. Relatives helped out as well, and we managed to avoid daycare. I thought things were basically fine.

But Komisar presents research showing that men just don't have the biological make-up to perform well as nurturers and comforters. Mothers, she explains, are best at providing the “emotional regulation and balance” that babies need. Moms provide critical and instinctual “calming and soothing” that comes less naturally to men. Moms actually work as an emotional buffer for the baby, filtering out the stressors of the world. Fathers are great at providing “playful stimulation” and encouraging independence. This is because men and women have different biologies, of course: “Mothers produce the neurotransmitter oxytocin . . . which is responsible for the empathetic nurturing”; men, on the other

hand, produce more “vasopressin, a neurotransmitter that produces a more aggressive protective response.” Some dads may want to sniff a little oxytocin to up their nurturing quotient; Komisar says research shows this does indeed make Dad a little more warm and fuzzy.

Komisar’s insistence on making gender distinctions, along with a perception that she is somehow out to shame working women, have led to her expulsion from polite liberal society. “I was rejected wholesale—particularly in New York—by the liberal press,” she said in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*. She has become, she says, “a bit of a pariah.” She couldn’t get a spot on National Public Radio. When she was invited on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” the hostess leaned over just before the cameras went live and said: “I don’t believe in the premise of your book at all. I don’t like your book.” Komisar recently admitted in an interview with a Yale student publication that one implication of her message is that gender neutrality is a myth—while men and women are equal, they are not the same.

I am firmly in Komisar’s camp on these issues. Family and child-rearing should be the focus of all couples. Still, I have some quibbles. Any parent who bails on the family for three years is likely to cause deep harm, whether it’s the mother or the father. It probably wouldn’t matter much if it happened during the first three years of a child’s life or during three random teenage years. A gaping hole in the middle of a family caused by one parent’s absolute obsession with something other than raising children is going to leave a lifelong mark. How do you measure the damage? With so many disparate factors going into childrearing, who knows which factor to isolate and reserve for blame when something goes wrong?

Some of my children I “sleep trained” according to then-fashionable theories. Many nights my husband and I would leave a colicky baby to “cry it out” as we plugged our ears and kept each other from rushing to the rescue. (Komisar is not a fan of sleep training.) But now that I’ve been around the block a few times I’m less worried about ruining their chances of future career success by occasionally letting them into our bed. Some of my children were never allowed to snack outside of carefully prescribed meal times and had their access to sugar carefully rationed. My youngest, however, helps himself to cereal out of the box when he feels like it and is often found with his head in the fridge, yelling for someone to help him open the cheese drawer. Usually one of his older siblings comes to his rescue, with me being none the wiser.

Certainly, different parenting approaches will produce different results. Add in all the other variables at play—like a child’s own personality type or whether the family lives in a city or a suburb—and the range of potential outcomes starts to appear limitless. One could almost certainly find examples of moms who stayed home for the first three years only to have their child grow up to be

a serial killer. In the face of all this variability, Komisar's doomsday warnings seem a little over the top.

When I stopped working, I did so willingly as part of a fairly well-drawn family plan. My husband and I spent hours upon hours assessing the pros and cons, as I imagine most married couples do when making vital decisions about the work-life balance. Because I transitioned willingly from working mom to stay-at-home mom, I don't today live with work regret. I don't secretly pine for power suits, meetings, and performance reviews.

We all crave adult conversation and interaction. Moms are no different. There are days when I go from dawn to dusk without speaking to a person who was alive on 9/11. Hagglng with toddlers for hours at a time can be exhausting. Raising children sometimes feels like an endurance race in which unexpected yet monumental choices are thrown at you every few steps as you drag yourself along, never knowing when the race will end or how you are doing. You don't get too many high-five moments as a parent.

Still, if I was carrying around a load of bitterness and disappointment because I'd been forced to walk away from a career I loved, then I might have a harder time coping with the drudgery of folding another load of laundry or watching another carefully prepared meal end up on the floor. I never felt that my family pushed me off the career track. I prefer this life by a million miles over the one I was pursuing. Sure, getting by on one income involves financial sacrifice, but inner peace about your parenting goes a long way.

Komisar zeroes in on this when she notes that children of moms who must work—absolutely must, for the basic financial survival of the family—end up just fine. Children suffer when their moms go back to work either to support their self-esteem or to finance a fancier lifestyle. Komisar's clinical experience as a therapist has taught her that children “understand that their mothers and fathers prefer to prioritize work and career and material success over them.” Even small children sense when their parents are “truly sorry” about having to miss out on their childhood and when, conversely, parents clearly want to be “somewhere else.”

My biggest quibble with Komisar's generally interesting and persuasive book is her suggestion that young women should ask themselves a series of questions before having a child. She suggests a sort of discernment process for being a parent:

How do [you] define your core values? Do [you] believe that family comes first or that work and status will take priority in [your] lives? Are [you] having children because [you] want to nurture a child or because it's expected of [you]? Do [you] need to work to support [your] family or would it make more financial sense to stay home with [your] child? If [you] stay home, will [you] be comfortable with the loss of status and loss of income? If [you] go back to work, can [you] be clear about [your] boundaries regarding

when and how much [you] will work? Can [you] be clear with [your] employers about what those boundaries are, and are [you] prepared to enforce them, and deal with any possible consequences to [your] careers? Do [your] spouses or partners share [your] values and priorities and support [your] decision, whatever the decision may be?

Whoa. Seriously? I'm 46 years old and the mother of five children and these questions scare the heck out of me. If you'd presented this coldly analytical and absurdly detailed slate of questions to me at age 31, married for about a year and happily ensconced in a career I loved, I probably would have panicked. I almost certainly would have judged myself unready for the sacrifice and commitment. And I wasn't ready. Nobody ever is. You can't possibly be "ready" for how becoming a parent for the first time will change you.

And shouldn't the discernment process take place prior to marriage? A woman who marries a man who is open to life no matter how surprising, frightening, or challenging has already laid the groundwork for successful child-rearing. Infertility and miscarriages are facts of life that not many couples think about or plan for ahead of time. Any perfect script you've written for you and your family will go sideways with a diagnosis of a child's physical or intellectual disability. Choosing the right partner to walk that journey with you is far more important than filling out Komisar's grim flow chart.

Although Komisar suggests considering how your life will change before choosing to have children, she mostly focuses on how financial and emotional ledgers affect openness to life.

"Motherhood should be a choice," she writes, "and that choice requires recognizing the sacrifices involved in being a mother and working through conflicts about mothering before having a child." The problem with Komisar's approach is the implicit assumption that, once the decision is made to become a mother, the process will proceed cleanly according to plan. But no one can predict or control pregnancy complications.

