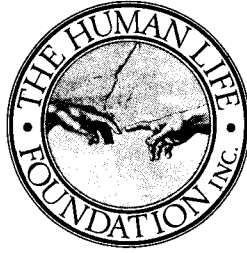


the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



WINTER 1984

Featured in this issue:

George Gilder on Paying for Children

Mary Meehan on Conscience in Politics

James Hitchcock on ... The Bishops' 'Single Issue'

Prof. William K. Kilpatrick on .. Why the Secular
Needs the Sacred

Thomas Molnar on Dehydrated Christianity

Frank Zepezauer on The Double Standard

E. von Kuehnelt-Leddihn on .. The Quality of Life

Also in this issue:

• Allan C. Carlson • Tom Bethell • Francis Canavan, S.J. •
plus a statement on abortion by the late Humberto Cardinal Medeiros

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. . . FROM THE PUBLISHER

"This review makes no pretense to detail. Its purpose is to inform those already interested and concerned about the meaning of life, and death. If in so doing we also perform a more educational service . . . we will of course be delighted (and to this end we mean to publish as much source and explanatory material as possible)."

That was written by our editor, Jim McFadden, in Vol. I, No. 1, and it hasn't been more true or evident than in this issue, which begins our 10th year of publishing. We are indeed delighted with this issue because the varied topics discussed here go far beyond providing an educational service.

We are not quite at the "publishing empire" stage yet, but we are making steady progress in that direction. In the Spring of this year, Thomas Nelson Publishers will bring out a hard-cover edition of President Reagan's article, "Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation" (HLR, Spring '83), along with articles (also first printed in the HLR) by the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. C. Everett Koop, and our great friend Malcolm Muggeridge. (A paperback edition is also planned.) This is especially pleasing because it represents our first entry into what should be the mass distribution of our material—something we have not been able to achieve in the past.

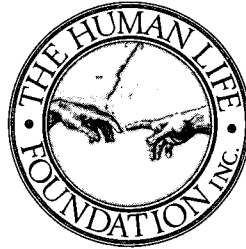
William Kirk Kilpatrick, making his first appearance in these pages, is the author of *Psychological Seduction* (\$5.95), Thomas Nelson Publishers, P.O. Box 14100, Nashville, Tennessee 37214-1000. In George Gilder's article, "The Case for Child Allowances," he quotes from a monograph, "Help for Families on the Front Lines: the Theory and Practice of Family Allowances," by Joseph Piccione. It can be obtained for \$2.95 from the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, 721 Second Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. Appendix A, "Family Breakdown and other Cancers of the 'Post-Capitalist' Era," by Allan C. Carlson first appeared in *Persuasion at Work*, a monthly publication of The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103. Subscriptions are \$10 per year. Appendix C, "Entrail Reading" by Tom Bethell, is reprinted with permission from the American Spectator, P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, Indiana 47402. A one year subscription (12 issues) costs \$21.

We remind our readers that we still have available copies of Ellen Wilson's *An Even Dozen* (\$10.00), and Joseph Sobran's *Single Issues* (\$12.95). Both are collections of essays that first appeared in this review; both are original (and handsome) hardcover editions, and can be ordered direct from the Foundation. We also have copies of *A Private Choice* (\$11.95) by Prof. John T. Noonan, Jr. It is generally considered the best book yet written on abortion in America. Prof. Noonan is, of course, a frequent contributor to this review, and member of our editorial board. Please see the inside back cover for details on how to order these important books.

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

EDWARD A. CAPANO
Publisher

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INTRODUCTION

“ALMOST THE ENTIRE poverty agenda of economists, left and right, is bankrupt. Until policy makers confront the paramount realities of sex and family, they will continue to multiply the problems they pretend to solve, continue to ravage the lives of the poor in the name of compassion . . .”

So writes Mr. George Gilder in our lead article. As always, Mr. Gilder writes with a passionate intensity, which is altogether fitting for the “Welfare Trap” he describes in vivid detail here. We have long wanted to explore the subject. In past issues we have, of course, carried numerous articles on the problems of the family (which is and must be—it cannot be repeated too often—the basic unit of any society), but none that better illuminates the awesome new problems caused by some of the “solutions” our society has attempted to apply.

We Americans are, on the record, generous people; we have supported spending programs for the poor and the aged that may well be beyond our means, and beyond what our children can or will pay. This sobering conclusion would be one thing if such massive spending were producing the intended results; it is quite another thing if, as Mr. Gilder argues (from the available facts), we are paying dearly to make things worse.

The basic problem seems to be that our national debates on social policies have been reduced to a wholly-inadequate political shorthand: Do you want to help the poor? Then vote for Program X. Will Program X actually *help* the poor? Aha: so you *don't* want to help . . . by and large, we have voted our consciences, without asking whether they are properly formed? (Another astounding example is our habit of voting ever more money for Planned Parenthood-style “sex education” as the means to stop the ever-growing “epidemic” of teenage pregnancy—as a friend of ours once put it, rather like teaching drivers’ training when you want to clear the highways.)

Thus, when we read a short article by Mr. Gilder in the *Wall Street Journal* last fall, we thought he was saying just the kind of thing that *ought* to be said.

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And, knowing the author, we suspected that he undoubtedly had a lot *more* to say. He did. We hastened to invite him to say it here. He certainly has, and we strongly recommend it not only to you, dear reader, but also to every lawmaker, churchman, and “social justice” votary in the land. It is certainly one of the most unusual articles we have yet published.

The fact is, most of the other articles in this issue are also unusual for us. Sure, we have much, as always, about our fundamental concerns, abortion *et al*; but here you will find them interlaced through a series of pieces on a very broad range of other subjects, from this year’s politics to age-old arguments about religion. (We have often been advised to *avoid* politics and religion; the trouble is, as Chesterton once reminded us, that would mean saying nothing about what happens to us here, or hereafter.)

So we continue with a most timely article on political courage by Miss Mary Meehan, one of our favorite writers. She too has a great deal to say, specifically about political leaders who can say, as Vermont’s Senator Patrick Leahy has said, that abortion is “a very, very serious evil in this country”—but then, as she points out, go on to vote consistently not only to keep abortion legal but also to support it with the taxpayer’s money (as Senator Leahy certainly has done). Of course Mr. Leahy is hardly alone; there are a great many lawmakers who share his peculiar habit of voting for great evils to which (in the phrase made famous by another Senator, Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts) they are “personally opposed,” and you will read about quite a few of them here.

To be sure, politicians are not the only ones to get tangled up in inconsistency on abortion. In the (strong) opinion of Professor James Hitchcock, another of our regular contributors, some churchmen too are having increasing difficulty focusing on abortion as the “single issue” it has heretofore been considered by just about everybody, for or against. Hitchcock’s text is the recent declaration by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Chicago, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, that henceforth reverence for human life must be viewed as a “seamless garment,” i.e., that Catholics who oppose abortion should also oppose nuclear weapons and even capital punishment (and a good deal more as well). The question naturally arises: Will Catholics who already hold those latter, liberal views, but do *not* oppose abortion, now begin to do so? Hitchcock thinks not; rather, he believes, the new “linkage” policy will have the effect of dissipating the intensity of Catholic opposition to abortion.

What the reader may find of even greater interest is Hitchcock’s discussion of a little-noticed book by an ex-priest that has all the markings of a trial balloon: it puts forward arguments which, if accepted, could make abortion—and infanticide—*morally* acceptable to Catholics. Not possible? Well, as you’ll see,

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the book has the endorsement of several prominent prelates and others (including, for some unexplained reason, Senator John Danforth of Missouri, who is by reputation anti-abortion). As we say, it makes very interesting reading, and it's a story we will do our best to follow up in coming issues.

Next we welcome Professor William K. Kilpatrick, a newcomer to our pages (but hardly to serious writing; he is the author of many articles, and the recently-published book *Psychological Seduction*), who essays the opinion that what our secular "pluralistic" society badly needs is a good dose of the *sacred*. Why? Well, because purely-secular authority ends up being purely arbitrary, all "must" and no "ought." And we poor humans always want to know *why* we should do what we're told—an answer that only the gods (or God) can supply.

Little wonder, then, that the breakdown of authority is especially obvious in our schools. We have lost, says Mr. Kilpatrick, the old notion that teachers acted *in loco parentis*—not to mention the idea that *parents* acted as personifications of an even Higher Authority.

He puts it neatly: parental authority derives not from the kind of "rational, mutually-satisfying agreement" that would have pleased a Rousseau, but simply from the fact of *generation*; it's the natural order of things. "There is no way to reason logically to such a conclusion because it is not a conclusion but, rather, one of those bedrock observations about human nature that are not the result of logic but the source of it." Good stuff, and plenty of it. We certainly hope to have much more from Mr. Kilpatrick in the future.

God, the One and True, is also the concern of our old friend Professor Thomas Molnar, whose long and distinguished teaching career has only sharpened his zest for, well, the pursuit of Truth (what else?). The good Professor has taught many subjects in many places, all the while producing a steady stream of tough-minded books, and countless articles for American and European publications (no doubt his is a household name in France at least). When, last year, he took the opportunity to teach a "religion" course at Yale, he did what comes naturally, i.e., he critiqued not only the performance of his students but also his own. It makes a fascinating story.

Molnar also cuts to the heart of a very serious matter: even in our most prestigious academies, "value-free" education is *dogma*, a contradiction-in-terms sufficient to stunt the intellectual growth of even the best and the brightest. Unless of course they are lucky enough to run into someone who professes what he *believes*, which is what happened to Molnar's select band of student-scholars. Clearly they profited from the confrontation, as you will, just from reading all about it.

Mr. Frank Zepezauer has also had long teaching experience, currently at high-

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school level. And he maintains a close interest in “what’s happening” around him. Here, for instance, he starts with the obviously socially-significant question asked by a newspaper’s “man-on-the-street” reporter: “What are you mad as hell about?” As it turns out, you’d better be sure that what you’re mad-as-hell about is not socially *approved*.

About here, we always try to provide something quite different. Well, Herr Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn (another old friend) is *always* quite different. Here, he takes the currently-fashionable term “Quality of Life”—you know, the trendy justification for such things as abortion, infanticide, and so on—and in effect stands it on its head. We ourselves define the quality of our lives, all too often by *quantitative* judgments; paradoxically, “too many” babies often produce *more* reverence for life, whereas too few of them can produce “Me” generations. But as anybody knows who has read even one of Herr Kuehnelt’s previous essays, there is no possible way of describing the breadth and width of his eclecticism. If this is the kind of thing you like, you’ll like this one very much indeed.

We add, as is our custom, a number of appendices. As we said, this issue seemed to grow out of Mr. Gilder’s unusual article—all the other pieces somehow seemed fittingly unusual, etc. *Appendix A* is, as you will see, an obvious complement to Gilder’s lead: the brutal destruction of ghetto families is merely the most obvious rupture in a social fabric that is threatened even at its strongest bulwarks by the relentless assault of an anti-family *ideology*. (Surely 1984 is not the year to dismiss such visions as exaggerated?) We note that the author, Mr. Allan Carlson, is another of our previous contributors.

The next two items “fit” with Professor Hitchcock’s article. If today Cardinal Bernardin claims that abortion is but one of many “life” issues, well, it would seem that the late Cardinal of Boston, Humberto Medeiros, would not have agreed. In retrospect, his bold statement, issued in the midst of the 1980 elections (reprinted here in *Appendix B*), may well stand, *in memoriam*, as the most unequivocal anti-abortion statement ever made by an American prelate.

The short commentary by Professor Francis Canavan, S. J. (*Appendix C*) is quite different in both tone and content, yet we see it too as relating directly to what Hitchcock is talking about: namely that while abortion is indeed (and rightly, we’d say) a political issue, *churchmen* should treat it as a *moral* issue. And on its own merits, lest they confuse the Faithful, and so on. Professor Canavan, our esteemed editor-at-large, writes with his accustomed lucidity, and restrained humor (the current Silly Season *does* make it hard for “the rest of us” to go to church, he’s got it just right—don’t miss this one).

Finally, we have a restorative you may otherwise have missed, and which makes a point vital to all this journal has attempted to do. *Our* purpose is to use

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reason to get at truth, whereas the national rage is to find out what we ought to *think* (read “feel”) in relation to what we’re assured everybody else thinks, courtesy of modernity’s entrail readers, The Pollsters. Mr. Tom Bethell (also a previous contributor) is at his best on stuff like this; he will not disappoint you in *Appendix D*, nor, we predict, will you ever again read the latest “opinion survey” without recalling what he says—and laughing. Why, you *too* could get the answers you prefer, if only you could compose the questions!

So we put to bed this, the first issue of our tenth year of publication. We are of course always tempted to say this may be the best one ever—but that’s for you, dear reader, to judge (*do* consider our just-previous issue . . .). Certainly it has plenty of interesting stuff, written with verve and humor—we’re amazed ourselves at how much variety our “single issue” produces. With more to come.

J. P. MCFADDEN

Editor

The Case for Child Allowances

George Gilder

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I wrote a book called *Visible Man*, which described the way the welfare state debauches the lives of its supposed beneficiaries. The most popular chapter among my more literate male subjects was entitled “The Welfare Trap.” The consensus was that the title said it all.

Four years ago, a conference of experts on the U.S. welfare system was held in Albany, New York. In the room were five men, as mild-mannered and soft-spoken as any assemblage of prominent sociologists. All but one had been convicted recently for violent crimes. One had raped a white girl (rapes of black women scarcely counted as acts of aggression in these circles). One had shot at a police car. All bore ugly scars from repeated knife fights on the streets of the city. Contrary to the conventional wisdom in academic circles—where blacks are assumed to be arrested and prosecuted more often than comparable whites—each of these men had committed several assaults of various sorts for every arrest, and had incurred several arrests for every conviction.

Like so many academics, the men were gathered to offer criticism of a book they hadn’t read. Although they pretended to have studied it carefully, all but one had previously revealed, in the face of street signs or bureaucratic documents, that they “didn’t read too good.” But all had copies of *Visible Man*, which had been based on hundreds of interviews with them, their families and friends, in Albany, Greenville (South Carolina) and New York City. The chief reader in the group was eager to speak: “One chapter you really said it all,” he said, “The Welfare Trap. That’s what it is, a trap. It’s got us all.” At that point, all the other men in the room, separately and in chorus, chimed in: “Yeah, the welfare *trap*. That’s what it is. The trap. And we’re in it. Yeah.”

The men all claimed to have been entrapped by a program called Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a proud offshoot of the

George Gilder, a peripatetic analyst of American social mores, is, as usual, working on one or more new books. He is perhaps best known for his seminal *Wealth and Poverty* (Basic Books, 1981).

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Social Security System. Yet no American expert on poverty, no sociologist, political scientist, or welfare analyst—no designer of welfare reforms—so much as acknowledges the existence of these men as a welfare problem. For none of these men is on the welfare rolls at all. Depending on the point of view, these men are the invisible beneficiaries, or victims, of the system.

Four years later, two of the men have moved “upstate,” to prison. One has died of an overdose. The others have gone beyond the reach of my quick investigations. Young men in their twenties four or five years ago, even the street survivors have aged radically by their mid-thirties. Gray-ing, paunchy, red-eyed, afflicted with various wasting diseases, totally uninterested in any form of employment, they fight from one woman to another, for food, lodging, and the comforts of life.

The experts will rush forward to deny in voluminous vehemence that these men are victims of welfare. Conservatives will deplore their chronic criminality and short time horizons, recount the profitability of crime, denounce the endless delays in a hopelessly-snarled judicial system, assert the usefulness of replacing welfare with a simpler “negative income tax,” recite the increasing barriers to entry into low-income jobs, chiefly the minimum wage. The liberal experts, consulting the women receiving the benefits, will clamorously declare that the only problem is inadequate payments, reflecting a racist, sexist, parsimonious society. All will speak of the many brands of unemployment: frictional, structural, cyclical, and technological.

There is some very limited truth in all these claims. Any amount of benefits will seem too small to totally improvident beneficiaries—and will indeed prove inadequate. The principle of personal responsibility for crime is a fundamental truth of conservative thought. It can be rejected only at the cost of adding a complete denial of human dignity to the other afflictions of poverty, and summoning a mass of ever more reckless assailants against the social order.

The chief and crucial cause of the endless violence, demoralization, unemployment, poverty, and despair of the U.S. ghetto is not difficult to identify. It is the welfare trap. As long as Americans, liberal and conservative, fail to recognize it, they connive at a horrible and tragic wastage of the lives of the American poor: a devastation extended on into future generations by a remorseless mechanism of social generosity which

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maims and wastes and kills more surely than any device of South African racism or any fantasy of the Ku Klux Klan.

According to the latest Census data, 41 percent of all black families in America are now headed by women, and 55 percent of black children are now born out of wedlock. Since *middle-class* blacks show no more illegitimacy than whites, the latter figure reflects a nearly complete breakdown of black families in the ghetto itself—precisely where the “social programs” were focused. The Census data also show the progress made when parents stay together: The average income of intact black families with children rose during the 1970s to 90 percent of comparable white households, from 71 percent at the start of the decade. By contrast, the gap between black and white family incomes overall hasn’t narrowed in two decades.

Illegitimacy means that the sons will be brought up without fathers, in homes where money is seen as an always-inadequate entitlement to *women*, and coming from the state. These boys will hardly ever meet a working man who supports his children. They will find their manhood not by emulating adults, but by fierce street rivalries with their peers, gyrating always toward the violence that so often erupts among unconnected men. Illegitimacy means the daughters grow up in a crowded, violent, and resentful circle of women, the continuous glow of the television set and, within the alternately seductive and menacing reach of a series of passing men.

Although the men have no way out except the profits of crime or the kind of menial labor chiefly performed in the U.S. by immigrants, any girl is offered an irresistible solution by the U.S. government. It presents her, at age 16, a chance for independence in an apartment of her own: free housing, medicine, legal assistance, and a combination of welfare payments and food stamps worth several hundred dollars a month. It is a package far beyond the earning capacity of any of her male acquaintances. It is all offered on one crucial condition. She must bear an illegitimate child. Her prospects are even better. If she has three children, her income in New York State will rise to \$8,333, an amount 45 percent higher than the earnings of a full-time job at the minimum wage.

Welfare experts and administrators will testify to the existence of programs which allow her to marry the father of her offspring without jeopardizing her benefits. But the AFDC program for families with unem-

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ployed fathers is hopelessly complicated and subject to withdrawal according to the caprice of bureaucrats and the reported earnings of her man, who may well be only temporarily employed.

So the one safe, sure, and simple way for the girl to win liberation in an apartment of her own is to bear an illegitimate child. It is not surprising that, in the face of such an overwhelming inducement from the state, millions of young women have indeed launched such children into the welfare culture. As this behavior becomes accepted in welfare communities, it is adopted by many girls, black and white, without calculation or deceit, as a simple reflection of a way of life.

It may come as a shock to the partisans of the welfare state that this program is a peculiarity of the United States. The socialists of Germany or Greece would never dream of rewarding every 16-year-old girl who manages to get pregnant with a free apartment of her own. Sweden provides the most comparable benefits—and Sweden's national illegitimacy rate has recently reached 40 percent. These white Europeans have achieved such a dubious eminence despite an abortion rate of over 50 percent for young pregnant women, and despite sex education and family planning, services which, for a quarter-century, have been the most comprehensive in the world.

A welfare culture so arduously and expensively inculcated with all the wiles and wealth of the American government cannot be readily changed. But long-term improvement depends on de-legitimizing out-of-wedlock births and legitimizing marriage, even within the welfare system, rather than lavishly rewarding and affirming illegitimacy and punishing married parenthood by banishment from the compass of the welfare state.

Since 1960, all increases in personal taxation have fallen on married couples with children. While illegitimate mothers receive massive benefits, and singles or "child-free" couples have faced no increase in taxation, taxes on couples with children have risen by between 100 percent and 400 percent depending on the number of offspring. A key reason is the evaporation of the child deduction, which would be nearly \$6,000 today if it had risen apace with incomes and inflation since World War II. Meanwhile the costs of bringing up a child have risen rapidly. According to estimates by the Department of Labor, one child requires a 26 percent income hike to preserve the same family standard of living, while two children require 46 percent more than the childless level. After 10 years,

as the children grow up, family income must double in real terms.

In the lower middle class, this collision of needs and taxes has created a crisis of conscience in American family life, in which financial incentives conflict sharply with the moral duties of paternal support. With welfare the only source of income that rises as the family grows, lower-middle-class families with children face a serious dilemma.

The Congress, however, has devoted none of its reforming concern to families raising children. It has successively eliminated first the so-called “singles penalty” and then in 1981 the “marriage penalty” chiefly affecting two-earner couples *without* children. These policies are obviously appealing to the high-flying Washington singles, two-earner child-free couples, homosexuals, and other childless types who dominate the legislative and bureaucratic offices which design these programs. But the results are dangerous to the social fabric. Married couples with children bear not only the brunt of tax increases, but also the burdens of raising the children who through the social security system will support the “child-free” couples in their retirement. With welfare the only source of income that rises as the family grows, lower-middle-class families with children face a devastating financial crunch and are offered a nearly irresistible solution.

If the mother stays home to care for her children, moreover—as in most cases she should—she is deprived of a full \$800 tax credit for authorized day-care services for two or more offspring. Together with the added tax burden and the seductive welfare system, the subsidy for day care adds to the remorseless mechanisms for punishing the married mother who refuses to abandon her small children for some nine hours a day and exerts a continuous pressure for mothers in poor families to go on welfare.

The plight of the married mother with children is exacerbated by the campaign to end alleged “discrimination” against females. It turns out that the most sophisticated computer analyses of sex discrimination can find only one large group of males significantly benefitting from “sexism”—only one group earning more than their “credentials” and education would seemingly justify. The group comprises lower-middle-class men with high school education or less, and with large families to support.

Such a combination of programs can be explained partly by an ingrained resistance, within the sexually-indulgent new class of media and

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congressional leaders, to the necessary disciplines and responsibilities of motherhood and family life. Fantasies of home-body fathers cooking meals and caring for children are popular on Capitol Hill. But in fact the same legislative aids who try to inflict this ideal of meek masculinity on the ghetto will shrink from walking alone at night into nearby parking lots for fear of muggings from the fatherless boys spawned by their policy. The campaigns for affirmative action for women, and equal pay for jobs of so-called comparable worth, all too often comes down to an effort to take money and jobs away from hard-working, lower-class men with families, and give them to educated women, often with middle-class husbands. This policy thus furthers the process of family breakdown and further expands the welfare rolls. Unbeknownst to the computer, these male heads of families out-earn college educated women chiefly by working much harder, often at more than one job, while credentialled women massively prefer part-time labor.

The best way to change this system and disarm the welfare trap is to convert the current child deduction—along with the day-care subsidy and the relevant portion of AFDC—into a monthly payment, in most countries called a child allowance, which goes to all families with children, whether legitimate or illegitimate. Teenaged mothers of illegitimate children, however, should not receive an apartment of their own and should get their child allowance through their mothers (the children's grandmothers). As in civilized countries around the world where it is safe to walk the streets at night, illegitimacy would not be massively favored over legitimate motherhood. A girl who chooses to marry the father of her child would not lose her child allowance and might gain an apartment of her own only if he could pay for it. This system, which now applies in America only in the middle and upper classes, would allow the poor to overcome poverty by the only means that is effective anywhere in the world: by disciplined work and family life.

