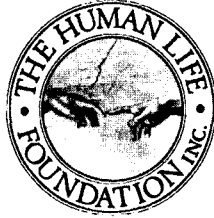


the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



SUMMER/FALL 2006

Featured in this issue:

Ellen Wilson Fielding • David van Gend
Mary Kenny • William Murchison • Edward Short
Patrick J. Mullaney • John Burger • Laura Echevarria
Mary Meehan • Lynette Burrows • Stephen Vincent

Criss-Cross: Democrats, Republicans, and Abortion

by George McKenna

Also in this issue:

Nat Hentoff • Julia Gorin • Ted Harvey • Hadley Arkes
Maureen Condic • Wesley J. Smith • Paul Greenberg
Elizabeth Schiltz • Robert George & Eric Cohen

Published by:

The Human Life Foundation, Inc.

New York, New York

Vol. XXXII, Nos. 3 & 4

\$7.00 a copy

ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

. . . it's a big one—a double issue, in fact, the third such in the *Review's* thirty-two year history. It came about when many of our regular contributors responded to our invitation to write for what was then to be the Summer 2006 issue, one we planned to give out at our annual fundraising dinner on October 25. Here we were with a wealth of timely and provocative articles, too many for one issue, too good to sit on for another three months. Hence this combined Summer/Fall issue, which, in addition to providing you with plenty to read and ponder for the rest of the year, will also get us back on a seasonal schedule.

For the last eight years, the fall season (specifically Oct. 17), has marked for us the anniversary of the death of our founding editor, J.P. McFadden. For the last four, it has also marked the advent of our Great Defender of Life Award Dinner. This year we honor our long-time European editor Mary Kenny, who has honored us with an article in this issue. “It was J.P. McFadden,” she begins, “who said the inspirational words to me, back in the 1990s. ‘We didn’t choose to take on this subject,’ he wrote. ‘The unborn child came to us. And we had to defend its cause.’ I have often reflected on this when the cause has proved trying, or difficult, or painful. And it has always sustained me.”

The pro-life cause proves trying, difficult and painful for most of us at one time or another. Part of the mission of the *Review*, in addition to presenting persuasive arguments we hope will change minds and hearts, is to provide sustaining material for the vast number of our readers whose minds and hearts are already in the right place. In addition to Ms. Kenny’s reflection on the professional cost of her prolife commitment, readers will also find inspiration in our long-time senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding’s meditation on the true meaning of family and children and in Patrick Mullaney’s exploration of John Paul II’s thinking in the 1998 encyclical, *Faith and Reason*. A new contributor, Edward Short, adds sustenance with an essay contemplating what our literary heritage might look like had “pro-choice” entered the canon a few centuries, instead of a few decades, ago.

George McKenna (who took time out from writing a book) has provided the centerpiece of this issue: an invaluable analysis tracing how the Democratic and Republican parties have “criss crossed” on where they stand on abortion. And Dr. David van Gend has graced us with simply the best debunking of the bad science behind the embryonic stem-cell debate we have seen. There are also timely reports from William Murchison on George Bush’s first veto; Stephen Vincent on the forced death of a disabled child; John Burger on the debate over South Dakota’s challenge to *Roe*; Laura Echevarria (another new contributor) on the unsung *risks* of RU-486; Mary Meehan on Democrats for Life (revisited); and Lynette Burrows on the escalating global collision of cultures. Hearty thanks to all our contributors, including those who permit us to reprint their fine work in our *Appendix* section, for defending the cause of the unborn child who (sadly) continues to come to us.

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MANAGING EDITOR

the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



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Published by THE HUMAN LIFE FOUNDATION, Inc. Editorial Office, 215 Lexington Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10016. Phone: (212) 685-5210. The editors will consider all manuscripts submitted, but assume no responsibility for unsolicited material. Editorial and subscription inquiries, and requests for reprint permission should be sent directly to our editorial office. Subscription price: \$25 per year; Canada and other foreign countries: \$30 (U.S. currency). ISSN 0097-9783.

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Summer/Fall 2006

Vol. XXXII, Nos. 3 & 4

<i>Introduction</i>	2
Maria McFadden	
<i>A Veto for Life</i>	7
William Murchison	
<i>Prometheus, Pandora, and the Myths of Cloning</i>	15
David van Gend	
<i>Ties that Bind</i>	28
Ellen Wilson Fielding	
<i>The Child Came to Us</i>	37
Mary Kenny	
<i>The Handwriting on the Wall</i>	43
Lynette Burrows	
<i>Criss-Cross:</i>	
<i>Democrats, Republicans, and Abortion</i>	57
George McKenna	
<i>South Dakota: Time to Challenge Roe or Bad Strategy?</i>	80
John Burger	
<i>The Content of Faith & Pursuit of Truth</i>	85
Patrick J. Mullaney	
<i>Dylan Must Die</i>	93
Stephen Vincent	
<i>Literature for the Pro-Choice</i>	99
Edward Short	
<i>RU-486: A Bitter Pill</i>	109
Laura Echevarria	
<i>Democrats for Life Revisited</i>	118
Mary Meehan	
<i>Appendices</i>	132
Nat Hentoff	Maureen L. Condic
Paul Greenberg	Wesley J. Smith
Elizabeth R. Schiltz	Hadley Arkes
Ted Harvey	Julia Gorin
Robert P. George & Eric Cohen	

INTRODUCTION

As I begin the introduction to this special, double issue of the *Review*, in late summer, we are marking the 5th anniversary of 9/11. We all remember “where we were” . . . early that morning, I was on a city bus, taking my son to school, and I was mulling over in my mind the introduction I had just written for the Summer 2001 *Review*. That issue was largely dedicated to President Bush's decision, announced that August in his first major televised address, that he would allow federally funded research only on existing embryonic stem-cell lines. Reactions to his announcement divided the pro-life movement: some were pleased that Bush's decision would prevent the federal government from funding more killing of embryos, whereas some insisted it was a morally unacceptable position. In what is quite eerie now, I remember thinking about adding to what I had written something about “before and after,” meaning that, in the pro-life movement, there was a feeling that summer of before and after Bush's announcement. Little did I know that, about an hour later, I would hear the first terrifying reports of the events of that day, a day which has really become the Before and After of our time.

I also recall discussions we had at the office in the days following the attacks, how we knew that of course the embryonic stem-cell debate would be eclipsed, that we were thrust into a new reality. And yet, we also knew that the embryo-killing issue was no less important. Our very civilization was attacked that awful day, and we as a people were united in the determination to fight for our way of life. But questions about how we treat human beings lie at the heart of how we define our civilization, and on these questions Americans are fiercely divided.

Five years later, in this summer of 2006, President Bush has again made news in the area of embryonic stem cells—this time by using his first presidential veto on a bill that would have expanded federal spending on embryonic stem-cell research. We open this issue with senior editor William Murchison's razor-sharp essay on the political spinning that started as soon as the veto was announced (“A Veto for Life,” p. 7). As he writes, “commentary turns immediately to the politics thereof”—even though the President “focused on the moral question, saying that loosening restrictions on funding . . . ‘crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect.’” Murchison writes that we can “recognize easily enough the dynamics of the stem-cell furor as they translate from abstract questions of right and wrong to questions of political utility and advantage. We recognize them because we know them so well from the furor over abortion.”

In a superb essay on stem-cell research and cloning, David van Gend, a doctor from Australia, writes about why cloning is a) wrong, and b) “redundant” (“Prometheus, Pandora, and the Myths of Cloning,” p. 15). It's redundant because, the media hype notwithstanding, research on using embryonic stem cells to create cures has encountered major difficulties—there are inherent problems not yet overcome—whereas

adult stem-cell research is proving to be a promising field. Dr. van Gend reports that adult cells are now being “safely used in 72 human conditions.” Why, then, he asks, do scientists downplay the good news of adult stem-cell research and lobby for cloning? His answer might surprise you, as might his story about the “paralyzed rat,” which illustrates the lengths to which some cloning researchers will go to get what they want. Dr. van Gend also reports on the debate over cloning in Australia, and how legislation there differs from that in the U.S.

Several of this issue’s articles report on news stories important in the fight to defend life. John Burger writes about the Women’s Health and Human Life Protection Act of South Dakota, signed into law on March 6, 2006. Depending on which pro-life camp you ask, it’s either, as his title reads, “Time to Challenge *Roe* or Bad Strategy” (p. 80). In his clear, informative report, Burger describes the response to the ban of both those who think it’s a bold step whose time has come, and those who believe that a more incremental approach is still the best way to save more lives. The law went into effect July 1st but enough opposing signatures were collected to put it on the ballot in November. And even if it passes in November, a court challenge will probably follow, creating the situation that worries some and excites others in the movement. Laura Echevarria, formerly media director for the National Right to Life Committee, writes about the abortion drug RU-486: about the politics surrounding its approval (in September 2000), and the medical dangers the drug poses—some deadly (“RU-486—A Bitter Pill,” p. 109). At least five women have died as a result of using RU-486; as Echevarria writes, “these are not mere statistics; they were flesh and blood young women,” and she gives their names and ages. In addition to the actual deaths there is a long list of medical complications affecting women who have taken the drug, as you will read. Such complications were foreseen by both sides in the debate over approval.

Contributor Stephen Vincent has written about another news story, one that didn’t get much attention outside of Denver. It’s a devastatingly sad story about a handicapped boy who was starved and dehydrated to death by his parents (“Dylan Must Die,” p. 93). His name was Dylan Walborn, and he was born with severe disabilities. Vincent reacts to a lengthy story in the Denver *Post* about Dylan’s protracted dying (it took 24 days). It was meant to be a heart-rending tearjerker, but *all in the parents’ favor*, as you will read. Dylan’s death was supported by his family, the press, his doctors, nurses and the law. And sadly, his case is not unusual: “Dylan’s case was one of about five that the Denver Children’s hospital consults on each year” involving food and fluid removal from a disabled child.

It may be no small part of Dylan’s story that his parents had never been married, and at the time of his death, were both involved with other people and ready to move on with their lives. Might it have been different if the parents were committed to each other? Just what kind of society have we become, how do we view marriage, and children—as blessings or burdens? That’s the subject of senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding’s insightful essay (“Ties that Bind,” p. 28). Fielding writes that, with the exception of times of terrible famine or extreme poverty, children have tradi-

INTRODUCTION

tionally been viewed as blessings—until now. American ideals of independence and self-actualization have changed the nature of how we view family. Children, who could once be counted on to contribute to the family financially, are now enormously expensive, compared to earlier generations, “because of the extension of their education and the postponement of adulthood.” But that’s only part of the change: the deeper issue, as you’ll read in Fielding’s persuasive prose, is the sea-change in our concept of marriage itself, and “the depreciation of children as both the greatest gift and the greatest responsibility of a marriage.”

Also on the subject of modern society and how it views children, especially unborn children, we have two women writing from Europe, two women who also happen to be coming to our side of the pond this fall. Mary Kenny, our European editor, is our Great Defender of Life honoree for 2006, and will be presented with the award at our Fourth Annual Great Defender of Life Dinner on October 25th. She is the author of several books of history and social commentary, including one on abortion (*Abortion: The Whole Story*, 1986), a columnist and frequent television commentator. She has written an engaging essay about her experience being a defender of pre-born life in her milieu—as a woman of the media in England and Ireland (“The Child Came to Us,” p. 37). Introducing Mary at our event will be our longtime contributor, Lynette Burrows, a British author and broadcaster, whose article “The Writing on the Wall” (p. 43) is a searing essay on contemporary society and the culture of death. Burrows begins with G.K. Chesterton’s prophetic writings about how “developments that started in the 19th century would give rise to serious moral and political transformations in the 20th.” One major such movement is eugenics, which, the lessons of World War II notwithstanding, returned in the guise of population control. Burrows’ article is a fascinating look at the historical reasons for our current cultural crisis, and a powerful wake-up call about what is at stake in battles being waged by the secular against the sacred. She focuses specifically on her native England, and the incendiary clashes of cultures, social classes and political movements of recent years.

Back to America, and our own political and moral struggles. In his marvelous article, “Criss-Cross: Democrats, Republicans, and Abortion” (p. 57), Professor George McKenna opens with this: “Suppose a politically savvy Rip van Winkle in, say, 1965, perceiving that a movement to legalize abortion was gaining strength in the country, were asked, ‘Which of the two major parties will eventually identify with that movement?’” What would he say? Perhaps that the Democrats were the party of the poor, the underdog, the party of compassion. That it was the Catholic party, the immigrants party—the party whose Ted Kennedy in 1971 said that “the legalization of abortion on demand is not in accordance with the value our civilization places on human life.” The Republicans, on the other hand, “draw heavily from the upper-middle class WASPs, where the drive for population control has always come from,” the party which first believed government should stay out of people’s lives, the party that first supported an Equal Rights Amendment for women

as early as 1940. How surprised would our Rip van Winkle be if he woke up today, to find that the Democrats were the abortion party? McKenna modestly writes that he'll "take a stab at this thorny issue," but his essay is a remarkably reasonable and compelling explanation of the criss-cross. It's an article that ought to be read widely, and shared . . . and it is one I am sure will be read years from now by those who really want to understand the history of the abortion struggle in America.

McKenna concludes with a warning that the "bacillus of abortion is everywhere in America, and there is no guarantee that it will not finally take hold of the Republican party . . . Nevertheless there are grounds for hope" that the Catholic-evangelical coalition of pro-life activists will prevail. What about the Democrats? McKenna doesn't see much chance that they will change, but, as you read Mary Meehan's article, "Democrats for Life Revisited" (p.118) you'll see that pro-life Democrats are energetically trying to move mountains. Meehan profiled Democrats for Life in a two-part series in the *Review* in 2003; she revisits the organization now, and gives us an interesting update on its "current national operations, the initiative to reduce abortions, and activity at the grass roots." The "initiative" is the so-called "95-10 Initiative," which has as its goal "to reduce abortion by 95 percent in ten years." As you'll read, that proposed legislation is another source of division among pro-life activists, partially because of its emphasis on funding contraception. Though she lists the many obstacles pro-life Democrats face, all in all, Meehan's article strikes a hopeful note: active pro-life Democrats are a comparatively small group, but their David-like determination may bring on important changes in the Goliath of their party's abortion majority.

The last two articles I introduce here both challenge, in a scholarly way, prevailing mindsets in our secular culture. Lawyer Patrick Mullaney has written for us before about the standing of the unborn child in the Constitution. He returns to this question in his new essay, but as part of a broader discussion about the interplay of faith and reason in pursuing truths about the world ("The Content of Faith and the Pursuit of Truth," p. 85). Specifically, he discusses the theories about the origins of life; that is, evolution versus Intelligent Design. Mullaney takes as his starting point and inspiration the late John Paul II's 1998 encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, in which he warned about what would happen were faith in God to be entirely separated from reason and the pursuit of truth. Mullaney describes what is understood in contemporary evolutionary theory, that natural selection is a process of "blind chance, not design," and gives us the most recent arguments for the opposing view, that it is more logical to see design behind the cause and adaptive changes of biochemical life (and design points to a Designer). Finally, we welcome Mr. Edward Short to our pages with his unique essay, in which he imagines how the pro-choice view would have impacted the lives and works of some of our great English-language authors ("Literature for the Pro-Choice," p. 99). As he writes, he has long been intrigued by what "English literature might have looked like if the different societies for which it was written had agreed with the pro-choice view that abortion is

INTRODUCTION

not only defensible but actually humane." Short goes on to demonstrate, in an article rich in literature and history, that not only would some works of great literature be very different, but some of our celebrated authors might not even have been born.

There you have it: a brief introduction to all the articles here (not necessarily in order). I have little space left to comment on our appendices, but we have an excellent collection of columns discussing many of the issues covered up front—eugenics, stem-cell research, abortion and euthanasia—as well as other subjects, like animal rights. You have to read Wesley Smith's "Let Great Apes Be Apes" to believe it. In addition to Smith, our appendices include contributions from two previous Great Defender of Life honorees, Nat Hentoff (2005) and Professor Hadley Arkes (2004); the great pro-life columnist at the Arkansas *Democrat Gazette* Paul Greenberg; Professor Robert P. George of Princeton and Eric Cohen, editor of *The New Atlantis*; Dr. Maureen L. Condic from the University of Utah School of Medicine; Julia Gorin of *JewishWorldReview.com*; and Elizabeth R. Schiltz, associate professor of law at St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis and a "genetic outlaw" (the mother of a son with Down syndrome). We close the issue with an amazing story written by Ted Harvey, assistant minority leader in the Colorado House of Representatives . . . what an unforgettable moment of truth he describes.

As always, we include cartoons from our friend Nick Downes, who'll give you a respite of chuckles amid the heavy reading. And this is a hefty issue . . . so take your time. We'll be back in the new year.

MARIA MCFADDEN
EDITOR

A Veto for Life

William Murchison

II mean, we're not exactly flabbergasted, are we? Not when President Bush vetoes a bill to expand federal spending on embryonic stem-cell research and commentary turns immediately to the political consequences thereof—consequences that seem (to the commentators) problematical if not downright dire for Republicans?

No wonder this terrain looks familiar: comfortable even, in the way home ground makes for ease of movement and reflection. Where we are, we have been before. It is where we end up every time we attempt to view the stem-cell controversy in moral terms rather than the terms preferred by the political class: polls, parties, power; voter reaction, voter blocs, voter backs in want of constant scratching.

Certainly the President, in his veto message of last summer, focused on the moral question that underlies stem-cell research. He said the bill before him, a measure to loosen restrictions on taxpayer money used for research that entails destruction of frozen embryos, “would support the taking of innocent human life in the hope of finding medical benefits for others. It crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect, so I vetoed it.”

As he did so, many Americans noticed anew how complex and terrifying is the interaction between secular and sacred in a society accustomed to viewing the public will as the ground of truth and the fount of action: beyond which no appeal lies, save at the next election.

Cross politics with morality, in the ways that 21st century American society takes almost for granted, and you get a hybrid creature incapable of resolving any matter whatever, save through electoral head-counting. Of which activity—another name for it is political utilitarianism—we're going to see a lot more as the stem-cell controversy drags on.