Making a deal with your husband to split the housework or guarantee every other Friday is date night can't ensure that your children won't do something to scuttle the arrangement. Children—being individuals with their own points of view, senses of humor, and curious predilections—have a way of exerting their personalities on the shape of a family. In fact, it won't be the same family as before the child came along, so the answers to many of Komisar's questions may no longer apply.

Most problematic, however, is that rigorously following Komisar's program would practically ensure that no pregnant woman would ever choose to continue a risky pregnancy—one that includes a prenatal diagnosis of disability, for example. Who can look at a list of medical conditions and worst-case-scenarios and immediately find within themselves—and their pocketbooks—the necessary reserves? Unfortunately, continuing a difficult pregnancy, especially with

medical professionals urging termination, requires not so much deliberation over a series of searching questions as a leap of faith made with a beloved partner. There's no magic mantra or book to read or job to acquire that will prepare you emotionally and financially for a child with special needs.

This is why any discernment process should happen before marriage. Komisar approaches parenting as one might approach deciding to change careers or move across the country: *If you just do enough research, you can weigh the costs and benefits, pin down the particulars, and make a practical decision.* Parenting is not like that. The experience is too fleeting and amorphous to capture with a pre-birth or pre-conception questionnaire.

On paper, having a child is always a losing proposition, is it not? If we waited for all young couples to assess accurately and rationally all the sacrifices of parenthood, then exactly zero couples would “choose” to have a child. There's an abundance of tangible proof that parenting is confusing and wearying. It's the richness and satisfaction that's much harder to convey. Platitudes like, “When your kid gives you a hug, it makes it all worth it,” inspire only eyerolls. Yet, it's the damn truth.

While clichés never really persuade anyone, I have to say that Komisar offers up two that hit home. And they work for all women—wealthy, poor, working, stay-at-home, parenting children with special needs, or struggling with infertility:

1. Ask for help whenever you need it from whoever will help.

2. It's never too late to begin the process of repair, for yourself and for your child.

Keep these two in your pocket for any outbreak of Mommy Wars. I'm not sure they're exciting enough for NPR or *Good Morning America*, but some young mother will be deeply grateful for these simple truths.

FILM/BOOKNOTES

SUMMER IN THE FOREST

Directed by Randall Wright

Reviewed by Anne Sullivan

Last summer my husband and three children and I traveled to Ireland. I remember the unusually sunny weather, the green lushness that gives the isle its moniker, and the warm embrace of family hospitality. Equally prominent in my recollection is a distinctly different aspect of Irish families, that is, when compared to American ones. At each place we visited, at least one family (and usually more) included a disabled loved one who was enjoying the museum tour or the beautiful Cliffs of Moher as much as my family did. Of course, there are disabled individuals in the U.S., and in my hometown of New York City. But again and again, I was struck by how many more of them there seemed to be in Ireland.

I was reminded of this as I watched the quietly affecting film *Summer in the Forest*. Director Randall Wright evocatively tells the story of philosopher Jean Vanier, who in 1964 invited two men who had been institutionalized because of developmental disabilities into his home. This simple action spawned a worldwide movement called L'Arche (French for ark, as in "Noah's Ark") that 54 years later has provided homes (on all five continents) for countless individuals with developmental disabilities, and for those who help them to live comfortably and contribute to their communities.

As the film opens, we meet Michel, who is cross-eyed, fiercely concentrating on shaving his 75-year-old face. Patrick, 65, is enjoying an open-mouthed nap in his own cluttered room. And David, a relative youngster at 33 (who insists he is "not small. I'm big. I'm an adult"), shows off his early morning dance routine as his radio blares a lively rock 'n roll tune. These are just a few of the residents of the L'Arche home in Trosly-Breuil, France, where Vanier created a community with a verdant, tranquil forest as its backdrop. "I had nothing before I arrived," says Andre, another older gentleman who has settled into life at Trosly-Breuil. "Now I have everything."

In between meeting these men and others, we meet Jean Vanier himself, the son of a Canadian governor who answered the call of his "mysterious compass"—an "inner voice that leads us to do right"—to gather these individuals into a safe place where they would be treated with compassion and expected to take part in community life as well as build meaningful relationships. Many of the older individuals had been labeled "idiots," locked away—and forgotten—

in institutions where they were beaten and broken. “Jean Vanier is a man who loves us. He is very much interested in us,” says Andre.

Initially, his presence is so inconspicuous—sitting in his room, reading glasses perched on his nose, calmly writing notes—that one believes Vanier is another resident of the community. And, in fact, that is exactly how he would describe himself. But he is also a man of great bravery, someone who saw that disabled people needed to be loved and abled people needed to learn that “someone with a handicap is still a person, a human, not an animal,” as Philippe, age 75, and one of the first men Vanier brought to the new home, tells viewers.

Today we understand much more about mental and developmental disabilities than was earlier known. It seems natural to us that Vanier would feel a tremendous pull to be compassionate. But in the 1960s, this was not the case. In his soft, lyrical voice, Vanier describes how disabled individuals were at the “bottom of the ladder of social status.” His intention was not just to provide them a roof, but a communal space where they would be safe and their childlike need for friendship—not worldly power—could be fulfilled. It was not an easy undertaking. There were many nights of lost sleep, broken windows, and violence. Gently, for he does everything gently, Vanier recalls that “it took a long time for it to become a place of peace.”

Each person in the film is treated with dignified respect by director Wright. The violence Patrick endured in a mental institution isn’t depicted in Hollywood-style flashbacks. Instead, the camera lingers on his lined face, where the pain of those experiences can be observed. When Maya, a Muslim girl who lives in a L’Arche home in Bethlehem, struggles to pick up her tea cup, the camera does not shy away. Instead, we see her silently, determinedly, try and try again with quivering hands until the liquid reaches her lips. Wright sets the film’s pace pointedly slow to allow us to absorb the lives of these remarkable men and women, whose fears, hopes, and desires are not unlike our own.

Although the film does not reveal any particular religious affiliation (L’Arche is rooted in Christianity, but accepts people of all faiths and none), it intentionally depicts how L’Arche treats each disabled person as God’s beloved. *Summer in the Forest* is sophisticated in conveying its message that each human being is worthy of love while never straying too far from the joy Vanier feels in knowing and loving each individual in the home and his delight in being with them. In one scene, Wright shows Vanier patiently chatting with Sebastian, a severely palsied young man, softly repeating to him, “You are very beautiful.” The deliberateness with which Wright unfolds this scene causes the viewer to imagine a horrible world where some people might never hear these words.