The details of the child allowance program are well presented by Joseph Piccione in his monograph for the Free Congress Foundation. It is no panacea. In Sweden, for example, the government swamps its child allowances with overwhelming contrary subsidies for illegitimacy and family breakdown. Ultimately, as the social bankruptcy of secular humanism becomes increasingly evident, churches will have to regain the confidence to teach morality to the poor. But child allowances are a crucial

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first step toward a sensible welfare system which will support families rather than subvert them.

The alternative is the perpetuation and intensification of poverty in the world's wealthiest country, while America's streets remain the most dangerous in any peaceful nation on the face of the earth. None of the other programs of the right or left—from "workfare" and lower minimum wages to more "family planning" and abortions—would have any significant effect on the problem. Even the usual remedy of "more jobs," particularly for women, would do nothing at all to dent the welfare culture. U.S. employment rose 27 percent during the last decade, created 19 million new jobs, and two-thirds of them went to women. The U.S. far excelled Japan or Europe in job growth and employed the highest share of the population in peacetime history, while the welfare problem got steadily worse. Some 10 million immigrants, mainly ignorant of English, found work in the same streets where American citizens could only find welfare.

"Workfare" programs for welfare workers are an administrative nightmare, requiring huge day-care expenses and accomplishing nothing of value. Having driven the fathers out of the ghetto family, workfare would take away the mothers as well.

Almost the entire poverty agenda of economists, left and right, is bankrupt. Until policy makers confront the paramount realities of sex and family, they will continue to multiply the problems they pretend to solve, continue to ravage the lives of the poor in the name of compassion, continue to create a criminal underclass of unlisted male welfare recipients who exploit the welfare trap—and extend it by violence ever deeper into the heart of our cities and our national consciousness.

In Things Touching Conscience

Mary Meehan

COURAGE IN POLITICS is a many-splendored thing, but hard to find. As former Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., of North Carolina once said, “Courage is the rarest trait among public men I know of. Many of them are intelligent, but there are very few of them courageous.”¹

One of the finest historical examples of courage was given by Sir Thomas More when he braved the wrath of King Henry VIII. The great English statesman would not bend his conscience to suit the King, to please other friends and political allies, to save his political career, or even to save his life. In refusing to acknowledge Henry as supreme head of the church in England, More risked a fate even worse than the one he eventually received. He was charged with high treason, and the punishment for that was hanging, drawing, and quartering—a painful and humiliating death. He was initially given this sentence, but the King commuted it to beheading.²

The horror of More’s original sentence underlines the eloquence of something he told the judges at his trial: “. . . ye must understand that, in things touching conscience, every true and good subject is more bound to have respect to his said conscience and to his soul than to any other thing in all the world besides . . .”³

The United States has had its share of political heroes. A few, such as George Washington and Andrew Jackson, seemed almost beyond temptation to cowardice. “Mr. Blair,” said Andrew Jackson to a friend, “Providence may change me but it is not in the power of man to do it.”⁴ That was a fairly accurate summary of his political career.

Jackson’s fellow Tennessean, Andrew Johnson (Lincoln’s Vice President and successor), entered politics at a time when giving a speech could be worth a man’s life. A Democrat and populist, Johnson was willing to go against his party if need be.

More than once his speaking was interrupted by the cocking of pistols. Speaking once under such sinister conditions, he was warned that the repetition of his speech would

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injure his party. "I will make that same speech tomorrow," he replied, "if it blows the Democratic Party to hell."⁵

In 1861 he risked his life many times, and was once threatened with lynching, when he opposed Tennessee's secession from the Union.⁶

Men like Johnson showed great physical courage in the course of war; others demonstrated moral courage in opposing a war they believed to be unwise or unjust. George Norris and the senior Robert La Follette led a Senate filibuster against a bill they feared would lead to American involvement in World War I; they were condemned by much of the press and public.⁷ Fifty years later, Eugene McCarthy challenged an incumbent president of his own party in an effort to end the war in Vietnam. Although his campaign later caught fire, at the beginning it was a lonely venture, almost a leap of faith. "It is difficult," the candidate noted, "to support me by daylight."⁸

That war had not yet ended when the abortion issue entered the national consciousness with the 1973 Supreme Court decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. Perhaps the greatest moral issue of our time, the abortion question is a good standard by which to judge political courage. Relatively few politicians on either side of the issue rise to the occasion, although Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina leads the anti-abortion cause with unusual tenacity and courage. The issue may help him with some constituents, but obviously hurts him with many others—North Carolina is one of only ten states that *voluntarily* fund abortions for the poor.⁹ "My friends say they agree with me on everything except abortion," Helms admits. "Some have gone as far as to say they doubt they can support me. If I have to come on home on the principle of the rights of the unborn, then I'll come on home."¹⁰

Far from being profiles in courage, most politicians are profiles in jello on this issue. They would rather hide under their desks than vote on it; they say as little as possible about it; when they do speak, they try to appeal to both sides at the same time.¹¹ A favorite ploy is to say, "I am personally opposed to abortion, but . . ." Anti-abortion activists groan inwardly when they hear this, since it is nearly always followed by a statement that we cannot impose our personal views on others; that we live in a pluralistic society; that the speaker opposes any effort to outlaw abortion and, in fact, favors public funding of the practice. This is called a "pro-choice" position, a brilliant invention of the pro-abortion lobby.

It is hard to imagine that the historical figures noted earlier could have taken it seriously. “Do you mean to say that our deepest personal convictions should have no influence on our public positions?” There would have been a look of polite disbelief from Thomas More, and one of withering scorn from Andrew Jackson. They would not have been able to understand how persons of integrity could separate their private and public convictions and then live at peace with their consciences. This would have seemed to them a great wrong and a matter of personal dishonor.

The pro-choice stance is often adopted hurriedly by politicians who have many things on their mind and want a quick answer to the nagging abortion issue. Perhaps some of them suspect that they sound awkward as they recite the pro-choice catechism. They should ponder the wisdom of a cowboy in *The Virginian*: “When a man ain’t got no ideas of his own,” said Scipio, “he’d ought to be kind o’ careful who he borrows ’em from.”¹²

One would think that pro-abortion groups would be embarrassed to receive so much of their support from politicians who *say* they are opposed to abortion. In a recent House debate, just before he voted to allow abortion coverage in the insurance programs of federal employees, Representative Robert Garcia of New York declared: “Mr. Chairman, I believe it is important that we understand that there is not one person in this chamber who favors abortions.”¹³ Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, another pro-choice legislator, was even franker when he said that “I’m not comfortable with the notion of turning a significant number of women into murderers.”¹⁴

Dodd’s statement may have raised eyebrows in the offices of Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Rights Action League, but pro-abortion lobbyists do not mind more tactful statements of personal opposition to abortion. Voters for Choice, a political action committee, even encourages such statements. In 1982 it distributed to sympathetic congressional candidates a manual on how to deal with the abortion issue. It warned them that the issue could not be evaded, but reported that it could be “well-managed.” One of its sample campaign positions included a statement of “personal opposition” to abortion, followed by the usual pro-choice line. The manual also suggested that candidates pledge their support for programs to “reduce the incidence of abortion.” But it was

very clear on the bottom line: the candidate should oppose every effort to outlaw abortion and should support public funding of abortion.¹⁵

In short, pro-abortion forces do not care very much what a politician *says* about abortion so long as he or she votes for it. They give much publicity to members of the clergy, such as Rep. Robert Edgar of Pennsylvania and former Rep. Robert Drinan of Massachusetts, who say that they do not believe in abortion, yet also say that it should remain legal and should be supported with public funds.¹⁶ It is almost as though they pat such politicians on the head and declare, "You're a good little religious person; you don't let your convictions influence public policy." A rather strange tribute.

Most pro-choice politicians do not separate their private convictions from their public stance on other life-and-death issues. This point is strikingly demonstrated by the issue of capital punishment. Most pro-choice politicians are against the death penalty both privately and publicly. (This writer is, too, but cannot understand the logic of defending the right to life of the guilty while opposing that of the innocent.)¹⁷

In 1969 Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts asked that Sirhan Sirhan, convicted assassin of his own brother, Robert Kennedy, be spared the death penalty. In his clemency appeal, Kennedy wrote that his brother "would not have wanted his death to be a cause for the taking of another life." He said that the Kennedy family believed that "the kind of man my brother was . . . should be weighed in the balance on the side of compassion, mercy and God's gift of life itself."¹⁸ That this position was not simply a personal stance of the senator's was proven in 1974, when he spoke and voted against a death-penalty bill on the Senate floor, and again in 1981, when he dissented from the Senate Judiciary Committee's support of a death-penalty bill.¹⁹

But as early as 1975, when Kennedy was leading a floor fight against an anti-abortion measure and other senators tried to ascertain his personal views on the matter, he said that "I am personally opposed to abortions," but that his personal views did "not have any direct relevance to the matter we are talking about."²⁰ Kennedy always votes for public funding of abortion, and has recently issued strident attacks against anti-abortionists.²¹

Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont joined Kennedy in dissenting from the Judiciary Committee's vote for a death-penalty bill in 1981. Their

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minority report declared that “the act of premeditated execution is itself a debasing denial of the sanctity of life.” They said that “capital punishment is wrong in principle, wrong as public policy, and wrong as reported out of Committee.”²² Senator Leahy recently called abortion “a very, very serious evil in this country” and said that “I would hope that we would reach a day when there would be no abortion.”²³ Yet he votes consistently to keep it legal and to support it with public funds.

Former Representative Bella Abzug of New York testified in 1981 against an anti-abortion measure and expressed her opposition to “any other legislative attempts to intrude the power of the State or a particular set of beliefs into the private lives of women.”²⁴ Abzug, however, is not pro-choice on capital punishment; she opposes it. When she was running for mayor of New York City in 1977 and was asked about her position on the death penalty, she responded, “It’s against my religious tradition.”²⁵

Capital punishment was an issue in the mayoralty campaign in part because then-Governor Hugh Carey had recently vetoed a death-penalty bill passed by the state legislature. In his veto message, Carey declared: “I must respond to those very personal judgments that I hold and that I cannot discard by virtue of office. I am opposed to violence and the ultimate that violence can bring—the death of another person.”²⁶ Earlier, when the legislature was debating the bill, Carey had made it clear that he would veto it and that, if the legislature passed it over his veto, he would use executive clemency to save the life of anyone sentenced to death. The legislature did not override his veto.²⁷

Because there was great support for capital punishment both in the legislature and among the public, Carey’s position appeared to be genuinely courageous. It was a good example of harmony between conscience and action. At about the same time, however, Carey announced that he would oppose any effort to end state Medicaid funding of abortion, even though “I do not believe in abortion.”²⁸ Like Kennedy and Leahy and Abzug, Carey failed to explain why his personal convictions should affect his public position on the death penalty, but *not* on abortion.

More recently, Agnes Mary Mansour left a Catholic religious order rather than obey a Vatican directive to resign as director of a Michigan state agency that funds abortions for poor women. Mansour, like many

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others, claims to be “morally opposed to abortion,” but supports public funding of it.²⁹ In 1982 she had run for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. She said then: “I would support the use of federal funds for abortion. This for me would be a vote for the poor rather than a vote for abortions.”³⁰

Her position insists that abortion is a favor to the poor—an idea disputed by many poor people and many who serve them. Mother Teresa of Calcutta declares that poor people “love their children.” Speaking of poor lepers who give up their newborns so that the infants will not contract leprosy, she says:

And it is so painful to see the mother, the tenderness of that mother’s love going through that terrible sacrifice of not even kissing her child to be able to save the life of the child. We learn so much from the poor.³¹

Dick Gregory suggests that abortion is a form of genocide against black people.³² Erma Clardy Craven, a black social worker, says this about aborting the children of the poor:

And listen to the rationale for taking their lives: They are poor! As if poverty should be an excuse for taking a human being’s life! And you can walk through the garbage cans in America and the lunchrooms in America and look at the food that’s wasted And that to me is the grossest form of racism: to take the life of a black child . . .³³

Rev. Edward Hill, a black minister, notes that his ancestors came to this country “in chains” and says of Americans that “we were the unwanted of Europe, Asia, and Africa. If we betray our heritage of bravery, hardship, and honor by telling the child there is no room in the inn, we will find we are a people without destiny”³⁴

Graciela Olivarez, an anti-poverty activist and a member of President Nixon’s commission on population growth, wrote a powerful dissent when the commission recommended abortion on request. Later she remarked, “We do not have equal opportunities. Abortion is a cruel way out.”³⁵ Juli Loesch, founder of Prolifers for Survival, once worked with poor Mexican farm workers, including women who were “strongly, strongly anti-abortion and saw it as an assault on their own dignity, as if to say they didn’t know how to be mothers or that they should maybe choose to not be mothers” Their poverty, says Loesch, “was not new to me because I was poor and was raised poor, too. In my neighborhood abortion was never anything anyone talked about, it was simply unknown. No one ever did it. No one ever heard of it Of all the

rights that poor people have demanded, and we've demanded them all along, this is the right that we've never asked for but we got."³⁶

Ellen McCormack, the anti-abortion activist who ran a highly-publicized presidential campaign in 1976, noted that "abortion is put forth as a solution for the poor, but I think the poor want better housing, more jobs, and food on their tables. I don't think aborting their babies makes them any happier. . . . it probably contributes to their misery."³⁷ One might add that the unborn children of the poor are even poorer than their parents. They have no clothes, no money, no property, no power, no way to defend themselves against violence.

Should not such considerations lead someone like Agnes Mary Mansour to oppose abortion publicly as well as privately, and to insist that government encourage alternatives to abortion? Moreover, should not a servant of the poor have regard for the *integrity* of the poor as well as their material well-being? Many poor women are opposed to abortion.³⁸ When the state offers them financial aid to have abortions, it tempts them to go against their convictions. This point is one of many that Mansour apparently overlooks. Her own conscience is not the only one at stake.

Perhaps Mansour and other politicians have not thought through the implications of having private and public positions that are diametrically opposed to one another. Professor Francis Canavan suggests another possibility: that such a politician "sees nothing morally wrong" with abortion.

Or perhaps he would agree that abortion is morally wrong because, to his mind, morality is something idiosyncratic and subjective, a kind of hangup that some people have but others do not In this view of the matter, genocide and torture are *really* wrong and we simply may not engage in them, but abortion is only *morally* wrong and we must not impose our morality on those who do not share it Rightly understood, "personally opposed" is a code word and a signal to the elect among the electorate. Unless the sender of the signal is himself simply confused, it means, "I'm with you; I don't see anything really wrong with abortion, either."³⁹

Canavan notes that this sort of position raises certain questions: "For instance, how do we tell the difference between those actions, like genocide, that are really wrong and those, like abortion, that are only morally wrong?"⁴⁰

Both, of course, are morally wrong; and "imposing morality" is what the law is largely about. To fence off abortion from other moral issues, to treat it as a privileged action that is not subject to normal sanctions on the

taking of life, is to undermine both morality and our notions about human rights.

Most politicians who say they are “personally opposed but . . . ” are trying to appeal to constituents who strongly oppose abortion. This is especially the case in the Democratic Party, whose members include huge numbers of Catholics, fundamentalists, evangelicals, and other religious people who object to abortion. Overlapping the religious groups are ethnic groups—black people, for example—who tend to oppose abortion.⁴¹ Without these groups, the Democratic Party would collapse. Pro-choice Democratic candidates try to gain their votes by appealing to them solely on the basis of “bread-and-butter” issues. A statement that a candidate is “personally opposed” to abortion is supposed to reassure them; presumably the voters can say to themselves, “Well, at least she wouldn’t have one herself” or “At least he wouldn’t encourage his wife or daughter to have one.”

It is difficult to understand why a party that depends so heavily on people opposed to abortion has taken such a strong pro-abortion stand. Many Democratic members of Congress vote against abortion, but the party as a whole supports it, and there are strong institutional pressures for candidates to fall in line. Indeed, most feminist groups *demand* a “pro-choice” position as a litmus test for candidates.⁴² Some black leaders, ignoring arguments cited here, argue that efforts to end public funding of abortion are an attack on the poor.⁴³ Some labor unions important to the Democrats have pro-abortion stands. Federal employee unions lobby for abortion coverage in employee insurance plans; and the National Education Association has taken a strong stand in favor of legal abortion.⁴⁴ (One would think that, for self-interest if nothing else, the teachers would oppose abortion since it means fewer children to teach and fewer jobs for teachers. As one anti-abortion activist quipped, the NEA’s position is like “pipefitters being against pipes.”)

So strong are the institutional pressures for abortion within the Democratic Party, especially from activists who have decisive power in primary elections, that some party leaders who once held an anti-abortion position have abandoned it. Senator Alan Cranston of California, Democratic Whip of the Senate and a candidate for the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination, served with Graciela Olivarez on President Nixon’s population commission. Like Olivarez, Cranston dissented from the commis-

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sion's endorsement of abortion. He declared:

I am unable to join in this recommendation because I hesitate to endorse governmental sanction of the destruction of what many people consider to be human life. I am particularly concerned by the social and ethical implications of such action now, given the general atmosphere of violence and callousness toward life in our society and in our world. Ours has become an incredibly violent time

Has life ever been held more cheaply? Has there ever been greater indifference to the taking of life? Are we really aware of just how hardened we have become?⁴⁵

But Cranston also expressed concern about laws that deprived "low-income persons of equal access to medical procedures readily available to the more affluent."⁴⁶

The second concern soon overrode the first; for years Cranston has voted for public funding of abortion. He still believes that "abortion is a tragic result for everyone concerned,"⁴⁷ but he recently told a group of women leaders that: "As a member of the Democratic leadership in the Senate, I have been actively involved in efforts to defeat legislation and proposed Constitutional amendments which would deny women the right of choice."⁴⁸

Former governor Reubin Askew of Florida, another Democratic presidential hopeful, spoke and voted against a pro-abortion bill as a member of the Florida legislature in 1967. The bill would have permitted abortions in the case of rape or incest, fetal handicap, and serious threat to the physical or mental health of the mother. Askew said that the bill was "medically unnecessary and legally unjustified."⁴⁹ Of the rape provision, he asked: "Are you going to compound a wrong with another wrong?"⁵⁰ Askew was governor of Florida from 1971-1978. He "signed the prolife legislation that came to his desk," but was not "vocal on the right to life issue," according to an anti-abortion newspaper.⁵¹

By the time he announced for the presidency in early 1983, Askew had changed his position in a major way. While indicating that he still favored some restrictions on abortion, he said that it should be "available for reasons of health of the mother—whether it be physical or mental—and in the case of rape or incest." He added that "under those conditions, I believe that everyone, regardless of their financial situation in life, should be treated the same. And therefore I believe the government, if necessary, should make the funds available."⁵² Later, responding to a questionnaire from women's leaders, Askew went even further, saying

that he also supported abortion “in cases where there is evidence of mental retardation” (not specifying whether he referred to mother or child—or both).⁵³

Rev. Jesse Jackson used to have a fairly strong anti-abortion position. In a paper issued several years ago, Jackson noted that “I was born out of wedlock (and against the advice that my mother received from her doctor), and therefore abortion is a personal issue for me.” While he supported abortion in cases of danger to the mother’s physical or mental health (rather broad exceptions), he opposed it in others:

Human life is the highest human good, and God is the supreme good because He is the giver of life. That is my philosophy. Everything I do proceeds from that religious and philosophical premise. Life is the highest good, and therefore you fight for life, using means consistent with that end.⁵⁴

Jackson argued against the idea “that the right to privacy is of a higher order than the right to life.”

I do not share that view If one accepts the position that life is private, and therefore you have the right to do with it as you please, one must also accept the conclusion of that logic. That was the premise of slavery. You could not protest the existence or treatment of slaves on the plantation because that was private and therefore outside of your *right* to be concerned.⁵⁵

In 1975 he endorsed the U.S. Catholic bishop’s call for a constitutional amendment banning abortion.⁵⁶ In 1977 he urged members of Congress to support the Hyde Amendment restricting Medicaid funding of abortion. “As a matter of conscience,” he said, “I must oppose the use of federal funds for a policy of killing infants. The money would much better be expended to meet human needs.”⁵⁷

However, when Jackson started thinking about running for president, he reassessed his position. Meeting with leaders of women’s groups, whose support he was courting, he indicated that he was now pro-choice. A staff member of the National Organization for Women described his new stance: “He said politically he’s for abortion, but, morally he’s against it.”⁵⁸ By the time Jackson announced his presidential candidacy, he had forsaken even his previous endorsement of the Hyde Amendment. Asked if he supported federal funding of abortion, he responded: “Absolutely. The reason I support federal funding is because the alternative to women not having adequate medical care is being driven underground and thus jeopardiz[ing] the health of the born and the unborn”⁵⁹

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It is sad to see politicians abandon their convictions, especially when the issue involved is one of life or death. A little expediency on something like tariffs or farm subsidies may be understandable. But when politicians do not draw the line where human life is involved, where can they draw it? What is left of their principles, and why should anyone trust them?

There are examples of consistency on the abortion issue, even within the Democratic Party. After the 1980 Democratic convention adopted a platform that recognized “reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right” and supported public subsidy of abortion,⁶⁰ Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri was asked, “What do you do about the Democratic plank?” Eagleton, a liberal Democrat who opposes abortion both personally and politically, responded: “Disavow it.”⁶¹ This may not be as strong as Andrew Johnson’s promise to “make that same speech tomorrow if it blows the Democratic Party to hell,” but Eagleton is travelling in the right direction.

If others who are personally opposed to abortion follow his example, they can keep (or regain) their integrity. Their actions will follow their convictions, and they will be able to state their position with no embarrassment or awkwardness. Some, with special courage, may one day earn this tribute:

I think continually of those who were truly great
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire’s centre.
Born of the sun, they travelled a short while toward the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honour.⁶²

NOTES

1. Sam J. Ervin, Jr., “Former Senator’s View of President is Mixed” (interview), *Richmond Times Dispatch*, September 12, 1982, p. D-4.
2. R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1935), pp. 326, 340, 342-343.
3. Quoted in E. E. Reynolds, *The Trial of St. Thomas More* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1964), p. 87.
4. Quoted in F. P. Blair, Letter of November 13, 1859 to Martin Van Buren, in *Autobiography of Martin Van Buren* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1969, reprint of 1920 ed.), p. 607.
5. Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1929), p. 39.
6. Lloyd Paul Stryker, *Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 69-80; Dorothy T. Potter and Clifton W. Potter, Jr., *Lynchburg: “The Most Interesting Spot”* (Lynchburg, Va.: Progress Publishing Corp., 1976), p. 69; Moncure D. Conway, “The President’s Defence,” *Fortnightly Review* (London), vol. 5, no. 25, May 15, 1866, p. 102. Some accounts indicate that Johnson prevented a lynching by drawing his gun. But Conway claimed that a mob dragged Johnson from his railroad car in Lynchburg, Va., kicked him, spat in his face, dragged him to a tree, and had a rope around his neck “when some old man raised his voice, and said that his (Johnson’s) own neighbors at Greenville, Tennessee, had, as the speaker had been informed, made arrangements to hang their senator on his arrival, and that as Virginians had no right to deprive them of that privilege, they had best permit him to go on. So Mr. Johnson was put in the train again.”