The widespread, if less than universal, consensus that followed Bush's veto of the stem-cell funding bill—the first Bush veto of anything—was that our leader had put his party, and its candidates, in some large peril. Well, just look. Fifty House Republicans joined Democrats seeking to enlarge the relatively small number of cell-stem lines made available by Bush right before 9/11. What were these embryos anyway?—mere unwanted bits of tissue left over, in frozen state, from past fertilization treatments. Why not use them in pursuit of cures for cancer, leukemia, Alzheimer's, and sickle cell

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anemia? Framed thus, the question drew 19 Republican votes when the bill went to the Senate: among these the votes of John McCain of Arizona and Republican leader Bill Frist of Tennessee, both conventionally identified as pro-life senators, both seen as likely presidential candidates.

Bush stuck to his well-publicized promise. Congress wasn't going to get away with treating "spare" human embryos with the high scientific indifference normally accorded laboratory mice. And that was that, until the political banshees began to wail: a few unable to keep from smacking their lips over what seemed an adversary's political goof.

The computer-generated image here is of a moralistic president out of touch with the voters, standing far apart from Real Life as he pages through the collected works of Bob Jones Sr. and the Ayatollah Falwell; trying above all to cultivate his political "base"—voters of religious persuasion, necessary to maintaining Republican control of Congress.

That would be one way of looking at it. Suppose we consider the evidence, with the notion of determining whether serious discussion of a profoundly serious matter actually terminates at the polls . . . or for that matter the doorway of the research lab.

Polls certainly indicate a general preference for what are represented as major medical advances stemming from stem-cell experiments. A post-veto poll for USA Today found 36 percent supporting the veto, 58 percent decrying it. (Sixty-one percent of Republicans, and just 19 percent of Democrats, approved.) According to the latest Pew Forum poll—July 2006—56 percent accord stem-cell research priority over preservation of human embryos. The pollsters noted additionally that for the first time ever more white evangelicals support such research (44 percent) than oppose it (40 percent).

The poll, no less interestingly, broke down the demographics of embryo research supporters: 73 percent of liberal Democrats, 58 percent of moderate to liberal Republicans, 38 percent of conservative Republicans, 58 percent of white Catholics, 72 percent of seculars, 69 percent of college graduates, 53 percent of high school graduates, 41 percent of plus-65ers, 62 percent of 50-64ers. And so on, with large gains, virtually across the board, for research. Only Americans over 65 thought worse of stem-cell research than they had earlier.

Note how many conservative Republicans and white Catholics go arm-in-arm in this matter with liberal Democrats and seculars.

When Bush vetoed, various Republicans made known to media questioners their anger and dismay. Said one, the mother of a 9-year-old diabetes victim in Cincinnati, a self-described pro-life Christian, "This is a vote-breaker for me. I tell people I'm becoming a Republi-cratic at this point,

because there are just things wrong in the Republican Party where people's voices are not being heard anymore . . . I think the worst sin of all, and I am a very religious person, is to look a miracle from God in the face and throw it away." Said a 68-year-old registered Republican in Henry Hyde's suburban Chicago congressional district: "I think the Republican Party is in the Dark Ages on this."

Delivering the Democratic weekly radio address, the weekend after the veto, Democratic Congresswoman Diana DeGette of Colorado—a co-author of the vetoed bill, along with Republican Mike Castle of Delaware—pitched a veritable fit. The veto, said DeGette, "had nothing to do with morals. It had everything to do with cold, calculated, cynical politics . . . the kind of politics that snuffs out the candle of hope and that condemns the disabled and the sick." (Castle contented himself with expressing unhappiness and disappointment with a Republican president's contrary view of the matter.) In Missouri, another Democrat working to turn the tide in the people's favor—senatorial candidate Claire McCaskill, whose incumbent Republican opponent, Jim Talent, firmly opposes federal cash for stem-cell research, found the veto "difficult to explain to the majority of people who want our country to continue to be a beacon of hope to the world." Again the theme of "hope" foreclosed by political opportunism. Never at a loss for words, on any topic, New York Sen. Charles Schumer, who heads the Democratic organization working to recapture the Senate, discovered with satisfaction that a political shift was in train, one that involved "Protestant non-evangelical Republicans The elder in the Presbyterian church in the suburbs of Cincinnati. There's a feeling of uncomfortableness with where the Republican Party is headed." These are the people, Schumer continued, who want stem-cell research and at the same time don't want Creationism spoon-fed to school kids.

"Everybody," as Jimmy Durante used to note, wanted "ta get inta da act," including the media's favorite apostate Republican, Kevin Phillips, who thought he glimpsed mid the smoke and racket indications of an emerging "American theocracy." Eleanor Clift, in *Newsweek*, couldn't top that one, but obliged anyway with news of a potentially large "political gift" from Bush to the Democrats—a gift comparable to that which the Democrats gave the GOP in 2004 with the gay marriage ruling from Massachusetts' highest court. A columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* found it "hard to see how the GOP can emerge from the episode politically unscathed." Wouldn't that be good news, both for Democrats and the moderate suburban Republicans growing wearier and wearier of a president, even one of their own party, so cloyingly fond of the religious right?

At least the Jews—whose views on public issues are rarely other than robust—held their fire on this occasion. The President's support for Israel's attack on Hezbollah seemed to have trumped underlying angst about the need for stem-cell research.

It all seems odd in a way—the tumult, the shouting, the poisonous and accusatory rhetoric. None of which is exactly odd in a political context, as we know. The oddness proceeds from the politicizing of a question poorly designed for the political rally or the live television studio or the frenzied forum known as the Internet. The question at hand is human life, and the circumstances under which it begins—or ends.

You could call the question moral in terms of its deepest implications. A larger number, it would seem, see life questions as existing mainly within the sphere of democratic governance, awaiting votes, speeches, position papers, hearings, fund-raisers, editorials, magazine articles, blog postings, the works. The question of life—in the context of government funds for stem-cell research—comes to a vote on Capitol Hill. Then another vote. Press conferences ensue—shouted questions, impassioned commentary. To the president's desk the question moves from there. More declarations, more analyses, more warnings about political gain or loss.

And then? More of the same: if not this year the next, and certainly the one after that as the candidates for president (including Messrs. McCain and Frist) run their traps and craft their positions with a view to maximizing vote counts. Which, as I have noted, shouldn't surprise us the least bit. Don't we know this road pretty well by now? Haven't we trudged along it for three decades—since the U.S. Supreme Court, with *Roe v. Wade*, suddenly pressganged the human life question into political service? “Son of *Roe*” is what we might rightly call all the messiness over how to deal in public context with the ethereal questions of when life begins and how we know and what then?

We recognize easily enough the dynamics of the stem-cell furor as they translate from abstract questions of right and wrong to questions of political utility and advantage. We recognize them because we know them so well from the furor over abortion.

When the abortion debate—in its early stages, a fairly short one—got under way in the late 1960s, two very human situations drew spectacular amounts of attention. The first was that of a mother, any mother, unable for economic or other reasons to bear children at just this moment. The public was invited—in testimony before legislative committees, in opinion pieces, and the like—to appreciate the cruelty of forcing on a woman, assuming she

didn't abort herself in a back-alley, the obligation of parenthood, at which she might do a second or third-rate job. What if her resentment of the child came to exceed her maternal love of same? That wouldn't be good for the child, would it? No. And neither would a serious birth defect that might lower significantly the child's potential for rich enjoyment of that life the law commanded to be brought forth. Abortion was the compassionate way out. Or didn't we know?

So with stem-cell research. It's about compassion. Scientists seek cures for deadly afflictions and diseases. A vote against federal funding of such research (never mind all the non-federally funded stem-cell research going on around the country and the world) is, as the aforementioned Cincinnati mother mentioned, a vote against nine-year-old diabetes victims. And a vote against Michael J. Fox, with his Parkinson's disease. And against Mary Tyler Moore, with her grown-up diabetes. And even against (as not-too-subtly implied in the past by Nancy Reagan) the late President Ronald Reagan, laid low with incurable Alzheimer's. A letter writer to the *New York Times*—from President Bush's home state of Texas—summed it up: "For those of us whose kids suffer with disabilities and chronic illness, the sanctimonious pretense that unusued stem-cell lines destined for likely destruction are more important than our living children is infuriating. If the president ever had to hold his child while she cried because she can't climb on the monkey bars like other children, I imagine he might decide that the real pro-life stance is to fully support the healing potential these cells can provide."

No wonder the issue engages political types. Under the welfare regime planted last century and now conspicuous as a feature of daily life, the politician looks not only for needs to address but for just plain wants. Our wish is his command—always provided enough of us express it. (As everyone understands, democratic politics is about numbers. The more who want a thing, the likelier their prospect of receiving it.)

The breakdown of sentiment on stem-cell research, as in the Pew poll cited above, shows the way things are moving. Baby boomers (the 50-plus component) increasingly support it, their level of commitment having risen 12 percentage points from 2002 to 2004. Is it unreasonable to cite, as one possible motive, boomer preoccupation with personal well-being, now that the sunset years draw nigh? The prospect of Alzheimer's, perhaps especially when Nancy Reagan talks about it, scares the daylights out of many. Growing numbers of boomers watch as this formerly unfamiliar horror steals vitality from their own parents. Of course they worry. Of course their political leaders worry along with them. That is what modern political leaders do, in addition to looking for a way to address the things their constituents worry about.

Political independents, moderates, and liberals outpace, to no one's surprise, conservatives in their willingness to give medical research priority over preservation of life. Religious conviction is less often associated with liberalism than with conservatism, so this disproportion in viewpoint comes as no shock. The shock comes from noting how many more of the strongly religious, and of the Republican Party's conservative component, similarly accord research the priority over preservation of life. On the other hand, conservatism has at least a little to do with the conservation of habits. Among the habits most on evidence in the 21st century is that of looking at "pre-life" as something other than rosy-cheeked, gurgling, diaper-soiling life—that is, while looking at it, seeing something lumpish and theologically uninteresting.

The *Roe v. Wade* debate has all too clearly taken its toll. At the start, 30-some-odd years ago, "pre-life" enjoyed considerable reflexive support. It *was* life! Couldn't you see? Couldn't you feel? And maybe there were Circumstances wherein the disposal of particular less-than-satisfactory specimens of life could be justified (but let's not talk about that, shall we?); still, life was better than non-life, because clearly the Scriptures endorsed that way of looking at things, and home was good, and motherhood good, and . . .

Then years pass; years in which the political caste finds it more advantageous than not—in numerical terms, the terms that determine elections—to let the Supreme Court have its way in the matter of abortion. So for another year *Roe v. Wade* stands; and then another; and soon enough moss grows on the plinth of this once-horrifying monument to solipsism, and hairline cracks appear in the mortar. And realization dawns: Hardly anybody looks twice at the thing. We've grown used to it—just one more feature of the neighborhood we live in, like Joe's Bar and the pigeon lady. So that maybe the toil of tearing down the monument would exceed the benefits to be expected from the restoration of respect for all human life? Would that be it? Might it be that *Roe v. Wade*, and its perdurability, have softened a whole nation, a whole people, when it comes to speaking of the obligations that life lays on a nation and a people? The habit of respecting others' "choices" comes slowly, but when it comes, still other implications come to mind. What about me? may be the first of those. Forget Sue. Forget Tom. What about *my* rights and prerogatives?

And so the habit of deference to the preferences of others can harden into the habit of insistence on one's own preferences and needs. Me? Alzheimer's? Wait . . . all those frozen embryos: no good to anyone now; on the other hand, so filled with potential for the cure of suffering and the alleviation of distress.

Maybe my own distress, how should I know? *Facilis descensus Averno . . .*

Our politicized minds easily inhabit the ideal of acceptance as distinguished from the ideal of challenge. Of grounds for challenging the incremental orthodoxy on embryonic stem cells there's no shortage. For instance, the entirely speculative nature of those gains we're to look for from embryonic stem cells, such as the "veritable fountain of youth" that Republican Sen. Arlen Specter said a couple of years ago he foresaw at the end of the research rainbow. Beg pardon? Fountain of youth? The distinguished senator knows this location? Smells it? What, then? We could plausibly *hope* he is right in predicting for this program such world-changing results, but not even United States senators (especially those academically trained in law, not science) can turn prediction into reality. Advocates of expanded embryonic research ask us to bet on the come, as poker players say: dreaming of the ace of clubs that may, once dealt, turn out to be the deuce of hearts. Meanwhile, under the voter-placation regime blocked by Bush's stem-cell veto, how many hundreds of potential human lives would the scientists have taken? And on what particular grounds? Why this one? Why not that one?

An equivalent point concerns the embryonic cell lines that Bush himself, in 2001, approved for federal funding: lines deemed deficient if not indeed useless by the full-speed-ahead faction in science and politics. Yet, as noted lately (*The New Atlantis*, Spring 2006), "more than 85 percent of all the published embryonic stem-cell research in the world has used the lines approved for funding under the Bush policy." Concerning so-called adult stem-cell lines, new disputes rage: Are such lines useful or aren't they? Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* last summer, Dr. David A. Shaywitz of Massachusetts General Hospital, a stem-cell scientist, contended that although adult stem cells have been used as replacements in cancer-treatment, "adult stem cells may not exist for every tissue type in the body, and thus do not offer the same range of clinical possibilities as embryonic stem cells." Still other scientists say the virtual opposite. Nobody knows for certain.

That being so, mightn't some caution be in order here? No? Great is the power of habit, one has again to conclude with sadness. "Pre-life" seems not to be life at all, weighed against pie-in-the-sky promises related to personal satisfactions.

What is all this about in the end, all this flurry of anxiety over stem cells, and the political combat those infinitesimal pieces of potentiality excite? It is about various things—not least the way we live today. It is about the things we say we want and the people who, as our representatives, propose earning our gratitude by giving us those things: irrespective of cost and

WILLIAM MURCHISON

consequences. As the spiritual sphere of life diminishes—that portion generally allotted to God, and to stewardship of his promises—so the public sphere, meaning the political sphere, expands, amid noise and self-congratulation.

Not that inhabitants of the political sphere disdain the spiritual and the nonmaterial in greater degree than anyone else. It's a matter of the terrible choice before them: a grateful voter at the next election, or . . . you just can't know; you can't know at all.



"If he only spent as much time battling evil-doers as he does guys who make fun of his tights."

Prometheus, Pandora, and the Myths of Cloning

David van Gend

One of the earliest human trials in regenerative medicine was conducted on a crag high in the Caucasus around the dawn of time. Or not strictly human, since Prometheus was a Titan. But for fraternizing with humans he was pegged out on a high rock where the eagle of Hephaestus ate his liver out each day, and it grew back each night.

With remarkable scientific insight, although without specifying the key role of hepatic stem cells, the Greeks observed that the liver is the one internal organ that has a capacity for vigorous regrowth after trauma.

Prometheus was being punished for his beneficence to humans—for teaching them arts practical and aesthetic, and worst of all for stealing the secret fire of Zeus to give humans comfort in their caves and supremacy over the animals.

To call scientists “Promethean” seems to me a compliment. Their role is to benefit humankind by their labours—and scientists who labor in the field of regenerative medicine using adult stem cells are most authentically Promethean.

The proper term for scientists who violate norms of human relationships and ethics, unleashing destructive forces upon us, is not “Promethean” but “Pandoran.” She was the other chapter in Zeus’s punishment of Prometheus. Pandora was asexually reproduced, “forged on the anvil of Hephaestus,” essentially a laboratory creation like the modern clone. Irresistibly packaged, she wowed the impressionable brother of Prometheus, who accepted her gift of a mysterious box—which, upon being opened, released all sorts of corrupt and harmful things into the world. It is said that one thing only remained in Pandora’s box after all the noxious things had emerged: hope, groundless and unreasonable hope.

With cloning, modern Pandorans raise unreasonable hope with their attractively packaged deceit. With obscure motives, they threaten forms of harm to humanity that we are only beginning to understand.

Keeping the lid on Pandora’s box is still possible if we can show clearly why cloning is both redundant and wrong.

Why cloning is redundant

A patient of mine with advanced Parkinson’s disease hopes to be the first man treated with stem cells from the back of his nose. He is among the dozens of patients with various genetic illnesses whose stem cells have been

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collected for research at the Griffith University Adult Stem Cell Centre, here in Queensland, Australia.

There are cautious, very cautious, grounds for hope for my patient, given that Griffith has successfully used these adult stem cells to treat Parkinson's in rats, and is planning primate trials. If all goes well, human trials will follow.

His case is an example of the true state of stem-cell science, as opposed to its political distortion. In the public mind embryonic stem cells and cloning are the main event, whereas in reality they are a conjurer's sideshow. Adult stem cells are now safely used in 72 human conditions (for more, see www.stemcellresearch.org); embryonic stem cells remain both unusable and dangerous. The cloning lobby dreams of creating "patient-specific stem cells" for research; adult-stem-cell researchers have already achieved that goal.

Australian cloning advocate Professor Alan Trounson has recently clarified that cloning is not about cell therapies for Parkinson's or spinal injury, but is limited to the modest research goal of creating patient-specific cells for studying disease and developing drugs. That is an important clarification, since the media still pretend that embryonic stem cells, cloned or otherwise, can be used as magic bullets for direct "cell therapy." That has always been false—since, among other things, the risk of tumors inherent in the use of embryonic cells rules out human application. Trounson's revised prospectus for cloning is more honest: "It's not about cells for therapy. This is about cells that give us an opportunity to discover what causes a disease and whether we can interfere with that."¹

Fine—but even that more realistic goal for cloning has been made redundant, since that is exactly the research capacity Griffith has now achieved with adult stem cells. They possess an expanding range of patient-specific stem cells, easily obtained from patients, readily transformed into the required cell type (brain, muscle, kidney, liver) and useful for genetic study of the disease and development of drugs.² These adult stem cells are superior for research because they are cheap, ethically uncomplicated, and free of the genetic damage caused by cloning. And only adult stem cells can be used safely for direct cell therapy without the risk of tumor formation and immune rejection.

Cloning has been left for dead, and Griffith Professor Alan Mackay-Sim has written its obituary telling the Lockhart enquiry into Australia's cloning laws that "it is probable that such stem-cell lines as these will render therapeutic cloning irrelevant and impractical."³

If that view is correct, what possible justification is there for pursuing cloning? What really motivates the cloning lobby?