At the end of the film, I was left thinking of 89-year-old Jean Vanier, his back a little hunched, what’s left of his hair snow white, smiling wide, still dedicating his life to serving the vulnerable and forgotten. I wondered who would commit

to follow God's call to love these extraordinary people. Then I remembered an encounter I had earlier as I was entering the theatre. Two very young men had approached me, one carrying a backpack. They asked if I was there to see *Summer in the Forest*. Being your average, suspicious New Yorker, I cautiously responded, "Yes." Quietly, they pulled a business card out of the backpack and handed it to me. If I liked the film, one of them asked, would I please spread the word?

Plainly printed on the back of the card is, "Let's change the world's perspective on disability!"

* * *

"The weak and the foolish have been chosen to confound the wise and powerful." These are among Vanier's parting words in the film. This May, Ireland will hold a referendum on the eighth amendment to its constitution, which makes abortion illegal. What will future Irish families look like if the amendment is repealed? Who will be the wise and who will be the foolish?

—*Anne Sullivan previously wrote for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as a nationally syndicated film critic.*

SURROGACY: A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

Renate Klein

(Mission Beach, Queensland: Spinifex Press, 2017, pp. 209. Also available as an e-book).

Reviewed by John Grondelski

Renate Klein and I approach surrogacy from different starting points. I focus on the harms surrogacy inflicts on children—those who have the least say in this modern variant on human trafficking. Their very existence is commodified and depends on the good will of the (generally well-off) people who commission their production. Klein, a "long-term women's health researcher," biologist, and former associate professor of women's studies at Deakin University, Melbourne, focuses on the harm surrogacy inflicts on women, who are victimized by the commodification of their procreative capacity to benefit other (generally much more well-off) people. Although the journey for us is different, we end at the same place: Surrogacy—commercial or "altruistic"—should be banned.

In seven chapters, Klein affords a thorough and uncompromising feminist explanation of surrogacy's irremediable ethical flaws and why they cannot be "fixed" by tinkering around the edges. Surrogacy, she argues, requires abolition, not regulation. "[A] regulatory inquiry does not start at the bottom and ask whether the practice of surrogacy should be abolished; it starts half-way

up and asks questions about how different aspects of surrogacy could or should be regulated. It is thus never a holistic search to understand the nature of the problem, but instead a *compartmentalized dissection* of the multiple problems arising from surrogacy” (emphasis in original). Policy can be divided and compromised; rights and rights violations (the rubric under which Klein correctly identifies this issue) require a yea or nay.

But how can one say a “surrogate” is a victim when, presumably, she consented to become one? Klein’s response takes a variety of forms, the most important of which we can group into three categories: consent, inequality, and acting in bad faith.

“Informed consent” is at the heart of ethical medicine. Enshrined in the Nuremberg Code after the horrors of Nazi medical experiments on concentration camp inmates, “informed consent” was subsequently woven into the World Medical Association’s 1948 Helsinki Declaration. “Informed consent” is also a pillar (sometimes one of the few) of contemporary bioethics. That is especially true for bioethics drawing inspiration from Kant, for whom the essential requirements for morality was that a principle could be formulated as a rule and applied universally. In some cases today, that has turned into a “check-the-box” test of morality: “informed consent” was provided, but a pro-life ethicist might ask whether it was fully understood or merely formalistic.

But, as Klein argues, women can hardly give “informed consent” when “they are not given the facts (or the facts do not exist).” The truth is much of what passes as “advances” in reproductive technologies is still experimental: The only way to know if there are dangers in intervening in the process of creating life is to take a risk now and see what happens one or even two generations later (because one cannot know how experimental reproduction affects the child who is created until that child reproduces and—arguably—*his or her* child reproduces).

Practically, however, this would mean that (a) such a procedure would be inherently unethical because, not knowing whether it could entail risks, one nevertheless would choose to impose *potential* risks on a being who cannot consent to them; and (b) even if that objection could be overcome, the timespan for studying how any reproductive intervention affects the reproductive capacity of its “product” would entail one to two generations. Those are intolerable limits when the IVF business is promising big money today. In vitro fertilization, embryo screening and transfer, embryo freezing—all of these procedures can be wrapped up in a gauzy emotional appeal to “overcoming infertility.” As a feminist, Klein doesn’t necessarily share my concern about the rights of the unborn child. But she is concerned with the lack of informed consent, noting that the dangers of egg donation and extraction, as well as the long-term effects of hormonal and pharmacological treatments the “surrogate” undergoes, are not known.

Indeed, Klein notes, we *do not know* what risks egg donation and IVF procedures pose. As Jennifer Lahl, president of the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network, has pointed out, America is the “wild West” of surrogacy. These issues have never been studied, and the reproductive technology industry has invested too much to pay anything but lip service to informed consent. Lahl’s video documentaries, especially “Eggsploitation,” which reveals the dangers to which egg donors are unknowingly subjected (<http://www.eggsploitation.com/>), are a powerful indictment of the reproductive technology industry’s *omertà* regarding these issues.

This leads to Klein’s second objection: the profound inequalities in surrogacy relationships, which are almost always marked by profound class differences and often racial ones as well: Upper-class suburban soccer moms in Bethesda aren’t carrying babies for infertile Indian untouchables. Proponents (such as the opinion journal, *The Economist*) try to evade the inequality problem by redefining surrogacy as “work.” Klein’s analysis caustically demolishes that fiction, asking such basic labor questions as: Given that pregnancy is a 24/7 condition, will a “surrogate” be paid overtime on weekends and holidays? Can compensation be docked if the “surrogate” gets too fat? Does she get an end-of-trimester bonus if the pregnancy “develops” as it should? Finally, Klein raises the problem of bad faith: What kind of head trip is being played to convince women that a woman who bears a baby can be rightfully considered not a mother but only a “surrogate” (which is why Klein—and I—put that term in quotes)? How much worse is it to call her a “gestational carrier,” a term which “erases women as the only living human beings who can grow and bear babies?” Klein takes vehement exception to an Australian case in which a young woman carried a baby for her older sister and regularly spoke of the elder sibling as the “mother” and the baby she bore as her “niece.”

Now here is where Klein and I part company.