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7. Belle Case La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1953), 2 vols., vol. 1, pp. 603-644. After the filibuster stopped the Armed Ship bill, a friend of La Follette's told him, "Bob, they'll crucify you. But God bless you." *Ibid.*, p. 625. See, also, John F. Kennedy, *Profiles in Courage* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1956), pp. 192-203.
8. Quoted in Mary McGrory, "McCarthy Adds a Light Touch," *Washington Evening Star*, December 1, 1967, p. A-4.
9. Alan Guttmacher Institute, *Issues in Brief*, February, 1983, p. 6.
10. Quoted in Kurt Andersen, "To the Right, March!" *Time*, September 14, 1981, p. 35.
11. Mark Feldstein, "Mail Fraud on Capitol Hill," *Washington Monthly*, October, 1979, pp. 41-48.
12. Owen Wister, *The Virginian* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1929), p. 271.
13. *Congressional Record*, 98th Congress, 1st session (daily ed.), June 8, 1983, p. H 3780.
14. Quoted in Elisabeth Bumiller, "Christopher Dodd, His Father's Son," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1983, p. D-13.
15. Susan Dickler, ed., *Winning With Choice: A Campaign Strategy Handbook* (Washington: Voters for Choice, 1982), pp. 12, 17, 18, 22-24.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 20, Appendix 21 and Appendix 31; "Drinan Returns to Action, Elected President of ADA," *Washington Post*, June 28, 1981, p. A-3.
17. There are, however, cases of innocent people who have been executed. This is one reason to oppose the death penalty, but there are many others. See Mary Meehan, "The Death Penalty in the United States: Ten Reasons to Oppose It," *America*, November 20, 1982, pp. 310-312.
18. "Text of Kennedy Letter on Sirhan Case," *New York Times*, May 22, 1969, p. 29.
19. *Congressional Record*, 93rd Congress, 2nd session, vol. 120, part 5, March 12 and 13, 1974, pp. 6440-6441 and 6756-6757; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, 97th Congress, 1st session, Senate Report No. 97-143, July 1, 1981, "Establishing Constitutional Procedures for the Imposition of Capital Punishment," pp. 39-43.
20. *Congressional Record*, 94th Congress, 1st session, vol. 121, part 8, April 10, 1975, p. 9806. But in 1971 Kennedy had written this to a constituent: "Wanted or unwanted, I believe that human life, even at its earliest stages, has certain rights which must be recognized—the right to be born, the right to love, the right to grow old . . ." Quoted in David Farrell, "The Reason for Kennedy's Flip-flop on the Abortion Issue," *Boston Globe*, September 27, 1982, p. 11.
21. *Congressional Record*, 97th Congress, 2nd session, (daily ed.), September 15, 1982, pp. S 11570-11571; *ibid.*, 98th Congress, 1st session, (daily ed.), June 28, 1983, pp. 9265-9266.
22. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.
23. Patrick J. Leahy, Remarks at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Washington, D.C., May 10, 1983 (from the writer's tape recording).
24. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, 97th Congress, 1st session, *Constitutional Amendments Relating to Abortion*, 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 1150.
25. Quoted in *New York Times*, September 6, 1977, p. 44.
26. Quoted in David Bird, "Death-Penalty Bill is Vetoed by Carey," *New York Times*, July 13, 1977, p. B-4.
27. *Ibid.*; "Death Penalty Bill Faces Carey's Veto," *New York Times*, May 10, 1977, p. 21; and "Albany Backers of Death Penalty Say They Could Override '78 Veto," *New York Times*, November 16, 1977, p. D-17.
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33. Erma Clardy Craven, Remarks at Workshop on "Abortion, Minorities and the Poor," National Right to Life Convention, Cherry Hill, N.J., July 15, 1982 (from the writer's tape-recording).
34. Rev. Edward V. Hill, Letter to Members of Congress and to President Ronald Reagan, n.d., p. 2. The letter was distributed at a press conference in Washington, D.C., September 13, 1982.
35. "Separate Statement of Grace Olivarez" in U.S. Commission on Population Growth and the American

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- Future, *Population Growth and the American Future* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 160-164; Grace (Graciela) Olivarez, quoted in Betty Liddick, "Abortion Foe Wants Equal Time," *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1972, part 4, p. 5.
36. Juli Loesch *et al.*, "Abortion: A Question of Survival?" (roundtable discussion), *WIN*, August 1, 1980, p. 23.
37. Quoted in "She's Running 'to Defend the Unborn,'" San Francisco *Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, February 29, 1976, p. A-13.
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40. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
41. *Gallup Report*, *op. cit.*
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62. Stephen Spender, *Collected Poems, 1928-1953* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 32. © 1934 by Stephen Spender, © renewed 1961 by Stephen Spender. Reprinted by permission of the Harold Matson Company, Inc.

The Bishops Seek Peace on Abortion

James Hitchcock

IT HAS BEEN obvious for some time that many of the leading American Catholic bishops regard the abortion question as an albatross hung round their necks. Rhetorically there is of course no possibility of discarding it. Yet these bishops find its weight no longer tolerable.

The bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace, issued last May after two years of debate, relieved some of that weight, not only by changing the *subject*, but also by bringing the bishops unprecedented praise and even adulation from secular quarters not ordinarily known for their admiration of Catholic prelates. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a founder of the National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws, has revealed, around 1970 pro-abortionists deliberately set out to foment anti-Catholic prejudice as a way of damaging the anti-abortion movement, and for a time it was almost mandatory in the media to identify abortion as merely a "Catholic" issue. In recent years, however, secular-liberal wrath has been mainly directed at Evangelical Protestants like Jerry Falwell, while the bishops basked in the glow of approval on the "peace" issue.

Early last December, the present unofficial leader of the American Catholic hierarchy, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, revealed what is apparently the bishops' plan for ridding themselves of their abortion albatross. In the wake of the peace pastoral, Cardinal Bernardin said, reverence for life must now be viewed as a "seamless garment." Hence those who are to be considered pro-life must not only be anti-abortion but also opposed to nuclear war and, for good measure, capital punishment.

Cardinal Bernardin's statement got unusual national publicity, especially in the "prestige" media. The *New York Times* published much of the speech, which was delivered at Fordham University, as well as giving it extensive news coverage—which it deserved: despite its bland tone, the

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speech in fact represented a revolution in the bishops' position on abortion.

Previously, the bishops were officially on record as regarding abortion as *the* public issue, and the term "prolife" (much to the annoyance of pro-abortionists) was reserved for those opposing abortion. But henceforth, said Cardinal Bernardin, abortion is to be considered merely *one* issue among a wide range of other "life" issues.

The ramifications of this new policy are many, and, surely, unpredictable. On one level it obviously represents a victory for liberal Church bureaucrats, journalists, and clerics (including "feminist" nuns), many of whom have for years been decrying the "narrowness" of the anti-abortion movement. In his speech at Fordham, Cardinal Bernardin alluded to a "consistency" which must underlie all Catholic pro-life efforts, thus in effect conceding the charge (made by many of their enemies) that the anti-abortionists have been inconsistent.

Without question, there are immediate *political* implications in the new policy. Nothing has dismayed Catholic liberals more than the way in which the anti-abortion movement has regularly defeated pro-abortion liberal politicians, especially in the election of 1980, when it also contributed significantly to the victory of Ronald Reagan. Many grass-roots anti-abortionists are in fact traditional Democrats, but they have found themselves all but totally shut out of the Democratic Party and, almost in desperation, have turned to conservative politicians willing to support their cause.

Thus Cardinal Bernardin's newly-announced policy will, at a minimum, have the effect of dissipating Catholic "prolife" intensity, as Catholics are told that there are, after all, many "life" issues, and that it is perhaps better to support a candidate who favors legalized abortion but also favors a nuclear freeze and opposes capital punishment, rather than the reverse. That the Cardinal's speech was deliberately aimed at the Reagan administration can hardly be doubted, since he also alluded to the bishops' continuing criticisms of the administration's policies in Central America.

In several important ways, the equation between abortion and nuclear war is hardly apt. One of the most obvious is the fact that no one "favors" nuclear war, whereas many people do indeed support abortion

as a woman's basic "right." Thus debates between "hawks" and "doves" center on how best to avoid war—whether by increasing or decreasing America's own arsenal—and, arguably, a politician who favors increasing that arsenal is making war *less* likely. On abortion, "dialogue" simply means *more* killing.

Cardinal Bernardin's new definition of "prolife" is also likely to prove infinitely expandable. Professional liberals within the Church will unquestionably use it to argue a whole range of issues, their interpretation of which will inevitably point towards supporting the farthest-left Democratic candidates for office. It will be viewed as merely regrettable, but little more, that few such candidates oppose abortion in any way whatever.

Priests in the pulpit, teachers in parochial schools, and the Catholic press are all likely to understand the message now being sent, which is to put far less emphasis on abortion than has hitherto been the case. It is realistic to assume that before long the issue will simply be lost amidst a welter of other issues now deemed more pressing, although there will be occasional formal reminders that abortion is still a blot on American society.

If the bishops genuinely hoped to convert pro-abortion liberals to oppose abortion, the new strategy would be worth trying. However, it is hard to believe that anybody could expect many such conversions. All along, Catholic liberals have refused to use their votes, or other forms of political influence, as leverage to force reluctant politicians to support the official Catholic position on abortion. Indeed much liberal Catholic effort has been directed precisely towards making it safe for such politicians to ignore the anti-abortion movement. Now, that effort will be seen as having the bishops' blessing.

Indeed, if the "link" between abortion and war is as strong as Cardinal Bernardin says, the first effort at affirming it will have to be made among the bishops themselves. Last summer two of the leading "doves" within the hierarchy—Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit—appeared on TV's Phil Donahue show to explain the pastoral letter. Despite Donahue's notorious—fanatical—pro-abortion stance, the two Peace Bishops did not see fit even to mention the subject. Nor was their silence likely to have been a mere oversight. Last fall, the Seattle archdiocesan pro-life commit-

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tee resigned in a body, charging lack of cooperation from Hunthausen's archdiocese. Meanwhile, Bishop Gumbleton was publicly criticizing the Vatican for its handling of the Sister Agnes Mary Mansour case. (Sister Mansour was appointed to a position in the Michigan state government which required her to administer the public funding of abortions. The Vatican gave her an ultimatum, which caused her to resign from her religious community. Bishop Gumbleton defended her "right" to administer the tax funding of abortions.)

There is another serious problem with the new "linkage" strategy. Many Catholics will surely assert that they have a right to disagree with the bishops on appropriate defense policies, or capital punishment, and certainly on Central America. There *are* no official Catholic teachings on any of these subjects. But, now, this right of disagreement will touch abortion as well. Increasingly, the argument can be made that, if Catholics are free to support capital punishment, or increases in the military budget, they are also free to support legalized abortion.

But there is no doubt that the backbone of the pro-life movement is still heavily Catholic, and may remain so for the indefinite future. Catholic women in particular make up much of the movement's "grass-roots," and they are not likely to abandon the fight. The bishops' 1981 decision to support the Hatch Amendment in the U.S. Congress badly split the movement and created lasting divisions, because many proliferators thought the amendment, which was essentially a states-rights' document, fell far short of the full commitment to the defense of unborn life to which the movement had originally pledged itself. This compromise of principle seemed particularly unfortunate in view of the amendment's defeat, which makes it unlikely that the Congress will consider any other anti-abortion constitutional amendment in the near future (*legislation is, of course, a different matter*).

Having been defeated on the Hatch issue, the bishops showed little sign of regrouping their forces for a second try. As pro-life critics of the Hatch effort predicted, the tendency now is to assume that the anti-abortion movement had its chance and failed, and that it is now necessary, as Senator Hatch himself has said, to go on to other things.

And there is further evidence that the bishops may be planning to abandon the anti-abortion effort, provided in a so-far little-noticed book, *An Apology for the Value of Human Life*, by an ex-priest named David

Thomasma, a professor of medical ethics at the Jesuits' Loyola University in Chicago.

Thomasma's book was published last summer by the Catholic Health Association (CHA), a national organization with headquarters in St. Louis, which is the official professional body representing Catholic hospitals and other health-care institutions.

In his book Thomasma bluntly opposes all efforts to curb abortion by legal or constitutional means, on the grounds that the Supreme Court "was right to give the discretion about these matters, through state law, to the women most affected by our society's demands on them." Thus, suddenly in 1983, the CHA, for reasons best known to itself, published a book endorsing the most commonly repeated pro-abortion slogan of the past fifteen years—that abortion should be simply "a woman's choice."

Thomasma goes on to endorse the pro-abortionists' claim that American pluralism prohibits any legal restrictions on the practice, since such restrictions would constitute the "imposition" of one group's moral values on others. For the same reason he opposes all "Baby Doe" regulations requiring health-care institutions to provide minimum care for "defective" new-born infants. (The CHA itself claims that the regulations proposed by the Reagan administration are "too rigid.")

Nor are Thomasma's problems with the anti-abortion position legal only. In discussing the morality of both abortion and infanticide, he sets up three basic moral positions with respect to human-life issues. Position A attributes an absolute value to human life that would forbid all abortions. Position B ascribes value to human life only in relation to other goods, and lays particular emphasis on the "quality of life." Position C gives unqualified value to human life but holds that in some circumstances that good must be sacrificed to other goods. (His example is the smothering of a crying infant to prevent it from revealing the hiding place of people fleeing from an enemy.)

Thomasma equates Position A with absolute pacifism and argues that, in order to oppose all abortions, one must oppose every other kind of killing. He proposes sweeping social reforms which would be necessary before Position A would be tenable and establishes it as a kind of remote ideal towards which society should strive. Thus in practice, according to Thomasma, society must live with either Position B or C, although the latter can only be justified in emergency situations.

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In effect Thomasma's "apology" for human life provides all the loopholes needed by those who would justify abortion and infanticide almost without limitation. In addition, he makes favorable reference to the growing movement for "animal rights," without discussing the now-fashionable thesis that some animals have better claims to life than do "defective" humans. (More evidence of Thomasma's trendiness comes in a list of "great persons" who he says have "graced the landscape of Western civilization." All of them—from St. Augustine to Florence Nightingale—are religious figures, except for the gratuitous addition of Karl Marx.)

Thomasma has nothing new to say about the morality of human-life issues. The interest of his book lies entirely in the fact that it was written by a professor at a Catholic university and has been published by the Catholic Health Association. In essence it is a compilation of already familiar pro-abortion arguments, with some cosmetic attempt to reconcile them with Catholic morality.

It is therefore startling to see on the cover of the book an endorsement by Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly of Louisville, who calls it ". . . an eloquent and moving statement on the value of human life," when in fact it seems to be precisely the opposite. Archbishop Kelly's endorsement is all the more significant in view of the fact that he is the former general secretary of the United States Catholic Conference in Washington, the bishops' principal agency for public affairs (he succeeded then-Bishop Bernardin).

Archbishop Kelly has said that he disagrees with Thomasma's opposition to pro-life legislation, and a spokesman for the CHA says the book represents only the opinion of the author. But, this being the case, why should the CHA have published it, and why should Archbishop Kelly have given it his endorsement?

The Archbishop's answer is that Thomasma has "brought forth some new and interesting insights that need to be looked at," specifically his claim that abortion might be rendered obsolete by new medical techniques such as implanting an "unwanted" fetus in the womb of a mother willing to carry it to term, and his emphasis on "education" as the solution to the abortion problem.

In part the support given the book may reflect a kind of old-boy network of the Dominican Order. Thomasma is a former Dominican. Arch-

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bishop Kelly is a Dominican. The book has also been praised by Dominican Father Kevin O'Rourke, a professor at St. Louis University, and by retired Bishop Carroll T. Dozier of Memphis, who formerly had an ex-Dominican as his theological advisor.

However, it seems more likely that the book is intended to function as a familiar "trial balloon" in the on-going abortion wars, in conformity with a scenario already well developed in secular politics. First certain controversial positions, marking a significant break with past policies, are made public in such a way as to imply that they bear the approval of those in authority, in this case the Catholic health establishment and leading bishops. When questioned, however, those in authority formally dissociate themselves from the controversial positions. They thereby in effect have it both ways—the ideas stand, now attracting a certain credibility because of the names attached to them, while officially nothing has changed. Meanwhile those in authority can gauge how much resistance they are likely to encounter if indeed they do alter official policy.

Thomasma is nothing if not well-connected within the Catholic establishment. Besides gaining the endorsement of two bishops for his latest book, he has collaborated on a work of medical ethics with Edmund Pellegrino, former president of the Catholic University of America (CUA) and his new book is also endorsed by Jesuit Father William Byron, current president of CUA, who regards it as defining a "middle-ground position" on human life issues.

Father Byron's comment probably gets to the heart of the purpose which the book is supposed to serve—to provide a theological rationale for the process by which the official leadership of the American Catholic Church shifts to a more "moderate" position on abortion.

At a *minimum*, this new-found "moderation" will mean much less vigorous—perhaps no—public lobbying for anti-abortion legislation. Following the defeat of the Hatch Amendment, there is no visible evidence of any organized church-supported effort either to revive that proposal or to substitute any other. Although controversy over the public funding of abortion will continue, for the time being the attempt to ban abortion by law is dead, at least as far as the Catholic Church is concerned.

Wes Elliott, the director of the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, an organization set up by the bishops, told the press in connection with the Thomasma book that "I have just come to the realiza-

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tion that there is a real danger in enacting a total ban on abortions. We would have the same type of reaction there was during Prohibition.” Elliott’s comment was remarkable, given the fact that it is allegedly the sole purpose of his group precisely to achieve such a total prohibition. Like Thomasma, Elliott seems to have belatedly awakened to the wisdom of one of the arguments long favored by his adversaries.

The unsuccessful Hatch Amendment attempt badly and perhaps permanently split the pro-life movement, and will be pointed to as showing that such an effort is unrealistic, even as Thomasma’s book will take its place among the acceptable “Catholic” literature on the subject and will be cited, when needed, to justify this inactivity.

Also endorsing Thomasma’s book is Senator John Danforth of Missouri, who has consistently voted anti-abortion (he was also the unsuccessful pro-life defendant in *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth*) but has done and said very little in Congress about abortion. Danforth and other politicians may see in Thomasma’s argument a “theological” means of freeing themselves from the burden of a never-ending and bruising political conflict.

It is most important to recognize that Thomasma justifies abortion not only legally but *morally* as well. Indeed, if his tripartite discussion of morality is accepted, not only is abortion sometimes morally justified, it may sometimes be immoral *not* to permit it.

There is of course little likelihood that Catholic bishops could ever support the morality of abortion. However, it is an open secret that there are well-placed elements within the Church, such as ardent feminist nuns and influential theologians, who regret that the Church ever committed itself to an “absolutist” position on the subject, and who would prefer a pragmatic “compromise” whereby the Church would permit abortion under certain circumstances. (Such a compromise, once effected, would be likely to prove infinitely expandable, as has happened with respect to liberal Protestant positions on the subject.)

The religious identity of Catholic health-care institutions, like that of Catholic colleges and universities, is now often problematical, and there are nominally-Catholic institutions whose officers either would like to allow abortions within their facilities or believe they are being pressured to do so by the government, the medical profession, or the communities which they serve. Here again, Thomasma’s book will serve as a rationale

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for permitting abortion under “special circumstances.”

Liberal Catholics have been restive under Catholic sexual morality for some time. The CHA, for example, has published in its official magazine an article by the Jesuit moralist Richard McCormick arguing that Catholic hospitals should not adhere “rigidly” to the Church’s ban on surgical sterilizations. (However, the Vatican has ordered the Sisters of Mercy, the community to which Agnes Mansour formerly belonged — and to which Sister Theresa Kane still belongs — to cease permitting such operations in their American hospitals. After long hesitation, the nuns announced that they will comply.) In his article on sterilization, McCormick noted that there are other issues on which Church authority conflicts with common medical practice, and praised those bishops who have shown themselves “open” on such questions.

All this—and much more such—would seem to confirm this conclusion: in the second decade of its existence as a national force, the anti-abortion movement may still be heavily Catholic in composition, but it will henceforth have to proceed largely without the active support of, and sometimes in opposition to, the Church’s official American leadership.

Why the Secular Needs the Sacred

William Kirk Kilpatrick

AT THE TIME of the U.S. Supreme Court's deliberations over the legality of Christmas crèche displays, ABC's *Nightline* interviewed, among others, Father Robert Drinan and the Mayor of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the city where the issue first boiled over onto the national scene.

Predictably, Father Drinan worried about the trauma and mental anguish such displays cause to little boys and girls who are not Christian. It was a case, said he, of the arrogant majority imposing its values on a minority, and it shouldn't be allowed to happen in a pluralistic society. The Mayor of Pawtucket, on the other hand, was in favor of a Christmas display but took pains to downplay its religious nature. The manger scene, he said, had become a tradition in Pawtucket, and people should be allowed to keep their traditions. If you look at it in the right way, suggested the Mayor, it's not really a church/state problem at all.

It's understandable that he would take such a tack. This *is* a pluralistic society, after all. And indeed his argument is quite typical. Many attempts at defending the "church" side of church/state issues are framed in similar terms. It's either a defense ("we're not really trying to influence anyone else") or a demand ("Christians have a right to educate their children in their own way"). Unfortunately, neither approach gets at the main source of resistance to the religious side of such questions, because the main problem is not hostility toward religious practices (though there is plenty of that) but indifference. A great many people have come to the conclusion that as far as the everyday functioning of society is concerned, religion doesn't matter one way or the other. So why rock the boat? In other words, there exists a widespread assumption that the secular can get along without the sacred. From this point of view, religious beliefs may be seen as nice and commendable, and even helpful, but they are not seen as necessary to leading a good life or having a good society. Many Americans seem to believe that a secular culture can maintain morality without a sacred core. And so, if a Christmas scene offends, it's better to pluck it

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out and replace it with a non-offensive Santa. If the crèche is nothing more than a nice tradition it's not worth the fuss.

The Mayor might have had more effect on this indifferent mass if he had said what he probably really thinks: cut out the crèche and you cut out the heart of Western Civilization. And he would be right. The sacred view of life is not simply an alternative within society, it is indispensable to society. To step away from it is to step into the void.

What does the sacred do for the state? The brief answer is simply that it makes sense out of life—a service the state cannot perform for itself, and yet without which it cannot exist.

This is hardly a new argument, but it is one that is not often used. Although it can be sensed or intuited by the simplest folk, it cannot be easily put into words. Nevertheless, it's worth trying. Dostoyevsky puts the matter in its most direct formulation when he has Ivan Karamazov say: "If there is no God everything is permissible." Dostoyevsky meant this not as a figure of speech but as something akin to a mathematical axiom, something along the lines of "if a triangle has one right or obtuse angle, its other two angles must be acute."

Fixity and Formlessness

It is instructive to note that when scholars try to describe the idea of the sacred they do, in fact, tend to talk in precise geometrical terms rather than in vague spiritual ones. In *The Sacred and The Profane* Mircea Eliade returns again and again to the idea that the sacred is the fixed point without which no orientation can be established. The sacred "fixes the limits," and "establishes order" in what is otherwise a formless and chaotic fluidity or relativity. Ordinary things and events only derive their meaning from their relationship to the sacred order. On any other view than a sacred one, reality reduces to a chance combination of matter; and values, likewise, are reduced to the status of arbitrary choices since there is nothing fixed against which they can be measured. On that view there is no arguing with Ivan Karamazov or, for that matter, with Adolph Hitler who also said "everything is permitted."