I discussed that puzzling question with scientists at Johns Hopkins University in May, at a conference titled “What does it mean to be human?” After outlining the Griffith research to the panel I posed the question: If the Griffith findings are correct, and their adult-stem-cell lines can do everything the cloners dream of and more, what possible role is there left for cloning? The cloning advocate on the panel admitted he could think of no residual role for cloning if the Griffith claims are correct. But he added, “It sounds too good to be true.”

But it is true; so why the grudging nature of scientific and media response to this thoroughly good news story?

In later discussions with scientists it became clear, as I suspected, that the deepest motivation to “win” on cloning was to deny social conservatives a political victory, rather than any valid scientific purpose. Medical good-news stories that render cloning “irrelevant and impractical” are therefore not political good-news stories.

We, the scientific elite, will not be told by conservatives what we can and cannot research. One scientist told me frankly: “It you let them limit scientists on cloning, where will it stop?” Therein lies a key motivation for scientists to link arms on cloning, even if they are not sure it has any real scientific value. When I put to this scientist that his reference to potential embryonic cures for Alzheimer’s were false and misleading, his jaw-dropping response was, “Well, the other side say cloning is like the Holocaust, so we will talk about Alzheimer’s.”

Scientific integrity, RIP. If scientists have to win over the public with lies about treating Alzheimer’s, so be it.

How has it come to this? Deliberately misleading, creating false hope in sick people, using emotional blackmail on our elected representatives—along the lines that those who vote against embryo research or cloning are keeping little children in wheelchairs longer or blocking a cure for Alzheimer’s.

This distortion of science was on display again in June, when coverage was given worldwide to a paralyzed rat treated with embryonic stem cells—although the treatment cocktail still required adult stem cells to make it work—while little mention was made of research published that month in *The Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine* that showed that adult stem cells have now progressed to early trials in paralyzed humans. Tricks and tumors with rats versus safe treatment for humans: that truthfully sums up embryonic-versus adult-stem-cell science—but not in the public mind.

Alzheimer’s is the litmus test for the whole debate. As a rule, anybody who uses the A-word in the context of stem-cell therapies is either a fool or a fraud. This includes many politicians and science reporters; they may choose

which category, fraud or fool, they prefer. Australian embryo researcher Professor Peter Rathjen famously dismissed any talk of Alzheimer's therapies as "bloody nonsense." American stem-cell scientists are more subtle, seeing the need to lead a dumb public in their preferred direction. In response to the hysteria over President Reagan's death from Alzheimer's, the *Washington Post* correctly noted that Alzheimer's was not the sort of disease open to stem-cell therapy, and that science was being distorted amidst the hype:

It is a distortion that some admit is not being aggressively corrected by scientists. "To start with, people need a fairy tale," said Ronald D. G. McKay, a stem-cell researcher at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. "Maybe that's unfair, but they need a story line that's relatively simple to understand."⁴

Maybe that's unfair, or maybe that's a contemptible lack of integrity on the part of scientists. It violates the trust of the public. As our deputy prime minister, John Anderson, lamented in 2002: "If we can't believe leading scientists to give us the real truth, the real parameters for this debate, how are we as a society to form the right judgments?"⁵

The president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Lord Robert Winston, reproached his colleagues last year for their earlier misleading hype, observing that "the desire to source some stem cells from embryos—an ethically controversial area—probably led a number of the field's proponents to hype outcomes just to get liberal legislative approval."⁶ What a devastating admission—but it was made only *after* liberal legislation had been safely approved in Britain, at which time it was acceptable to admit an earlier lack of scientific integrity.

Back in 2002, our deputy prime minister had good reason to be dismayed and angry. Australia's leading advocate of embryonic-stem-cell research, Alan Trounson, had just misled Parliament in a spectacular way, showing a video of a paralyzed rat (a perennial form of propaganda), which, he explained to the impressionable politicians, was treated with embryonic stem cells and could now move its limbs. The vote was imminent on whether to allow "surplus" IVF embryos to be used for research, and this spectacular video was the trump card of the "yes" campaign.

Unfortunately for Trounson we had Dr. David Prentice, spokesman for the group Do No Harm, visiting from the U.S. We were in Parliament, and David said, "I know that rat!" He was not referring to the professor, but to the rodent from Johns Hopkins, 1998, which had been treated not with stem cells from a five-day-old IVF embryo (which was what our politicians were given to think) but with germ cells from the primitive gonads of a nine-week-old aborted human fetus. In the spirit of "people need a fairy tale,"

Trounson had not thought it relevant to tell the politicians where the cells actually came from; it would have spoiled the enchantment. Likewise, since fairy tales are not subject to scientific standards of scholarship, he felt free to lullaby the Senate that the rat research had been published in *Nature*, when in fact it had been rejected by that journal.

The spell finally broke when a major daily newspaper—the *Australian*—passed on a rebuke from the rat’s owner, who was displeased at his pet’s being paraded without permission:

Douglas Kerr, of the Johns Hopkins Institute in Baltimore, said all his research used germ cells from older fetuses and not the cells involved in the Australian legislation. Although a supporter of embryonic-stem-cell research, Dr. Kerr also said it was “not accurate” to cite his research because it was not approved for publication.⁷

One reason I went to the May conference at Johns Hopkins was to pay my respects to That Rat and shake its poor paralyzed paw. I e-mailed David Prentice, who was to speak at the conference:

We should put the idea of a monument to That Rat to the Johns Hopkins board. I envisage a sculpture that will actually move its hindquarters when you put money in the slot. Or rather than money, perhaps there could be a “change machine” to dispense small round counterfeit objects, not unlike embryonic stem cells (and quite like germ cells, too), which make the legs move. I think it will catch on. The sculpture could be titled “Stem Cellar” . . .

No response so far from the Board.

One further insight into the murky motivation for cloning was suggested by a conference at Stanford a few weeks later on “transhumanism.” This radical philosophy considers it our duty, our destiny, to take human evolution under our own control—not be subjected to the “random insults” of normal reproduction. As we become better at editing the software of the human genome, deleting damaged bits and inserting improved genes from our own or other species, there remains the problem of how to “launch” this new, improved genetic software. It seems that cloning must be perfected for the transhumanist vision to be realized—for how else can we get our transformed genome up and running as an embryo? Is this one of the covert motivations for cloning?

Returning to the rat: If that episode was an early sign of the sneakiness of the cloning lobby, the full flowering of deceit came with Korea’s “supreme scientist”: Hwang Woo-Suk, the king of cloning. But at the same time as the world was being taken in and intoxicated by his elaborate lies about cloning human embryos and extracting patient-specific stem-cell lines—“the biological gold that can regenerate any organ,” as one of our science reporters drooled—there was a more discreet and sinister fraud

being perpetrated by a wider group of scientists.

Their strategy was exposed in a vitally important editorial in the June 2005 issue of *Nature*⁸, titled “Playing the Name Game,” which scolded stem-cell scientists for attempting “to change the definition of the word ‘embryo.’” Reporting on the June 2005 meeting of the International Stem Cell Society in San Francisco, *Nature* accused scientists of “playing semantic games in an effort to evade scrutiny”: “Whether taken from a fertility clinic or made through cloning, a blastocyst embryo has the potential to become a fully functional organism. And appearing to deny that fact will not fool die-hard opponents of this research. If anything, it will simply open up scientists to the accusation that they are trying to distance themselves from difficult moral issues by changing the terms of the debate.”

Remember that the cloning lobby has been faced with principled resistance to the deliberate creation of human embryos for destructive research. Their audacious way around this ethical roadblock? Simply to agree amongst themselves, and teach the public, that the cloned embryo is not really an embryo after all. Therefore it is hardly human. Therefore there is no ethical issue in creating or destroying it.

This rhetorical attempt to dehumanize the cloned embryo was exemplified in an Australian radio report on the Korean cloning story on May 20, 2005:

“The announcement from the South Korean scientists is a breakthrough without an ethical dilemma because the researchers did not use a fertilized egg to create the embryonic stem cells. So a human embryo was never actually created.”⁹

In the next day’s *Sydney Morning Herald*, we had an equally astonishing misrepresentation of the facts from a Melbourne professor of genetics:

“Professor Williamson said the technique reproduced genetic material from a living person and the intermediate cellular products should not be called embryos, because they were not formed by the union of egg and sperm.”¹⁰

This is biological nonsense. An embryo is an embryo no matter how it is made. Cloning is simply one way of making an embryo; uniting egg and sperm is another. Each looks like an embryo, each grows like an embryo—each is an embryo.

The campaign to dehumanize the cloned embryo is an international one, and in May of last year the head of the President’s Council on Bioethics, Leon Kass, pleaded for honesty in public discourse:

“If we are properly to evaluate the ethics of this research and where it might lead, we must call things by their right names and not disguise what is going on with euphemism or misleading nomenclature. The initial product of the [Korean] cloning technique is without doubt a living cloned human

embryo, the functional equivalent of a fertilized egg.”¹¹

Truthful nomenclature was also used by former President Clinton’s National Bioethics Advisory Commission. Its 1997 report on “Cloning Human Beings” explicitly stated: “The Commission began its discussions fully recognizing that any effort in humans to transfer a somatic cell nucleus into an enucleated egg involves the creation of an embryo, with the apparent potential to be implanted in utero and developed to term.”

One could usefully adapt a phrase of that former president and sky-write over the Capitol, “It’s an embryo, stupid,” in the face of all attempts to fool the people’s representatives by misleading nomenclature.

Another act of verbal trickery instituted by the International Stem Cell Society was also noted by Nature: “At the equivalent meeting last year, the society decided to formally adopt the term “somatic cell nuclear transfer” (SCNT) . . . Scientists realized that the word ‘cloning’ was generating public concern. So they decided to adopt a more technical term less likely to stir up strong emotions.”

The cloning lobby is trying to put the public off the scent by avoiding the familiar word “cloning,” using only the innocuous acronym “SCNT.” These word games may dupe the dullest of our politicians, yet the technique, by any other name, will still create a cloned human embryo, the identical twin of the donor and a being that could be born as a baby. Kass had a comment on this tactic as well: “Although as a scientific matter ‘somatic cell nuclear transfer’ (SCNT) may accurately describe the technique that is used to produce the embryonic clone, these terms fail to convey the nature of the deed itself, and they hide its human significance.”¹²

The human significance of cloning is the subject of the second part of our argument.

Why cloning is wrong

Here is the dual desecration of “research” cloning: not just that a human life is wrongfully killed for the benefit of others, but that a human life is wrongfully created outside of any normal human setting.

To clone is to generate a living human embryo with no mother—think of that! Only an emptied-out female egg is used, with no trace of the mother’s genetic identity. And no father, either—for the donor of DNA is not father to the clone, but is instead its identical twin, and could be as anonymous a donor as a piece of human tissue from the laboratory fridge.

Cloning creates a subclass of humans who are nobody’s children. Anonymous artifacts, not beloved offspring; scientific objects with no mother or father to defend their interests. The bonds of belonging are broken: A

human being is created outside the circle of human kinship and care.

And yet the cloned offspring is a child like any other; if it were allowed to be born, we would care for it as any other orphan. As Australia's religious leaders have pointed out, it would be a lesser evil to let a cloned embryo be born as a child—even considering the sociological distress and genetic disease it will suffer. The greater evil is the one proposed: that it will be created but never allowed to be born, remaining a mere laboratory animal, meat for the consumption of science.

That is not to condone the obvious abuse of “live-birth” cloning. Let Dolly the sheep, Matilda the lamb, or Snuppy the puppy be part of the freak show of cloning, but not a human child. But it is to be clear that the act of asexual reproduction of a human being, regardless of whether the clone lives for days or for years, is an abuse in itself—violating the essential bonds of “blood and belonging” that every human individual needs, willfully creating the world's first absolute orphan. That is a desecration of humanity, and must be condemned as such.

In Australia in 2002, our Parliament was united in condemning cloning—but in 2006, the debate has been reopened. We are at a different stage of the debate than the U.S.; in 2002, we banned cloning but lost the argument over the use of “surplus” IVF embryos, which are now available for research. At that time we argued that there was no good way out for the “surplus” embryos. We advised that it would be a lesser evil to let the current frozen generation of embryos die—acknowledging our shame in allowing them to be stockpiled in the first place, and ensuring it never happened again. We said it was a greater evil to set up a permanent industry exploiting human embryos, since demand would ensure supply: IVF clinics would ensure the ongoing creation of surplus embryos to feed the drug companies.

Our argument failed. In the U.S., there does not appear to be a fixed deadline at which frozen embryos must be thawed out, so they are not so clearly “going to die anyway”; more vividly, the U.S. practice of adopting frozen embryos further negates that fatalistic argument. In Australia, by contrast, the argument that the doomed embryo “may as well be used for research” (in the context of wild claims of miracle cures from the use of embryonic stem cells) carried the majority vote. The prime minister, a fair-minded man, spoke for the misled majority: “I could not find a sufficiently compelling moral difference between allowing embryos to succumb in this way and destroying them through research that might advance lifesaving and life-enhancing therapies. That is why, in the end, I came out in favor of allowing research involving excess IVF embryos to go ahead.”

But importantly, an ethical line in the sand was drawn between using IVF

embryos that were “going to die anyway” and deliberately creating new embryos specifically for destructive research. The PM made this distinction: “It is also my very strong belief that human embryos should not be created for any purpose other than IVF treatment.” On this principle a ban on creating embryos “by any means other than by the fertilization of a human egg by human sperm” was passed unanimously by Parliament.

On the same principle, there was a majority vote (non-binding) against all forms of human cloning at the United Nations last year. One delegate expressed the principle as: “No human life should ever be produced to be destroyed for the benefit of another.” They saw the inhumanity of creating a cloned human embryo—identical to you or me at that stage of life—with the sole intention of exploiting it for science. Likewise, the creation of a human embryo purely for research is expressly prohibited in Article 18 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine.

Australia’s Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 provided for periodical review of the legislation, and in late 2005 a six-person committee, hand-picked under the auspices of a pro-cloning cabinet minister, predictably recommended overturning the unanimous vote of Parliament and allowing research cloning. This committee acknowledged that cloning creates a human embryo, which could be born as a baby like any of us. But they callously reasoned that the cloned embryo does not really “matter” to anybody, since nobody intends to bring it to birth—therefore let it be cut up for stem cells, used for drug testing, even hybridized with animals, provided it is killed by the age of 14 days.

The question of whether the embryo “matters” goes straight to the heart of this debate. This is the dividing line for public opinion in every legislature around the world. Interestingly, the question is no longer whether the embryo is a human life, but whether that human life “matters.” In the words of our Senate report from the 2002 debate: “There is in fact little disagreement that the embryo is a human life and that its life commences at fertilization. The difficulties arise in specifying exactly in what sense it is to be considered ‘a life,’ and hence what significance should be attached to it.”¹³

The committee referred to an earlier Senate report that had reviewed “the biological facts of the matter” and concluded: “Two universally accepted attributes are that the fertilized ovum has ‘life’ and that it is genetically human (ie it is composed of genetic material entirely from the species homo sapiens). It is also generally agreed that it is an entity (a centrally organized unit which has a purposeful independent function as opposed to an organ or tissues). It also has developmental potential.”¹⁴

One can agree on the bare facts—that the embryo is a living individual

member of our species—but whether that individual life “matters” depends on the worldview one brings to the debate. And faced with this key question—the meaning of a human life in all its embryonic simplicity—the cultural divide shows up most starkly.

A citizen who believes, as C. S. Lewis put it, that human life is “a transient and senseless contortion on the idiotic face of infinite matter” is unlikely to grant great meaning to a mere embryonic contortion. If ultimately we are all just strangely complex lumps of meat floating in time, then the embryo is just a very small lump of meat, devoid of real meaning.

For those citizens whose worldview gives a deeper context to human life, even the life of the embryo has meaning. To those who share the Christian theory of life, all of us matter, even the “littlest of these His brethren,” precisely because we matter to God. Size and age are not a measure of human meaning; what matters is that the individual life is known and loved in God.

On this understanding, a new name is spelled out at conception and written on the palm of God’s hand—even if the font is too small for us to read. That name, that genetic identity, will take a lifetime to be fully expressed, but it is the same name we carry for our whole existence: a new character scripted into our vast mystery play, which no other character has the right to erase.

It is vital to engage in the battle for the meaning of the human embryo, for even if there is no hope of persuading card-carrying nihilists, there is always the muddled middle of fellow citizens who can be convinced one way or the other. All future policy on cloning, human-animal hybridization, prenatal eugenics, transgenic manipulation, and other as yet unimagined abuses depends on the dominant view of what the human embryo is, and therefore how we are bound to treat it.

There are four key arguments demeaning the human embryo, which can be rebutted in interesting ways.

First, there are the recurrent dismissive comments that the embryo is “smaller than the full stop at the end of this sentence” (which, being translated into American, refers to a “period”). On this, we should play the scientists on their own ground, reminding them that, according to their own theories, the Universe itself was once “smaller than a period.” To cosmologists, the fact that such a tiny entity as the embryonic Universe contained within itself the capacity to unfold into this vast and fruitful cosmos is not a cause for contempt, but intellectual wonder. We need similar eyes of understanding, not of ignorant contempt, when we contemplate the embryonic human. This tiny entity, like the embryonic Universe, is unfolding into the vast and fruitful cosmos of a human being, and deserves a comparable response of

intellectual wonder. The only event in the physical world comparable in complexity and wonder to the Big Bang is human conception, which creates the only entity that can know, and therefore in a sense transcend, the Universe itself. The embryonic human is in that sense a greater being than the embryonic universe.

Second, the logic of the culture of death will work backwards from abortion to argue that since the fetus does not matter, the embryo matters even less. Professor Alan Trounson put this baldly in a debate I had with him on national television in 2002:¹⁵

VAN GEND: The fundamental issue is that, if the embryo matters there are certain things we cannot do. We cannot define this littlest member of the human family as mere meat for the consumption of science.

COMPERE: Alan Trounson, is it the smallest member of the human family, the embryo?

TROUNSON: It's clearly human. We treat it with respect, but we have laws which say that we have to destroy it.

COMPERE: Taking the points David van Gend has raised, does that actually bother you ethically if this is a human entity?

TROUNSON: No, it doesn't bother me at all, because the regulatory bodies have just approved the morning-after pill, which would prevent implantation, we use the IUD, that prevents implantation, we're allowed to have abortion on demand. I mean, what suddenly tells us that the five- or six-day embryo is outside the boundaries of what we already accept that we can destroy or not allow to implant? It just doesn't make sense to me.