Klein rightly condemns “compartmentalizing,” which allows surrogacy to be politely discussed as a package of discrete but manageable sub-issues, thus avoiding the overall problem that it looks a lot like trafficking in women and children. But, faithful to feminist orthodoxy, Klein engages in compartmentalizing herself: By refusing to recognize the humanity of the preborn child, she creates her own dubious “science.” While she doesn’t concede that genetics makes one a parent, she rightly recognizes that a contract does not. She attributes attention to genetics as a form of patriarchy—an argument worth teasing out because there is clearly only one man responsible here for “paternity” even as “maternity” is sliced and diced into genetic, gestational, and social components. One also suspects that Klein’s reticence in acknowledging the genetic link stems from the perennial elephant in the room—abortion. Because if genetics mattered, what would that say about the status of the unborn? No matter

what one says, however, a “surrogate” mother can still be carrying a child with no genetic link to her. Klein wants to appeal to mitochondrial DNA, placenta, and the whole interplay of a “surrogate’s” body with the child’s, substituting biology for genetics so she can insist that a non-genetically related “surrogate” still has primary claim on being called this baby’s “mother.” While I find that argument strained, I do share this perspective with Klein: The situation brought about by the reduction of a woman’s body to separable “functions” used for discrete, utilitarian purposes is tragic and should be prohibited. As Klein rightly observes, if a woman’s womb is turned into a mere receptacle, is there any difference between it and the promised artificial womb of the future? And, to adapt C.S. Lewis’s title, does it not entail the abolition of woman?

Even where we disagreed, I found Klein’s argument a thought-provoking change of perspective and challenge to my own views. There is already a push in a number of (primarily Blue State) legislatures to legalize “gestational surrogacy,” e.g., New Jersey, Washington. According to the Center for Bioethics and Culture, 12 states permit commercial surrogacy, 14 permit “altruistic” surrogacy. Klein’s book gives proliferators common cause and a shared language with feminists to oppose this invidious exploitation of women.

—*John M. Grondelski (Ph.D., Fordham) is former associate dean of the School of Theology, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. All views herein are exclusively his own.*

FROM THE HLR WEBSITE

Abortion Is Rumpelstiltskin

Victoria Garaitonandia Gisondi

The Brothers Grimm were the first to tell the dark tale of Rumpelstiltskin. And although it was certainly not their intention, the fairy tale eerily parallels so many women's experience of abortion ...

Rumpelstiltskin is the story of a poor miller's daughter, locked up in a tower by a greedy king who demanded that she turn straw into gold in exchange for her release. It was an impossible task and she lost all hope. But then a devilish little man appeared out of nowhere, promising to rescue her from her desperate situation. He would be her savior. The cost? One newborn baby.

Rumpelstiltskin offered what appeared to be the only escape route. And so the desperate girl swore she would give him her firstborn in exchange for her freedom. He produced the gold for the king, and she was liberated. Soon after, she forgot about her awful promise. But years later, when she gave birth to her first child, Rumpelstiltskin came to collect.

How often it is that women facing an unexpected pregnancy feel trapped in what they perceive to be an impossible circumstance! They can see no way out of their predicament except through abortion. Maybe some women, those in dire financial circumstances, feel they are being asked to turn straw into gold. Not having resources or means to care for themselves or for a new baby, they choose to end their pregnancy.

Abortion, like Rumpelstiltskin, shows up not as a strong knight-on-a-horse savior, but as a manikin whispering in the ear of the vulnerable woman: "I can rescue you from this mess. I can bring immediate relief from your troubles." Rumpelstiltskin's "rescue" is not the kind that provides a safe refuge; it's more akin to the bargain a woman strikes with a pimp. And, like the protection a pimp provides, it comes with a debt. The cost? One unborn baby.

How many post-abortive women are like the poor miller's daughter? They hope, as she does, that the ugly exchange will be forgotten and put behind them. But then Rumpelstiltskin shows up, looking for payment. Nobody tells a woman of the cost—the grief and desperation she will feel after aborting her child. Rumpelstiltskin comes in her dreams and accuses her while she's awake. She bargains with him, offering gold if he will just go away. But he's not interested in her gold.

For the miller's daughter, there was only one way to make Rumpelstiltskin go away. She had to guess his name correctly and speak it aloud. This is not unlike the post-abortive woman who, at first, cannot name the root of her anguish. Like

the miller's daughter, who kept her shameful visits with Rumpelstiltskin hidden, the post-abortive woman might hide her feelings of guilt and shame, keeping her secret—and her sorrow—to herself. Sometimes it manifests in drink or drugs, in risky behavior, or worse. Some women try to escape by attempting suicide—some of them succeed.

But one day the miller's daughter chose to confide in somebody, asking a messenger to help her find the name of the evil manikin who kept returning to collect payment. The messenger had overheard the name of Rumpelstiltskin and told her of it.

Knowing the name of her nightmare, the miller's daughter suddenly felt some of her power restored. She was no longer at Rumpelstiltskin's mercy. The post-abortive woman, when she reaches out for the help of others who made the same dark journey and have been healed, can also find relief. These "messengers" come in the name of the Prince of Peace, the true Savior. They can assist her in naming her sorrow. And when she does, it loses power over her, making room in her heart for healing.

The next time Rumpelstiltskin came back for his pay, the miller's daughter looked him in the eye and spoke his name. In a fury, he stomped his foot so hard it plunged deep into the earth, tearing him in two.

—*Victoria Garaitonandia Gisoni is the Public Outreach Associate at Priests for Life and Hispanic Outreach at Sacerdotes Por La Vida.*

Thinking Through Kevin Williamson's Abortion Remark

Nicholas Frankovich

An irony of the recent contretemps over Kevin Williamson is that a writer who delivers such a high ratio of originality to conventional wisdom would become the subject of so much repetition of ideological boilerplate. Four years ago, Williamson wrote in a Twitter exchange and said on a podcast not only that abortion should be illegal but that women who aborted their unborn children should be hanged. Last month, critics on the Left dug up those statements of his and pointed to them as self-evidently reprehensible and cause for him to be fired from *The Atlantic*, which had just hired him away from *National Review*. On the Right, many rose to Williamson's defense by invoking the freedom of speech and, more broadly, the need for a freer exchange of ideas in mainstream media, but of course *The Atlantic* did not violate Williamson's First Amendment rights by deciding not to publish his work, and the range of ideas that any publication can give space to is necessarily finite.

On neither side did many of those who weighed in on the controversy engage with any of the ideas implicit in his provocative position. From one perspective,

that was fair enough, since he presented that particular opinion of his as a bold assertion, not the conclusion of a reasoned argument—although the possible lines of reasoning that lead to the position that women who get abortions should get the death penalty are worth articulating, if only to cut through the euphemism and evasion that clouds so much discussion of the issue. To their credit, a minority of commentators on each side of the Williamson affair did attempt to think the problem through, though in varying degrees of good faith.