The secular attitude has it that morality is a basically rational construct requiring no reference to a sacred or religious dimension. But the truth is the profane can't get along very well without the sacred. The diminishment of the sacred and mystical does not make the rest of life seem more

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sensible. The result, rather, is that profane or secular life seems more senseless. The deterioration of Greek mythological religion did not clear the way for a flowering of Aristotelians so much as it brought forth a crop of cynics and sophists. The French Revolution, born of the marriage of enlightened reason and anti-religious fervor, produced a reign of terror and irrationality. Nietzsche's announcement of God's demise was followed by the existentialist conclusion that life is absurd. As it is, of course, without the sacred.

This can be seen most clearly—if one is willing to look—in matters of law. Without a fixed and transcendent order everything is arbitrary. Yet few people are comfortable with that idea. Most still need a fixed system of order. And for this purpose the rule of law serves admirably. Or does it? As a people come less to believe in the gods, they come more to depend on the law. They need it more since they have no heavenly standard to which to conform their behavior. In such a society the law must be made to work overtime. Sooner or later, however, purely legal attempts to provide and maintain order are bound to fail since law itself is eventually revealed to be arbitrary. Cut off from its relationship to the supernatural order and from the natural (which is only a derivative of the former), the law can't bear a close examination. Even the dullest will eventually see the skull beneath the skin.

In our present society this process takes many forms, but the one which touches almost everyone's life is the transformation of the relationship between adult and child, particularly at school and in the home. In both institutions, there has been a substitution of legal and contractual lines of authority for natural and sacred lines of authority. This substitution has already had disastrous consequences. Here, let us say a few words about these two types of authority.

Two Orders of Authority

The most direct way of sorting out these differing spheres of authority is to ask two simple questions: Where do teachers get their authority over students? Where do parents get their authority over children? Modern man does not have ready answers to these questions (my students, both undergraduate and graduate, tend to be dumbfounded when I ask them), but his ancestors did. They would simply answer that such authority was natural, or that it came from God. However imperfectly, worldly order

was thought to reflect a natural order or a heavenly one. In Christendom, for example, the authority of a father over his children was thought to derive from the absolute authority of God The Father. The Marriage bond was considered a reflection of the marriage of Christ and His Church. The family, in short, constituted a sacred unit. Crossing the family threshold brought one into a different order of being; so did the crossing of the Church threshold. Other religions may have had less explicit theologies supporting parental authority, but the same ideas prevailed. For example, in ancient Roman society the father had priestly duties. Parental authority was mystical authority.

Instead of speaking in terms of the supernatural origin of parental authority one can, of course, simply avert to its natural origin. Nevertheless, the import is similar. The same element of irrationality is there. At least, it would be perceived by the modern mind as irrational because, once again, the appeal is to an axiomatically fixed order. Parental authority over children derives not from some rational, mutually-satisfying agreement, but from generation. To the question: Why should it be this way?, one can only reply that this is the natural order of things. There is no way to reason logically to such a conclusion because it is not a conclusion but, rather, one of those bedrock observations about human nature that are not the result of logic but the source of it.

Schools and teachers, by extension, also shared in this authority, because they stood *in loco parentis*. The respect due to them was similar to the respect due to one's parents. Moreover, formal schooling was almost always conducted within the precincts of church or temple. The phrase "hallowed halls of learning" once had a literal meaning.

It is true, of course, that parental authority was also legally upheld, but the law never pretended to grant that authority; it was merely recognizing an existing order, much as the law of sanctuary recognized the legitimacy of another order.

The point is that these other orders, whether they be conceived of as natural or supernatural, are in a different order from the prevailing notion of authority. What is the prevailing notion? It is a social-contract view. Authority comes from the consent of the governed. It is legitimate only so far as it conforms to certain reasonable rules freely agreed to. The most convenient model for this view of authority is the business agreement. The parties to such an agreement have decided for one reason or another

that their interests are best served by a mutual compact. Once they have given their consent they are bound by the contract. Any subsequent difficulties can be interpreted and adjudicated by a court of law.

Much of the moral confusion in our society, and much of the weakening of traditional modes of authority, stems from the extension of this contractual order into areas which were once within the realm of the sacred or natural orders.¹ In short, Caesar's slice of the pie is larger. The law no longer stops at the church door when in pursuit of criminals, nor does it show much inclination to stop at the school door or the door to your house where other matters are concerned.

This is not to say that the line between the secular and the sacred is clearly drawn. In some ways the law still acts as though it were grounded in some sacred soil. Why else, for example, would the penalty for rape be so much more severe than that for other types of assault, especially when the actual physical injury may be slight? There seems to be a residue here of the ancient belief that the sex act partakes or ought to partake of the sacred realm, so that a violation of a woman's body is a violation of the sacred order. Another trace of the sacred realm is exhibited in the honor and deference with which judges are treated, although the logical conclusion of the rational/contractual approach would be to replace them with computers. But though government may from time to time indulge itself in shows of solemnity, it seems increasingly to demand that other institutions conform to the contractarian model.

What is at Stake

Many people, of course, are not overly bothered by the encroachment of the secular into sacred areas. I think this nonchalance stems in large part from a failure to see the problem clearly, because, even from a secular point of view, much is at stake. The problem resides in the fact that strictly rational or contractual approaches to life do not yield the harvest of rationality and harmony one might expect. Quite the contrary. One reason why this is so is that the keeping of contracts depends on qualities and virtues that do not flourish in a strictly-contractual *milieu*. For example, parties to a contract are expected to enter into the agreement in good faith and are further expected to maintain loyalty to the spirit or intent of the agreement. But virtues such as "good faith" and "loyalty" are generated for the most part within the sacred order. If that order is extin-

guished, the only guarantee of a contract is fear of the law. A society which thinks it can manage on a purely secular level will find it has need of a great many policemen or a great many lawyers, or both.

Without some higher sanction, a civil society is reduced to nothing but a compact of individuals for the sake of protecting their own self-interests. And there is no compelling moral reason why an individual should stick by that compact when it is no longer in his interest to do so. The legal order can support and encourage morality but it is not the source of morality. Morality originates in those irrational basic units like the family and the church. A government which wishes to maintain a moral climate among its citizens is wise not to tamper with those basic units.

And herein lies the problem. Although government still manages to wrap itself in a cloak of near divinity—the Bill of Rights and the Constitution have the force of scripture in this country—government is slowly depriving other institutions of their claim to a separate authority derived from a fundamental order. We are moving in the direction of the idea that parents and teachers hold their authority not from sacred or natural realms but from consent, as the State does. From there it is only a short step to the next conclusion: the State has a duty to make sure that these other groups do business the way *it* does business.

From whence do parents and teachers derive their authority over children? Once the initial astonishment has passed, most of my students conclude that it must be from the state. Where else could it come from? This attitude is already widespread, and it means, of course, that the bonds between parent and child, or teacher and pupil, must be reinterpreted not in terms of blood and duty but in terms of a compact of equals.

The Hostility Between the Generations

This, as we are beginning to see, is a formula for disaster. Primarily it will serve to increase hostility between the generations. After all, if we are all fellow citizens, what right do you have to tell me what to do? That is the way the child or adolescent will reason. Despite the fact that schools and parents are more permissive than they have ever been, children are more restive than ever. Why shouldn't they be? They have learned that government is by consent, but they have little say in the governments that immediately concern them, those of home and school. Traditional modes of authority, once they are divorced from any concept of the sacred or

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natural order, will appear as arbitrary impositions of will with the paradoxical result that children perceive even the most lenient schools and families as oppressive.

This attitude is reinforced by television which also acts to eliminate the distinctions between children and adults. As Neil Postman points out in *The Disappearance of Childhood*, television makes it possible for everyone to see and hear the same things.² The programs which adults watch are the programs which children watch. In fact, producers make a conscious effort to capture as wide an age range as possible for their shows. And the amount of programming specifically for children is declining. In addition, children on television dress, talk, and act like adults. They seem wise and rational beyond their years. They are extraordinarily sophisticated about the world, and often must intervene in adult affairs to put things right. Indeed, adult problems and relationships are presented as little different from the ones children are involved in. Parental authority is not necessarily scorned in these programs, but it seems to be acceptable only so long as it is reasonable and can be explained to the satisfaction of the child as being in his own interest. The children of the media age can be forgiven if they think they are every bit as equal as adults, for that is the impression conveyed by television. It is understandable that they might resent the real-life parent or teacher who doesn't accept their equality, or who thinks that his own word ought to be sufficient authority. Making the child equal to his parents or teachers thus becomes an effective way of alienating his allegiance to them.

Adults, in turn, will experience increased resentment toward children. If children are simply fellow citizens rather than a sacred trust, it is difficult to see why one should sacrifice for them. It is inevitable that many adults will come to look upon them simply as burdens—and state-imposed burdens at that. Parents and teachers will reason that they owe children nothing but the minimum legal requirements.

By increasing the legal rights of children, children's advocates hope, of course, to better protect them. But a child needs more than legal protection, he needs love as well. Turning family matters into civil-rights issues is a formula for insuring that he won't get it. Consider a proposal for licensing parents by the state which appeared in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. The author, Hugh LaFollette, sees this as necessary for the protection of children, but also for the purpose of destroying the idea of

parents' "natural sovereignty."³ It would certainly have the latter effect, but would it have the former? Would it really protect children? For once you destroy the idea of natural sovereignty you also destroy the notion that children owe any particular honor, respect or obedience to their mothers and fathers. It would be an unusual adult who could suffer such an arrangement without eventually resorting to indifference, neglect, or even physical abuse. The only thing the child will be protected from is his parents' love. These considerations help to explain why the proposed "Squeal Rule" (requiring that parents be notified when their minor children seek contraceptives) is such a sensitive issue. Those who oppose the rule—who usually also favor laws allowing minors to obtain abortions without parental consent—are saying in effect to parents: This is none of your business, this is a matter between your child and *his* federally-funded agency. But if they are right, it is difficult to imagine in what areas parents might still retain hegemony, since this one lies so close to the center of family life.

The Schools: Moral Authority and Legal Authority

A similar subversion of traditional authority goes on in schools. And with it goes the same recipe for hostility. Edward Wynne, writing in *The Public Interest*, demonstrates in very concrete ways how court decisions concerning student rights force educators to abdicate their parental duties and become instead "mere custodians."⁴ Such decisions as *Tinker v. Des Moines*, *Goss v. Lopez*, and *Wood v. Strickland*, helped to create an air of uncertainty and confusion among educators. In one school, writes Wynne, a principal is advised by the school lawyer not to interfere with a student who wears a "Marijuana" stenciled T-shirt. In another district, school-board members are advised to avoid written discipline codes lest these be used as a basis for litigation (however, in the Boston schools, students receive a booklet each September informing them of their rights and legal recourses). In another school a security guard is uncertain about his right to search a student he suspects of holding drugs. The student (who actually is holding drugs) gets away with it. The guard feels humiliated.⁵

The upshot of all this, observes Wynne, is that schools become more depersonalized, less communal, less familial. Teachers become more hostile or indifferent, retreating from the kind of engagement and concern

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that was possible under the aegis of *in loco parentis*. In addition to losing the power to discipline, they lose the power to care. Their attitude becomes that of the civil servant or bureaucrat toward the clients he must serve. In both school and home the result of a real or perceived equality for children is a mutual withdrawal of loyalty and love. Without those virtues, obedience to rules is secured only by fear and by force, which in concrete terms means that we will have more battered children as well as more battered parents, more social workers to watchdog families, and more security guards to police the schools.

That it doesn't *have* to be this way is attested by the success of parochial schools in some of the most unpromising areas of our cities. Children not only behave better in these schools, they are happier in them. In addition, school spirit is higher and so is parental involvement. Of course, the difference between public and parochial schools can be explained away by many sociological factors, but one must eventually contend with a non-sociological fact: parochial schools are under a different order of authority. They stand very firmly *in loco parentis* and *in loco Deus*. Strangely enough this almost-absolute investment of power creates in students not more hostility, but less. There are two reasons why this is so. In the first place, the invidious idea that children are equals can make little headway since the order of authority is so obviously hierarchial. In the second place, the authority exercised is moral authority and not, as is increasingly the case with public schools, legal authority. Even where laws are made by consent of the governed, legal authority will always seem arbitrary unless it is perceived as corresponding with some natural or divine moral order. When it refers back only to majority will or only to itself (e.g. to previous legal decisions) it is on shaky ground. The civil rights movement was successful in changing hearts and minds to the extent that its leaders convinced other Americans that certain laws were out of line with the moral law.

The moral order has a more compelling hold on us than the legal order. The present Polish government has plenty of legal authority but little moral authority. It needs force because it cannot command loyalty. The reason is not difficult to see. It has miscalculated. Despite its impressive philosophical underpinnings, Communist ideology operates on the mistaken premise that the secular can get along without the sacred. Now this observation may seem a far cry from a discussion of American fami-

lies, schools and courts, but it is not so far. For all the differences that separate American society from Communist ones, we tend to act increasingly on the same premise. And we are not having much more luck with it than they.

Thick and Clear Religions

The error in both cases lies in the belief that what C. S. Lewis called a “clear” religion is sufficient for enlisting the moral passions of a people. Lewis’s distinction between “thick” and “clear” religions goes like this: thick religions are associated with smoky altars, sacrifice, deep mysteries, blood ties, mystical bonds and communion with the gods. Clear religions, on the other hand, are demystified. They are tidy and rational, and claim to be based on principles of enlightenment and harmony. They promise illumination rather than salvation.⁶ The Catholic Church is a prime example of the former, the Unitarian Church of the latter. Many modern philosophical and political theories, however, can be grouped into the second category since it is, in essence, a philosophical approach to belief. As Lewis saw it, the problem with a clear or “minimal” religion is that it has “no power to touch any of the deepest chords in our nature, or to evoke any response which will raise us even to a higher secular level. A flag, a song, an old school tie is stronger than it,” wrote Lewis.⁷

The same is true of rational, contractual societies and systems. Although they still require loyalty and fidelity, they are in no position to generate such things. This fact was not lost on our Founding Fathers. Robert Nisbet puts it this way:

Just as Luther had solidly formed Roman Catholics in mind for the communicants of his antichurch Protestant sects, so the Founding Fathers and their counterparts in Europe had in their minds for democratic citizens men shaped by feudally grounded social and moral disciplines in family, community, and church.⁸

As a consequence, the Founders tried very hard to present the new government as having a religious sanction (“laws of nature and of nature’s God . . . endowed by their Creator . . . our sacred honor”). Lincoln, who also understood the poverty of the naked state, was of a similar mind and felt no hesitation in giving a bereaved mother the “thanks of the Republic” for having “laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.”⁹

But the reigning cultural orthodoxies are divorced from that way of

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thinking. They are religions of the clear variety. Very clear and thin like water. They are presided over by people who, to paraphrase Tom Bethell's description, think the world is inhabited by people as devoid of passion as they are. They appeal to intellectual types as does Unitarianism, but like Unitarianism they instill little devotion in the ordinary man and woman. They lack the requisite vision. Indeed, for the most part, the present culture seems to provide no more compelling a vision than television. The flags, songs, and "old school ties," the things that make ordinary people feel bound to extraordinary responsibilities, are in short supply.

Above all, they fail to understand that blood really is thicker than water. Certain roles such as those undertaken by mothers and fathers require not just concern and enlightenment but deep love, the kind of love that is given in full measure. Bringing children into the world is literally a bloody sacrifice, and so, in some respects, is bringing them up. I am reminded of a father who jokingly but proudly told me he had left half his skin on the walls of the playroom he had just built. It didn't speak much for his skill with hammer and saw, but it said a lot about his love for his children. There is not much in our current cultural ideology to suggest why he should love them that much. To explain it you need to reach into that other category of deep and mysterious bonds which we now consider expendable. Families belong to the sacred order. Or call it the order of love. We make a mistake to think we can deprive people of that old order of authority, and then expect them to have, for the new order, the kind of enthusiasm and loyalty which Odysseus felt for Ithaca. Our secular society still assumes those old bonds, even though it cannot *produce* them. It must stop polluting the wells from which they spring.

NOTES

1. For an excellent treatment of the two kinds of authority see Joseph Sobran, *Single Issues* (New York: The Human Life Press, 1983).
2. Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (New York: Delacorte, 1982).
3. Quoted in Bruce A. Miller, "Student Advocates, Teachers' Rights," *American Educator*, Spring 1981.
4. Edward A. Wynne, "What are the Courts doing to Our Children?" *The Public Interest*, Summer 1981, pp. 3-18.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The contrast between the two types of religion is shown most strikingly in C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966).
7. C. S. Lewis, "Religion Without Dogma?" in Walter Hooper, ed., *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 142, 143.
8. Robert Nisbet, *Prejudices* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 127.
9. Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby quoted in Walter Berns, *For Capital Punishment* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 162.

Dehydrated Christianity

Thomas Molnar

I DO NOT SUGGEST that my own experience of teaching at the Religious Studies department of Yale University provided conclusive evidence of the religious convictions and sensibilities of better students at our better universities. Yet I do think that it produced valuable insights into the general question of “students and religion” in the country today. Especially if one keeps in mind that Yale is an elite institution, that the famous Divinity School is located on campus, and that the university’s intellectual climate dictates to some extent the mentality and attitude of many other colleges across the nation.

One of my first teaching assignments in this country, back in the early 1950’s, took me to the Northwest, where several smaller colleges prided themselves on the tradition inherited from universities in the Northeast, Harvard and Yale among them. That is where I learned that religious affiliation no longer meant much, that it survived mainly in some rather superficial ceremonies, particularly in the institution of “chapel,” a weekly, more or less compulsory convocation, at which guest speakers usually addressed themselves to any conceivable topic *but* religion. The place of the latter—and this is more true now than it was thirty years ago—has been taken over by some vague humanitarianism, the credo of which is the similarly blurred question: “What can we Americans do to help other people?” (At the time I was not yet bold enough to answer, as I would do nowadays: “Abstain from meddling!”)

My observations of religion in the Northwest and its colleges made me understand the religious climate at Yale better when I began teaching there. I found at Yale what one might call a dehydrated Christianity, which is the penultimate (ultimate?) state of a complete and semi-official abandonment. It is not even necessary any longer to invoke the authority of a Gibbon or a Spengler who, in their different but concordant ways, described the phases of decadence as the ossification of religion, or, if you wish—since neither writer was a notable adherent of religion—of the

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“central myth” of a civilization. At one point in the life of a society, the transcendent becomes weak and blurred, the symbols which used to convey its presence and power are discarded. In the resulting vacuum people begin to feel liberated from what now appears as an oppressive force, surrounded by meaningless ritual. From that point on, things begin to accelerate—in the opposite direction. A kind of repressed anger is manifested against the mere mention of God, faith, creation, and providence, although at the same time an eager reception is extended to various “world spirits,” pagan theories, oriental gurus, and replacement-gods proposed by ideologies. It is today as it used to be in Rome, even by Cicero’s time—he informs us, remember, that when two members of the priestly classes met, they winked at each other and smiled. The fashionable ersatz-religion was then Stoicism, and soon there began the invasion of oriental goddesses, Magna Mater, Isis, Astarte, and so on.

In other words, what one witnesses at such a leading academic institution as Yale seems to be an instance of a recurring phase of decadence in civilization. This makes observation rather intriguing, because in critical times people display the kind of hesitant attitude that is not in evidence when strong institutions support their *Yes* and their *No*. In the twilight of institutions—State, Church, Family, School, Law Court—people show the approved attitude of skepticism, not because they are doubting by nature or temperament, but because it is a more prudent policy not to commit oneself. In the case of the academic climate, this usually appears as the scholar’s weighing “the two sides of the question,” a fashionable behavior which enhances his prestige.

In the case of the scholar-professor himself this behavior may not be so transparent, since university politics have taught him to hide both his convictions and the lack of them. The students, however, are at a more innocent age. They reflect the professor’s uncommittedness easily; they have learned, as animals learn the art of mimicry, that a non-committed attitude is far more useful than natural enthusiasm. The latter reminds the professor of his own youth, when he was not yet a politician. Thus the student learns that it is best not to “show his colors,” but rather to adopt the blasé, world-weary stance of the teaching staff, in order to sail safely through the always-turbulent academic waters. The result is that dealing with students—that is teaching them—is the best way to obtain insights into the professors’ minds. This, of course, is not the real objective; de-

spite the dictates of the *Zeitgeist*, the real objective is to teach the truth to the students, something for which they are immensely grateful. The student likes to know that he is not facing a cautious, bored man in the professorial chair, but one committed to learning and to probing for truth; only then will the student's inner spirit be moved. He accompanies the teacher in the latter's explorations, testing his knowledge and competence as proofs of a vocation for which he, the student, may then acquire an invincible taste.

I was allowed to select only twenty of the thirty-four students who wanted to register for my seminar course on "The Pagan Temptation." Many candidates indicated their reasons for registering on cards that were then forwarded to me. Some were well-written, a fact which naturally influenced my selection of those I guessed to be the best students. Others advanced similarly good reasons to be included: the course would complete the kind of studies they had undertaken. Others were students of religion, and wanted a glance at "the other side"—Paganism. A third category admitted candidly that they regarded themselves as "pagans"; as it turned out at our first session, they expected me to introduce them to pagan practices: magic, incantation, secret doctrines. (Only one of them came back after that first session.)

From the start I laid my cards on the table. I intended to do two things: first, acquaint them with new insights and arguments as to why Christian civilization weakens at certain periods, and why, then, Paganism, the Greco-roman, and also particularly Hindu ideas, penetrate the lowered defenses; second, to demonstrate that the study of religion, and its systematization into doctrine and theology, are rationally articulated disciplines, inseparable from philosophy, psychology, cosmological theories—in other words, from the rest of the spectrum of knowledge. True, we were in a university department of religious studies, so it was natural for me to take it for granted that the students accepted religion as a discipline of knowledge. But I intended to go farther, and show that, far from science influencing religion (in order, eventually, to eliminate such childish tales and superstitions), it is the religious worldview—right down to its doctrinal details—which provides the context wherein science thrives, or fails in its interpretation of phenomena.

I did not announce these objectives in plain words. I preferred to explain them precisely only at the end of the course. But things were clear

to the students from the beginning. What kind of students? They were undergraduates, not yet spoiled by mini-professional arrogance, the narrow limits of specialization, or the refusal of general knowledge as unbecoming a “true scholar.” Most important of all, they were eager to learn, but at the same time reluctant to budge from earlier adopted positions, a kind of resistance the teacher should always welcome as a sign of reflection. A strongly (but not blindly) held view may be induced to modification, whereas indifference, which is often a fanatically-held fortress, provides no reason to move in any direction. Quite naturally, there was a predisposition in these students to be curious in matters pertaining to the religious discourse, and at the same time to accept only the socially-consecrated image, a rather neutral one, of religion. I assumed that their previous courses must have been of two types: introductory ones which regarded religion as a cultural-historical factor, with no particular privilege over other factors, and more concentrated, scholarly ones, introducing the students into specialized studies of the history of religions, but not connected with other disciplines, thus not submitting the studied material to outside arbitration. Above all—and this point is essential—in the name of academic neutrality, nobody had previously raised with these students the question: Was it possible to state the superiority of one religion over others? In short, their teachers had, all along, ignored Aristotle’s wise suggestion that every branch of learning must be weighed on a special balance; that ethics for example cannot be judged by mechanical standards, nor can mathematics be, as we were taught at the University of Bruxelles by a Marxist geometer, “Marxist” or “bourgeois.”