Care is needed here. Policy on how we treat embryos is formed in an entirely different context from policy on abortion. Abortion is portrayed as an act of self-defense against the threatening intruder in the womb. In no way is the laboratory embryo threatening the mother. In the case of the cloned embryo, there is no mother to threaten. Abortion is portrayed as an assertion of moral autonomy over one's private life, often in the context of emotional crisis, while policy on embryonic research is a coldly calculated decision by public committees. The two types of policy must be kept widely separated, and the meaning of the embryo considered on its own merits.

Third, there is the argument that the embryo cannot be considered an individual human being until the stage of possible "twinning" has passed. This is generally taken to be about 14 days of embryonic life. Until that time, we cannot know if the embryo is going to end up as one "entity" or two, which surely casts doubt on its moral status. I admit to finding this a very muddled argument, and it is the phenomenon of cloning itself that finally clears the fog. For with cloning you or I can now undergo "twinning" well past day 14—in fact, tomorrow, if you like. Does that mean that your moral status as a true, unambiguous "individual" today is in question, just because tomorrow

you might have split off an identical twin? Is your current “soul” somehow diminished because you have twinned yourself into a clone? The problem is no different for the embryo: If it splits off a twin at day 14 it has merely cloned itself into an identical embryo, a twin that is 14 days younger than the original embryo. So, again, there is a positive way to look at the early embryo: It is a wonder, a marvel, and if it splits off a twin, that is just greater cause for celebration: We now have two marvels, two wonders. At the very least we are looking at one embryonic human; there is the happy chance of a second, younger human being arising a few days later from the phenomenon of natural cloning, or twinning, but that is no cause for downgrading the significance of either life.

Fourth and finally, there is the argument that so many embryos are “wasted” naturally that they surely cannot be considered to have a full human status—even, for some sensible Christian people, full spiritual status in the eyes of God. Estimates vary wildly for embryonic loss, but even if the figure is 30 percent I do not see how the problem is any different from the similar “wastage” of infants in the part of Africa I was born in. Does the fact that some 30 percent died in infancy (including some children of my early missionary ancestors) mean they were not truly human? With all due respect, if God has a problem with taking seriously the moral status of embryos because so many are “wasted,” He has the same problem with these wasted African infants, or with the high percentage of Chinese babies wasted through female infanticide. And I remain unconvinced as to why a higher spiritual status should be granted to those of us who, through good luck and good environment, happen to have persisted longer on this earth. None of us matter, in the Christian understanding, unless we matter to God, and it seems wise to give the benefit of the doubt to the most embryonic of these His brethren.

Conclusion

Cloning is wrong. It violates our humanity and the bonds of love and care to manufacture offspring who have no mother or father. It violates the most basic ethical prohibitions to create an embryo with the intention of destroying it in research. Only the parent-child relationship is the legitimate and humane context in which to create a human embryo.

Cloning is redundant. Once we have rejected it on ethical grounds, the great consolation is that we do not need cloning anyway; adult stem cells will get us the good things of stem-cell science, leaving cloning “irrelevant and impractical.” But we must remember that the scientific argument is strictly secondary: Even if there were additional scientific benefits from

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

cloned-embryo stem cells over the new disease-specific adult stem cells (and there appear not to be) cloning must still be rejected on grounds of basic humanity: fundamental respect for the dignity of a living member of the human species, which rules out creating such a life with its destruction in mind.

In the magnificent new field of regenerative medicine, we can and must be diligent Prometheans, while keeping the lid locked on Pandora's deceitful and dehumanizing gift.

NOTES

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Ties that Bind

Ellen Wilson Fielding

One of the things that might most astonish a pre-ancient man or woman who visited our era—something at least as shocking as the automobile, antibiotics, or bikinis—is our attitude toward family life, particularly large families. Most of us, like every other generation since the dawn of time, want to marry at some point and have children. (Though that “most” is getting smaller—the most recent Census Bureau statistics show about 20% of American women in their early 40s are childless, up from 10% in 1976.) But unlike human populations in pre-modern times, most couples now think (and plan) in terms of a couple of kids. We are told that high infant and child mortality rates in pre-modern societies made the production of numerous progeny a good hedge against disease, and this is true. We are told that children were an asset in the labor-intensive world of the family farm (or cottage industry or shop), and that children constituted their parents’ security in old age, and these things are also true. We also know that, aside from completely abstaining from sexual intercourse, people seeking to restrict family size before the 20th century had only crude and often unreliable means, like coitus interruptus, primitive models of condoms and spermicides, etc. We are further told that, for poverty-stricken families, especially in non-rural conditions where children needed at least several years’ worth of expensive nonproductivity before they could be put to work, parents of large families would willingly have forgone many of their children.

The introductory plot of “Hansel and Gretel” gives us a glimpse of this darker, less family-friendly aspect of the past, as the children’s father reluctantly agrees to abandon Hansel and Gretel in the forest, because he cannot provide for them. The hygienic version we read blames the stepmother for this unfatherly act, but another version has their own mother arguing for their abandonment. And the leftover lore of the pro-abortion movement, as well as historical research, informs us that abortion, infanticide, and the sale and abuse of children have piled up corpses in other eras beside our own.

Still, it is hard to get around the fact that, both in pre-modern times and in those few remaining pockets of the globe where people live essentially “pre-modern” lives, as long as starvation and abject poverty are not threatening,

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children are welcomed as a good, and busy, crowded, intensely non-private family living is even *enjoyed*.

Consider how children—in large numbers—are regarded in the Old Testament, for example. Jacob's beloved wife Rachel wishes to die because she has borne him no children (and this is not a dynastic problem, because her sister Leah has already produced several male heirs for Jacob by then). When her prayers are answered, she delights in the birth of first Joseph and then Benjamin. We know that sterility represented to the Jews (and many other peoples) a sign of divine disfavor, but perhaps we don't consider the implications of the reverse—that being blessed with many children was a sign of being, well, blessed. It was a gift, a God-given favor, an enriching as indicative of the goodness of Creation and the Creator as abundant harvests or nets teeming with a catch of fish. "Happy the man who has his quiver full" of sons, says the psalm, and "your children [are] like olive plants around your table" says another. Consider that, in all other contexts except that of human reproduction, "fertility" and fruitfulness have only positive connotations. In contrast to sterility and barrenness, it is a sign of life, health, growth, promise. (Interestingly, it is only about a century and a half ago that we began developing a parallel positive definition of sterility, with the discovery of germs.)

Well, in the culture of the Old Testament (and almost all other cultures the world has seen), even reproductive fertility was a blessing. The sign of the Messianic age was that "the barren wife will bear seven sons." One of the indicators of Job's prosperity both before he is visited with misfortune and after the restoration of his riches is a very large family. When we consider the amount of sheer hard labor exacted by even a small family before the machine age—weaving, sewing, hand-washing, drawing water, cooking, baking, preserving, and on and on and on, it is incredible to realize that, even so, additions to the family were welcomed as blessings, except when plague or famine or extreme poverty threatened the lives of all.

Why? Which is the same as asking, "Why isn't this the case today, outside of small pockets of countercultural traditionalists?" In a world of plenty and convenience beyond the dreams of ancient populations, what makes the idea of plentiful children so unappealing to prosperous populations?

We have heard lots of the proposed answers, and once again, it is hard to argue against their accuracy as far as they go. For example, money. Nowadays children commonly don't contribute financially to the family; on the contrary, they are enormous money pits compared to earlier generations and simpler societies, because of the extension of their education and the postponement of adulthood. Once they are adults, children (ideally) find employment,

but instead of pooling their resources with other family members, they move out on their own. This means no more major child-related expenses for the parents (except in cases of illness, unemployment, or incapacitation), but also no influx of money—and often limited emotional support or physical assistance. Far from being seen as an act of desertion, however, this distancing is often welcomed by both parties, since independence and self-reliance (on the part of both the maturing children and the aging parents) are the goals and in fact the standard for evaluating a healthy adult human life.

But this independence goes further in unraveling the ties that once bound members of traditional, “tribal” families. In healthy, “successful” modern families, siblings, parents, and children will rejoice in one another’s achievements and sympathize when things go wrong, but the extent to which each feels his reputation or value diminished or enhanced by what a family member does is much reduced from what it was in a more tribal society, particularly when adult children may live and work and socialize at a great distance from siblings and parents. Except for a few very high-profile cases, where publicity creates a global village to stand in for the traditional one, an individual family member’s economic circumstances or social standing may soar or plummet without greatly affecting the economic circumstances or social standing of parents and siblings.

Because this is the case, and because independence and individualism are so highly prized, children make the important life decisions about what they will do for a living, where they will live, and most significantly, whom they will marry not judged by the criteria of family needs, alliances, or interests, but by those of personal needs and self-fulfillment. This means that extended family households that are not entered into out of urgent necessity (such as a parent with Alzheimer’s, an ill or unemployed child) are relatively rare, and it is just such extended families that once helped relieve the parental burden of caring for many children.

So all of these contemporary factors contribute to a shift that can be sensed between the earlier world of ethnic urban enclaves, family farms, and small-town interrelatedness on the one hand, and a contemporary world of small families operating out of islands of independence from which, when the children reach maturity, colonies will sail forth, eventually to found their own small familial islands.

I don’t want to romanticize. This week’s newspaper carried one of those periodic stories about Hindu wives doused with kerosene and set ablaze because their families weren’t coughing up further installments on dowries. Others are killed or made miserable because they don’t get along with their in-laws. Not long ago many women bringing home high grades were told

that the family budget could only stretch for a son's college education, because he was the one who would have to earn a good living for his own family. Small-town families could suffer enduring humiliation and discrimination for something that one of their members did. Tightly interknit and interdependent extended families are made up of people as fallen as the rest of us, and they can ignore, misunderstand, and disregard the genuine human needs, abilities, and temperaments of their members. They can sacrifice some for the good of all, and impose their will on the legitimate choices of children or grandchildren. Many children have bent their natures to take over a family business or line of work that they were ill-suited for. The kind of support that a large, loyal family can provide for their own when the outer world is being oppositional is matched by the force such a family can bring to bear against those members attracted by a different path.

So in all times there have been people, sometimes for good reason, who chose to escape from the large family, whether nuclear or extended. However, increasingly these escapees are the *parents* of families, and not just the children. Adults postpone or limit family size, or leave to live alone or in a less encumbered state, rationing their parenthood to weekend status. Despite the stereotypes, many parents today openly relish the empty nest, and, as they age and perhaps grow feeble, often strongly resist relinquishing independence and forfeiting privacy to move in with their adult children.

So neither the traditional nor the contemporary social arrangement should be viewed sentimentally. However, the "island of independence" model has gained the clear ascendancy now, boosted in the last 40 years by birth control, no-fault divorce, the secularization of the public square, and a government that replaces financial dependency on family with the Welfare State. The earlier model is stretched financially by longer schooling, greater educational and consumer expenses, and higher taxes (a good chunk of which go to pay the kind of health, welfare, and retirement benefits once largely considered a family responsibility). And it is likely to be increasingly threatened in the next 30 or 40 years, as the proportion of elderly to wage-earners jumps and the burden of meeting the needs of the elderly crushes the ability of most working men and women even to contemplate producing a "quiverfull" of children, or permitting the mother to stay at home with them. Something like this demographic burden on society has already begun in Japan, where the fertility rate began plummeting years before ours. Now an increasing number of elderly Japanese are living in poverty; welfare payments to them were recently cut, because the Japanese state believes it cannot afford the kind of reverential care for the elderly

that was traditionally taken for granted. More ominously, many grown children are refusing to take up the slack.

So economists tell us what some of us don't want to hear, but what others accept as a face-saving excuse: today's adults can't afford large families. And psychologists and educators tell us that large families short-change the children; that the centripetal force of children's athletics and activities pulls everyone in separate directions; and that, for many children, the peer group (class-team-clique-college-gang) has replaced the family or tribe as the active unit of belonging. This does not mean that the family has no influence, or even little influence, but that it is perceived more as these distinct persons: Mom, Dad, brother, sister—rather than as a milieu, or ecosystem, or sociological unit in the more collective sense that is likely when we are talking about large numbers of siblings, cousins, aunts, and uncles.

It is often the case nowadays that you care about *these people*, and not so much about “the family” as an adumbration of earlier clans or tribes. You are swayed by your father's experience or your mother's good counsel, and not, knee-jerk, by pronouncements from the paterfamilias. You negotiate insurance forms, powers of attorney and assisted living for your failing parents because you love them and feel a responsibility to repay in some measure their sacrifices for you—but you don't commonly feel the same need to deal with Great Aunt Sarah or discuss end-of-life options for Uncle Stan with the cousins.

Economics, affiliations, intrusive government—all of these play into the differences in the family's relations with society and with its individual members.

At the extreme end of contemporary politics, this has its effect on the definition of marriage and its seeming capacity to be stretched to include very non-traditional pairings such as homosexual couples. Why is it here and now that the concept of homosexual marriage can land on a state ballot or be argued before a state Supreme Court? We can point to all sorts of ancillary reasons, but at bottom it is due to the privatization of religion, marriage, and parenthood, and the depreciation of children as both the greatest gift and the greatest responsibility of a marriage.

Marriage is no longer a sound, tested, and trusted social structure for providing life, nurture and security to a couple and its members “from cradle to grave,” and often in association with extended family. It is an emotional, psychological and perhaps economic buffer against the demands and predations of the rest of the world. It is a place where we can get our needs met, including the need to be close to someone. When Robert Frost wrote the lines “Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take

you in,” he meant the reluctantly spare language to nevertheless resonate within his audience as a good thing, a positive thing. He meant us to identify with the potential neediness of the home-comer, as well as the somewhat grudging acceptance of the homesteader. But judging by how few middle-aged or aging adults wish to be placed in the position of having to knock on that door, the lines convey more grim necessity than rueful acknowledgement of the human condition.

Recently we learned that the first gay couple married in Massachusetts following legalization of homosexual marriage has already separated. The two women, who had celebrated their public union only two years before, had lived together before their “marriage,” apparently in relative peace and harmony, for many years. We all know the phenomenon in heterosexual couples of a man and woman who successfully live together for several years and then, thinking it safe to take the plunge, quickly begin to unravel. What causes this, in an age that, comparatively speaking, allows spouses to retain so much individual autonomy, including the right to veto children, to decline a geographic move, to pursue a career, wear clothes the spouse can’t stand, do lunch with old friends? Of course, that very freedom is a two-edged sword, since it also includes the freedom to exit. But also, perhaps so much autonomy has made us overly sensitive to levels of social and communal engagement—to ties that bind—that would have seemed laughably, even vertiginously slight to people living in more traditional societies. Like the heroine in “The Princess and the Pea,” we are hypersensitive to the encumbering effects of a commitment—we feel the equivalent of that irritating, obtrusive lump beneath the mattress of our marital bed, and after a certain number of restless nights we begin to gather the urge to fly.

The lesbian couple in Massachusetts, like many divorcing couples, may have felt the unexpected weight of the kind of archetypal roles they had spent a lifetime sidestepping or fleeing: the pressure to be a spouse, to think in terms of “us,” not because the two individuals comprising “us” happen to be romantically involved at the moment, but because they are part of a permanent unity, something brought into being only at the point of the wedding ceremony. They may have objected to accepting not just a married present but a married future and, as the years went by, a married past together too. Their psyches may have rebelled against the very institution they had successfully gate crashed. “Mankind cannot bear very much reality,” wrote T.S. Eliot (who knew a lot about marital suffering), and marriage qualifies as maximum reality.

But back to the children, or to the empty seats where the children should be. Let’s consider the subject from the opposite angle. If a pre-modern society

were to imagine a society like ours, which possessed both the capability and the will to drastically curtail birthrates below historical norms, what would they imagine such a society to look like? How would it appear to their eyes?

This is hard to get at, but it is useful to consider from the outside what modern developed nations look like, to escape from what Chesterton termed the tyranny of the living. About 15 or 20 years ago, British detective fiction novelist P.D. James imagined a society in the early third millennium that had inexplicably ceased reproducing. In her novel *Children of Men*, she imagined a human race that suddenly, in the waning years of the 20th century, became barren. As her novel opens, the seemingly last generation of children has reached their teens and early 20s—they have all been tested and found sterile by a government obviously keenly interested in whether the human enterprise is about to fold, and preoccupied with supervising the setting sun of humanity so as to prevent or forestall social collapse and barbarism. What does this extreme version of our own minimally reproducing era look like?

It is increasingly top-heavy with the elderly, of course, and this leads to much of the book's action, as the protagonist discovers that the older folks who are removed to an apparently pleasant senior citizen existence followed by a humane exit are really being euthanized against their will, because it is both expensive and increasingly difficult to find sufficient able-bodied people to care for them.

It is also a society lacking the innocence, wonder, and sense of expectancy that accompany young children. It is a society that cannot and does not, in fact, look ahead in hope, because such hope requires the expectation or arrival of new human beings who can en flesh the future.

It is a society where little teaching goes on, because little learning occurs. There is no one to whom to entrust the cultural capital of the past, once this last generation has reached adulthood.

And this last generation, which most fully experiences the hopelessness of having nothing to build or contribute or live for to survive them, exists aimlessly, dispiritedly, unproductively, and in many cases, predatorily, in packs. They do not reverence or respect their elders, whose lives they can never, in any case, emulate. They cannot hope to nurture, protect, teach, and inspire a succeeding generation of children—a powerful motive for attempting to be your best, as parents know. Cohesiveness between generations—the family, the clan, the tribe—is non-existent. Cohesiveness within their age cohort is, like the reality show survivor contests, at bottom Hobbesian rather than generous and self-giving.

What P.D. James' exaggeration of reality shows us is that it takes a child to raise a village. It takes the challenges, needs, and innocent expectations of a child to call forth, in most people over long periods of time, a fully mature measure of generosity, selflessness, and devotion, and the acceptance of our limitations, both natural and required by the complementary requirements of others.

The Hobbesian myth is that human societies originally cohered around a social contract prompted by the need to seek safety from human and non-human predators. A social arrangement so constituted cannot rise above the tit-for-tat, I'll-scratch-your-back level of exchange, which makes it hyperalert to unfair treatment. What's needed for a society to develop the life-enhancing qualities of generosity and self-giving is an education in the proper response to the call of the truly needy and helpless, which entails a voluntary curtailment of one's freedom, a sharing of one's goods, and a lifting of the cloud of self-preoccupation.