“In some ways I appreciate Williamson’s honesty in admitting where his anti-abortion agenda leads,” wrote Michelle Goldberg in the *New York Times*, presenting a familiar case against the pro-life cause. “More abortion opponents should be willing to acknowledge that treating abortion as murder necessarily means treating women as murderers.” The key word is *murder*, which means the premeditated and unlawful taking of a human life. Virtually all abortions that are performed in the United States are premeditated by the women who procure them, but virtually all those abortions are also legal under the various state abortion laws, which conform to the stipulations of *Roe v. Wade*. Since, as a rule, abortion in America, as in most of the developed world, meets one condition of the definition of murder but not the other, it can’t be accurately called murder, except perhaps in rare cases, so pro-life advocates who know what they’re doing steer clear of the term.

Advocates of abortion rights often seek to discredit the pro-life movement by ascribing to it the unqualified view that abortion is murder. They aim not just to portray the movement as unschooled in the law but to characterize as psychologically horrifying the entire effort to protect unborn children. Here the loose, colloquial sense of *murder* does its work. It’s a strong word. It points to the murderer, imputes guilt, and conveys moral disgust.

One slander against pro-lifers is that they care only about unborn children and thereby degrade and dehumanize the women who carry them. An opposite slander is that pro-lifers only pretend to care about the unborn and are secretly motivated by misogyny. One proof of that accusation is sometimes said to be implicit in the case that pro-lifers make for an abortion ban with exceptions that include pregnancies resulting from rape. If the moral worth of an unborn child is equal to that of any other human being, the conditions under which he was conceived should be immaterial to the moral imperative to protect his life. If we maintain that a woman must not abort him unless he is the product of her having been raped, what are we saying except that pregnancy is her condign punishment for agreeing to have sex? If she didn’t agree to it, she’s not culpable.

That abortion-rights debating point is intended to embarrass pro-life advocates and pressure them to back off their endorsement of exceptions and to embrace a pure abortion ban, which would be intellectually coherent but politically untenable. Given the strength of public opinion on this question, the prudent

course for pro-life advocates is to advance abortion restrictions that do include an exception for rape, but they need to anticipate the other side's logic-based objection and to develop a response that is both reassuring to moderates and also philosophically cogent. I don't propose such a response here, only the need to have one.

Even though most people do not hew to rigorous logic in their views of abortion law and policy, the logic or illogic of a position registers with them all the same. The argument for a given restriction on abortion will be more persuasive if it includes a frank acknowledgment of the philosophical problems entailed by any stipulated exceptions. It's better to preempt than to be cornered by the objection that an exception for rape implies that our motivation in restricting abortion is to punish women for having sex. Even if it's never voiced in the course of debate, that thought will lurk somewhere in the minds of readers and listeners. In discussing strategy with other proliferators, I'm sometimes misunderstood to be advocating philosophical purity and rejecting political prudence. What I'm advocating is debate preparation.

The consensus in the pro-life movement is that bans or restrictions on abortion should be enforced by imposing punishment and penalties only on abortion providers. The reason for exempting women who have abortions appears on the surface to be only that public opinion demands it, but here public opinion is based in a certain logic, sound though for the most part unexamined. We see the injustice of abortion, and so, to an extent, may the woman who has an abortion, but the prevailing sentiment of the surrounding culture is one of ambivalence, a blend of the feeling that abortion is wrong and of the feeling that it may be justified. That ambivalence influences her moral judgment. If she had an abortion and it was illegal, she would have broken the law but not necessarily violated either her conscience or "community standards."

The mere discussion, let alone the enactment, of strong abortion bans or restrictions is colored by the problem of where the pro-life movement currently stands in the history of the anti-abortion cause. We have envisioned with some clarity a more just society for future generations. We take steps in its direction but cannot proceed as if we've already arrived. Remember that our present-day unequivocal rejection of slavery would be dismissed as extremist by most white Americans in Charleston in the eighteenth century. So it is with abortion and most Americans in 2018. "It's going to be 150 years before this happens," Williamson said in the podcast, meaning that we're that far from a world in which abortion would be so unthinkable that capital punishment for a woman who had one would not be. His moral imagination is more active than most.

Born and adopted a few months before the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, he wonders whether his mother would have aborted him had he come along just a little later. He's thought it through. The indignation

you might feel at his talk about hanging is a mirror image of the indignation he feels that he might have come that close to being on the wrong end of a suction device or pair of serrated forceps. “Anyone who actually went to school on his voluminous, scintillating body of work would know that his tweets and podcast commentary about hanging women who abort their babies were bracing observations about the barbarity of killing the defenseless, not a summons to the gallows” is how Andrew C. McCarthy summed up the matter at *National Review Online*.

—*Nicholas Frankovich is an editor at National Review.*



APPENDIX A

[*John Finnis is Professor of Law and Legal Philosophy Emeritus at the University of Oxford and the Biolchini Family Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame. The following essay is reprinted with permission of The Public Discourse (www.publicdiscourse.com), the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute. ©The Witherspoon Institute. All rights reserved.*]

Germain Grisez, Christian Philosopher

John Finnis

Germain Grisez, who died on February 1, early on the eve of Candlemas, wrote the twentieth century's most adequate, profound, creative, and faithful work of moral theology. And down to his very last days in this world he was working toward a theological book on the Last Things, a work that even in outline had the same unique combination of qualities.

But his richest talent was as a philosopher. Speaking of himself on the website he painstakingly constructed over the last decade—a resource set up to endure, complete with a short autobiography, a full and explanatory bibliography, a republication of virtually all his printed and some valuable unprinted works, and a guide to the life and work of more than a dozen of those he counted as his personal colleagues—he rightly says: “in 1978, his understanding of his commitment compelled him to become a theologian but enabled him to do so without ceasing to be a philosopher.”

In November 1960, early in his thirty-first year and little over a year after completing (under the formidable Richard McKeon) his University of Chicago PhD on logical theory, Grisez wrote a short but deep-going paper on “The Four Meanings of ‘Christian Philosophy.’” What he there wrote about the first and fourth of these meanings says much of what a truthful obituary needs to say of him, nearly six decades later, when he had in wonderful measure fulfilled what he had long before envisaged as the good to which, and for which, he should commit himself.

The first of his meanings of “Christian philosophy” focuses on the philosophers themselves, those who

having good will . . . see . . . that their diverse commitments conceal an implicit unity, for one and all they are committed to a reality which lies outside their proper and peculiar interests and beyond their clear vision and grasp. Hence they tolerate diversity of [overarching] commitment . . . because they accept it as a significant and common evil toward whose elimination they must co-operate, using themselves in the service of that one reality beyond interest, in which their diverse explicit commitments implicitly unite.