The students and I collided head-on when I established from the first a distinction between *religion*, by which I meant the monotheistic ones, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and *paganism*, by which I meant all other systems of ethics, of pantheistic worldviews, or of psychic therapies. Those students who tended to embrace “paganism” still had enough monotheistic cultural breeding in them to oppose me when I refused to call paganism a religion. They wanted me to defend paganism as just as much an admirable and self-contained worldview as monotheistic religion. This bone of contention remained to the end.

The second difficulty arose from the fact that the students, the majority of them products of good preparatory schools, had no background either in history or philosophy. Even the brightest, who had engaged in serious

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research in various courses they had taken, had an almost insurmountable aversion to handling the chronological table—to grasp the enormous time distance from Plato to Plotinus, to comprehend that civilizational stages are not sharply divided, to come to terms with the baffling fact that old methods of thought were still displayed at the Renaissance, that the Church, doctrinally opposed to so many of her teaching sons, yet tolerated them, affording science a wide scope, and so on. In these instances I could practically read my students' intellectual biographies, the courses in which they had been less instructed than indoctrinated, even the *milieu* in which they lived. They would have preferred neat dichotomies, not to say the confirmation of some half-ingrained prejudices. I needed all my dialectical skill in order to lead them back from *idée reçue* to premis, to encourage them to have confidence in reasoning. This is the most risky sea on which to navigate. The unexamined idea is a haven whose safety we give up with the greatest reluctance.

A breakthrough did occur at the beginning, when they became persuaded that the true dichotomy takes place between the gods who, no matter how majestic and potent, are still parts of a pre-existing cosmos, and the creator-God who brought forth everything out of nothing, Who stands outside the universe, and watches it, sustains it. Of course, Christianity posits such a God, but it is hard nevertheless to draw the inevitable next conclusion that this free God was not compelled to create, and that creation, including man, is contingent, not, as we would like to self-flatteringly believe, necessary. A large part of the success of all modern ideologies can be traced to their insistence that although the universe is the product of chance, man is autonomous (an obvious contradiction), and produces his own humanity and his own "values." All I wanted my students to accept at this stage was that there is literally a world of difference between saying that the universe is eternal, bringing forth from its entrails, so to speak, gods and men, or saying that the universe is the result of an external Creator who, moreover, has it within His power to intervene in history, and even to assume flesh and blood. A kind of confessional truce was established through the demonstration that the Old and New Testament "played" into each other's hands, and that Yahweh, the anthropomorphic God, prefigured Christ, the God-man. Only one lonely "pagan" girl dissented at this point.

Another opposition party-of-one adopted an argument which was pos-

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sibly spontaneous, but more likely produced by books on exegesis or the now-proliferating studies of myth. Everything in the life of Christ, argued this bright student, is prefigured in various mythologies: birth from a virgin, the violent death, the resurrection. True enough, but the universality of the theme does not contradict its historicity, while the decisive difference remains that in none of the myths is there an ethical content, a god as the source of goodness favoring the humble, the poor in spirit, the sufferer. There are in mythologies gods of light against gods of darkness, gods torn apart and eaten by other, more powerful ones, gods fighting for their own preeminence over men. But only in monotheistic religion does one find a God who rewards faith and good action, who says that "good deeds done to the least of my children I regard as done to Me."

Because ancient paganism has had a very "good press" since the Renaissance, and nobody really dares criticize "the Greeks" because of their stupendous achievements, the term pagan conveys hardly anything pejorative. I had to wait until the third part of the course, devoted to "neo-paganism" of the contemporary variety, to bring alive the pernicious substance. Thereafter, the class had no difficulty in understanding paganism on its own terms, once Nietzsche, Spengler, and Heidegger were presented, and also the "neo-polytheists" disguised as psychotherapists, children of Heidegger and Jung. Being contemporaries of the events, and of the climate of the times, the students could fully appreciate the synthesis presented to them. Things began to make sense when modern cosmological theories were juxtaposed to ancient ones, or when the new vision of subatomic particles was found to have strange affinities with oriental mysticism and Buddhist epistemology. My parting words suggested the hope that in the future these young men and women will observe the intellectual landscape more intelligently. And that it will be harder to fool them with fads or so-called brand-new doctrines. I think that these are not vain expectations.

* * *

Why attribute so much importance to a single class in a department of Religious Studies? Because contrary to the popular belief, our times are *not* pluralistic, offering many competing positions. On the contrary, we have witnessed the formation of a few immensely-large ice floes on the ocean of intellectual interest, or, to put it differently, immense ideological

blocks which stifle the fragile efforts of genuine curiosity. In spite of the myriad academic offerings—I should say, because of them—minds are unable to bring into focus the truth of things. Quite naturally, my class reflected this state of affairs; the students had expected the addition of yet another fragment to the many and various ones they had already picked up, from courses, lectures, books, newspapers, television programs, from scholars and quacks, and from institutions which are the more aggressive in proportion to their disintegration. For example, the only ethics course offered by the Divinity School in the spring of 1984 will be “Ethics and Revolution in Southern Africa.” The name of the Reverend who will teach it shall be covered by the veil of charity.

Thus under various labels the students are taught conformist ideologies, no matter how brightly-painted the labels are, no matter what never-yet-seen approach they advertise. I know that several of my students resist this academic indoctrination, but they may still be left unprepared for the selection of the genuine from the phony. In short, they are ready to be taught orthodoxy, but they feel ashamed to admit it because the slogans which surround them insist that they be well-rounded, open-minded, eclectic, tolerant. In “religious studies” this means that, more than anything, a kind of ecumenicism is rewarded, so that “religion” is studied while religious truth is tactfully left out of consideration. Nobody would teach biology that way.

The usual argument is that ideal teaching must be equidistant from all the self-proclaimed truths, and that scholarship consists of dispassionate analysis. Then follows the famous “value-free” commandment which is now invisibly inscribed on all university letterheads. I am confident that everybody’s experience with “value-free” teachers is of two sorts: either they are very boring or very aggressive. But I believe that students want to hear men of conviction, who do not believe in “values” but in reality. In courses about religion they would first like to find out—although they do not necessarily admit it—whether their parents and their early environment were “right” or whether their teachers’ sophisticated dismissal of the former orthodoxy is to be accepted (along with, usually, the teachers’ *new* orthodoxy). In this conflict inside the student’s mind and soul, books are of limited usefulness. They present a third, a fourth, a tenth possibility. And priests or ministers have as varied opinions today as the books and the teachers. Thus the intelligent student is condemned to live in a spiri-

tual vacuum. Religion is taught to him as if it were sociology or literature, whereas sociology and politics are taught as if they had taken over religion's place. The view that theology is the queen of sciences, and that philosophy is its handmaid (*ancilla*) is laughed at as medieval; yet we accept an ideologically-permeated political science that has climbed to the apex of the curricular pyramid, as we also accept the ancillary function of other disciplines, among them literature and art, all pressed into the service of the reigning ideology.

The main trouble is, then, that in the name of a democratic equality of all branches of knowledge, religion is denied its ordering superiority above the rest. As noted, respect for knowledge does not neutralize the formation of a hierarchy among the disciplines: yesterday religion, today political science, tomorrow something else. As historians of science themselves point out, there always exists an organizing, ordering vision outside the sciences which gives meaning to the scientific endeavor. This is of course even more true of the so-called human sciences, as it was true in the nineteenth century about the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the sciences of the spirit. Take a popular discipline, such as psychology, the favorite meeting place of increasing majorities of students who see in it mostly an outlet for comfortable and remunerative careers, embellished with the aura of "helping our fellow-men." Before the eighteenth century, such a discipline, such a name, simply did not exist, or it was regarded as an epiphenomenon of physiology. Psychology's traceable ancestors in the Renaissance centuries were the many handbooks about how the men at the royal court should behave in order to succeed with etiquette, courtship, and the counseling of princes. Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) is the model of the *genre*. Farther back, throughout the Middle Ages, the "lives of saints" fulfilled a similar function. They set up types and stereotypes to show the ideal man, the one integrated with the requirements of a higher existence. In its own manner, therapy attempts to do the same thing today, although with greatly-lowered ideals.

The same changes and transformations may be traced in the evolution of all disciplines. Yet religious doctrines change little (see Cardinal Newman's profound study of the question in *The Development of Christian Doctrine*) or hardly at all, even though styles of behavior and language vary. Thus religion represents a compact form of truth, and even disagreement with it serves as a compass for a wide spectrum of thought and

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action. When this stabilizing influence is removed from the students' perspective, they desperately search for other ordering principles, which then fail in the role for which they were not intended. The "confusion" of our best students—the most popular state of mind on our campuses—has no other root but this. And most faculty members do little more than help finish the job—begun by T.V. and the media—of performing an operation on students by which an original commitment to truth is thoroughly extracted.

The pity is the greater because a substantial number of these young people possess fine minds and could rise to leadership in society. It will be argued—and students will do so first of all—that Yale graduates are generally destined to occupy such positions: in law, the academy, government, business, the arts. As it is, they will bring mostly their indoctrinated conformism to these positions; along the way, while still learners, the intellectual confusion is allowed to spread in their minds, and it then becomes moral indifference. They do belong to the elite class, but the elite itself belongs nowhere, as Santayana, an acute observer of the academy and public life, noted three-quarters of a century ago. The nature of life in America is such, he wrote, that young people's enthusiasm for great patriotic achievements is channelled into business. These words are still correct, provided we extend the meaning of "business" to cover law, management, and bureaucracy.

To some extent, then, their studies are wasted. Let no one misunderstand me, my class at Yale was brilliant. Some of the one-page summaries they were asked to prepare for me after each two-hour session were gems of intellectual concentration (and the questions appended on a second page went so deep into the meat of the issues that I often wrote a second one-pager to answer them). When I speak of waste, I have two things in mind. The students' general background and ongoing course of studies may further remove them from the life of the mind structured by a hierarchy of realities. The temptation is strong in Western industrial society, with its production-centered ideology, to regard other endeavors as frivolous. In fact, communication in our society is almost predicated on this frivolousness, derived from puritanical embarrassment before things without a practical scope. The second thing I have in mind is the fragmentary character of studies which blocks the emergence of a common discourse above the level of business, a cultural universe in which the elite feels at

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home. By the time cultured and intellectually alert people come to the market place of ideas from their separate and distant hide-outs, their mental energies are sapped, their conversation fades into monologues or irrelevancies.

One of the highest achievements of a society is the establishment of a common discourse among members of its intellectual elite. (This would be even more important today when members of the moral and spiritual elite—the clergy—are speaking in different and contradictory tongues.) I am not the first to argue that the present instructional structure, with its fragmented approach and plethora of electives, its orientation to the practical and to the latest fad, blocks the emergence of such an elite and Babelizes its discourse. The minds and the curiosity are there, but they too often sink into confusion or disuse for lack of an ordering principle pulling together the many endeavors, already and especially at school level.

As it is, we may only hope—and in my case hope turned for once into certainty—that the best men and women will use their gifts for more than the achievement of practical goals in this life.

Keeping the Double Standard Alive

Frank Zepezauer

THE GREAT CULTURAL LEAP forward of the recent past killed the double standard. Think so? Then consider two recent newspaper stories about public servants in trouble with their public.

The first tells of a man who served five years as the Assistant Public Defender of Alameda County, across the bay from San Francisco, where he lives. A man-on-the-street interviewer asked him: "What are you mad as hell about?" His answer: "The homosexual problem distorts the character of the city. Some are probably nice creative people, but San Francisco is imbalanced. It's changed from a family town to something bizarre."

Such candor inflamed the "Gay Capital of the World." The news story reports that he "infuriated many in the gay community." His colleagues "sharply criticized him." One, an out-of-the-closet homosexual, protested that he had "degraded every attorney in the office." His boss announced that he was "outraged." The Assistant Public Defender of Alameda County, feeling the heat generated by these remarks, knew his job was in jeopardy.

Across the country, in East Hampton, New York, the second story involves a high school biology teacher who also found her job threatened. She was pregnant, and some 100 "very disturbed" local residents wanted her fired because she was single and had no plans to marry. In a petition to the school board they charged her with "immoral conduct."

So far, both reports run parallel courses. Two public servants rubbed some locals the wrong way and had to fight for their jobs. But the courses soon diverge. The story of the public defender, which appeared in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, tells only what he said, who got mad, and what eventually happened. Its headline: "Public Defender Quits Over Remarks on Gays." Looks like the man got run out of his job and that, when he quit, he was all alone.

On the other hand, in the story of the school teacher, which ran in the

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New York *Times*, we learn little about her critics and quite a bit about her supporters. Some citizens, we are told, filed a counter petition. Her students rebuked the protesting townsfolk by bringing lunch to her classroom; they fussed over her growing tummy like a worried husband. Her union declared her a victim of “sex discrimination.” Her superiors cited her good work record and stated that “without further cause” she would face no serious threat of dismissal. As you read the story, then, you get a them-and-us feeling: “us” formed by the compassionate who rallied the beleaguered mother-to-be; “them” constituting the gang of citizens that was after her job.

We begin therefore to see a double standard taking shape. Its outline becomes sharper when we note that a principle was invoked for the teacher but not for the public defender: private behavior should not prejudice assessments of job competence. The teacher’s supporters insisted that she was a nice person and a good teacher and what she did in private was nobody’s business but her own. That distinction between public performance and private behavior did not appear in the story of the public defender. Yet it was implicit in the situation. The man had commented on San Francisco’s Gay Community on his own time, as a private citizen. What he said may have been impolitic and unpopular, but he had a right to say it. He himself “emphasized” that his remark expressed personal, not official, opinion. In the news story, no one—not his colleagues, nor his boss, nor any of the infuriated citizens—claimed he had done poor work. But the tone of the story, formed as much by what was omitted as by what was included, left the impression that all agreed that anyone with his kind of opinions should not hold his kind of job.

However, what was omitted was considerable, enough to give the story a distinctly different slant. The public defender who expressed reservations about Gay Power in San Francisco was not alone. Far from it. He and his boss heard from supportive as well as “infuriated” citizens and both could point to other signs of disenchantment with San Francisco’s homosexuals. For example, San Francisco’s Catholic Archbishop had denounced the city’s “bizarre sexuality,” reaffirmed his church’s rejection of homosexual behavior and joined with orthodox Jewish and fundamentalist protestant leaders to oppose Gay Power and its ideology. A popular San Francisco journalist had said in a four-column series what the public defender had said: that the growing homosexual community distorted the

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city's image. More recently, in San Francisco, Blacks, Chicanos, Orientals, and "blue collar" workers rose up in significant numbers to oppose a "live-in lover" plan that would have granted "domestic partners" rights equal to those of blood or married relatives. In nearby Santa Clara County, a majority squashed a gay-rights initiative by a three-to-one margin, expressing a Bay Area sentiment against the spread of Gay Power beyond San Francisco. If the public defender had misgivings about what the concentration of homosexuals had done to his "family town," he had lots of company.

But those many signs of support were not all that was omitted from the news story. Something else never appeared: the truth. A check with the public defender himself and the journalist who wrote his story reveals that he did not, in fact, quit his job because of public outcry over his remarks. He had resigned a month earlier to take a job with a private law firm; at the time of his sidewalk interview he was on vacation, and was no longer serving with the public defender's office. Why then did he and his boss allow to be publicized the assertion that he had resigned under pressure? Because, it seems, the pressure was intense and, to a public agency sensitive about its image with minorities, it was embarrassing. Also, the ex-defender feared that gay activists might compromise his new job. He therefore agreed to a cover story which delivered a covert message: public officials who offend organized homosexuals will suffer their wrath.

Fabricated or not, the story reveals the new double standard by failing to generate its own kind of wrath at this outbreak of leftist "McCarthyism." All it reported was that a man complained about Gay Power's effect on his home town, caught hell for it, and "quit over remarks" he had made. Nowhere do you read anything about the possibility that all these "infuriated" citizens might have over-reacted. And nowhere do you pick up a suggestion that such coerced resignations violate civil rights. One should not be forced out of a job because of his race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or appearance. Presumably, however, he can be told to get out for holding anti-liberal opinions. Thus, if we go by the story alone, we can only assume that the public defender got what he deserved.

Compare that story's slant, then, to the story of the pregnant teacher, and you go from one side of the double standard to the other, from

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public servant as big mouth to public servant as victim. The story of this woman's plight builds victimhood with every line. Start with its bold print lead: "A Modern Version of *The Scarlet Letter*." Thus, right from the beginning, the contemporary woman is united with a powerful image from fiction—Hester Prynne protecting her love-child from Puritan bigots. The sub-head is even more heavily loaded: "Some parents think the unwed pregnant teacher is 'immoral'"—a button-shoes-and-spats word that new-age sophisticates use only in jokes. Does anyone outside of Oral Roberts University describe questionable behavior as "immoral"?

Go further and you find this theme re-inforced. The opening paragraph reads: "There have been moments in the past few weeks when [the teacher] has wondered if she is playing out scenes from the novel, *The World According to Garp*, but with a difference. T. S. Garp's mother was never assailed in a petition demanding that school officials dismiss her for being pregnant and unmarried." Thus we link the universally sympathetic figure of Hester Prynne to the eccentric who copulated with a comatose soldier, publicized the act that made her a 'sexual outlaw,' built a woman's movement on her defiance of traditional codes, and ended up a hero.

Go still further and you come to a picture of the teacher in madonna-like repose, her hand resting protectively on the innocent bulge in her abdomen. Who would ruffle such nurturant serenity? Yet by now we are led to feel that in the age of T. S. Garp some throw-backs still exist who would actually hound an unwed mother out of the local school house.

The story thus exploits traditional symbols to awaken sympathy and modernist symbols to excite indignation, both building an image of a woman more moral than the moralists who attacked her. But unlike Hester Prynne, who never denied her sin or the code that defined her act as sinful, the school teacher implied that she and the protesting townspeople no longer lived in the same moral community. The problem, as she saw it, did not lie in her behavior but in *their* reactions. She said: "I don't know why everyone's so excited." She had reason to know, however. Twice married and twice divorced, she had once before gotten pregnant out of wedlock. The earlier pregnancy—which miscarried—stirred up enough feeling at the time to provoke a statement in the petition that the second pregnancy "challenged" the community. She therefore knew what bothered her critics, did what she wanted anyway, and made apologies to no one.

She also took us to deeper levels of an issue already thickly-layered with implications. It involves more than our traditional distaste for busybody scandal mongering exemplified in the story of Hester Prynne as well as in the gospel story of the woman protected by Christ from “the first stone.” It also involves our competing moral systems, the source of our contemporary double standard. It focuses not only on the possibility of people applying their beliefs improperly, but on the beliefs themselves. And to understand this new dualism, we should try to see the episode through the eyes of the protesting parents. They apparently felt that a person who was teaching their children was also affronting their values. They believed that only men and women joined in traditional marriages should beget and raise children, affirming not just a “lifestyle option” but a norm so important that it requires the constant support of custom and law, not to mention the staff of the local school.

Nor are they alone in their “backward” feelings. Cultural progressives themselves worry so much about unwed motherhood that they demand sex education, birth control, and abortion to control it. Even when families begin in traditional ways, they increasingly end in modern forms of disaster, leaving half our children spending part of their lives with one parent.

In fact, the leaders of this school teacher’s profession commissioned research from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation to learn how such conditions affected the classroom. One investigator reported that “serious behavior problems often characterize children reared in one-parent families. Academically the high number of low achievers is alarming.” Such findings reinforced other concerns about blurred sexual identity, diminishing male responsibility and waning commitment to the old-style home and family.

To such concerns the East Hampton school teacher remained conspicuously aloof. From the beginning, she proceeded firm of jaw and open of eye—almost, it seems, with settled conviction. Unlike unfortunate women who, out of passion or accident, wind up single mothers, *she* walked directly into deliberate illegitimacy, or, as her supporters might now prefer to describe it, into “elective parenthood” or “single motherhood by choice.” About her child she said: “A fortuitous marriage does not always coincide with a fortuitous pregnancy.” Fancy words for saying that if you’re not married and you want a baby, it’s okay to have it anyway.

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By choosing single parenthood she also chose something else. In the story we hear nothing of the prospective father, whether he will help raise the child or appear in its life at all. We hear only that the mother-to-be is not currently involved “in a long term relationship.” So it’s possible—even probable—that the father will remain completely outside the truncated family the mother is forming. If so, the school teacher will join a growing number of women who, in the age of sexual equality, have chosen to set up fatherless families where all love, power, and authority comes from the mother alone.

Even Ellen Goodman, who shoots off like a howitzer on women’s rights, does not think women are right when they make this kind of choice. “These new unwed mothers,” she says, “have done more than abandon the traditional family. They have embraced the notion that fathers are dispensable, disposable parents . . . perhaps it has been true for some fathers. But it’s not true for the children.”

Nor should it be true for the students of this teacher, who functions not only as their instructor but as parental surrogate and community agent. By saying with action and word that deliberate single parenthood was okay, she was also attacking the norm that defined her pregnancy as “illegitimate.” By so doing she expanded the already inflated meaning of “reproductive rights,” going from the freedom to kill her unborn child to the freedom to *keep* it exclusively for herself, and to set up for it any domestic arrangement she chose.

The implications of her act and her public stand thus keep unfolding, each layer opening up tough questions. And deeper layers take us to still tougher questions, this time involving a casuistry that can argue a legal permission into a legal right, turn it into a moral right and then a moral good, and finally construct out of it an entitlement so fundamental that public funds must be used to subsidize it. At each step our sympathies toward “poor women” generate the power to take us to the next step until finally, for instance, passionate anti-abortionists are told that the public good requires their financial support of abortion. Should they balk, they hear a pragmatic argument which is used to reinforce the moral reasoning: that, by using tax money to pay for abortions we wipe out a potential mob of expensive welfare children and, in the long run, save taxes.

By choosing motherhood out of wedlock, the East Hampton school

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teacher turns these arguments upside down. She and other financially independent women in effect deny equality to poor women. If welfare should fund abortions of unwanted children, why shouldn't it fund the upkeep of *wanted* children? If some women with money can defy the norm, why can't women without it defy it also? And if the norm is obsolete, why bother about unwed pregnancy to begin with?

Thus, in spite of all the talk about "private behavior," the school teacher was making a public statement and, as the protesting parents pointed out, she was making it every day to her students. Moreover, she was openly taking sides in a theological war between liberationists and traditionalists. Her assurance came in part from her belief that she marched with the winners. If she knew she would upset some people, she also knew she could win support from others, not only in East Hampton but in centers of cultural progress such as New York and San Francisco.

To say this is not necessarily to deny that she is as "nice" as her supporters insist, or to say that she should have been run out of her job. It is to say that her critics made a reasonable point and did not deserve the subtle disparagement they received in the *Times'* story. They appealed to principles of family integrity which still affect all of us whether the principles continue to apply, or whether, as the teacher's action suggested, they have given way to a new "morality."

It is also to say that the Assistant Public Defender of Alameda County should not have been maneuvered into endorsing a fiction about his forced resignation. The pressure working on him reveals that he, too, had affronted somebody's values—in his case, those of the new moralists that the East Hampton school teacher had joined. His experience again exposes the competing moralities behind the current double standard. We now, apparently, establish "tolerance" as the cardinal virtue, replacing the bigotted censoriousness that older values produced. "Individual choice" becomes sacrosanct and decisions about "one's own body" rest on a principle as absolute as the speed of light.

Thus the only remaining sin is to call someone else a "sinner," making of him a public spectacle in order to affirm a public principle.