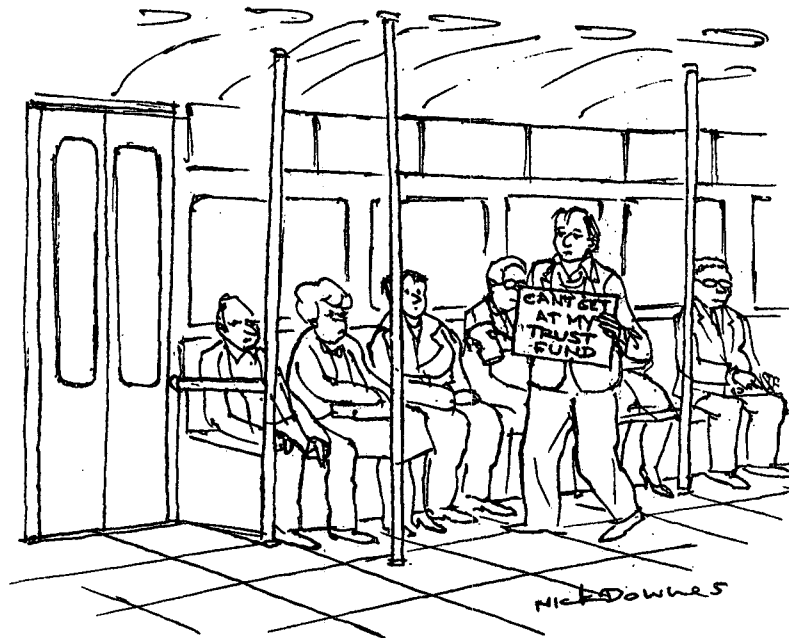
Hobbes invents a social contract. But the family, and the tribe, and the clan are based on a covenant, an exchange of persons, a voluntary entanglement with the messy lives of others. Most of the time, these covenants have been very imperfectly entered into, very imperfectly lived out. But they remain, by and large, more life-giving and life-enhancing forms of union than a legal contract or a mere business arrangement could accomplish. A child working for his father, a slave working for his master and an employee working for his boss might all be performing the same actions, but how differently the internal emotions, motivations, personal investment, and plans for the future would animate them!

In some ways, especially as we look ahead toward imploding populations and emptying nurseries, we seem to be regressing all the way back to the original state of nature, in which, in Hobbes' famous phrase, human lives were "nasty, brutish, and short." Our cultural ideals of pleasure, comfort, self-fulfillment, prolongation of life, and prevention of pain are individualistic rather than communal. We may sense our need for solidarity with others, but we want it on our terms, for our benefit, without violating the rest of our self-involved ideals, so we construct artificial communities, invent picturesque traditions, adopt appropriate zoning and by-laws, knowing we can always move to another subdivision or another state, switch churches, jettison a relationship, find a new job, reinvent ourselves.

That is much harder to do, guilt-free, with children. Children are the baggage of past and future, obstructing the free enjoyment of our present. But they are also the only way most human beings can escape from what Milan Kundera called, in his novel of the same name, "the unbearable lightness of

being,” the disconnected individual life detached from significance beyond and outside itself.

Do we all need to acquire five or ten or fifteen children to qualify as adult members of society, so as to accept ties and limitations, liberate ourselves from self-love, and escape from that lightness of being? No, but we have to recognize un sentimentally, as a solid fact, what we may not always have the inner vitality to feel subjectively, that children are a good—which means that life is a good, which means that a life supporting and assisting and nurturing other lives is a great good. At that point, we’ll begin to align ourselves ever so slightly with the mind of our Maker, fruitful Father of a multitude of children.



The Child Came to Us

Mary Kenny

It was J.P. McFadden who said the inspirational words to me, back in the 1990s. “We didn’t choose to take on this subject,” he wrote. “The unborn child came to us. And we had to defend its cause.” I have often reflected on this when the cause has proved trying, or difficult, or painful. And it has always sustained me.

The pro-life cause—particularly opposing abortion—is not, I would say, a particularly beneficial career move. In Britain, where I mostly live with my English husband (though I have retained a foot in my native Ireland), being pro-life is, somehow, shall we say, *bad form*. The English have a horror of “extremism” of any kind, and they imagine you are about to berate them with your “extremist” values. People seem to feel, too, that you are setting out to judge and chide them, or that you are unnecessarily bringing a private issue into the public domain.

The late Auberon Waugh—writer and son of the very great Evelyn Waugh—who was a vague sort of Catholic remarked to me: “Oh, why make a fuss about all that. An abortion is something anyone sensible wants to forget about.” There is a truth in that affirmation, and it cuts several ways: It implies that anyone who takes up the pro-life cause is a standing reproach but it admits of the fact that an abortion is at best something horrible—that it is not, as the pro-abortion advocates would have it, a neutral choice that doesn’t matter very much one way or the other. Yet one doesn’t wish to be cast in the stern mould of John Calvin: It seems to me that the purpose of the pro-life cause is not to be a living reproach to anyone for past sins, but to endorse the value of human life from its inception, and to signal that this principle should be as much of a moral norm as any of the other human rights ethics which are so widely agreed upon.

In the world of the media, in which I have lived for most of my professional life, pro-life values are widely regarded with hostility, and it can become difficult, even for those of us who normally have access to the press, to publish anything about the subject in the mainstream media. After I wrote a book on the abortion theme, I was told by a leader-writer on one London newspaper (there are at least 12 national newspapers in Britain, all of them published in London, and read nation-wide): “Leave it out. You’re a busted

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flush on this question.” (Meaning, “Quit this issue”; “busted flush” is a gambling term for a broken or worn-out strategy.) On a BBC (the national British broadcasting corporation) radio programme I was informed that I was “obsessive” about abortion, although I had only mentioned it in passing, and it was relevant to the discussion. British *Cosmopolitan* magazine nominated me as “Misogynist of the month” after I published a piece on a pro-life issue. My response to some of these reactions has been to draw back from too much directly polemical engagement: You are no good to any cause if you are regarded as a scold or an obsessive. And it hurt being called a misogynist.

Actually, I had been a fiery young feminist from my early twenties, and was involved in founding a feminist movement in Ireland in 1970, the *Irish Women’s Liberation Movement*. Another of my co-founders was Mrs Mary Robinson, who subsequently went on to become President of Ireland, and latterly, an important personage at the UN. The IWLM was a worthy cause in its time: It was, I now see, a modernising movement which necessarily brought antiquated Irish laws into the latter part of the 20th century. There were Victorian laws enacted by British administrations which had never been taken off the statute book; restrictions which barred women from taking out a checking account without the counter-signature of a man, or from applying for a mortgage (odd in that in Irish society women were often considered more responsible than men when it came to money—certainly less likely to spend it at the local bar): regulations which very seldom admitted women to jury service (enacted by the Irish Free State in the 1920s), laws which banned married women from working for the State (commonly applied in European countries in the 1920s and 30s, during catastrophic male unemployment), fiscal arrangements which in effect neglected widows and failed to support deserted wives, and, perhaps most controversially of all, a 1935 law which forbade the importation of contraceptive devices.

Similar anti-contraception laws had existed in France (from 1920 to 1967) and in the State of Minnesota. The “suppression of fertility,” as the French called it, was culturally regarded as dangerous and unnatural, and particularly so after the horrendous loss of French population after the First World War. Nevertheless, by 1970, the Irish law was archaic, and an unwarranted intrusion by the State, to forbid the importation of condoms or the diaphragm once known as the “Dutch cap.” And in our feminist movement, we had some fun with demonstrations and stunts against the outdated law.

Interestingly, our feminist movement did not, at that time, confront the issue of abortion. In our consciousness-raising sessions, we simply never

spoke about it. Although a British law enabled abortion to be performed—with certain token restrictions—in 1967, termination of pregnancy did not really become a world-wide public issue until 1973, with the *Roe v. Wade* debates in America. I think there were a number of reasons why we, in the Irish feminist movement, did not discuss abortion. There was a natural, if unspoken, element of distaste. Irishwomen would be aware that there would be deep divisions among women, even among feminists, in what was still a profoundly Catholic country—and what was also relevant, an agricultural one. When abortion did enter the public realm of discourse in Ireland in the 1980s, a correspondent wrote to *The Irish Times* to say that the only time the word “abortion” had ever been heard among farming folk (which until recently constituted the majority of Irish people) was “when the cow had failed to calf.” To agriculturalists, “abortion” simply meant “failure”: and indeed material loss.

Among Irish feminists at that time, there was an instinctive feeling, then, that the market wouldn't bear a pro-abortion stance—besides the ambivalent feelings of the women themselves. (It surprised me to note, more recently, that Mary Robinson now accepts the routine “right to choose” of feminist orthodoxy over the abortion question: she never showed any engagement with the subject during our shared Irish feminist movement.)

But moreover, legal contraception seemed a more focused and significant issue.

Although I have more complex feelings about contraception today—I think it is a profoundly complicated subject: and I have developed an enhanced esteem for the ideals expressed in Pope Paul VI's *On Human Life*—I would still stand by our campaign to remove the archaic law from the Irish statute book prohibiting contraception. I do not think it is the business of the state either to forbid or promulgate the use of vulcanised rubber in the matter of human sexual relations. On a pragmatic basis, too, I think it more difficult to maintain a stand against abortion when also opposing contraception. As a wise woman once said to me: “You can't be against everything.”

I think it was about 1977 when I first became aware of abortion as a political issue: it was ten years after the 1967 British abortion act, which was universally marked in the United Kingdom as a liberating piece of legislation which had saved women's lives. I had returned to live in London, was married and had one child, with another expected. It was at that moment, I remember, that I thought: Wait a minute—is this legislation so liberating? Can it be right for the state to extinguish human life in the womb? Can't women's lives be safeguarded in ways other than by this?

Some of the arguments being advanced by pro-abortionists struck me as not only diminishing of human life, but as laughably unscientific—even backward. There were claims that the conceptus was “part of a woman’s body” and “just an undifferentiated lump of jelly.” I became involved with the British organisation *Life* and met groups of people who not only felt that human life must be defended, but who also cared immensely for the young women faced with problem pregnancies.

Jack and Nuala Scarisbrick, the founders of *Life*, had actually started out by inviting distressed young pregnant women into their own home, in the Shakespearean county of Warwickshire in England. Later, the network grew so remarkably that a range of sheltered houses was established throughout the country to support pregnant women. *Life’s* counselling services brought its volunteers into daily contact with women who needed to talk through a crisis pregnancy, and I came to admire not only the *caritas* involved, but also the experience, knowledge, compassion and understanding that the counsellors developed. They *never* judged the women who came to them, or sought to coerce them in any way: but tried, instead, to emphasize the positive and support them through what was often a worrying time.

From the 1970s to this day, *Life* has done admirable work in helping not only pregnant women, but mothers with young families, disabled babies (founding a hospital for handicapped babies in Liverpool, “Zoe’s Place”), and extending support to men and fathers. They have also provided post-abortion counselling and encouraged studies on psychological assistance. All this has been supported by voluntary contributions, and, incidentally, I might add, in a spirit of admirable ecumenism which embraced Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and agnostic members. (In Northern Ireland, at the height of the sectarian Troubles of the late 1970s and early 1980s, I witnessed Catholics and Protestants working harmoniously and wholeheartedly together in *Life’s* cause: I saw the Rev. Ian Paisley’s daughter, Rhonda, stand shoulder to shoulder with Roman Catholics—perhaps for the first time in her experience—on a *Life* platform.)

All this has passed without a single note of public recognition. Britain is a society replete with a complex honours system: the powers that be can, and do, award a rich variety of honours in the name of the Queen, and the Prime Minister has, within his gift, a large deposit of grace and favour patronage in due recognition of public service. Despite the help and support they have extended to generations of young mothers, despite the care they have initiated for disabled babies, and despite the social and welfare services they have brought into being—not to mention the human lives they have saved—the founders and personnel of *Life* have never received any honour in

Great Britain. Quite the contrary—the work has been officially ignored and marginalized. It has consistently and persistently been omitted from standard reference books which provide helping services for pregnant women, and the charity has never been permitted to make a charitable appeal over the BBC (which regularly broadcasts a “week’s good cause.”) And indeed, I might add, neither have any of the other pro-life campaigners in Britain, all of whom do fine work which in effect supports the fabric of society.

But that is what I mean by pro-life causes not always being a beneficial career move, at least in the United Kingdom. It is simply not Politically Correct, and was not Politically Correct even before the notion was established. I realized this when Christopher Hitchens—an old friend of my husband’s, who worked in London for a decade before migrating to America—confessed to me that, privately, he was anti-abortion. Really? “Yes,” he said reflectively. “I reported a story in California which involved an aborted baby gasping for breath on a hospital slab—and I thought, shit, this is *revolting*.” But he declined to go public with it. Why upset the feminists? Unnecessary. I thought then of Jean-Paul Sartre’s refusal to condemn Stalinism in the 1950s and 60s, for fear of distressing the Parisian working-class, who were solid Communist voters. And yet, Christopher Hitchens is a courageous man, and one day, I believe, he will make his privately held commitment on abortion public.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, I engaged in numerous public debates in Britain and Ireland on the abortion issue. It was often a disagreeable experience: I find it difficult to be the object of hostility and hatred. And yet, I learned a great deal and met some wonderful people. I also discovered, as the Jesuit teachers have always said, that sometimes you learn as much from your opponents as from your cohorts. Some of the people I debated against, often at Oxford or Cambridge, were chillingly cold-hearted: One woman said, when referring to a distressing case in the North of England where an aborted infant fought for breath in the hospital sluice room and even tried to cry: “Oh, aborted fetuses only cry to draw attention to themselves.” Even she knew that she had gone too far with such a statement. But I also met opponents who were thoughtful and sincere and who at least had the honesty and courage to engage in open debate. Far more evasive were the pro-abortionists who would not, or perhaps could not, engage in debate at all.

I did feel gratified, though, when an opponent said to me after a debate: “I don’t agree with what you say, obviously. But in some part of me, I’m glad you’re out there saying it.”

Debate is important: and yet now I think it is best done by younger people,

MARY KENNY

or those in an active middle age who are in the full flow of oratory. As I moved towards my 60s, the historical perspective has become increasingly interesting, in a whole range of subjects, in culture, politics, and what I would call “values.” The purpose of the senior years is to analyse the past, and to reflect upon the narrative that it opens up to us.

I am also beginning to think that there are other ways of exploring the pro-life narrative, in terms of story and drama. I wrote a book of short stories, *A Mood for Love*, in the 1980s mostly based on abortion case histories I had encountered in research. It was not particularly successful, and may not have been well realised: and yet, the material around the theme is full of real human issues and reflections, and has tremendous creative potential. In general, fiction writers have tended to avoid the abortion issue; or to treat it, in the predictably Politically Correct mode as being something associated with fanatics (see Douglas Kennedy’s *State of the Union*). The field is wide open to be explored more imaginatively, and I hope that the pro-life narrative will develop in this way, as well as maintaining its platform in politics, culture and ethics.

I have come to see that it is the imagination which can be the most powerful tool of all in communication. I said I had first been alerted to the abortion issue as a political subject in 1977, but now, looking back, I think a 1966 movie first stirred a dim awareness: that film was *Alfie*, with Michael Caine. There is an abortion in that film, and we see Caine looking down at the aborted child. I remember sitting in the cinema and thinking “please don’t show us the reality. Please don’t.” The direct Lewis Gilbert very wisely didn’t: It was enough to imagine the horror.

* * * * *

My own journey through the pro-life issue has been a very small and humble part of the pattern; a pattern, though, which I believe in times to come will be regarded as being akin to the anti-slavery movement or the campaigns to rescue starving and abandoned infants. For at its core is the affirmation of life itself, and there is no higher value.

The Handwriting on the Wall

Lynette Burrows

I know that G. K. Chesterton is very popular in America, and that American publishers have been republishing many of his books over the past few years. You even have a couple of fine magazines devoted to his writings: *Gilbert* and *The Chesterton Review*. Chesterton was writing at the turn of the last century and died in 1936, but he seems to be as relevant to Americans now as he ever was to us here in Britain. This is curious and interesting, given the differences between our countries in terms of size, history, and demography. The “exposed flank” of a shared language enables us to share ideas on what the French call “Anglo-Saxon attitudes”: We influence each other, for better or worse. Chesterton thought that, in the moral field, it tended to be for the worse; he ascribed this to the malign influence of Darwin (whose theories of survival of the fittest were enthusiastically taken up by the Germans as well, and developed via Nietzsche into the idea of the “superman” and the doctrine that “nothing is true; everything is allowed”).

In a period of rapid technological and institutional change, Chesterton identified—and traced forward by means of his unerring moral imagination—developments that started in the 19th century and would give rise to serious moral and political malformations in the 20th. He realized, further, that these would eventually metastasize into an onslaught against everything we hold dear. His relevance to *The Human Life Review* is marked; the *Review*’s founder, J. P. McFadden, loved Chesterton’s work.

One of the first big movements that foreshadowed today’s culture of death was the eugenics craze in Britain and America about 100 years ago: The Anglo-Saxon countries had decided that the wrong people were having children and must be stopped by scientific means. Eugenics—the scientific selection of “good births”—was started by Francis Galton, Darwin’s cousin, and it was eagerly taken up by just the same kind of people who embrace mad theories now; that is, they were well-educated, mostly rich, and strongly against religion (which they dismissed as superstition).

There was massive discussion on the subject in the press, yet few seemed to realize the sinister implications of having one class of “better” individuals decide who could or could not have children. People became quite euphoric at the idea that the undeserving poor, alcoholics, and habitual petty

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criminals would just disappear if they were not allowed to breed. The profound change that this would mean to the very nature of the way people lived, and the society they lived in, didn't seem to occur to great swathes of those who should have known better. In particular, no political party broke ranks to oppose the proposals and no Church, apart from the Catholic Church, supported Chesterton in his lonely crusade against this monstrous crime against society.