He continues, about philosophers of this kind:

Among these . . . some appear pre-eminent over the rest in their extraordinary intellectual competence and activity, in their detachment from both technicalities and vulgar concerns, in their universality of interest, in their indifference to praise and condemnation, in their magnanimity, in their fairness to collaborators and critics, in their sagacity in appreciating the common human predicament, and in their determination to unfold their commitments to the point where their hidden community can appear in reality . . .

And that, we can now see, was Grisez's preeminence, achieved and maintained over

many decades even if not widely recognized. Having delineated other characteristics of such philosophers, including that “they know well their limitations,” he concluded his portrait of them in this way:

such as these deserve the title “philosopher” . . . and the title will be qualified by the denominations of commitment—for example, they will call John Henry Newman “a Christian philosopher.” The qualification does not diminish the title, nor is it a mere extrinsic addition to it . . .

His outward productions, his utterances and writings, are not what such a philosopher hopes mainly to accomplish, but in so far as those works are relic of his life they will be called after him, “Christian philosophy.”

Then his account of the fourth, complementary meaning of “Christian philosophy” focused not on the philosopher so much as on philosophical inquiry’s outcome:

We may call a philosophy “Christian” in itself—and denominate its author “a Christian philosopher” from it—inasmuch as that philosophy has the truth that it has in itself at the end of an analysis which is intrinsically related to a Christian’s wonder—wonder that initiated the inquiry preceding the analysis—wonder upon the worlds of which we find ourselves a part: the world of nature signed by the Creator’s hand; the world of truth illumined by the Light of man; and the world of value sanctified by the Love that abides within.

The whole of Grisez’s account of this sense of Christian philosophy repays study, not least as—implicitly if not unconsciously, but certainly not exclusively—an exploration of the shape that *philosophic wonder* first takes in a cradle Catholic educated by a warmly believing household; and then of the place of audacious questioning in a Christian faith firmly held for love of God and—more and more dominant in Grisez’s developing understanding and theology—in hope for God’s Kingdom.

In arranging his works for his website, Grisez wrote that his professional commitment “insofar as he was both a philosopher and a believing Catholic” was articulated *more* in his 1966 paper “The Christian Philosopher,” and that in it he had spelled out “the understanding of the relationship between nature and grace that would remain, though be more fully articulated, in his later works;” and had “made clear the sort of Thomist he would be: one who would begin from Thomas but depart from him insofar as evidence and reasons required.” As the paper put it,

Each philosopher must ultimately judge these demands, using his sources of evidence and his reason. He cannot avoid final responsibility for his own judgment, because he has no philosophic superior.

Philosophic argument is not a strategy of proselytizing. Genuine philosophy must criticize other philosophy and offer itself to all other philosophy for criticism. This exchange is not a dialogue; it is a bloody conflict without which philosophy would not progress.

A main conclusion of the 1966 paper was that “the Christian philosopher’s primary aim” should be to do pure “speculative philosophy—first philosophy, pure metaphysics.” Then: “a secondary, but by no means incidental concern, should be the work of ethics.”

But the exigencies of teaching and the crisis of the times meant that Grisez’s first

two books, though fundamentally philosophical and certainly not theological, were on ethics: *Contraception and the Natural Law* (1964), and *Abortion: The Myths, the Realities and the Arguments* (1970). The critical and historical (and in the latter case also scientific, medical, and legal) parts of each book are of permanent value, but the constructive ethical arguments, especially of the former, have been superseded by Grisez's later work showing why the firm Christian judgment, from the beginnings of Christianity, that choices of such kinds are opposed both to reason and to revelation is entirely sound.

The essential work in pure metaphysics was done by Grisez in his book on the existence of God, published in 1975 as *Beyond the New Theism: A Philosophy of Religion* and republished in 2005 with a valuable additional ten-page preface and the more suitable title *God? A Philosophical Preface to Faith* (St Augustine's Press, South Bend, Indiana).

The other book Grisez wrote on metaphysics is a first example of his preference for collaborative philosophical work, *Free Choice: A Self-Referential Argument* (Notre Dame UP 1977), written in 1973-75 with Joseph Boyle and Olaf Tollefsen (most able former doctoral students of his). The upshot of these two books is that Grisez's natural law ethics is the most metaphysically well-grounded of all ethical theories of modern times.

Collaborative large-scale philosophical works followed even after Grisez's vocational turn to theology in 1978 (a turn made needful by the absence of serious work responsive to Vatican II's call for theologians to prioritize moral theology, and by the ever-growing infidelity of theologians, not least moral theologians). *Life and Death with Liberty and Justice: A Contribution to the Euthanasia Debate*, written with Joseph Boyle immediately before that turn, parallels the book on abortion in its ambition to attend to facts, political theory, and law as well as to ethical foundations and judgments; Grisez's explanation of its supersession by later work of his accompanies the website version.

Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism (Oxford UP 1987), lists me and Joseph Boyle as lead authors but was mostly written by the three of us together in Germain's office at Mount St Mary's College, Maryland—a remarkable, unreproducible experience made possible by his matchless analytical and synthesizing powers of grasping and formulating what most matters, and then of planning, outlining, and composing by dictating. As events transpired, the book was a year or two too late to have the impact needed, but it remains unrefuted and as painfully relevant as ever.

My own collaboration with Grisez began in 1974, when we drafted the four central chapters on morals in Lawler, Wuerl, and Lawler, *The Teachings of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*. My work with him extended (in very subordinate ways and varying degrees) through the three published volumes of his great *The Way of the Lord Jesus—Christian Moral Principles* (1983), *Living a Christian Life* (1993), and *Difficult Moral Questions* (1997). Organizing and chairing open seminars with him at Oxford University and Boston College in 1994-1995 on a number of those 200 difficult questions, I could observe firsthand what intellectual luxuries he had sacrificed, without complaint, in choosing to spend decades teaching seminary students rather than

advanced students of philosophy.

The extent and something of the topics and domains of our work together have been described by Grisez with characteristic precision. Our last collaborative writing is the Open Letter to Pope Francis of November 2016, about eight positions fostered if not taught by *Amoris Laetitia* and contrary to the Christian faith. Of these errors, the most important—long antedating that Apostolic Exhortation and contributing greatly to the accelerating decline of Catholicism that (mutilating or ignoring the teachings of the Council) began in the years between Grisez’s two early papers on Christian philosophy—is the eighth: the comfortable thought that “A Catholic need not believe that many human beings will end in hell.” Our discussion of it culminates in these words, close to the center of Grisez’s concern over many decades:

Confidently expecting heaven and no longer fearing hell, one reasonably assumes that nothing one does or fails to do is likely to make any difference to what will happen to oneself, one’s loved ones, or anyone else after death. Without a kingdom that must be sought, there no longer is any reason for non-Christians to repent and believe, and Jesus’ exhortation to seek first the Father’s “kingdom and his righteousness” (Mt 6:33; cf. Lk 12:31) no longer evokes the theological hope unsullied by presumption that alone can motivate Christians to live their faith in love, to try to form their children in its practice, and to promote others’ salvation.