New moralists are so dedicated to this style of toleration that they can only deplore trends but not the individuals who build them. An explosion of abortions and divorces and unwed pregnancies may have troubling consequences, but liberationists cannot, in their raised consciousness, say

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anything to the man or woman who adds a statistic to the pile. Ellen Goodman says as much about the growing trend toward deliberate illegitimacy: "It is a reflection of our shady world that the friends (of freely choosing unwed mothers) muster so few arguments against this choice." Ms. Goodman, however, does not refer us to the ideologized thinking that has made our world so shady.

If she had, she might have discovered the selectivity in such hand-wringing restraint. For, as Ellen Goodman herself reveals in many other columns, new moralists can rage against their own version of evil, can find in "sexism" and "racism" and "homophobia" (now defined, weirdly, as fear of *homosexuals*) grossly malignant new sins, and can in their incessant attacks on "moralism" manifest greater moral indignation than all the Calvinists at New Salem. Nor do they doubt their ability to distinguish virtue from vice: to an example of one they award the scarlet A of martyrdom, made even more holy by defiant adultery. To an example of the other they attach a new symbol of shame, the lavender H of homophobia.

If the attorney who now wears that H is puzzled, so are the rest of us. We've heard for decades about a hands-off pluralism in which your morality and mine claim equal validity. Yet, as we've seen, new moralists deny universality to *any* ethical principle except their own, and condemn moralizing while they moralize, which makes Jerry Falwell, who admits he's a preacher, easier to take than Jane Fonda.

On the Quality of Life

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn

THERE IS TODAY in Europe and elsewhere a great deal of talk about life quality which is not identical with and far more difficult to measure than living standards. It more nearly but not quite overlaps with happiness. And happiness, as we all know, is highly personal and has a great deal to do with the character, the disposition of individuals. It may be largely tourism that brought up the issue of life quality. Travelers from countries with very high living standards with a statistically-impressive number of cars, telephones, color TV's, bathrooms and a record of longevity—who visited countries far less “advanced”—found to their surprise that people there seemed to be as happy or happier than they were. Of course, material living standards are *not* entirely dissociated from happiness. Nobody is going to maintain that life in Calcutta or in the slums of Naples is really preferable to life in Copenhagen or even Stockholm. Yet, the high suicide rates in very “progressive” nations speak their own language.

Now, if we do look at the purely material side of the problem, we are faced by a number of theories, one claiming that the material aspect of general well-being is conditioned mainly by the number of people living in a specific area, and the natural resources they have available. Thus countries are hastily declared to be overpopulated, or even underpopulated. Today the average person is beset by the fear of overpopulation (which perhaps does exist in some parts of the globe) but overlooks the menace of underpopulation, which appeared in the last 10 years in, for instance, the German Federal Republic and elsewhere. Such evolution affects the well-being of generations; working men and women will have to support not only themselves and their progeny but, to an ever increasing degree, old people—in other words, *three* generations. Upside-down age pyramids of senescent nations like Sweden already show grave menaces to the welfare of the old, with financial collapse and foreign conquest becoming distinct possibilities.

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Yet, looking at individual countries, we see at first glance that some heavily populated states with very restricted natural resources have very high living standards, while others, thinly inhabited and potentially wealthy nations, live very poorly. Let us look at the Netherlands, Japan, Taiwan, or Singapore—and then at Rumania, Peru or certain African countries. Here the human factor is the cause of this state of affairs.

Real, tangible wealth itself is a two-edged sword. It can also have a debilitating effect and negative aspects, as the New Testament teaches us.¹ *Vide* the case of the German Federal Republic which, for a long time, had a fairly good birthrate, very much superior to that of the Communist “Democratic” German Republic, where people were reluctant to produce children in a drab, totalitarian, oppressive world. Those who did had real courage. Yet *today*, in the much larger free Western part of Germany, the birthrate is catastrophically low. The reason is not that people are afraid of World War III (as they are also in the East), but that they are in the glut of practical materialism, madly hankering after the luxuries of life. This can only be partly explained by their reactions to the evils of National Socialism, which brought total war and the grim fruits of a resounding defeat. It is far more a case of materialistic inebriation. Husband and wife both work to buy more goods, children become a real obstacle in this “pursuit of happiness,” egotism camouflaged as individualism celebrates orgies as a reaction against the collectivist ideas extolled by National Socialism. Needless to say, this craze for self-satisfaction, going hand in hand with sensual liberties, not only fails to make people really happy, it also creates new and unexpected material problems. For instance, the steep decrease in births has produced hordes of unemployed teachers; publishing houses printing schoolbooks and texts are near bankruptcy, and the Evangelical Church fears the rise in a few years of a new proletariat of unemployable young ministers as the churches are becoming empty.² Taking a global view, we see the highly paradoxical situation of a “planned parenthood” becoming a mania in countries which need more rather than fewer inhabitants and a population explosion in areas where the children and the youngsters, due to a lessened child mortality, will not be properly taken care of. There is, after all, such a thing as “responsible parenthood” with all its material, pedagogical and educational implications.

We have to turn to large areas of Latin America, mainly the racially very mixed zone, where Christianity is still, relatively speaking, a newcomer. One should have no illusions: it can last a very long time until Christianity affects not only the heart and the blood, but also the brains and the bones. How long did it really take Christianity to mold—by and large, up to a point!—the mentality and the reflexes of people into a Christian way? The Middle Ages were still profoundly affected by a pagan inheritance. The Tyrol, where I live, was Christianized 1500 years ago, but pagan practices and notions survived until a hundred years ago and in some cases are to be found even today.

Now, if we look at Latin American demography, we see that the average birthrate is higher than that of Asia. In the middle zone the percentages of illegitimate births move to 80-85 percent of the total. If these children came from “wild marriages” (common law marriages) the evil would certainly not be as great, but due to *machismo*, the male pride in procreation rather than in sexual prowess, women often have one child after another from one male after the other. As a result the hapless mother must work very hard for the upkeep of her brood while the grandmother, with very little authority, takes care of them. Even where there are schools, the children hardly attend them and, in addition, there is no training for hard and methodical work.³ The South Europeans never were fanatical workers, but the American Indians have no tradition whatsoever of hard labor without duress. The controlled work system instituted by the Spaniards in the *Encomienda* was so little successful, that the Spaniards (and the Portuguese) felt compelled to import black slave labor from Africa.⁴ In the *Reducciones* of Paraguay the Jesuits succeeded in training the Guarani-Indians to some sort of highly organized collective labor and a common life, but after the Portuguese destroyed this highly-interesting experimental establishment by force, it disappeared practically without a trace—if we except some beautiful baroque churches.⁵ Still, as one can see: an irregular population growth, lacking the immensely important frame of a family upbringing, can lead to real congestion. And, *if certain positive factors are missing*, this might create grave psychological problems. Such is partly the case of El Salvador which is emphatically not only a political, but also a moral problem.⁶

We must come to the conclusion that overpopulation and underpopulation cannot be expressed in simple numbers, or a more or less rigid

proportional number between human beings and square miles. Even bringing in soil fertility data will not get us anywhere. We are faced primarily by the human element. The Japanese under the Shogunate believed that their country, with a population of about 30 million, was menaced by overpopulation and therefore they practiced a frightful form of birth control or, rather, of population control. The Shogunate (abolished in 1868 by the revival of the monarchy) was a totalitarian military tyranny established in fear of a European invasion.⁷ The entire way of life for all classes (such as even the size of houses) was laid down by rigid laws. The government (as today in Communist China)⁸ regulated the number of children for the peasantry. Only two were permitted. The rest became victims of the "Thinning Out Order" (*mabiki*). If the third or subsequent child had not been aborted,⁹ it had to be suffocated after birth.

This sort of barbarism was, in a certain way, revived by the American occupation preaching abortion, because according to a Western opinion military aggression is the result of overpopulation. The victorious Americans pressed for "free abortion," the population growth slowed down considerably, but still "overpopulation" remained (Japan is slightly smaller than Montana with a population of 117 million) and the Japanese today, to the dismay of the U.S. Government, are one of the most pacifistic people under the sun. They show not the slightest enthusiasm necessary for a rearmament. Or let us look at the Dutch living in a country not much bigger than Maryland and Delaware combined, with a population of over 14 million having, apart from some natural gas and the soil, practically no raw materials. Yet their spirit is not in the least militarily aggressive. Hitler, using the argument of "overpopulation," preached aggression for a bigger *Lebensraum* (living space) and was thus able to use this as one of his several demagogical devices. I must confess that I considered it impossible that Western Germany, already heavily populated, could digest after the war more than 13 million refugees on 96,000 square miles (a country the size of Wyoming), but they did it and still prospered—and still have 2 million foreign guestworkers.

All of which leads us to the *human factor* which cannot be easily measured. It is partly biological and partly moral. It rests on inherited intelligence and on qualities largely conditioned by education and culture.

Now, intelligence is directly applicable to manual and intellectual work, but it is also decisive for management. Intelligence is largely but

not solely hereditary and can be fostered or stunted only to a certain degree.¹⁰ It would be childish to believe that all persons, races or racial compounds are born with the same kind of brain—nor with identical other physical qualities. As runners the dwarfish Bambutis of Central Africa will always be licked by the giant long-legged Watussis or Massais. The nervous reflexes (which also imply speed in thinking) are not equally distributed either. God or, if you like, Nature, is not “democratic” and egalitarian.¹¹ I can only advise a Dutch or Swedish tourist coming to Rome to park his car in the next garage and not to try driving around in the Eternal City. Of course, as to the true thinking processes it might be premature to speak about superiorities and inferiorities. The practical question is this: How is an individual intelligence adapted to the needs and requirements of our rationalistic and technological civilization? Some are more and some are less, and this might be true individually or collectively. There is in the United States a controversial nervousness about I.Q.’s of racial compounds, a fear of a racist revival which to a religious person is perfectly ludicrous. Salvation does not depend upon intelligence,¹² strong bodies, long legs or excellent eyesight. This nervousness is centered around the image of the Afro-American.¹³ Nobody protested when it became evident that in American intelligence the Jews and Chinese appeared to be leading.¹⁴ Nor did Hitler send Jews to the gas-chambers because they had low I.Q.’s. Very much to the contrary!¹⁵

But high I.Q.’s alone do not assure a high living standard or a high quality of life. There must be a willingness for hard and systematic work as well as other distinctly moral qualities—reliability, truthfulness, honesty, temperance, i.e. the so-called natural virtues. It is for all these factors that we have seen certain countries or ethnic groups thrive, regardless of whether they are “overpopulated” or not. Switzerland, which not only has a very high living standard¹⁶ but also a high life quality, is, apart from its mountainous regions, enormously overpopulated. (At present it has a world record in low unemployment and a near-record in “guest-workers”—in spite of overpopulation.) There are, one should add, too many myths current about Switzerland, a very conservative country and a military democracy,¹⁷ a country with brilliant management, highly reasonable trade unions and a real dedication to hard work.¹⁸ Her critics like to argue that her wealth is due merely to tourism, which is untrue, or to her bank secrecy, another error.¹⁹

All of which simply means that people are not the same all over the world. They are not “equal.”²⁰ They think, speak, act, and react, differently. Thus what the Spaniards call *la gana de trabajar*, the disposition for hard and systematic work, which is a cultural rather than a racial trait, varies all over the world. Here we must remember that Max Weber’s “Protestant Work Ethic” is by no means a misnomer. It has suffered substantially through the modern Provider State which discourages hard work, thrift, prudence and foresight, but it is a factor still to be reckoned with. It was due to this ethical attitude that the nations of northwest Europe and the North Americans created living standards far above those of the south and the east. Free-market enterprise was, after all, born in Italy and Spain; it is the work ethic rather than “capitalism”²¹ which created the wealth of the nations of the Reformation faiths. The Catholic and Eastern Orthodox nations all worked in order to live—never the other way round. Thus their life quality is surprisingly high: tourists go from the North to the South; even wealthy Italians rarely visit Sweden or Denmark. In spite of all their poverty and the *favelas*, Rio de Janeiro or Bahia are more exciting places than Cleveland or Chicago, Toledo (Spain) more so than Toledo (Ohio).

If we take a look at the globe we find that the disposition for systematic work, coupled with the concept of an acquisitive society (which in its extremes is by no means a Christian ideal), is confined only to two areas. First, the European northwest, extending gradually in a southern and eastern direction, but not as far as the Soviet Union.²² This zone includes, however, North America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, which culturally belong to the European northwest.²³ The other area with a high work ethic is Eastern Asia in so far as it has a Confucian tradition. In Japan this has been reinforced by the frightening “education” given to the people by the militaristic Shogunate. Taxes amounted sometimes to as much as 80 percent, and the peasant who did not pay was swiftly beheaded.²⁴ The Japanese, the Koreans, the Chinese, the Viets (but not the Laotians or the Cambodians) are terrific workers.²⁵ They are also intelligent. Wherever they emigrate, they soon prosper, and become therefore intensely disliked. Both Indian traditions, the Hinduist and the Small Vessel (Teravada) Buddhist, do not make for work diligence. This is, indeed, not a racial issue. Indian emigrants in the southern Pacific, above all in Africa (in Black Africa as well as in South Africa) have made

money hand over fist. By becoming uprooted, they could at least get partly rid of their religious shackles. Of course, this they also can do in their own country, *vide* the social rise of the Indian Christians and of the Goans whom one finds all over the *Bharat*.²⁶

China, at the present time, is a very special case. The living standards there are today extremely low because the Chinese, who are great individualists and intellectually gifted, work hard only if properly motivated, which they are not in Red China. But they are strongly motivated in Taiwan, Singapore and Hongkong (where a mere 400 square miles has 5.5 million people). Taiwan, though only two-thirds the size of Switzerland, very mountainous and inhabited by 17 million people, has one of the highest living standards in Asia. If Taiwan is well-to-do, Singapore and Hongkong are opulent. But Red China has the silliest economic system the human mind can invent—socialism. It is deemed “overpopulated” and, due to a totalitarian government, the number of births is brutally controlled as it was in Japan under the Shogunate. Naturally, if a people like the Chinese is intelligent, individualistic, and hard working, the minority which does not have these qualities will fail abysmally *in a very competitive society*. The beggar was always treated with far more contempt in Europe’s North than in the South. Poverty was always more biting there than on the shores of the Mediterranean²⁷—and this was by no means a question of mere climate. The beggars have, indeed, disappeared in Communist China, for the simple reason that everybody is in harness. Yet, the “toilers” in Red China have living standards lower than those among us who are unemployed or unemployable.²⁸

Life quality, as we have said, is connected with happiness or, at least, with contentedness. This is admittedly almost impossible in misery which (unlike mere poverty) means lack of an abode with privacy, food, heat, clothing, or medical aid. He who has no roof over his head is hungry, freezes, cannot cover his body, can never be happy. The main source of happiness, on the other hand, as recent German polls have shown, is family and marital life. (Even for 79 percent of the males, happiness in the family was paramount.)²⁹ Yet it would be an illusion to believe that life on this earth can be continuously or even predominantly happy: our world is essentially a vale of tears and a place of trial; examinations just are no fun. The student of Goethe’s life might easily come to the conclusion that the great man was a very well-balanced pagan in harmony with

life, very healthy, admired, lucky in most of his undertakings and in his career, beloved and always in love.³⁰ And yet, Goethe admitted at the age of 75 that during all those years he had not been content (*zufrieden*) for more than a good four weeks.³¹

There are five rays of light in the darkness of our peregrination and they can be strong enough to illuminate our way: 1) religion, which is one of the most distinguishing marks between man and beast; 2) art, which can move us to joy and tears; 3) creativity (allied with art), which gives us a great inner satisfaction; 4) nature, and above all; 5) love, which can be Eros, affection, friendship and charity.³² They all relate to God: religion directly, art as “God’s Granddaughter,”³³ creativeness because it underlines the fact that we have been created in God’s image, the Creator, nature as God’s visible signature and love as God’s essence.

Imagine a farming cabinet maker with 15 acres on a hill near Avila with a good wife, children and a small car. He nearly exemplifies the Spanish dream:

Tener un hijo	To have a son
Plantar un arbol	To plant a tree
Escribir un libro	To write a book.

There is real life quality—much better than that of a successful over-worked lawyer in New York!

So far we have spoken about countries and their material-emotional problems. Happiness, however, also must be seen from the angle of social stratification. It is obvious that not all social layers share equally in the goods of life, be they material or emotional. Again we have to set misery apart which eliminates practically all happiness. Yet—to express a banality—there is no reason to believe that rich people are happier than poor people. Most rich people enjoy their wealth only if it is recently acquired. These *nouveaux riches* we envy for their often too-obviously enjoyed prosperity instead of sharing their happiness. Unjustly and uncharitably we tend to criticize them and to denounce them as “vulgar.”³⁴ Conversely, the most pitiful people are the newly poor, who have lost their fortune or had to flee and seek exile. They are not used to poverty.

Envy only too frequently raises its ugly head. This is especially true, and creates a great problem, in those countries where the masses live in misery or poverty, where the middle class is very small and a few people

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are rich or super-rich. This is, above all, the situation in the “developing nations” where the “underprivileged” abound. In order to understand this problem in the right perspective, we have to take a look at history and pre-history.

By now we know that humanity is at least a million and a half years old. If we equate this with 12 hours on the clock, we can say that only half or a quarter minute before twelve a very few individuals in a very few regions led a life remotely compatible with what we rashly call “human dignity.” For the rest—most of the time—life from *our* viewpoint was an unmitigated horror: frightful diseases, immense pain, high mortality,³⁵ terrible discomforts, hunger, climatic hardships and endless fears of wild beasts, enemies, cannibalism, wholesale slaughters, vermin, frequent rape, childbirth often under the most precarious circumstances, and not in a few cases the brutal elimination of the old. Even a Louis XIV led a miserable life compared to that of a good German worker. Remember, Versailles in spite of all of its splendor stank to high heaven in the summer on account of lacking sanitation. Would the *roi soleil* (who never got rid of his lice) not have given a province of his realm for a decent dentist, and three for an accomplished surgeon, anesthetist and pharmacist dispensing antibiotica? Would he not have given away a fortune for a color-TV set or an average motor car? Monarchs had to travel constantly but imagine—taking the roads and the coaches of that time into consideration—what frightful tortures this implied!

Let us return, however, to the “developing nations” and their “social problem” which allegedly is a) exploitation by the rich, and b) exploitation by colonialism, old or new. The social pyramids in these countries are, as a rule, not pyramids at all, but bodies with a very broad basis shrinking quickly and ending in a long, thin needle which is most conspicuous. Of course, the needle (the rich and super-rich) acts as a provocation. If you are nearly starving and live in a hovel, the big landowner, the industrialist, or the American tourist passing you in a Mercedes, enrages you. Why are they so rich? Because they are exploiting the poor is the answer of the miserable native, and of the sociologist who ventures in from a big American State university or the pious Christian researcher on the lookout for a moral rather than psychological or economic reason. He protests in the name of “distributive justice” which to him is equality, but justice is not equality: justice is Ulpian’s *Suum cuique*, “to everybody

his due.” Redistribution is an illusion, because if we break off the needle, melt it and pour it over the broad foot of the pyramid, practically nothing there would be changed. The rich will become poor and the poor will remain poor. In the countries of Central and northern South America this would mean for each poor man or woman roughly the addition of a cent or two a day.³⁶ *Poor countries always have a few very rich: the masses there are poor because the will to work hard is lacking and those who really work hard have little competition and thus get rich—often quickly.* Countries are wealthy and have few poor if there is a *general* dedication to hard work. There are indeed countries with no slums.³⁷

It is, moreover, absolute nonsense to blame either past colonialism or “neo-colonialism” for this state of affairs. Again and again one has to convince “opinion-formers” that the vast majority of the colonies were *in the red*. (Of the German pre-World War I colonies only little Togo was in the black.) It was the loss of the colonies which led to the great European prosperity. And, as a result of decolonialization, Europe’s former “adopted children” turned to the United States, the USSR and China for aid, usually blackmailing the Big Three politically.

However, it is true that in the Third World Countries “alien” minorities often played an extraordinary economic and social role, largely due to their technological and commercial qualities and energies. During my second visit to Peru I had a rather animated conversation with the secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, who told me that due to the enormous preponderance of the large estates, the Peruvian farming class lived in dire misery. He told me that 78 percent of the country’s surface was in the hands of large “feudal” landowners.³⁸ He was not able to give me an indication as to the quality of the various soils, but had to admit that a certain amount was infertile high-Andean territory and also trans-Andean jungle. I then insisted on getting data concerning the relation between the rural population and the remaining 22 percent and found the quota not bad. He protested. I referred to the Lima telephone book which at that time (the early sixties), due to the very high rates, featured only subscribers at least belonging to the middle class, and among them Japanese names abounded. The penniless Japanese had only quite recently arrived. They spoke no Spanish, yet, taking the most menial jobs and living parsimoniously, they bought one small plot after the other and started raising vegetables. The provisioning of Peru with fresh vegetables

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is done today mostly by Peruvians of Japanese descent. They ended up by owning houses, cars and even telephones, and sending their children to good schools. He who works hard, avoids alcohol and drugs, has in Peru every possibility to rise socially. "And do you really think," the Christian Democratic Secretary shouted at me, "that our noble Peruvian people would stoop down to such back-breaking labor as these Japs?" No need to comment on this outcry, but again, this is not a racial, but a cultural and personal issue. I well remember a stocky Mestizo with fur coat and heavy rings in a good Bogotá (Columbia) hotel who asked the room clerk for a suite with a bathroom. The price was not modest. The clerk handed him the registration book to sign and, without batting an eye, he made three x's. He came from the humblest origins, had obviously not been to the Harvard Business School, but he could count and obviously had made a small fortune. Of course, he was an exception.

Professor Frederick B. Pike of Notre Dame had also once believed the Latin American myth, i.e., the exploitation of the masses in a feudal system. He visited Chile on a sabbatical and then wrote a book in that sense. On the next sabbatical he visited Peru, suddenly saw the light and published a brilliant essay in which he put the finger on the wound.³⁹ He thinks that the Church is not blameless: in the past she failed to emphasize the natural virtues, is now increasingly veering to the Left, and spreads an obsolete Marxist version of history, sociology and economics, thus increasing and justifying envy. Yet envy is one of the most potent poisons to life quality. It ruins one's whole existence. He who envies, hates. He who envies and hates is unhappy. It all started ominously with Cain and Abel, and since 1789, the mobilization of the envious many against the envied few has become the very key to political success. Envy is the very cancer not only of Europe, where it is extremely strong, but of our entire modern civilization.

Economics, as a matter of fact, is the Achilles heel not only of the Catholic Church but of the entire Catholic world. At present I know of no Catholic economist of world fame.⁴⁰ Too many Christians think that economics can be compared to a certain situation in a jail. Let us imagine a cell with four inmates. One of them is an extremely strong bully who forces the other three to surrender to him half their portions. This creates, no doubt, a "social problem,"⁴¹ which, however, has rarely had an analogy in a free society. It might exist in Latin America, in remote areas with

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armed landowners who invest their revenue in American or European banks. We cannot entirely exclude this. Yet what about manufacturers in the Third World not paying family wages? If they did, could they still sell their products? Who could afford to buy them? Has not labor in Europe (and in America) gone through a fairly long penurious development until *finally* our employers, thanks primarily to technological evolution, were capable of paying family wages? Capital in the Third World is constantly being menaced by expropriation, hence the reluctance to invest there. And if capital does invest, it is immediately accused of "exploitation".⁴²

As one can see, life quality depends upon a number of factors of which climatic⁴³ and purely demographic aspects are the least important. The human element is truly decisive. And this, in turn, has religious, political and ideological implications. Life quality is thus, by and large, of our own making.