The American editor of a new edition of Chesterton's collected writings on the subject—*Eugenics & Other Evils*—commented that, amongst the multitude of well-known people who enthused in print about eugenics, Chesterton was the only person of note who fought for the natural, human family. His bulky form stood more or less alone against the aberration of allowing officials to decide who was fit to “breed” and who should be sterilized (and incarcerated if they refused). The very idea seems to us now so deeply shameful that any past support of it is considered embarrassing; yet this malign fantasy infected the intelligent classes in several countries, including so great an intellect as Einstein. The proposals even resulted in legislation in Britain, known as the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913.

The nub of it was, in Chesterton's words, to “incarcerate as madmen those whom no doctor would consent to call mad. It is enough if some doctor or others may happen to call them weak-minded.” This practice also became law in some of the states of the U.S., where people had to present themselves before a panel for permission to marry and, if they were found wanting—not mad, you understand, just “wanting”—they could be refused that permission unless they consented to be sterilized.

In the event, of course, the Great War intervened before the British legislation could be implemented; the country found itself at war with the home of the “superman” and nine-tenths of the professors and philosophers who had done so much to advance the ideas of racial superiority. Overnight, even the name of a German became anathema to the general public, as they realised where this “scientific approach to life” had led the Prussians. As Chesterton commented, “Death shone on the land like a new daylight, making all things vivid and visibly *dear*.”

After the war, however, the old preoccupation with the “wrong” people having children made a strange comeback—in another form. This time, it was birth controllers; they had in their sights, again, the families of the poor. Chesterton confessed himself to be astounded that the intellectual elite was prepared so quickly to return to a scientific approach to life, in view of where it had led in the previous decade. Alone among intellectuals, he predicted that the Germans had not got over their obsession with a “master race,” and

would pursue it by other means when they could.

He took out his old notes and articles and entered the fray again. The birth controllers were just as insane as the largely male eugenicists had been, but much more obviously unpleasant, and almost all female. They didn't like families at all—and didn't want anyone, not even the clever, having children or making good-sized families. They are with us today, and abortion is their preferred method of eradicating those too “unfit” even to use contraception.

The whole eugenics episode, both pre- and post-WWI, bears an uncanny resemblance to our present situation. Consider these words Chesterton wrote in 1913: “*I call this atmosphere anarchy; but insist that it is an anarchy in the centres where there should be authority.* Government has become ungovernable; that is, it cannot leave off governing. Law has become lawless; that it cannot see where it should stop. The chief feature of our time is the madness of government and the meekness of the mob.”

Doesn't that make you gasp? It's a spot-on accurate description of government in our own day.

Cannot the people rule?

In Britain, hardly any of the wild and immoral legislation that has been enacted over the past 30 years came in response to public demand. Nobody asked for divorce to be made easier, or for the no-fault divorce that rendered the marriage contract less enforceable than contracts over household goods. It was a lawyer-led coup. Nobody wanted school children subjected to inflammatory indoctrination into premature and illegal sexual activity that could only result in under-age experimentation and consequent disease and breakdown. There were no calls for abortion and contraception to be given out to under-age girls without their parents' knowledge and consent.

Neither did the public want mock marriages enacted between homosexuals that guaranteed them rights not available to family members who have lived together for a lifetime. In Britain, we have an iniquitous system in which family members, apart from married couples, must pay a 40 percent inheritance tax on the value of the property they inherit—even if they have lived in the property for years in order to care for aged parents or siblings. If they cannot pay it, they have to sell their home. And yet, at a stroke, the parties to a “civil partnership” have been given the same rights as a married couple even if they don't actually live together—e.g., Elton John and his “partner”—or have done so only for a matter of weeks: *They* can inherit without paying the tax.

Or again, most people regard unlimited welfare to those who don't work as wrong—it is the former, after all, who have to pay for the welfare. Yet we

financially encourage girls to take the career option of getting pregnant and living off the state, even as all other European countries simply say the girl is the responsibility of her parents (as a result of which, it should be pointed out, those countries have low illegitimacy rates).

No, all this drastic change has been top-down—which is why policies are never changed when they are plainly causing great harm and are not even achieving their stated goals. This is *intended* by those—somewhere—who govern us, and they are not telling us why; and it is defended and kept in place by the well-meaning minions whom Chesterton referred to as “gigantic dupes,” who probably don’t understand what they are doing but talk the talk to keep themselves in jobs.

The largest and most serious piece of this sort of social engineering has been undertaken on behalf of an undisclosed program of making Britain “multicultural”—and you don’t need to be a prophet to see that this program is heading for a fall. Nor is this because the British are, in any meaningful sense, “racist”: We are, on the whole, very friendly to strangers and interested in their culture. But we do not want our culture to be taken over by them—and our governing class clearly does.

There is a striking parallel here with the way that homosexuality has been forced upon the public as being a perfectly acceptable lifestyle choice, even though most people’s instincts revolt against it. Such feelings are too strong and too allied to self-preservation to be within the control of social indoctrination, and yet an experiment in thought-control seems to be the main aim of our governors. Like the word “racist,” uttered with the right amount of moral fervor, the term “homophobia” is designed to make us immediately collapse. It’s like the uttering of a spell in the Harry Potter stories; perhaps the reason spells are so much a part of our folk tradition is that such psychological tricks have always been a potent way of gaining control, and fairy stories are a way of describing the phenomenon.

Our government has tried to reinforce this thought control by means of the law—as I found to my cost earlier this year. I was telephoned by the police following a discussion on the BBC in which I had expressed the opinion that it was an aberration to allow two homosexual men to adopt boys, the same as it would be to allow two heterosexual men to adopt a little girl; it would be a risk. The policewoman told me that they now had a “policy” about homophobic and racist opinions, and that a “homophobic” incident had been recorded against me for this remark. I told her that I believed I lived in a free country and intended to continue to behave as if I did—and then went straight to the newspapers. In the furor that followed, with articles and editorials right across the English-speaking world, the police climbed

down and said they would be more “sensitive” in future. They were no doubt helped in this decision by the fact that a group of lawyers in London was preparing to sue the police for the common-law tort of attempting to suppress free speech.

In their effort to turn Britain multicultural, the elites have also fomented an immigration catastrophe. The regular inflow per year—223,000—was topped in 2004 when a total of 900,000 were allowed in. So-called “asylum seekers” account for only 10 percent of the total, with the rest being “economic migrants” with a right to settle with their families. These are just the legal ones; our lax immigration laws ensure that the estimate for illegal immigrants is many times that number. Professor Robert Rowthorn of Cambridge said recently in the *Sunday Telegraph* that at the current rate—unprecedented since the invasion by the Saxons and Danes 1,500 years ago—the population of Britain will increase by 12 million by 2046. (The U.K. today has a population of just 60 million.) Commenting on the same phenomenon, former Labour party minister Frank Field said that this yearly influx of foreigners amounted to eight parliamentary constituencies *every year*, or 41 seats over the life of a Parliament. This will transform our society in a very short space of time.

As with the Mental Deficiency Act back in 1913, there has been an eerie silence on immigration, from all the dogs that should have barked. No trade-union leaders have protested at the decline in wages and job prospects of the working class, who are supposed to be their special interest. Until recently, not one single political party had opposed the policy on the grounds that their constituents were suffering from a drop in wages. Crime is endemic among the foreign-born, and more than half our prison population is from abroad—but nothing is made of it. The churches are all too politically correct to take the robust stand of Cardinal Giacomo Biffi in Italy who said, three years ago, that no government had the right to inflict masses of people of an alien culture on their indigenous population without consulting them. It was more than charity could stand, he said, and he likened it to demanding that every family take in another family of different habits and beliefs in order to demonstrate their Christian charity. “No man is so much a stranger that he cannot be my brother” is an ideal that we believe in here in Britain, but it was never intended in the sense of *millions* of strangers.

The anarchic despotism of the elites

It becomes ever more imperative to ask what exactly is the agenda of those who govern us and why, when the evidence of harm is so widespread, no one seems prepared to question and to counter it. There is no doubt that it

is tearing the moral heart out of us, with results that no one can yet entirely foresee. It is, in a sense, truly mysterious and almost defies rational explanation—rather as Pope Paul VI must have felt when he described many ideas circulating in powerful circles as “the smoke of Satan.”

The seeds of our contemporary crisis were obviously germinating in Chesterton’s day, because he wrote a book in 1908, at the height of the eugenics controversy, called *The Flying Inn*—which is, remarkably, about the Islamification of Britain by the governing class. After being out of print for many years, it has now been republished in Britain and America and can be obtained from Amazon.

At first sight, the book appears to be simply an exploration of what might happen once the imperial powers were told by the colonies they ruled to pack up and go home. As an opponent of imperialism, and a believer in the strong impulse of people to live according to their own culture, Chesterton saw this departure as inevitable. He also knew that the largely commercial interests that were the driving force of imperialism would not abandon the effort to harness cheap labor simply because they had been thrown out of the colonies. They would take steps to attract those whom they could no longer rule in their own countries to come and settle where they might be similarly employed to maintain profit margins on the world market. They would also be a valuable fifth column on whom, by means of special concessions and welfare, the government—any government—could rely to maintain its hold on power.

The book’s theme is expressed by the hero, Dalroy, as follows: “The destiny of Empire in the eyes of the governing class, is in four acts. Victory over barbarians. Employment of barbarians. Alliance with barbarians. Conquest by barbarians.” The story of *The Flying Inn* takes place at the point at which the fourth act is about to be undertaken. The alien force that stands for the barbarian is the Turk, but I suppose it could have been any of the subjects of colonialism; and the religion under whose philosophy conquest is to be achieved is Islam. The eponymous Flying Inn is the last pub in England, since alcohol has been outlawed in the interests of the “higher philosophy” of Islam, disguised as a health measure. The hero is obliged to move about the country, rather like Alfred when the Danes came, rallying people to his pub sign and reminding them of what had been taken away from them without their leave, or any shred of democratic consultation.

We follow the progress of the pub sign, as the people begin to stir themselves toward revolt and the hero notes how extremely biddable the British are—until a certain point is reached. “Politics has never got the people what they want,” Dalroy muses, “it is regarded as an activity for the rich.”

Because the changes have taken place slowly, the people have barely noticed how their traditions have been undermined. They have bishops who don't believe in God and clerics who consider themselves to be in the service of all religions. The army has been emasculated and the police wear fezzes to demonstrate admiration for all things foreign. There is a hint of nameless horrors being planned on the domestic front, of harems and selective breeding among the right people. Vice is celebrated as a virtue. The workers are housed in nightmare estates and are virtually slaves in that they have nowhere else to go to work and they depend on the government for everything. They are treated like half-wits and must accept that those things are "evil"—e.g., smoking and drinking—that the government says are so. Morality is a matter of government policy—and exercise is obligatory!

And yet the people involved in all this are still recognizably English. They grumble and complain but are still trying to be fair to the people manipulating and driving them. They apologize for wanting a bit more freedom, or for yearning for the past; but they are a long-suffering people. How much they resemble the people today who have to suffer race and gender indoctrination in order to get or keep a job! The mixture of resignation and complaint has been familiar to us for many years.

The inexplicable hatred of the ruling class for all things English is exemplified by Dalroy's enemy, Lord Ivywood, a grandee as much of the new school as of the old. He espouses the cause of Islam, not through any belief in, or feeling for, the new religion—but simply because it gives him power. If he can destroy every living tradition of Britain, he can replace it with something that he has fashioned, some new movement that he has made. Islam is a religion that exercises political power and, in his arrogance and foolishness, he thinks he can control it.

Meanwhile, the process of undermining the people's sense of identity is carried on by means of making all sexual morality relative. As Ivywood enthuses, the problem of divorce will be solved at a stroke when polygamy makes the indissoluble union out of date. Sexual misbehavior is ignored in order that monumental financial and moral irregularities in the governing class will seem equally inoffensive. The fact that right and wrong become simply what the government says they are enables the new leaders to take more "enlightened," and more comprehensive, control.

Above all in this book, one sees deployed Chesterton's insight that the breaking of a specifically Christian morality makes tyranny possible. Once the link with Christian dogma is severed, then all our traditional liberties are in danger since there is no concrete basis for them. Once morality becomes simply what the top people of any period want, our traditional freedoms can

no longer be considered safe. This was, Chesterton felt, why most governments tend to favor agnosticism, or even better, skepticism, in the populace. A skeptic cannot be tolerant, because only a person with a fixed moral standpoint can exercise tolerance: The word itself implies there is something to be tolerated but not accepted. Without a fixed morality, with nothing either right or wrong, one cannot be tolerant, one can only be permissive—and Chesterton must have been one of the first to use the word in its modern sense.

Governments much prefer this because they can then manipulate the populace into accepting what they want them to accept on the liberal-sounding grounds of permissiveness. Political correctness has been evolved as the perfect tool to enforce permissiveness; and, since it does not allow certain ideas to be expressed at all and permits only the expression of what suits it, it is censorship in the service of government policy.

Chesterton found this not only revolting but also dangerous. Since permissiveness is dependent on a mood, what happens when the mood changes—as it did in Germany, when the thoroughly permitted homosexuals of the Weimar Republic were marched off to death in the concentration camps ten years later? Neither course of action was subject to moral scrutiny; it was simply government policy. We are ordered to be permissive about homosexuality today; we could be ordered to be permissive about forced abortions for unmarried mothers tomorrow, or any other nightmare you might be able to conjure.

We observe, then, three disparate seeds that Chesterton saw germinating in his day. The first is a hatred of England as it is and has been, by a crucial but largely secret section of a powerful governing class: the sort of people who passed the Mental Deficiency Act in 1913. The second is a hatred of Christianity and all it has given rise to—a visceral hatred that will concede no good in it and curse it as a drag on science and progress. Almost anything else will do as a replacement. As long as it is strong enough, by whatever means, to displace Christianity, it will serve. The third is a detestation of the working class and of the very idea of an England that continues to have a destiny of its own, supported by strong families, composed of the common people, with a strong and cohesive moral and civic sense and with a culture that is built around our founding “cult”—Christianity.

Speaking truth to power

Ordinary people will not suffer from this manipulation indefinitely. They do not want their homeland transformed into another country and inevitably are, as Chesterton predicted, stirring themselves for revolt. The form this is taking is a political party that is only a dozen years old and has its roots in a

more virulent anti-immigration movement, the “National Front,” which began when immigration did. The two have since separated, and the new party has had notable success recently in local elections, taking every available seat in one London borough, as well as more than 50 elsewhere. It is called the British National Party, the BNP, and you will probably only have heard of it, if at all, as being “extreme” and completely unacceptable to all decent people. Indeed, such is the alarm aroused by this party’s potential for success that almost every commentator has bent every sinew to heap scorn and quite unbelievable insult upon them.

To me—not a member of the BNP, just a fascinated observer—it is a truly breathtaking example of what a thoroughly bad, indeed degenerate, ruling class does when faced with real opposition. It is all the more startling, therefore, when rather sensible commentators who have tended to support ineffectual attempts to contest the prevailing immorality emanating from government have joined the chorus of condemnation.

In 2004, BNP leader Nick Griffin was arrested after a private meeting in which he had said to his members that the Muslims were planning a terrorist attack that would take place within the year on the London buses and subways. Before his case came to trial, this actually happened—on July 7, 2005. Griffin got massive publicity for his accurate prophecy; he was acquitted of the racism charges, and the BNP has become the fastest growing political party in Britain. (The authorities are now trying to prosecute him again, from a different angle.)

The venomous hatred against the BNP is the result of something that perhaps you don’t suffer from in America, and that is genuine class contempt. It is not that the elite hate working-class people when they meet them; it is more that they are simply not used to taking anything they say into account. A similar phenomenon was on display over a hundred years ago, during the rise of the Labour party: They were hanged, transported, flogged, and imprisoned, but they persisted, and eventually the main parties were obliged to take account of their demands. The BNP makes much of the similarities but is mindful also of the speed with which Labour became corrupted by socialism, with the new union leaders becoming more like the barons of old than representatives of the working class.

The current, and largely ineffectual, conservative commentators are invariably educated at Oxford and Cambridge and from affluent homes. They seem to be enraged at the fact that the slowly emerging representatives of the BNP have often not been to university (although Griffin studied law at Cambridge). They hate the BNP members’ accents, and loathe the fact that they, well, they look working-class. They have no polish and some wear flat

hats when being interviewed. There is nothing to be gained from knowing them; they have no country estates at which to offer hospitality.

Also, if you consider yourself a cut above the common herd, you don't like a party that espouses what opinion polls have repeatedly shown are popular causes. The whole point of your existence is to be above the crowd; not a common man, but an un-common man. Often agnostic themselves, or the next best thing, Anglican, they are not sufficiently perturbed by what is happening to us, to step out of line and do something effective. In truth, I believe they hate the BNP so much because they fear them. They are gripped by a hatred of them that must be based on fear because it is not rational. They fear that the BNP will stir up trouble and, even though the Muslims have been threatening trouble for years on their websites and in their demonstrations, they fear the British common man more.

According to its website, newspaper, and canvassers, the BNP advocates the following policies: Leave the European Union and all its undemocratic laws, and get our government back under democratic control. Reassert our specifically Christian culture and our right to have it dominant in our country. Stop all immigration and welfare measures designed to attract and keep immigrants. Deport all immigrants who commit crimes here, and those who are illegal. Offer generous resettlement grants to immigrants who will return home. Support families through fiscal measures that encourage work and family responsibility rather than divorce and single parenthood. Support the right of parents to educate their children within their own culture.

The BNP dislikes abortion and would restrict it. They do not like the targeting of children by the contraceptive industry, and don't want the children indoctrinated on homosexuality in school. They believe in capital punishment; and corporal punishment for young offenders when they first go wrong. They would reassert the ancient right to free speech that is under relentless attack, chiefly on behalf of homosexuals and Muslims.

As they say themselves, you don't have to agree with *all* of their policies. But merely to read them is to see that they are formulated by people who have a belief system that is strong on morals and anchored in our history and traditions. It is healthy, in other words, and does not carry the lingering stink of an alien creed being secretly worked out and deployed without our knowledge or consent. Who on earth could describe such a programme as Nazi or based only on hatred—merely because it doesn't accept forced "multiculturalism"? These reforms may be a tall order now, but that is the fault of those who have lied to us for years about what was going on. We have a political party like the BNP because there needs to be an outlet for these legitimate grievances; and yet our flaccid commentators in the media

would, if they could, silence these political voices.