The attached footnote there cites the published fruits of Grisez’s collaboration with Fr. Peter Ryan, SJ, on the kingdom of God, a project thoroughly outlined but uncompleted at Grisez’s death.

Our final work together was our participation just before Christmas 2017 at a two-day consultation in Princeton with a dozen or so of those who deploy or actively explore the philosophical approach to ethics that Grisez and then I pursued, partly independently, partly in collaboration (visible or invisible), over the years since I chanced in December 1965 upon his *Contraception and the Natural Law*.

Although advanced in the progressive physical illness that he knew was terminal, Germain was in command of intellectual powers and attainments I do not expect to see matched in this life. They were powers and attainment fired, as they always had been in my acquaintance with him, by a glowing magma of Christian faith, faith that he had the privilege of not only adhering to by rational, critical judgment but also experiencing, with Christian hope to match. The emotions adding their motivation to his reason’s faith and hope could—as ever with Germain—momentarily shake or melt his voice, but not his intellect’s steel and will, nor his gentleness with interlocutors in search of light and explanation.

For his help and companionship, God be thanked; and let us pray for his admission to heaven’s full light and society.

APPENDIX B

[Clarke Forsythe is senior counsel at Americans United for Life and author of *Abuse of Discretion: The Inside Story of Roe v. Wade*. © 2018 by National Review. Reprinted by permission.]

The Supreme Court Sows Confusion about Abortion Law

Clarke Forsythe

Clarifying and settling the law are among the most important responsibilities of the Supreme Court in the American constitutional system, and something the Court is frequently called on to do. “Ultimately it is this Court’s responsibility to clarify the scope of its own holdings,” as Justice William Brennan said more than a quarter of a century ago.

It is extraordinary, therefore, to see the Court perpetuate and aggravate decades of legal confusion of its own making, as it has done through its decision in *Whole Women’s Health v. Hellerstedt* (2016). Five Justices in *Hellerstedt* threw out health and safety regulations for Texas abortion clinics by adopting a new version of the “undue burden” test, by which the Court gave power to judges to decide whether state regulations impose an “undue burden” on a woman’s decision to choose abortion. Sooner or later, this persistently troublesome area of American constitutional law is bound to come back to the Court, and that may happen later this year.

This confusion goes back 45 years, to *Roe v. Wade*, by which the Court assumed authority to approve or disapprove—directly or through the lower federal courts—every abortion law in the country. In 1983, a decade after *Roe*, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor criticized the Court for its inconsistent application of *Roe* in cases over the preceding decade. Nine years later, the Court substantially changed *Roe* and created the “undue burden” test in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992).

The late Justice Antonin Scalia predicted then that the new test would sow confusion, and that’s exactly what happened. How a burden is determined to be “undue” in any case is entirely subjective. An “undue burden” seems to look at the *justification* for the burden, while a “substantial obstacle” seems to look at only the *extent* of the burden.

A year after *Casey*, the Court compounded the problem by adding a “large fraction” factor to the “undue burden” test. For more than two decades, the federal courts struggled to determine what was a “large fraction” of “relevant” cases showing a “substantial obstacle.”

In January, abortion advocates asked the Supreme Court to review a case from Arkansas that tests whether any evidence is needed to claim that a “large fraction” of women seeking abortion face a “substantial obstacle” (*Planned Parenthood v. Jegley*). The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals had reversed a lower-court injunction against a state regulation of chemical abortion because the court had “done no math” to demonstrate that a “large fraction” of women would likely be affected. That case has been prematurely appealed, and the justices should not hear it unless and until the factual record has been sufficiently developed.

Last year, in *Hellerstedt*, the Court once again changed the “undue burden” test, by granting federal judges, for the first time, the power to personally review the “benefits and burdens” of health and safety regulations, imposing a subjective standard that can

be heavily influenced by the personal views of the judge. It is a highly speculative endeavor when federal judges review, as they often do, state abortion laws before they have gone into effect.

Using *Hellerstedt* as a sword, abortion clinics have now reopened attacks against abortion regulations across the country. In courts in Alabama, Arkansas, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas, more than a dozen cases are pending that challenge state abortion regulations—including laws that were upheld by the Supreme Court before *Hellerstedt*.

The confusion sowed by *Hellerstedt* isn't limited to health and safety standards for clinics or to hospital admitting policies after abortion complications, the specific issues involved in the case. Some pending cases seek to extend *Hellerstedt* to strike down basic medical-licensing and credentialing requirements. In Alabama and Indiana, parental-notice or consent statutes, an issue supposedly settled by prior Supreme Court decisions, have been challenged. Although the Court has twice upheld a physician-only law (that only physicians can do abortions), such laws in Maine and Montana are now facing court challenges. Waiting periods, which the Court previously upheld in *Casey*, are being challenged in Iowa, Florida, Missouri, and Tennessee.

Hellerstedt has reopened 45 years of abortion law and interpretation. Before *Hellerstedt* the Court looked at the impact of specific abortion laws. Now *Hellerstedt* suggests that abortion advocates can, as they are now doing in Louisiana, challenge a number of state laws taken together, for their *cumulative* impact on abortion “access.”

Five justices in *Hellerstedt* said there wasn't “enough” evidence of the need for Texas's health and safety regulations, though there was significant evidence in the record. Law professor Mary Ziegler, author of *After Roe*, notes that *Hellerstedt* “offers little guidance about how much (or how good) the proof must be before lawmakers can regulate.” That is a serious obstacle for legislators and public-health officials.

The ambiguity in *Hellerstedt* seems intentional. If the Court in June 2016 lacked enough votes to impose a broader injunction against state abortion regulations, the justices could effectively do the same thing by issuing a vague opinion that enabled abortion clinics to reopen challenges to parental laws, informed-consent laws, and waiting periods, knowing that sympathetic federal judges could shut down the laws for years, if not indefinitely.