NOTES

1. But the "camel" which cannot get through the eye of the needle is probably a "string." Due to itacism in the time of Christ the words *kamelos* (camel) and *kamilos* (string) were pronounced in exactly the same way. (Itacism implies the pronunciation of e, i, y, oi with the i sound as in "bit.")
2. The number of the Catholic candidates for the priesthood in Western Germany is today about 700, twice as many as in 1972, but still *far too few*. There are more theology students (of both sexes) than ever before, but only a minority studies for the priesthood.
3. We dealt with this problem already in an article entitled "Some Reflections on Population Problems" in *The Human Life Review*, Vol. III, No. 1 (Winter 1977), pp. 71-84.
4. When I mentioned my long American sojourn to a lady in a South American capital, she exclaimed: "Ah, these lucky North Americans. They have Negroes, but we these hopeless Indios!"
5. An excellent description of the *reducciones* can be found in R.B. Cunninham Graham's *A Vanished Arcadia* (London, 1901). The destroyer of the *reducciones* was the notorious Portuguese statesman Marquis Pombal, a bitter enemy of the Jesuits. The Portuguese operated from Brazilian territory.
6. Consulting the criminal statistics of 1968 we find that there was in Spain one murder (or manslaughter) for 1 million inhabitants, in the Republic of Ireland three, in the United Kingdom seven, but in El Salvador 319! Thus the low and the high record both happened in Catholic Hispanic countries.
7. These data I have partly from Prince Mikasa, the Japanese Emperor's youngest brother, a famous historian of early religions.
8. One child per family is permitted, in the rarest of cases a second child is conceded, a third one has to be aborted. Since the Chinese crave sons, newly born girls are often "eliminated."
9. St. Francis Xavier, soon after his landing in Japan, was horrified by the abortions. See James Broderick SJ, *Saint Francis Xavier* (Image Books: Garden City; Doubleday, 1957), p. 252.
10. The Belgian Robert Maistriau insists that in the life of the small child, up to the age of two, maternal love is of an essential necessity for its mental development. Between the ages of two and seven it is a maximum of contacts with other adults. Hence the two-year-old child in tropical Africa is superior in its evolution to the Euramerican child, but at the age of seven the Euramerican children are vastly superior. (Oral communication in his I.Q. research center in Elisabethville, Congo, 1960.)
11. Needless to say, we are not equal in the eyes of God either. If Judas Iscariot is equal to St. John the Baptist, Christianity can close up shop. We all have equally bodies, souls, the invitation to holiness and salvation, and Mr. Henry Ford II and I equally have banking accounts, but not equal banking accounts. Adverbial equality has at best a limited resemblance to real equality. We all get God's love and God's Grace, but by no means to an equal amount. (Christ loved St. John more than St. Peter, but to the latter he gave the power of the keys.)
12. There is still no consensus among theologians who the *ptokhoi to pneumatii*, the Poor in Spirit, really are.

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13. Of course, there are no black Africans in the United States (or practically none). All the so-called "Blacks" are of mixed blood—African (and American Indian), Anglo Saxon and/or Celtic.
14. Richard Hofstadter in his brilliant *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964) fails to bring up the inner connection between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Intellectualism in the United States.
15. Hitler also suffered from the rather "popular" identification of cleverness and wickedness, goodness and stupidity.
16. If we forget a few oil-shiekdoms in the Near East, Switzerland with an annual per capita *share of the GNP* of \$14,240 holds a record. India in comparison has \$190, Ethiopia \$130, Afghanistan (never a colony) \$170.
17. It is the portrait of the commanding general which adorns all public offices. Men have to serve annually until they are 47 and have the privilege to serve until they are 52. With the exception of Israel, Switzerland has the highest military expenditure—up to 35 percent of the budget. Women were given the vote only recently and hesitantly: only he who serves in the army is "really" a citizen.
18. The German-Swiss refer to their working activity not with the expression *arbeiten*, but *schaffen*, which literally means to create.
19. Tourism accounts for only eight percent of the Swiss GNP. And secret bank accounts are fairly general in Europe—they are, as a matter of fact, stricter in Austria than in Switzerland.
20. The New Testament speaks about Liberty but never mentions Equality (*isótes*).
21. This is a Marxist term which, in a way, is unscientific. If we accept it at all, we also have a perfect right to call Socialism and Communism "State Capitalism."
22. The notion that people work very hard and enthusiastically in Soviet factories is pure myth. The authorities there have learned the lesson that more working hours (with largely unmotivated workers) do not produce more goods.
23. Yet in Australia the old British work ethics were ruined by their trade unions long before the T.U.C. did the same destructive work in Britain itself. Only the immigration of "New Australians" from the European Continent after World War II saved the situation.
24. Morals can indeed be *beaten* into a people. When the Swedes conquered Finland they found out that the Finns had not the acute respect for private property they had. They hacked off one hand from every thief. If he stole again his second went the way of all flesh. Today the Finns are the most honest people in Europe!
25. Almost all shopkeepers in Phnom-Penh and in Vientiane were Viets, Chinese and, in a few cases, East Indians.
26. The Goans (mostly Catholics) are in the banking business, because they can be trusted as cashiers. When I went to churches in India, I was certain that the congregations were typically middle class: the women in *sari*, but nearly all men dressed neatly in the Western fashion. Yet I quickly found out that in Northern India nearly all these nice middle-class people had "risen socially": they originally came from the lowest castes.
27. Professor Allison Peers records in his *Spain* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1929), p. 22 that he was accosted by a Spanish beggar with the words: "Little brother, give me some alms for the love of God who in the fullness of youth has taken away from me the disposition for work!"
28. Young workers in the Chinese People's Republic earn about \$21 a month, full workers about \$42, physicians about \$50-\$55 (only "patriotic enterprisers" get a great deal more). This means, even if we accept the fact that many commodities are very inexpensive, that the masses in China live on the borderline of poverty and misery. (Public bus drivers in Hong Kong earn nearly \$600 a month.)
29. Even a famous libertine like Choderlos de Laclos confessed: "There is no other real happiness than in the family." See his *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Paris: Garmier, 1961), p. viii. Choderlos de Laclos wrote at the end of the 18th century.
30. At the age of 74 Goethe fell deeply in love with Baroness Ulrike Levetzow who was then 19 years old. The affection was mutual. Ulrike died at the age of 95, unmarried, never having forgotten her great admirer.
31. See J.P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe* (Weisbaden: Brockhaus, 1959), pp. 64-65 (dated January 24, 1824).
32. C.S. Lewis in his *Four Loves* calls the love of near relatives "the affections." I have adopted his terminology.
33. This is a term used in Europe for art: since the Church is the daughter of God, art in turn the daughter of the Church, and art until the Renaissance was in Christendom almost exclusively sacred, this expression is legitimate. (However, do not ask me to define "art" or "beauty"!)
34. On May 4, 1973 I published in *Rheinischer Merkur* an article entitled "In Praise of the Newly Rich" which shocked many "pious" readers.
35. In mid-Europe's Neolithic period the average age of men *surviving infancy* was 28, of women 22. Such a death rate is "natural."
36. When I mentioned this to a leading theologian he retorted that I was technically right, but as a theologian

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and priest he had to advocate everything which eliminates the occasion for sin. And envy is sin. I then brought up the case of two sisters, one beautiful with many admirers, the other an ugly duckling, who cries every night in her despair. Should we take a sharp knife and scratch up the face of the pretty one to remove her beauty and thus terminate the feelings of her sister? The theologian gave no answer but merely raised his hands in horror.

37. I always admired the dedication to hard work among Americans which among the many is enormous, but one can also observe a definite weakening of the fiber, and there is a segment of the population which is distinctly improvident, and whose failings are fostered and abetted by the Provider State (wrongly called the Welfare State).

38. This percentage was by and large correct. Soon a leftist military dictatorship made a radical agrarian reform, expropriating a whole class. The *campesinos* were partly unable and partly unwilling to engage in additional work on their enlarged farms. The government finally approached the old owners, intimating that they must have hidden savings (at home or abroad), invited them to buy back part of their former property. Small scale farming becomes more and more uneconomical—unless it is vegetable gardening.

39. See Fredrick B. Pike, "The Modernized Church in Peru: Two Aspects," in *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July 1964), pp. 307-318.

40. This is certainly the situation after the death of Goetz Briefs and Daniel Villey. I do not count persons merely baptized in the Catholic faith.

41. One must not believe that the Catholic Church has a "social doctrine" in the same way as it exists either in Marxism or in classic liberalism. P. Bartolomeo Sorge, S.J., in his article "E superato il concetto tradizionale di dottrina sociale della Chiesa?" *Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 119 (March 1968), pp. 423-436, tells us that the expression "Catholic Social Doctrine" is a very bad one and should be abandoned. Cardinal Küng (Vienna) in an article "Was ist eigentlich christliche Soziallehre?" *Die Presse*, June 20, 1981, emphasized the relativity of all social teaching and warns against considering all Encyclicals as infallible pronouncements.

42. There are very few political parties in the Third World which do not have the word EXPROPRIATION written in flaming letters on their banners—expropriation of the landowners, the manufacturers, the Church, foreign capital, and even all houses. (The latter was a demand of the "guerilla-priest" Camilo Torres Restrepo of Columbia.)

43. Much of Africa and of the Andean region—where the work ethics are rather low—have an excellent climate, sometimes even with the character of an eternal spring, while the American southeast, Japan, and a great part of China have terrible summers; Singapore has a perpetual tropical heat all year round. Yet all this does not affect there the dedication to long and hard work.

APPENDIX A

[The following is reprinted from the October, 1983 issue of Persuasion at Work, a publication of the Rockford Institute in Rockford, Illinois. Allan C. Carlson is the editor of Persuasion at Work; the newsletter's purpose, as he defines it, is to report on "developments that either threaten or support" cultural principles such as the idea of the family as "the primary unit of society." This article is reprinted with permission (©1983 by the Rockford Institute).]

Family Breakdown and Other Cancers of the 'Post-Capitalist' Era

Why Has the Left Viewed the Marketplace and Motherhood as Closely Related Enemies?

Allan C. Carlson

One could be forgiven for claiming confusion over the whole family question. On the one hand, there are still frequent expressions of optimism concerning the future of the family in America. One survey recently reported that nine out of every ten Americans say that their families are "very important" to their basic sense of individual worth, the highest rating given to any social institution. The Census Bureau notes that 90 percent of all Americans can be expected to marry at some point in their lives, suggesting that we Americans are still the "marrying" sort. Scholars participating in the Research Forum of the 1980 White House Conference on Families concluded that "what we are witnessing today is not the breakup of traditional family patterns but the emergence of a pluralism in family ways."¹ In fact, a minor industry has grown up within the sociological profession celebrating our "changing families" and the "new pluralism" of family forms.

But on the other hand, there remain those awful, haunting statistics suggesting accelerating social decomposition within the United States. An estimated one million of our children now live on the streets, a third of them supporting themselves through child prostitution. The nation's divorce rate has tripled since 1958, while the marriage rate in 1979 stood at its lowest level in 40 years. The number of divorced persons per 1000 married persons climbed from 35 in 1960 to 100 by 1980; among black women, the increase was from 78 to 257. The U.S. fertility rate (births per 1000 women aged 15-44) fell from 122.7 in 1957 to 66.7 in 1975, reflecting a rapid retreat by Americans from childbearing. Over the same years, the illegitimacy ratio (illegitimate births per 1000 live births) tripled, reaching 142.5 in 1975. Of the 3.5 million children born in the U.S. in

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1979, 17 percent were born to unmarried women; among black Americans, the figure was 55 percent, almost three times the figure from the mid-1950's. Four out of every 10 out-of-wedlock births in 1979 were to teenage girls, who commonly became children raising children. By any objective standard, the scope, rate, and public-policy implications of these changes must be judged as staggering.

Two Questions, One Answer

In face of these developments, two questions are in order: 1) What caused this dramatic breakdown in the American family life? and, 2) Why do analysts of the situation give such divergent interpretations to the same raw data?

In a basic sense, these two questions have the same answer. Both the breakdown of American family life and the unwillingness of many persons to acknowledge this breakdown are the common result of what can be called *the collapse of the "nuclear-family" norm*.

Forgive here my descent into sociological jargon, but it seems necessary. Simply defined, *norms* are those thousands of unwritten rules, assumptions, codes, and beliefs which we learn from our parents, peers, and teachers and which guide our daily actions at home, in the workplace, at worship, or at play. Cultural and social norms provide a society with its ordering principles, its measures of morality and deviance, of right and wrong, and its legacy to subsequent generations. Norms define for individuals the nature of responsibility, the ultimate purposes of social life, and the proper basis for human relationships.

For most of our nation's history, the so-called "nuclear family"—that is, the married couple with their children—served as the normative, idealized image of the American family. Rooted in the middle-class virtues of hard work, delayed gratification, and self-imposed restraints on personal behavior, the characteristics of this family form were: a heterosexual marriage based on love and free choice; the confinement of sexual relations to marriage; the primacy of family attachments; economic security for women and children; the obligation among family members for mutual support in crisis; and the acceptance of sex-determined roles ("mother" and "father") within the family. While certainly never universal, and often not even a majority phenomenon, the nuclear family norm stood well into the 20th century as an ideal to be striven towards, as the popular measure of normality and deviance, and as the mark of responsibility and respectability. It enjoyed the support of most other American social institutions, including government, the law, organized religion, the media, and the educated elite.

For complex and not wholly understood reasons, this normative model actually strengthened its influence in American society during the 1950's. Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons could affirm by 1961 that there was "a single and

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relatively well integrated and fully institutionalized system of values in American society” rooted in family and religious faith that “has not undergone a fundamental change in recent times.”² As late as 1967, Gerald Leslie could declare in his popular family sociology textbook that the “white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, middle-class family is a kind of prototype for the larger society *In twentieth century America, however, an increasing proportion of the population is achieving the ideal.*”³

What caused the collapse of this apparently successful, even imposing, model of how one should live “the good life”?

The Cultural War

To begin with, the prevailing American family structure came under an unprecedented ideological assault. Opponents came from many directions:

1) *The Marxist Left*. In an 1884 treatise, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx’s collaborator, had stressed the closely connected nature of the middle-class family model and modern market capitalism. As Engels wrote:

With the transfer of the means of production into common ownership, the single family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are legitimate or not . . . [W]ill not that suffice to bring about the gradual growth of unrestrained sexual intercourse . . . ?⁴

Viewed through this Marxist lens, the family emerged as but another “functional prerequisite of capital,” where motherhood served merely as a bizarre manifestation of the modern production process, providing for the “reproduction of a future commodity [of] labor power.”⁵ When “New Left” activists emerged in America during the early 1960’s, they adopted these old Marxist perspectives on “collective childrearing,” “nonrepressive sexuality,” and “oppressive motherhood” in the pursuit of their agenda, correctly perceiving that free-market capitalism and the modern family were closely related enemies. As one revolutionary wrote in 1971: “The institution of the family is inherently reactionary, and helps to maintain the capitalist system. The family . . . is oppressive to its members. . . . Each nuclear family exists in isolation from the rest of society and this weakens the class consciousness of the workers.”⁶ Destruction of the family, the neo-Marxists reasoned, would result in the destruction of capitalism itself.

2) *The Sexual Liberationists*. The evidence, I believe, is overwhelming that there were major discontinuities in the sex lives of most Americans after 1960; in sum, a true sexual revolution. A simple comparison of Alfred Kinsey’s famed studies of human sexuality during the 1940’s with Morton Hunt’s 1972 research shows that, on average, most Americans in the early 1970’s—young and old alike—were having more sex, doing it in different ways, with a greater variety of

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partners, and feeling less guilty about it afterwards, than did their Kinsey-survey counterparts.

While medical, physiological, and technological advances all played a role in bringing on the famed “sex revolution,” there *were* activists and a vague, if effective, ideology behind the transformation. In the April 1983 issue of *Mother Jones*, Barbara Ehrenreich focuses—correctly, I believe—on the role of *Playboy* magazine and the “Playboy philosophy” in planting the seeds of family disruption during the mid-1950’s. As editor Hugh Hefner wrote for his first issue: “We want to make clear from the very start, we aren’t a ‘family magazine.’” According to Ms. Ehrenreich, *Playboy*’s message for men “was not eroticism, but escape—literal escape, from the bondage of breadwinning,” involving an open critique of marriage focused on “gold digging” wives, the dismissal of children as irrelevant, and a utopian vision focused on the hedonistic pleasures.⁷

In 1973, the Playboy Press published its own history of the modern sex revolution. Entitled *The Rape of the A*P*E** (**American *Puritan *Ethic*), the book described in surprisingly candid terms the successful “obscening of America.” Wrote author Allan Sherman:

Carefully, and often secretly, my generation manned (?) the battlefronts of the [Sex] Revolution. We produced and sold the rock’n’roll records with risque lyrics; we invented the term ‘wonder drug,’ and LSD as the true panacea, pushing it at the kids in the hallowed atmosphere at Harvard. My generation wrote and read bestsellers with nothing more to recommend them than a half-dozen paragraphs of old-fashioned smut. . . . We invented or at least perfected wife swapping. We performed illegal abortions. We crowded into the dark to watch those stupid stag films.

According to Sherman, this conscious assault on the sexual restraints sustained by middle-class culture became, in time, an attack on the whole “incredibly clean-cut and impossibly wholesome” American World of Disney, church socials, Shirley Temple, the YMCA, Blondie and Dagwood, *The Saturday Evening Post*, motherhood, miniature golf, apple pie, and hot dogs. In the end, Sherman suggested, the sex revolution of the 1960’s and early ’70s “removed America’s backbone and revealed our awful secret: Stripped of the Puritan ethic, we have no morals at all.” He added that “nothing was reduced to less recognizable rubble than the revered . . . Institution of Marriage.”⁸

3) *Populationists*. Neo-Malthusian fears of supposed American “overpopulation” began growing in the mid-1960’s. While normally calling only for smaller families (one or two children as opposed to four or five), the neo-Malthusians sometimes turned to attacks on parenthood and family in general, finding “The myth of Mom and Apple Pie” and attitudes exalting the role of parenthood to be dangerous.⁹ Under their influence, neo-Malthusianism became by the early 1970’s the more-or-less official policy of the U.S. government, with large fami-

lies and population growth viewed, at best, as unwelcome and, at worst, as virtual social pathologies and the appropriate targets for state activism.

4) *Radical feminism*. By the early 1970's, the cutting edge of the women's movement found the family—particularly the burdens of children—to be a chief stumbling block to its ideological goals. Summarizing "The Movement's" perspective, sociologist Jessie Bernard cited the insights of Karl Marx and concluded that "the diagnosis of the family as the major roadblock to the full emancipation of women is very old. . . . Merely helping women bear the load of child care and child rearing is viewed as inadequate."¹⁰ Kate Millet, for example, came to view all of society as an oppressive patriarchy, with women cast as universal victims. Germaine Greer called on women to abandon their homes, husbands, and children in the pursuit of their individual desires and needs. Another writer from this era relabeled faithful wives as dishonest "prostitutes," for, unlike the real thing, the former lied about their true role in life. The same piece called the American home "the basis of all evil."¹¹

Other intellectual and social movements from the 1960's and early '70s joined gleefully in this assault on the nuclear family norm. Starting in 1965, scholars began arguing that middle-class values were irrelevant to black Americans and other racial minorities. Daniel P. Moynihan's famed Labor Department report that year on "The Negro Family," which focused on the urban "pathologies" of divorce, desertion, illegitimacy, and female-headed families affecting a growing proportion of blacks, brought howls of protest from minority activists and their allies in the universities. In representative fashion, sociologist Robert Staples declared that "[d]ivorce, illegitimacy, and female-headed households are not necessarily dysfunctional except in the context of Western, middle-class, white values."¹² Homosexuals, organizing politically after 1969, frequently attacked the normative nature of the nuclear family, seeking to end its special status and win public acceptance of their sexual orientation as merely "another" life-style. The Human Potential Movement, focusing on the health and fulfillment of the self, tended to view family ties and responsibilities as impediments to self-realization and advised its followers and clients to cast off such "unhealthy" burdens. One influential psychologist dismissed families as a bunch of "gangsters" and labeled the American home as the site for "reciprocal terrorism." And so on down the list.

Et Tu, Brute?

Such opponents were formidable enough. Yet the nuclear-family model even found the institutions that once supported it deserting to the other side.

1) *The Social Sciences*. Among the social sciences, for example, the interpretations of Talcott Parsons and his school gave way during the 1960's to a new

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relativism. Articles appearing after 1965 critically dissected the nuclear-family “bias” found within the sociological profession. Marriage counselors, psychiatrists, and social workers who accepted this family model as “healthy,” one author wrote, were little more than “zoo keepers” sustaining a dangerous “pathology.”¹³ Such ideas spread rapidly. The report of Forum 14 of the 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth serves as a significant benchmark of change. Authored by a cross section of the nation’s most well-connected sociologists, it defined *family* as merely “a group of individuals in interaction,” described optional family forms ranging from nuclear families to “single parent,” “communal,” “group marriage,” and “homosexual” varieties, and welcomed the contemporary movement “to destroy the cultural myth of a ‘right’ or ‘best’ way to behave, believe, work or play.”

2) *The Churches*. Already exhibiting a general relativization of moral values, a growing nonjudgmentalism concerning personal behavior, and a new tendency to borrow agendas from secular political movements, many churches—once supportive centers of the nuclear family—absorbed heavy doses of the new relativism regarding family life and shifted ground. One traditionally conservative denomination, for example, issued a document in 1976 defining a family as but “a relationship community of more than one person” and affirming “a diversity of types or forms of family existing in modern American society.” A recent article in the official magazine of another Protestant denomination could even declare: “The truth is that society’s image of what the family ought to be has become oppressive. Especially so when it has been linked with religion.”¹⁴

3) *The Media*. The electronic media, need it be said, wandered from the family norm that it had so visibly supported during the 1950’s. Programming staples such as *The Donna Reed Show*, *Father Knows Best*, and *Leave it to Beaver* gave way to a new breed of “family” shows such as *One Day at a Time*, *Three’s Company*, and *Love Sidney*.

4) *The Law*. As late as the mid-1960’s, most state marriage laws continued to reflect the nuclear-family model, presuming a lifelong commitment, a first marriage, procreation as an essential element of marriage, some division of labor within the family, middle-class status, and the Judeo-Christian ideal of a monogamous, heterosexual union.¹⁵ But when stripped of their normative character, these laws came under challenge. Social forces as divergent as the U.S. Supreme Court and the divorce-law-reform movement joined in this (still ongoing) unraveling of a long-standing moral consensus.

Critical (Yet Correctable) Weaknesses

Finally, in accounting for the collapse of the nuclear family norm and for the very real incidence of broken families and human pain that has come in its

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wake, it is important to note two internal weaknesses characterizing the American family system during the 1950's, weaknesses which left the system vulnerable to attack and which, at least indirectly, contributed to the social disarray we now face.