Take the case of the typical conservative commentator, the eminently sensible Peter Hitchens (brother of the egregious Christopher Hitchens, who, mercifully, lives on your side of the pond). Here he is in May of this year, writing about the ruination of Britain in general and, in particular, on the use of immigrants to provide a bloc vote for government and welfare. “For us to survive as a country, this elite treachery has to end. Those who have been given great gifts should stop using them to serve their own selfish ends and recognise they have a wider duty to that thing they have been taught to despise—their country.”

It is worth taking note of the language in which this stern warning to those he calls treacherous is couched. Class affinity means that his invective is neutered by shared recollections of dinners, clubs, and associates. The traitors are his class and he owes them his pitiful trust that it is possible to argue them out of what they have set up and run to their own advantage for upwards of 30 years. Can he be serious if he thinks a bat-squeak like that will cause them to see the error of their ways and reform? Yet he ended his piece: “If they don’t, the BNP are waiting, grunting just outside the door; their eyes glinting and their knuckles brushing the ground.”

Another example, closer to home for you, is an article by David Pryce-Jones in *The New Republic* in July of this year in which he—quite wrongly—accuses the BNP of violence in the riots that erupted in northern cities in Britain in 2001. Well, he doesn’t quite say that they *committed* the £27 million worth of damage, and attempted to kill people in a pub by fire-bombing the premises and then blocking the exits with burning cars—but the charge is there by implication: “Nobody has been killed so far in the BNP-inspired race riots in cities with substantial Muslim populations . . . but mosques and shops and Muslim properties have been vandalized.”

This is a calumny, since no BNP supporters were prosecuted for the violence there, although hundreds of Muslims were (and so were a smaller number of white youths). As the North Yorkshire police spokesman said in the report that followed the riots, it was “difficult to speculate on the political affiliations of people on the streets,” but “five National Front members had been met by police and turned away.” This hardly sounds as though the BNP were doing much fire-bombing or fighting, does it? The BNP were not mentioned at all as being involved.

A local Labour MP said that “a hard core of Muslim youth who had won the battle in the area for control of drugs had relished the chance for a confrontation with the police. ‘Their response,’ they said, ‘was out of proportion to the presence of the National Front and the BNP.’” In that last sentence you

have the truth of the matter: The BNP “inspired” the violence simply by being present in the city as a legitimate political party. Muslims disapprove of them and therefore, it is argued, they are justified in taking violent action. This argument was widely accepted back in 2001 and 2002; it has become less credible now that it has been used to justify the alleged plot to blow up ten airplanes in midair in August 2006. Our commentators are slowly and painfully coming to realize that this excuse—basically, that it’s OK to commit mass murder as a way to protest the Bush/Blair alliance—means an end to parliamentary democracy, and submission to the power of those who would rule by violence.

In June of this year, I decided to test what has become an obsessive theory of mine—that we are under something approximating to a spell with respect to the BNP. I was to give a talk at the honourable and eminently respectable RAF Club in Piccadilly, London, to a group that has been campaigning for many years on moral issues and has invariably been proved right in its assessment of what the various policies of successive governments would produce. They are always included in “government consultations,” and always ignored.

I was genuinely afraid because it is one thing to offend those with whom one is in complete disagreement anyway, but quite another to offend friends; and I had no idea of the outcome. After rehearsing all the things that were so grievously wrong with British social policy, I told them that I wanted to engage in a little experiment with them, such as is occasionally used to demonstrate how easy it is to manipulate people’s thought processes by a sort of auto-suggestion. I’m sure you know the most common one, of asking a person to name several things that are white—and then asking them what cows drink, to which they invariably answer “milk,” because their minds have been turned toward white things.

I said that I wanted them to test how they squared up to Chesterton’s challenge that the only things we need really to fear are corruption and cowardice. I asked them to consider the career of our last Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, who resigned in June of this year. He was a Communist as a young man, as were several members of our government, and often visited Romania to sit at the feet of its abominable dictator, Ceausescu. He must have seen the poverty there and known of the imprisonment and killing of opponents, since there were many brave dissidents who had suffered and written about it. There was torture, and a total lack of civil rights of the most basic kind. He certainly knew that none of the people he saw in the streets or serving the president his tea were allowed to leave the country; they were all, in short, prisoners. Yet it must have seemed to him some sort of an ideal

or he would not have continued to go there.

“Now the question I want to ask you is this,” I said. “Would you be more shocked, embarrassed, and even angered, if I said to you today, that I would be very interested in taking tea with Nick Griffin, leader of the British National Party, or with Charles Clarke? Honestly now, would you be more likely to be on your feet and heading for the door, if I were to commend ‘aspects of Communism,’ or ‘aspects of BNP policy’?”

“What I am interested in is how this comes about. How do we all come to be under what can only be described as a sort of spell? You know it and I know it. We have absorbed it somehow in a way that is almost occult. It is perverse and completely irrational to regard a plainly democratic party, rising from ordinary people upwards, with no international backers, or hidden agendas . . . as being beyond tolerance, beyond consideration, and beyond interest, simply because we have been brain-washed. This brainwashing has, I believe, been a studied process that has been subtly deployed and maintained for several decades, by the media principally and certain academics and pressure groups. We have fallen for it.

“This party is outside the loop, as they say, of the conspiracy to destroy our culture. They only see what has been done and what can be done to save ourselves. And yet, we are restrained by cowardice, from appearing to listen to them, to read what they say and to engage with them. Yes, no doubt some of them are outspoken and rude—as is the right of a free people; but not as rude and hate-filled as left-wing groups who regularly attack those praying outside abortion clinics and the Gay Rights marchers who invade churches and insult and blaspheme the beliefs of others. But they are not taboo and the BNP is.

“Theoretically, if they were to get anywhere near power, a vast edifice of moral and financial corruption would be sunk. That is why the governing class, supported by its placemen in the media, will do anything to silence and suppress them. So far, the middle classes have gone along with this and refuse to acknowledge the validity of at least some of their arguments. We won’t acknowledge them or give them their due, or help them by engaging in discussion with them. They are outcasts to the middle class, who see the corruption all around us, but are too cowardly to say, ‘If this is not an emergency, I don’t know what is.’

“And if this is not a party that has at least identified it and wants to resist it—I don’t know what is. I actually don’t know enough about the BNP—and I am relieved to be able to say so at this moment—to know if they have any idea about a great plan such as the eugenicists had, to take this country and our way of life away from us and substitute another. But David Cameron

[the new leader of the Conservative Party] urged people before the local elections to 'Vote for anybody but the BNP.' How unconsciously right he was! All the other parties are the same; just as they were before the passing of the Mental Deficiency Law; either wicked or gigantic dupes. Alas for England, that Cameron said recently 'that he loves Britain as it is, not as it once was.' We have little to hope from a judgement like that.

"So, ladies and gentlemen, I make no apology for drawing your attention to the difference between the knee-jerk and the principled. To me, there is something appropriate in speaking on such a subject in the RAF Club; home of those who fought an enemy we could see. You don't have to agree with me, you just have to be true to your beliefs, to have faith in your fellow countrymen, regardless of their class—and to be brave enough to stand by your opinions, robustly and cheerfully—particularly when a lot of degenerate, corrupt liars say that you are wrong."

Well, I hope you will be as relieved as I was, to hear that my comments were received with thunderous applause; congratulations came from all sides, and there were many follow-up e-mails of thanks. A woman journalist told me that she listened to me with tears running down her cheeks at the relief of knowing that a spell had been broken and that what our rotten culture had made unthinkable was still alive and well.

It is the assumption that you too have echoes of this brainwashing in your culture—and that it is the retro-rocket that powers your interest in the great G. K. Chesterton—that prompts me to write this. So many observations of his remain, like the proverbial writing on the wall, to remind us again and again that the eternal struggle in this world is for sanity. So chalk this one up and see it operating in a dozen, unrelated fields: "Unless a man becomes the enemy of an evil, he will not even become its slave, but rather its champion. God Himself will not help us to ignore evil, but only to defy and to defeat it."

Criss-Cross:

Democrats, Republicans, and Abortion

George McKenna

Suppose this: suppose a politically savvy Rip Van Winkle in say, 1965, perceiving that a movement to legalize abortion was gaining strength in the country, were asked, “Which of the two major political parties will eventually identify with that movement?” What would he answer? I think he would mull it over in his head for awhile and then say: “the Republicans, probably.” Why? “Well, in the first place, it fits pretty well into the Republicans’ private-property philosophy. ‘Let’s keep government out of a woman’s most personal property.’ Secondly, consider the demographics. The Republicans draw heavily from the upper-middle class WASPs, where the drive for population control has always come from. Abortion fits very well into the old eugenics mythology—the belief that you can improve the health of the ‘race’ by limiting the breeding of ‘undesirables.’ You can still hear echoes of that in the conversations of bicoastal Republicans. It wouldn’t surprise me at all if the Republican Party came out with a plank saying ‘We support abortion, in certain cases, for the nation’s overall health and well-being.’ Finally, consider the Republicans’ emphasis on the need for law and order and their conservative approach to welfare. The Republicans may not say this out loud but it slots right into their conservative ideology: abortion is good because, by holding down illegitimate births, it will cut down on crime and welfare costs.”

What about the Democrats? “Well,” Rip would say, “let’s start again with demographics. Consider the heavy concentration of Roman Catholics in the Democratic party. The Church hierarchy would go bananas if any prominent Catholic Democrat—or any Democrat at all—came out in favor of abortion. The Church has consistently held that abortion is one of the gravest moral offenses because it involves the direct killing of an innocent human being. No way is a Catholic Democrat, or any Democrat who wants Catholic support (and what Democrat doesn’t?), going to support abortion. It might even be smart politics for the Democrats to pick a fight with the Republicans on the abortion issue. Democrats like to boast that they protect the weak and

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the vulnerable. You remember Vice President Hubert Humphrey's characterization of his party as the advocate of those "who are in the dawn of life; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped." All they have to do is insert "unborn children" into that list and they can beat up Republicans every time on the abortion issue. I can hear them now: 'Let the Republicans pick on the weak and vulnerable, killing children in the womb to cut welfare costs. We Democrats are the party of compassion, the party that sticks up for the little guy, including the littlest guy of all, the child in the womb. (Applause)'"

Having delivered himself of this well-considered prophecy in 1965, Rip Van Winkle goes down for his nap. When he wakes up and we tell him how the abortion issue finally sorted itself out between our two major parties, Rip says, "Huh? How could *that* have happened?"

So how could it? I will take a stab at this thorny issue. It will be an essay, which literally means "a try." To try, to "essay," is not necessarily to succeed. But the hazard is worth it, because we really need to understand what happened during a critical period in American party politics.

Let's start with an all-too-easy answer to Rip's question. It goes like this: abortion ended up in the Democratic Party because feminists piggybacked it onto the Democrats' civil rights agenda. By 1965 the Democrats, despite the remaining segregationists in their own ranks, had begun to claim ownership of the civil rights agenda. The defining event was the Republicans' nomination of Barry Goldwater for President in 1964. When Goldwater publicly opposed passage of the Civil Rights Act of that year, Northern Democrats gleefully hung an "anti-civil rights" sign around the necks of the Republicans and, fairly or not, they've been doing it ever since. The term "civil rights" acquired an almost religious aura. Everyone is for it, so just about everyone claims it. There are Latino civil rights, Native American civil rights, gay civil rights, civil rights for women, civil rights for stout people, and so on. But the feminists were among the first and—so the argument goes—they dragged abortion with them.

This explanation sounds plausible at first, but it begs some critical questions. First, it assumes that the Democrats in the 1960s were prepared to take their marching orders from pro-abortion feminists. This is the fallacy of presentism—reading the present into the past. Democrats today are in thrall to the feminists but they weren't then. Democratic conventions in those days were dominated by hard-boiled union leaders and city bosses who didn't care a whit about feminist causes. If we go back historically we see that American feminism was always more popular with Republicans than with

Democrats. The Republicans were the first party to support a gender-based Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which they did as early as 1940. Feminism was an upper-middle class phenomenon, one of the many “civic” movements championed by Republican women, while the Democratic agenda tilted more toward the desires of the party’s working-class base, like minimum wage laws and the protection of unions. Even the McGovern-stacked presidential convention in 1972 shied away from an abortion plank. McGovern favored it—his own daughter had had one, a family secret at that time—but he knew it was political poison, so he and other party leaders killed off attempts to put it in the platform. Ted Kennedy, then as now the lion of progressive Democrats in the Senate, wrote to a constituent in 1971 that “the legalization of abortion on demand is not in accordance with the value which our civilization places on human life. . . . When history looks back on this era it should recognize this generation as one which cared about human beings enough to halt the practice of war, to provide a decent living for every family and to fulfill its responsibility to its children from the very moment of conception.” Even in 1976, three years after *Roe v. Wade*, Kennedy insisted that “abortion is morally wrong. It is not a legitimate or acceptable response to any problem of society. And if our country wishes to remain true to its basic moral strength, then unwanted as well as wanted children must be unfailingly protected.”

The second big hole in the thesis that abortion got piggybacked by feminists onto the Democrats’ agenda is its assumption that feminists were in the vanguard of the “abortion rights” movement. Far from it. You’d never know it from media celebrations of the early feminists, but if you check the website of Feminists for Life (<http://www.feministsforlife.org/history/foremoth.htm>) you’ll see how anti-abortion the “feminist foremothers” were. Susan B. Anthony called abortion “the horrible crime of child murder,” and Alice Paul, one of the leaders to getting the women’s suffrage amendment into the Constitution in 1920 and the author of the first Human Life Amendment in 1923, considered it “the ultimate exploitation of women.” Even modern feminists at first stayed away from promoting abortion. Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, usually credited with being the opening manifesto of modern feminism, didn’t even mention abortion in its first (1963) edition. Imagine Karl Marx writing his *Communist Manifesto* without saying anything about class struggle. The “statement of purpose” for the National Organization for Women (NOW), written by Friedan and others a full three years after *The Feminine Mystique*, denounces prejudice against women, demands equality of women in the workplace, schools and colleges, calls for more women to serve in government, and seeks “to open a reexamination of laws and mores

governing marriage and divorce”—but says nothing about abortion. This would be like Thomas Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence but forgetting to put in the part about separating from England. The truth is that neither Friedan nor any of the women who founded NOW in 1966 were thinking that they were founding a pro-abortion organization. It was two *men*, Lawrence Lader and Bernard Nathanson, who later pushed a reluctant Friedan to make abortion one of her organization’s planks. Nathanson, a gynecologist, was moved by compassion for women with unwanted pregnancies (Later, thanks to ultrasound, it occurred to him that there was another person deserving compassion, and now Nathanson is on the other side.) Lader had grander ambitions. A veteran of far-left politics—in the ’40s he was district leader for Vito Marcantonio, the radical congressman from East Harlem, and then ran for New York State Assembly as a candidate of the Communist-run American Labor Party—Lader wanted to move American society into a more “progressive” future by combating the forces and institutions that inhibit change. While writing an admiring biography of Margaret Sanger in 1955, he became attracted to her eugenics-based birth control movement, and wanted to take it a step further by providing abortion on demand. Shortly after the publication of Lader’s book, *Abortion*, in 1966, he and Nathanson held an historic meeting with Friedan. They promised her that if she would put an abortion plank in the next (1967) convention platform, they would, in the meantime, work the media to dramatize the plight of desperate women who had to resort to dangerous “back alley” abortions. True to their word, they made themselves the sources for articles in mainstream magazines at the time, such as *Newsweek* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, exaggerating, by at least a factor of ten, the number of deaths from illegal abortions. (Nathanson has since confessed that he and Lader simply made up the statistics.) Friedan kept her part of the bargain, getting the abortion plank into the 1967 platform, though even then it was given low priority. Not until 1968 did NOW make it central, and thereafter, with a convert’s zeal, Friedan made it number one. But she always acknowledged Lader’s leadership on the issue, calling him (apparently without conscious irony) the “father” of the abortion-rights movement. His paternal influence was quite considerable. Because he was a skilled and fluent spokesman who could boil down complicated issues for non-specialists, he reached a very large audience during the late ’60s and early ’70s. He was cited no fewer than eight times in Justice Blackmun’s majority opinion in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, and was frequently quoted in the media as if he were an objective source rather than a dogged advocate.

But Lader was not the only father of the abortion movement. You could

not take or teach a college course on environmental politics in the late '60s without encountering Garrett Hardin's 1968 article in *Science* magazine on "The Tragedy of the Commons." It was a huge hit in academia, probably because it combined the gloss of science with the passion of social commitment. In it, Hardin argued that unless the state got involved in "controlling the breeding of families" a worldwide ecological disaster loomed ahead. "The only way we can preserve and nurture other and more precious freedoms is by relinquishing the freedom to breed, and that very soon." Hardin was the father of "the population bomb" thinking; the book by that title, by Paul Ehrlich, a Hardin acolyte, was a huge best-seller.

There was a kind of aerosol effect to abortion advocacy at the early '70s; it was sprayed all over the air by Lader, Hardin, Friedan, Ehrlich, and lesser lights. We had only three TV news networks then, and they were all saying the same thing. The message blowing in the wind was that the time had come for "abortion reform." It was good for women, good for men, good for population control, good for the environment. It was the responsible thing to do, and responsible people advocated it, much as they advocate embryonic stem-cell research today. At that point the issue was in equipoise between the two major parties; it could have gone either way. Friedan was a leftist Democrat, though NOW professed to be nonpartisan and did attract many high-status Republican women. Lader was to the left of the Democrats, but Hardin was a staunch Republican who took a number of positions usually considered conservative, such as calling for a ban on immigration from the Third World and opposing foreign aid (which, in his view, just encouraged more breeding). Some Republican leaders in the early '70s made a pass at tying abortion to the Democrats—Senate majority leader Hugh Scott called the McGovern Democrats "the triple-A party: abortion, amnesty, and acid"—but it was generally low-keyed because too many powerful Republicans favored it, among them Colorado governor Richard Lamm, Senator Bob Packwood, then-Congressman George H.W. Bush, Senator Charles Percy, Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and National Security Advisor (later Secretary of State) Henry Kissinger. In fact, back in 1967, then-Governor Ronald Reagan of California signed a bill that virtually decriminalized abortion in the state.