In the wake of *Hellerstedt*, Americans United for Life, where I serve as senior counsel, published *Unsafe*, a 200-page report (backed up by 250 pages of data) documenting that 227 abortion providers in 32 states were cited for more than 1,400 health and safety deficiencies between 2008 and 2016. By ruling as they did in *Hellerstedt*, the justices left unresolved the problem of substandard conditions and providers in dozens of abortion businesses across the country.

With *Hellerstedt*, the Court has neither clarified nor settled its abortion doctrine. Confusion prevents state and local officials from effectively doing what the justices have repeatedly said the states have the authority to do: protect the states' interest in fetal life and maternal health. After 45 years, the Court's abortion doctrine shows no signs of ever being settled or workable.

APPENDIX C

[This article is reprinted with permission of The Weekly Standard, where it first appeared on March 23, 2018. For more information visit www.weeklystandard.com.]

Ruth, Meet Gracie

Charles Sykes

I wish Ruth Marcus had come to the birthday party Wednesday night.

Not that I know her that well, but I've always found her pleasant, decent, and smart. We've exchanged green room pleasantries and apparently last week during a joint appearance, I introduced her to the term "pornstache" (in a discussion of John Bolton's facial hair).

A few weeks ago, Marcus created a stir with her column headlined: "I would've aborted a fetus with Down syndrome. Women need that right." A mother of two, Marcus wrote that she was old enough to be tested for Down syndrome after the 15th week of her pregnancy. "I can say without hesitation," she wrote, "that, tragic as I would have felt, and ghastly as a second-trimester abortion would have been, I would have terminated those pregnancies had the testing come back positive. I would have grieved the loss and moved on."

I would have liked to have taken Ms. Marcus to Gracie Jagler's 21st birthday party.

Gracie had her hair done for the event and a limousine brought her to the local Elks Club lodge for the gathering of families and friends. Coincidentally, her birthday fell on World Down Syndrome Day, which was appropriate since Gracie was born with an extra chromosome.

I wish I could have introduced Marcus to this lovely young woman and told her Gracie's story. Last year, Gracie was awarded the first-ever Blake Pyron Entrepreneurship Scholarship. The award, given by the National Down Syndrome Society, recognized Gracie's success in creating her own company—a natural dog treat business based out of her home in Watertown, Wisconsin, called Gracie's Doggie Delights.

I should acknowledge here that I have known her parents for years, having worked with her father, John, at my old radio station. But my more direct connection these days is through our three dogs, Moses, Auggie, and Pete, who regard Gracie's treats as canine crack.

They are not alone, as Gracie and her family have built the business on the growing number of customers she calls "G-Dogs," whose lives revolve around scheming for her frozen chicken, lamb, and turkey hearts or beef liver treats. (Available for order online at <https://graciesdoggiedelights.com>)

"The money part, she doesn't quite realize, but she does know she's helping dogs," her father, John told a Madison, Wisconsin, newspaper. "So, every night before she goes to bed, we look at her photos on (the business') Facebook (page) of all the dogs that have been mailed (treats)."

At her 21st birthday party, Gracie blew out the candles on her cake and posed for pictures with two of her dog customers. She is a young woman with a purpose and the confidence of knowing that she can do this.

“Grace is a blessing,” her father, now a Republican member of the Wisconsin legislature, says. “She is a true gift. She makes me a better person every day. Seeing her thrive while operating her own business has been like watching a miracle play out before you. She’s confident. She’s happy. The world needs more people like her, not less.”

We talked about the Marcus column.

“My initial reaction was sadness,” he says, “but it grew to anger as people started complimenting her and describing the article as ‘courageous.’ Her saying ‘this was not the child I wanted’ is the most astoundingly selfish thing I have ever read.”

“She’s not picking out a snack at a vending machine in the Post’s cafeteria. We are talking about a human life—one that didn’t ask to be brought into this world.”

In her column, Marcus made it clear that she respected and admired parents like the Jaglers who “knowingly welcome a baby with Down syndrome into their lives.” She insisted, however, that aborting babies with Down syndrome should remain an individual choice.

But ideas and social attitudes have consequences; and regarding certain types of children as inconvenient burdens can morph into dehumanization. As George Will (who has a son with Down syndrome) wrote afterward, it can ultimately lead to the virtual extermination of a whole class of babies.

In Iceland, he noted, they have “basically eradicated” Down Syndrome people through aggressive prenatal testing and social pressures to abort children like Gracie. Iceland is further along than other Western countries, but is not an outlier.

About 750 British Down syndrome babies are born each year, but 90 percent of women who learn that their child will have — actually, that their child does have — Down syndrome have an abortion. In Denmark the elimination rate is 98 percent.

America, where 19 percent of all pregnancies are aborted, is playing catch-up in the Down syndrome elimination sweepstakes (elimination rate of 67 percent, 1995-2011).

There is a striking irony here. Even as the progressive West expands its circle of tolerance for “others” who had once been denied their full humanity, this is happening. And it is happening at a time when more people with Down syndrome are making productive and meaningful lives for themselves.

“People with Down syndrome are thriving,” says John Jagler. “The early medical interventions have improved quality of life and increased life expectancy. Their access to education is greater than ever before. Their opportunities to work are growing every day as companies realize the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities.

“The truth is, there has never been a better time for a person with Down syndrome to be alive. That is, if they’re allowed to live in the first place.”

So what would he tell a family facing a Down syndrome diagnosis?

“I would tell them what a very young resident doctor told me when Grace was born. I expressed to him my fears: What will her health be? What will she be able to do in her life? Will I be able to handle it?

“The young doctor looked at me and asked if Grace had any siblings. Her older sister Sarah was 2. He turned it around. ‘What will Sarah’s health be? Will she have any health issues in the future? What will Sarah accomplish in her life? Does her lack of a third 21st chromosome guarantee her happiness, wealth, a life lived with a strong

moral compass?’

“He then asked why would I try to project my fears and anxieties on Grace when I didn’t project them on Sarah.”

What did he think about Ruth Marcus’s “respect and admiration” for parents like John and Heidi Jagler?

He thinks for a moment.

“I don’t want it,” he says. “If she wants to admire someone, let her meet Grace.”

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“Young children are highly suggestible. By telling them they are not male or female unless they ‘think’ they are, gender ideologues force-feed kids a cruel diet of doubt. Ironically, it all relies on stereotypes: A boy is a girl in this world, if he thinks he fits the signs of a girl—the stereotype—in terms of his preferences in toys or clothing. And a girl can no longer just be a tomboy if she prefers boys’ games and clothing. By insisting there is no reality in a child’s physical sex, transgender propaganda stunts children’s development and may induce them to hate their own bodies.”

—Stella Morabito, “Transgenderism, Children, Cognitive Chaos”