First, black Americans and other minority groups were not wholly integrated into the scheme. There is nothing intrinsically racist about the middle-class nuclear-family model. The so-called "black bourgeoisie" has been a vigorous element in American society for most of this century and has exhibited strong attachment to traditional family values. The same could be said for the Hispanic or the Japanese-American middle classes. Nonetheless, in popular terms, these groups were generally treated as "invisible" elements of 1950's America. To choose but one example, black faces seldom intruded into the white suburbia implicitly celebrated in that era's television situation comedies.

And second, the image of "the suburban American women" created and sustained during the 1950's by the commercialized media was inadequate. It proved susceptible to erosive and partly sound critiques such as Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*. Granting this, though, it is important to add that there is no *intrinsic* conflict between the legitimate aspirations of women in the workplace (or elsewhere) and the middle-class family model. Even during the 1950's, when the birthrate soared above Depression-era lows and the whole nation seemed to be in "the family way," record numbers of married women were moving into the workplace. Feminism neither caused nor can be blamed for this development. Indeed, no ideology was attached to it at all. Significantly, however, attitudes of commitment to family members may have been involved. As one befuddled researcher concluded in 1969, "American wives may have entered the labor force [during the 1950's] as a means of raising the status of their family [sic] rather than as a means of raising their own status."¹⁶

The Loss of Moral Authority

Taken together, the attacks on the nuclear-family model, the defections of once-supportive institutions to the critical side, and the specific weaknesses which the model displayed during the 1950's proved ruinous. While polling data indicates that the vast majority of Americans still long for (and a large majority still live) a life generally in line with this model, I think it fair to conclude that the nuclear family does not currently enjoy "normative status." The moral authority once attached to the nuclear family—indeed, to the whole of middle-class culture—has been largely stripped away. As a result, family life as seen through the popular culture—television, movies, literature, the schools, the magazines—stands relativized. The nuclear family is now portrayed and is increasingly perceived as only *one of many* ways of organizing the basic cell of

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society, no better and no worse than communal living, serial marriages, “blended” families, the “gay” life-style, the “singles” subculture, or any other form of “human interaction” that the mind might conceive.

A “Social Catastrophe” Times Three

What are the societal consequences of this dramatic change in family values?

While some praise the “new pluralism” and the emerging era of unimpeded choice, I am unimpressed by their arguments. I believe that the breakdown of the nuclear-family model in the United States must be viewed as no less than a social disaster. The recent *relativization* of family life continues to gnaw away at the very foundations of human community, threatening our future as a nation. Family ties of any kind—but especially the bond of parents to their children—demand emotional, financial, and temporal sacrifice and a considerable degree of personal risk and self-denial. In the past, our society compensated for this, in part, by the honor and prestige granted to those who bore and raised children. But with little social prestige now attached to marriage or offspring, a shrinking pool of Americans are finding the uncertainties and burdens of family life—those open-ended commitments to spouse and offspring—worth the price. As social pollster Daniel Yankelovich has put it, “Having a family without a record of divorce, maintaining a well-kept home, exhibiting one’s children as well-mannered and neat and clean in appearance have all been drained of much of their symbolic significance. . . . As the norms supporting self denying respectability weaken, inevitably the sense of [community] must weaken too.”¹⁷

Moreover, minority groups are proving to be the principal victims of the new relativism in family values. Back in 1965, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. affirmed that the nuclear family—“the group consisting of mother, father, and child”—was “the main educational agency of mankind” and the “foundation for stability, understanding and social peace” on which the “whole of society” rested. Even then, he labeled the prevailing levels of divorce, illegitimacy, and female-headed families found in the black ghetto to be “a social catastrophe.”¹⁸ Eighteen years later, the frequency of these social pathologies in the black community has increased by a factor of three. What do we label “a social catastrophe” multiplied by three? Whatever it might be called, millions of our fellow citizens are now trapped in just that situation.

Some also suggest that we Americans are moving toward a new “ethic of commitment,” a startlingly fresh vision of community that will somehow manage to save us from our follies. Again, I am not impressed by the argument. “Moral visions” and “communities” are not conjured out of thin air. As one writer recently put it, “there is no way to create real communities out of an aggregate of ‘freely’ choosing adults.”¹⁹ Moral community must be deeply rooted

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in history, in faith, in personal sacrifice, and in the exercise of social responsibility. For this reason, I agree with the conclusion of Brigitte and Peter L. Berger in their new book, *The War over the Family*. "There is," they write, "no alternative to the bourgeois family in the contemporary world."

The necessary tasks in restoring this family model as a guide on "how to live" are largely cultural in nature, and only secondarily political. They involve the recreation of a specific moral vision and a sense of social responsibility within the whole range of culture-shaping institutions: religion, the media, literature, the arts, education, and the academy.

Such tasks are complex and enormous. Some would add "impossible." Nonetheless, the future that our children will inhabit and the kind of people that they will be are both at stake. Fortunately, the altogether human longings for love and progeny lie dormant within even the most depraved modern breast, working to the advantage of those who might begin to mount the effort.

NOTES

1. White House Conference on Families, *The Report: Listening to America's Families* (Washington, DC, 1980), page 159.
2. Talcott Parsons and Winston White, "The Link Between Character and Society," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal, editors, *Culture and Social Character: The Work of David Riesman Reviewed* (New York, 1961), page 100.
3. Gerald Leslie, *The Family in Social Context* (New York, 1967). Emphasis added.
4. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (New York, 1942), page 67.
5. Jane Humphries, "The Working-Class Family: A Marxist Perspective," in Jean Bethke Elshtain, editor, *The Family in Political Thought* (Amherst, 1982), pages 197-222.
6. Quoted in Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Feminism, Family, and Community," *Dissent* (Fall 1982), page 443.
7. Barbara Ehrenreich, "The Male Revolt," *Mother Jones* (April 1983), page 28.
8. Allan Sherman, *The Rape of the A*P*E* (*American *Puritan *Ethic): The Official History of the Sex Revolution, 1945-1973* (Chicago, 1973).
9. For example, see Ellen Peck and Judith Senderowitz, editors, *Pronatalism: The Myth of Mom and Apple Pie* (New York, 1974).
10. Jessie Bernard, "Marriage and Nuclear Family as Target," in Gordon F. Strieb, editor, *The Changing Family: Adaptation and Diversity* (Reading, Massachusetts, 1973), page 31.
11. Elshtain, "Feminism, Family, and Community," page 443.
12. Quotation found in Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York, 1977), page 158.
13. Ray L. Birdwhistell, "The American Family: Some Perspectives," *Psychiatry* (August 1966), pages 203-12.
14. Kenneth L. Gribble, "Exploding the Family Myth," *The Lutheran* (August 1983), page 11.
15. See Lenore J. Weitzman, "Legal Regulation of Marriage: Tradition and Change," *California Law Review* (October 1964), pages 1164-1277.
16. Jeanne Clare Ridley, "The Changing Position of American Women: Education, Labor Force Participation and Fertility," in *The Family in Transition: A Round Table Conference Sponsored by the John E. Fogarty International Center for Advanced Study in the Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health, November 3-6, 1969* (Washington, DC, 1971), page 235.
17. Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules* (New York, 1982), pages 121, 103.
18. Address by Martin Luther King, Jr. at Abbott House, Westchester County, New York, October 29, 1965.
19. Elshtain, "Feminism, Family and Community," page 442.

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[*Boston's Humberto Cardinal Medeiros (who died last September) spoke out often against abortion, but perhaps never more eloquently than in the statement he issued in the midst of the 1980 elections. We first reprinted the Cardinal's statement (as it appeared in the September 12, 1980, issue of his diocesan newspaper, The Pilot) in our Fall, 1980, issue. We reprint it again here because of its relevance to the upcoming national elections.*]

Dearly beloved in Christ:

As all of you know, since becoming Archbishop of Boston ten years ago, I have written and spoken to you many times about the most vital concerns of our day. I have joined with millions all over the world and in our country to condemn the evil of abortion. I have testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington favoring the passage of a Human Life Amendment; I have spoken and written in defense of innocent human life on any number of occasions, and it is my constant prayer, alone and with my people, that the United States would reaffirm what the Declaration of Independence proclaims as a fundamental human right—The Right to Life.

Living in a society that puts such faith in statistics, it is frightening to realize that 1,000,000 unborn children have been legally aborted in the United States every year since the death-dealing decision of the Supreme Court on January 22, 1973. As of this date, more than 8,000,000 of our very own children have been destroyed in the womb, strangely described as a “medical procedure.”

Presently, we are faced with primary contests in our own districts, and a few weeks later, the final election which will determine those individuals who will vote on the law which will govern the conduct of the Commonwealth and the entire country. Through this letter, as your Archbishop, I wish to restate my unalterable opposition to legalized abortion as an offense against God and humanity, against our Maker and His people.

With pastoral concern for the spiritual welfare of the faithful who are both heirs of God's Kingdom and citizens of this noble nation, I plead with you to exercise your right and duty to vote in the upcoming elections; and to bring your own conscience—the voice of God within you—to the ballot box with you. We are a nation *under God*, as we are a *nation of law*, and we must be as consistent with our concern for the unborn as we are for all those people from near and far who look to us for aid and comfort. We must work to change our nation from its blood-drenched current condition to a sacrificing society that welcomes life at every stage of human development. That might makes right by court ruling can

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never be the last word when human life is the issue.

The Second Vatican Council declares that abortion is “an unspeakable crime.” Those who make abortions possible by law—such as legislators and those who promote, defend and elect these same lawmakers—cannot separate themselves totally from that guilt which accompanies this horrendous crime and deadly sin. If you are for true human freedom—and for life—you will follow your conscience when you vote, you will vote to save “our children, *born and unborn.*”

Your answer to this call to vote must not be taken lightly since it could be a matter of life or death for millions yet to come. May our values be a living witness of the faith and hope and love we share.

With a hearty blessing, I am

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,
HUMBERTO CARDINAL MEDEIROS
Archbishop of Boston

APPENDIX C

[The following article by Francis Canavan, S.J., first appeared in the newsletter *Catholic Eye* (January 9, 1984). Professor Canavan, who teaches political science at Fordham University, is a member of the editorial board of this review, and has written frequently, here and elsewhere, on "pluralism" in America. His article is reprinted with permission (©1984, by The National Committee of Catholic Laymen, Inc.)]

The Pluralist Church

Francis Canavan, S.J.

Pluralism today is an "in" word. America, we are constantly told, is a pluralistic society in which no group may impose its beliefs and values on other groups, but every group's demands on society should get some satisfaction. Politics in such a society is an unending appeasement of relatively small but organized groups. No group gets everything it wants, but each group gets enough to keep it willing to play the political game, and so the game goes on forever. As the political commentators say, the system works.

But as Thomas A. Spragens, Jr., has pointed out in his *The Irony of Liberal Reason* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), attributing the stability of the American political system to this "interest-group liberalism" may be an error in judgment. "In fact," he says, "it may well be that the more fully the American polity approximates the pattern of interest-group liberalism, the more unstable it may become. To the extent that the policies of such a system are increasingly perceived as the product of purely self-interested logrolling, the more that system will be subjected to intensified demands and afflicted by loss of support. The system loses support because it loses its moral legitimacy, and intensified demands are placed on it as each group seeks to compensate for the real or imagined influence of its rivals. For both reasons, the system suffers from an erosion of its authority and, with it, a diminution of its capacity to govern effectively."

There is a lesson in this, I believe, for men of the Church as well as of the State. Bishops, religious superiors, and administrators of Catholic institutions dissipate their authority and lessen their ability to govern by trying to keep everybody happy. The temptation to listen patiently and to make concessions to organized and vociferous groups of nuns, priests, academics, homosexuals, or self-appointed "spokesmen for the laity" is understandable. One does not want to break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. Above all, one does not want to drive people out of the Church. But it must also be understood that the

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concessions made to them always exact a price in the loss of moral legitimacy.

To illustrate what I mean, the press recently quoted the feminist theologian, Rosemary Reuther, as saying that "the more we become feminists, the more difficult it is for us to go to church." But of course. Naturally, the more we become feminists, or Marxists, or individualists, or rationalists, or fundamentalists, or adherents of any other "ism," the more difficult it is for us to go to church.

Conversely, however, the more the Church becomes feminist (or Marxist, or individualist, etc.), the more difficult it is for the rest of us to go to church. More importantly, if the Church's accommodations to the demands of the ideologues are seen as a surrender to pressure-group tactics, it becomes harder for the faithful to believe in the moral authority of ecclesiastical superiors. The more often those who exercise authority in the name of Jesus Christ act like politicians in a pluralistic liberal democracy, the more they engender, not open revolt, but something that in the long run is even worse. That is a chronic, low-grade infection of disillusionment, cynicism, apathy, and loss of interest in the Church and her works.

This is not the kind of phenomenon that makes tomorrow's headlines, and it may take some years to register in the statistics of sociological surveys. But its effect on the Church is nonetheless real; it means that the Church loses the confidence of her people.

This infection among believing Catholics is also fed by the steady exploitation of religious symbols for political purposes. There may be some short-term political gain in having priests and nuns marching and waving placards. But the gain can only be for the short term. Once, perhaps twice, people may be willing to believe that the cause for which the clergy and religious demonstrate must be a serious moral cause, or they would not be leaving their ordinary roles in order to agitate for it. But when people come to see that the Roman collars and the religious habits are taken out of the closet only when activists need them in order to lend the authority of religion to political action, religious authority suffers erosion. People cease to take it seriously.

It is true that the demonstrators, the petition signers, the pressure-group tacticians may sincerely believe that the causes they serve are moral and religious, rather than merely political causes, and that they are in fact only carrying the gospel of Christ into practice. Unfortunately, almost no one else believes it. Many years ago, before Vatican II, the Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, remarked that Roman Catholicism had always been more successful than Protestantism in controlling its crackpots. That is no longer true, and the Catholic people know it.

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The people I refer to are ordinary practising Catholics. They are men and women who believe the Catholic faith, who accept the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, who try with some consistency to live according to her teachings, and who go to Mass on Sundays. Most of them, as is the case in any large group, are not profound thinkers or articulate speakers and writers. They are neither saints, nor heroes, nor prophets. But they are the Church as it exists on earth, and if the Church has any effective authority, it is in their eyes. When the Church loses authority with them, she has lost it, for practical purposes, altogether.

For these people are not pluralists in their religion, whatever they may be in their politics or their daily social relationships. Like other Americans, they live in a pluralistic democratic political system. By and large, they accept it without much question. It might be better for the system if they did ask some searching questions about it. But however that may be, it does not follow that they want to live in a pluralist church that gives the impression of not being sure of what it teaches, or by what moral standards it expects its members to live, or whether it has the right to enforce religious discipline on its clergy.

The Church's authority is from God but its acceptance depends entirely on the faith and the confidence of the faithful. To sacrifice that to "pluralism" is not only bad theology, it is not even good politics.

APPENDIX D

[The following article first appeared in the January, 1984, issue of The American Spectator. Mr. Tom Bethell is a well-known Washington correspondent for several opinion journals, and a previous contributor to this review. This article is reprinted with permission of the author and of King Features Syndicate (©1984, by King Features Syndicate, New York).]

Entrail Reading

Tom Bethell

It seems odd that the press, which prides itself on taking such an adversarial view of life, should not only be uncritical of pollsters but actually be in bed with them—hiring them and publicizing their often absurd findings on the front pages of the newspapers. It would be interesting and instructive to make a list (it would be a long one) of all the other institutions that the “adversary press” regards with equanimity, indeed encouragement, but today let’s stick to the polls.

I think that most people of independent mind suspect there is something vaguely fraudulent about polling—that there is some sleight of hand involved, some mystification of which the pollsters themselves may not be fully aware. And we recognize that our vision is somehow obscured by “science,” by the pollsters’ claim to be saying things “with 95 percent certainty that the results are within plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire population had been polled.” That bit of Lou Harris window-dressing exactly corresponds to the magician’s patter, designed to distract you at the psychological moment.

George Gilder has called polling the modern equivalent of entrail reading, which may not be too far off the mark. Not that I know anything about the techniques of entrail readers, but of course we recognize today that the precise methodology is irrelevant. What we can be sure of is that the entrail readers were able to make things come out the way their bosses wanted: The course of action “indicated” by the disposition of the entrails would certainly have been consistent with prevailing court wisdom.

The same is true of today’s fashionable pollsters. The “public opinion” that they purport to measure closely corresponds to conventional media opinion. This is not even particularly surprising. If you want to become a “nationally recognized” pollster (and bear in mind that there are plenty of nationally unrecognized pollsters) then your best bet is to frame the questions in such a way as to ensure that your findings are approved of, and thus quoted, by the major

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newspapers. Such findings will be called “scientific,” they will be accorded the status of news, and in time you may even be called “respected.” It is my impression that all these alleged measurements of public opinion are ultimately intended to influence public policy by reassuring elected officials that it is safe to implement the liberal agenda because it is desired by a majority of Americans.

Here, for example, are some of the things that the Harris Survey found out about the American people in 1983. They oppose the re-election of Ronald Reagan (or they did in August). They oppose his policy in Central America, even though another and intriguing poll by the *New York Times*—an unusual one in that it sought information rather than “opinion”—demonstrated conclusively that the American people do not know which side the U.S. is on in Nicaragua and El Salvador. They are opposed to business and “conservative” political action committees, but they support (surprise) “pro-environmental” PACs. They were not asked about liberal ones.

Lou Harris has also found this year that Americans are opposed to the MX missile, just as they oppose a potential laser-beam defense against enemy missiles. They favored a cap on the third year of the income tax cut. They oppose indexing the tax brackets to inflation. They support wage-and-price controls. They are not convinced that the Communist threat in El Salvador and Nicaragua “is worth the risk of American involvement.” (But the statement with which respondents were asked to agree or not was: “The communist threat in El Salvador and Nicaragua is so serious that we must accept any allies there even if they are military dictators or represent rich and powerful interests in those countries.”)

On the shooting down of KAL 007, Americans support Reagan “more for what he did not do than for what he did,” a conclusion directly contradicted by Harris’s own data. Americans oppose a bigger defense budget, and, finally, “a record high 62% of Americans have expressed sad and bitter alienation toward those running society and feel powerless to do anything about it.”

Do you really believe that a majority of Americans feel that way? If you do then there may be an entrail-reading job waiting for you, and you will no doubt be good at it, too, because your patter will be convincing.

Harris’s question on the income-tax cap went like this:

Beginning in July, everyone who pays federal income tax is scheduled to get a ten percent cut in their federal tax rate. This means that those in higher income brackets of \$50,000 and above get a much bigger tax cut than everybody else. A person making \$100,000, for example, would get a tax cut this July of about \$1,500. Democrats in Congress propose that no one get a tax cut above \$700, because they feel it is unfair to have the rich benefit so much more than everybody else. Do you favor or oppose putting a \$700 limit on the tax cut anyone can get on July 1? (Favor: 66%. Oppose: 30%. Not sure: 4%.)

The question is fiscally illiterate, to start with. The tax one pays, and thus one's "tax cut," depends not on how much one "makes" but on one's taxable income. People earning \$100,000 a year could be in tax shelters and paying little or no income tax. (For example, a certain well-known conservative columnist who regularly tells us that we are undertaxed has used such a shelter, and I'm sure he earns more than \$100,000.)

Worse, the question is calculated to stir up resentment, suggesting that "the rich" (those earning \$50,000 a year now qualify for this label, even though they might well not qualify for a mortgage!) will "benefit" from a change that merely diminishes the unequal treatment of Americans. Imagine that there are two prisoners, one receiving 100 lashes a day and the other only ten. A benign ruler then suggests a "ten percent cut" in their rate of punishment. Lou Harris, you can be sure, would be there to hint that the former prisoner would unfairly "benefit" from such a change.

Harris's envy-inciting question on the tax cut could easily have been rewritten to elicit a response favorable to tax cutting, e.g., by pointing out that high rates drive "the rich" into shelters, so lowering such rates will induce them to "shoulder a greater portion of the tax burden." But the question never will be asked this way because Harris is quite obviously in the business of representing "public opinion" as favoring the left-liberal agenda. If the bias in his questions were random I would not say this, but it is consistent. There is a clear "pattern of discrimination" in favor of leftist ideology, whether Harris himself knows it or not.

Pollsters and media have also persuaded official Washington that "public opinion" favors the Equal Rights Amendment; polls show a consistent majority over 60 percent in favor of ERA. But we are rarely given the contradictory evidence. Statewide ERA's have been rejected by voters in Iowa, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Nevada, and Wisconsin, despite preceding polls indicating support for the measure. In other words, people don't necessarily tell the truth in polls. (Following Tom Bradley's recent gubernatorial defeat in California—the polls said he would win—pollsters have belatedly acknowledged this obvious point.)

But there is a more pervasive problem. In cases such as the ERA people may consciously disguise their opinions. (Out of "chivalry," says Gilder; "sexism" say the feminists.) More frequently, however, people do not have the slightest idea what their "opinion" is on the issue that has been raised. In such cases, and they are the rule rather than the exception, "public opinion" is something that is manufactured rather than measured. People will only rarely say they don't know anything about the subject, or have no opinion on it. *Precisely because their*

APPENDIX D

opinion has been sought, they believe that they ought to have such an opinion. I mean, someone has gone to all this trouble to phone them up! And as I know from my own experience of being polled, your first reaction tends to be something like this: “. . . this guy has my phone number . . . perhaps he has my name. . . .” I am assured the numbers are randomly dialed, but people don’t know that.

Uneasy feelings like this flit half-consciously through your mind. You do not have the sense that your opinions are being *measured* as a part of a larger, scientific exercise. You experience the pollster’s inquiry as an *examination*, a multiple-choice test in which one of the responses is correct, enabling you to “pass” some unstated but dimly sensed test of good citizenship and sound values.

Precisely because the respondent has no real knowledge or opinion about the subject that has been raised, he is highly susceptible to the “leading of the witness” that is contained in the question. In fact he will seize gratefully upon such clues, because he will be ashamed to admit his ignorance. Pollsters essentially capitalize on this sense of shame, themselves shamelessly leading respondents out of the panicky mental cul-de-sac they find themselves in when questioned out of the blue about Anne Gorsuch (has she “failed to press charges against known violators of anti-pollution standards?”), Pentagon procurement policy (“waste at the Pentagon”), or federal deficits (“leading to high interest rates”). This safe conduct into the haven of responsible citizenship, sound value structure, and media approval is done by wording the question in such a way as to nudge the alert but nevertheless tractable respondent down the path that seems to promise least criticism or eyebrow raising on the part of the examining pollster.

In January 1983, for example, the Harris Survey reported that a sizable majority of Americans believe that excessive campaign spending is “a very serious problem.” The question was: “Do you feel that excessive campaign spending is a very serious problem?” The correct answer to that question is yes, and it was furnished by 84 percent of those polled. Lou Harris is no doubt correct to say that 84 percent “of all Americans” would have given the same reply. But there are probably not more than a couple of hundred, or maybe at the outside a couple of thousand, people in America who have any idea whether current campaign spending in America is “excessive” or not. Elizabeth Drew of the *New Yorker* evidently thinks it is, and my guess is that Mr. Harris would like to reassure her that she is not alone.

I tell you, gentlemen, this whole polling business verges on the scandalous, and it is doubly deplorable that the news media, who pride themselves on their skeptical, tough-minded attitude toward “press release journalism,” not only print the pollsters’ press releases uncritically, but are increasingly involved in orchestrating and conducting their own polls.

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