We do not know for certain what Richard Nixon thought about abortion, but both he and his successor, Gerald Ford, were very keen on "population control." In 1970 Nixon appointed John D. Rockefeller III, to head up a commission on the "challenge" of population growth in America, and two years later the Rockefeller Commission issued a report proposing no fewer

than forty-six measures for cutting down on births. With typical Rockefeller-inspired arrogance, the commission boldly advocated a nationwide program of contraceptive “services” to minors and government-subsidized abortions. That proved to be a fatal overreach, for it set off a firestorm of criticism from Catholic bishops, and Nixon, facing reelection in 1972, ended up renouncing the whole report. But he never abandoned his commitment to population control. Early in 1974 he set in motion another commission, headed by Henry Kissinger, to study the “Implications of World Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests,” more commonly known as NSSM 200 (National Security Study Memorandum 200). This commission issued its report in December of 1974, with instructions that it was to remain classified until 1989. Just as the Rockefeller Report had Rockefeller’s fingerprints all over it, this one was unmistakably Kissingerian. It was based on the premise that the population explosion in “LDCs” (less developed countries) poses a security risk to the United States. Why a security risk? Because high birthrates mean large numbers of young people, and young people are the ones most likely to jeopardize our investments, block U.S. access to strategic raw materials, and generally challenge existing world power structures. So we have to induce these countries to limit population through contraception, sterilization, and abortion. But we must be careful! With their long memories of colonialism, these people can get touchy about Western interference. So a kind of stealth program was recommended. It was to be presented in terms of the “rights” of individuals “to determine freely and responsibly their number and spacing of children.” It also recommended using the U.N. and other multilateral institutions as fronts to disguise U.S. involvement. Finally, in spite of its recommendation that population limits be wrapped in the rhetoric of individual “rights,” it added that “mandatory programs may be needed.”

The NSSM-200 report didn’t come in until December of 1974, three months after Nixon’s resignation, but Ford signed off on it in 1975. Ford also appointed Nelson Rockefeller, the Republicans’ most public abortion cheerleader, to be his Vice President. So, if our friend Rip Van Winkle were to wake up in 1975, or even early in 1976, he might still cling to his earlier prediction that the Democratic Party would become the pro-life party and the Republicans the party of abortion. At about the same time Gerald Ford was endorsing NSSM-200 and placing Nelson Rockefeller a heartbeat away from the presidency, Ted Kennedy was declaring that abortion “is not a legitimate or acceptable response to any problem of society.” Despite restive rumblings from some quarters in the party, the leaders were in no hurry to accommodate them, and most Democratic voters were pro-life. But by

the end of the 1980 conventions everything turned around: clearly and unambiguously, the Republicans had become the pro-life party and the Democrats were now so committed to abortion that they would not consider any arguments against it.

What caused the turnaround? Here we enter difficult terrain. To go further we must detour back into the history of our two major political parties.

All kinds of shorthand labels have been used to describe them: the Democrats are liberal, the Republicans conservative; the Democrats are working class, the Republicans fly business class; Democrats are the mommy party, Republicans are the daddy; and so on. All of these categories are pretty broad-brush (John Kerry, working-class?) but they are useful in one respect: they get us started with a big picture, which we can later trim and modify to suit the greater, more complex, array of facts. Here is my own own broad-brush treatment: when viewed historically, the Democratic Party has been the Catholic Party and Republican Party the Protestant Party.

There have always been plenty of Protestants in the Democratic Party, especially in the South and in rural areas of the lower Midwest. But in the real growth areas in the country over the last century, the Democratic Party has been run largely by Catholics. There were clear historical reasons for this. From the 1840s, when Democratic ward-healers greeted the first great waves of Catholic immigrants on the wharves of New York City, Boston, Philadelphia and other East Coast cities, Catholics found a congenial home in the Democratic Party, one which permitted them at first a seat at the table of a great national party and finally a chance to preside over it, divvying out the patronage and the power throughout much of the North. In the old days the majority of Catholics were blue-collar, and from the time of Andrew Jackson in the 1830s Democrats had gone out of their way to cultivate support of what Jackson called the “laboring classes of society.”

But to understand the Catholic-Democratic synergy we have to go beyond demographics, to the core values of the Democratic Party. At least during most of the last century, those values have been highly congenial to Catholic social teaching. From *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII’s famous encyclical on the rights of labor in 1891, to Pope John XXIII’s progressive pronouncements in *Pacem in Terris* and *Mater et Magistra*, the Democratic Party and the Catholic Church have always been on the same wave length as regards social and economic rights, particularly the rights of the poor, weak, and vulnerable members of society. The high point came during the New Deal period of the 1930s, when a Democratic Congress and White House put through major legislation promoting social welfare, legitimizing unions, and regulating the practices of big business, but the congeniality continued

through the next three decades. The great majority of Catholic clergy were Democrats. Born in working-class homes, they attended Catholic schools and were usually the first generation in their family to get higher education—mainly in Catholic colleges and seminaries. Even the least reflective among them could see that the social teaching they absorbed in those colleges was strikingly similar to the domestic platform of the Democratic Party. As for the Catholic laity, by the 1940s their tie to the Democrats was so strong that one of the jokes of the time had two Irish ladies gossiping over the back fence: “Did you hear that Timmy Breen became a Republican?” one said. “Couldn’t be,” said the other, “I just saw him at Mass last Sunday.”

The next decade saw some erosion in Catholic support for Democrats, at least in national elections; among Catholic voters President Eisenhower was running almost even against Democrat Adlai Stevenson in 1956. But the Catholics were back on board in 1960, with at least two-thirds and perhaps as many as three quarters of them (depending on which survey you consult) helping to put the first Catholic in the White House. As usual, blue-collar Catholics voted more heavily Democratic than those in business and managerial positions, but there was a segment of the Catholic population that didn’t show up on the voting statistics because its members were too young to vote: Catholic college kids. John F. Kennedy exerted a particular influence on these Catholics because he was such a cool guy. They loved his grace and derring-do, the way he carried himself and made speeches and (especially) the relaxed way he bantered back and forth with reporters. Kennedy was Catholic but he was not *too* Catholic. He was not parochial, not part of the “immigrant church.” He had gone to Harvard and the London School of Economics; he had written books and even got a Pulitzer Prize for one of them. (The book, *Profiles in Courage*, was written by an aide but very few knew it at the time.) These young people were proud of Kennedy as a representative of their religion. They had been brought up in the era of Pius XII but were coming of age in the time of John XXIII and Vatican II. In their minds it all seemed to fit together: the Catholic Church was throwing open its windows to the modern world and here was this classy young Catholic occupying the highest seat in the land. It brought young people to the Democratic Party in a way that their forbears had not. Their parents and grandparents were simply born into it, accepting it as part of their patrimony, but they came to it as adventurers, finding in it a spirit of dynamism and openness, a secular counterpart to the Church’s *aggiornamento*.

These young people believed in progress, and not just the technological kind. They believed in the moral and spiritual progress of the race. The more

intellectually ambitious among them tackled the work of a French Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin, who was also a paleontologist. In *The Phenomenon of Man* Teilhard sought to demonstrate by scientific principles that the world was evolving toward increased synthesis and unification, which might well propel man into the “noosphere,” a place of expanded human consciousness. There were strong hints that this process would involve the Second Coming, though the specifically religious parts were opaque enough to permit the main thesis to be endorsed by Sir Julian Huxley, grandson of T.H. Huxley, Darwin’s close collaborator, who wrote the introduction. The book was a big hit, and even those who couldn’t get through it had read or heard enough summaries to catch its optimistic spirit.

If the Democratic Party was always welcoming to Catholics and in tune with their social doctrines, the Republicans had an even closer relationship to Protestantism. Historically, it was not just open to Protestantism. It was suffused with it.

The Republican Party was born in a Congregational church in Ripon, Wisconsin in 1854. At a meeting called by opponents of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which threatened to extend slavery into the new territories, a group of Whigs and Free Soilers, plus a few antislavery Democrats, decided that the time had come to form a new party opposed to the spread of slavery. That was the main Republican plank throughout the rest of the 1850s and into the 1860 election. But the party also drew from a deep well of cultural inheritances that the sons and daughters of the Puritans brought with them when they left the stony soil of New England and trekked across the upper Midwest. There was Sabbatarianism—no working, or even playing, from sundown Saturday to sundown Sunday—derived from a strict reading of Leviticus; there was “temperance,” which in practice usually meant prohibitionism. The first of these, when enforced by law, was vexing to Catholics, who saw nothing wrong with having fun on Saturday night or Sunday afternoon, and the second was simply incomprehensible. Together they reinforced their general Catholic view that Protestants were strange people. This ill-will was more than reciprocated from the Protestant side. The leading Protestant sects in the nineteenth century came from a tradition of Reformation theology that read Church history through the lens of *Revelations*, particularly the part about the Second Coming. That is where it predicts that Jesus will come back to earth and throw into hell the Antichrist, the Whore of Babylon. In the Reformed tradition the Whore of Babylon was the Pope, who uses his legions of bishops and priests to make the Catholic laity march in lockstep with his orders. Much of this theological scaffolding fell away in the nineteenth century but the overall view of American Catholics

as a kind of fifth column still remained. It was no marginal view but a highly respectable one. There were political parties devoted to anti-Catholicism, most prominently the American, or Know-Nothing party. There was also plenty of No-Nothingism in one of the two major parties, the Whigs, who later formed the core of the Republican Party. (Abraham Lincoln was one of the few former Whigs who wanted no truck with Know-Nothingism, writing to a friend that he was not going to trade racial bigotry for religious or ethnic bigotry.) The Whigs reached into the same demographic well as the Know-Nothings, and in 1856 they actually ran with them on the “fusion” ticket backing Millard Fillmore for President. The Whig Party has been called “the ghost of Puritanism” because it preserved and nurtured the Puritans’ evangelical determination to reform, educate and generally uplift everyone, which they saw as doing the Lord’s work and their critics regarded as damnable meddling. White Southerners and Catholics, who particularly tended to this latter view, were thus regarded by Whigs, and their successor Republicans, as the chief obstacles to reform. In 1884 a Presbyterian minister named Samuel D. Burchard struck off a famous alliterative phrase when he told a gathering of the Religious Bureau of the Republican National Committee, “We are Republicans, and don’t propose to leave our party and identify with the party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism, and rebellion.” Historians usually treat this as an unfortunate gaffe that cost the Republican presidential nominee, James G. Blaine, the crucial New York City vote (and thus the election); Burchard himself later tried to explain it away as “a mere rhetorical flourish” improvised on the spur of the moment. But he would not have shared those sentiments with a Republican audience if he didn’t know that they would please the choir. Less noticed by historians was the remark of President Grant to his Republican base in seeking their support for reelection in 1872. Grant warned of the possibility of a new civil war—only this time, he added, “the dividing line will not be Mason and Dixon’s, but it will be between patriotism and intelligence on one side, and superstition, ambition and ignorance on the other.” Everyone knew what he meant, and it reminded Catholics of why they were Democrats and why they were going to stay that way. This was the kind of jibe that sank deeply into their collective memory. At some level they never forgot the nastiness of nineteenth-century Republicanism.

Republican Catholic-baiting eased somewhat during the early twentieth century, when Protestantism in the North lost much of its crusading zeal. The mark of status then was to join theologically relaxed but liturgically decorous Protestant churches in the large cities of America. Retro-Gothic architecture was brought to perfection in Episcopalian churches during that

period, and H.L. Mencken's crack about the Episcopalian Church being "the Republican Party at prayer" was not without a kernel of truth. Now Catholics had less to worry about from Republicans than from some fellow Democrats in the South. It was Southern fundamentalists who preserved much of the Reformation's anti-Catholic eschatology, which Northern Protestants had sloughed off decades earlier. So "the Whore of Babylon" was still being fought, but the battleground had moved southward. Protestant Klansmen hated Catholics as much as they hated Jews and "uppity" blacks, and in the 1928 presidential election the Democrats, though they still managed to hold the Deep South, suffered heavily in the polls there because of their nomination of Catholic Al Smith. The Depression and the New Deal largely papered over these divisions in the party, but by the end of World War II a new crack was opening in the Democratic coalition. Fifteen years after that, in the early 1960s, the crack became a chasm: segregationist Southern Democrats were squaring off against Northern liberal Democrats.

Could there be any doubt about which side the young Teilhard-reading Catholics were ready to join? They were on the march for civil rights (not all of them, of course, physically marching, but marching in spirit, virtually marching). They were once marching in religious processions; now they joined in secular marches. But wasn't it all the same thing? God's work had to be done here on earth—this was a religious calling. But there was one difference between their childhood processions and their marches today: today many of their fellow-marchers, while they might call themselves "spiritual," were not at all religious. Some of them were even opposed to religion, especially Catholicism, which they considered superstitious and reactionary. Yet this did not stand in the way of amicable relationships. In different ways these young people admired each other. The secular humanists were impressed by the dedication and seriousness of the Catholics. They figured that in this fight Catholicism was harmless, maybe even useful; afterwards their new friends might outgrow it, or at least not take it so seriously. The Catholics, for their part, liked the style and the dash of their secular comrades; they liked their gift for summing up the conflict in sharp, militant phrases that always got on the nightly news programs. And, perhaps above all, they liked the fact that their secular comrades liked them. If there was a touch of condescension in the secularists' attitude toward Catholic liberals, there was none going the other way. The Catholics wanted very much to be liked by their new friends.

The bonds of unity between the two groups were strengthened during the Vietnam War. They had been singing "We Shall Overcome," and now they

were singing, "Give Peace a Chance." But this time they got little support from a Democratic White House and even from the Northern Democrats in Congress. The Democratic party bosses hated them and they hated them back. But in 1972 the old bosses were defeated. Liberals took over the party, nominating the antiwar George McGovern, and, despite McGovern's 49-state loss, the McGovernites stayed in control. By 1975 the Democratic Party became the party not only of social welfare and business regulation but of a whole bag of causes: environmentalism, consumer protection, affirmative action, gun control, arms control, multilateralism, rapprochement with the Soviets, and the Equal Rights Amendment. But the Democrats had not yet become the party of abortion. Not yet.

The young Catholic students who cheered Kennedy in 1960 were in their thirties now. They had gone into business, medicine, law, academia, the media, and, despite mass defections in the late 1960s, the clergy. In a few more years some of the priests would become bishops, and even now some were staff members and advisors to bishops and cardinals. There were nuns with doctorates who were professors and college deans and presidents; they were teaching, writing, trying out different roles. None would forget the struggles of the '60s and the friends they had made across religious lines.

The abortion issue discomfited them. They were shocked that so many of their antiwar friends simply dismissed their concerns about killing unborn children, regarding abortion simply as "a woman's choice." They tried dialoguing with them but the dialogue got so tense that they gave it up. Meanwhile, other Catholics were organizing anti-abortion protests, and that raised a question: Should they join or sit this one out? The prolife activists were different from the activists of the 1960s. Few of them had ever been involved in demonstrations before. They had never marched against racism or the war, and some of them might have even been on the other side. In any case, all they seemed to care about now was abortion. It didn't look like there were many college students in the anti-abortion demonstrations (though there were plenty of Catholic high schools kids, who'd been given the day off to come), and most of the older demonstrators didn't sound like college graduates. They were the Catholics they had left behind when they went off to college at the start of '60s. Their accents, their interests, their outlooks—nothing had changed since then. Even their Catholicism seemed to have come from an earlier era; it had a Tridentine quality. But why should that matter? It was enough that they were right on the abortion issue.

Somehow, though, it did matter. It didn't matter but it did matter. Cognitive dissonance can produce frustration, and in this case the frustration led to some angry ruminations: "Where were these people in the 1960s when

we needed them? What were they doing when the U.S. was napalming villages in Vietnam? They were home watching *Hogan's Heroes*. Now they've found a cause they care about, a single issue, and they expect us to join them because we're Catholics. Well, the Church should care about a lot of things—poverty, racism, exploitation, nuclear armaments, world hunger. Why just abortion?”

While these still-young liberal Catholics were wrestling with their consciences over whether to get involved in the anti-abortion campaign, the American bishops were speaking out. They started blandly enough in 1968, expressing the hope that society would “always be on the side of life.” In the years that followed they kept increasing the volume. In 1969 they worried about the “widespread effort to ‘liberalize’ the present laws that generally prohibit abortion,” warning—prophetically, we now know—that the killing of the unborn eventually “endanger[s] the lives of persons who are senile, incurably ill, or unable fully to exercises their faculties.” By 1970 the bishops’ statements were becoming categorical: “The life of the unborn child is a human life. The destruction of any human life is not a private matter, but the concern of every responsible citizen.” In 1973, after the Supreme Court sought to end all argument (the *New York Times* announced that *Roe v. Wade* “settled” the question), the bishops stated “as emphatically as possible, our endorsement of and support for a constitutional amendment that will protect the life of the unborn,” and in 1974 no fewer than four Cardinals testified before the Senate Judiciary committee in support of an amendment. In 1975, in their most ambitious pro-life undertaking, the bishops published a “Pastoral Plan for Pro-life Activities,” an elaborate document setting forth a strategy of education, pastoral help for women who had had abortions, and “a public policy effort” aimed at curbing them.

The bishops’ most conspicuous muscle-flexing came during the 1976 presidential campaign, when they found themselves anxiously courted by both presidential candidates. President Ford announced his support for a constitutional amendment protecting life. During the Democratic primaries in Iowa, a state with a large right-to-life movement, Jimmy Carter emphasized his personal opposition to abortion; but once he got the nomination he reassured the prochoicers in his own party that he would not support a constitutional amendment, and so said the Democratic platform. This was painful to the bishops, who by conviction were Democrats. The basic thrust of the Democratic platform—emphasizing workers’ rights, extension of government aid to the needy, government-subsidized health care, restraint in military spending, reliance on multilateral diplomacy—reflected Catholic thought, yet here was the Democrats’ refusal to endorse the major prolife goal, a constitutional

amendment to reverse *Roe*. As one liberal writer smugly put it, “the bishops agreed with the Republican party on abortion, and with the Democratic party on virtually everything else.” If they could only get the Carter campaign right on abortion, they could wish both candidates well and vote Democrat with a clear conscience.

The prospects looked good. Carter was now trying to “clarify” his position. He insisted that he wasn’t against *all* attempts to amend the Constitution to protect the unborn; it was only the *current* proposals that he found unacceptable. Indeed, he added, the wording of the abortion plank (written by his own campaign staff) “was not in accordance with my own desires.” Backchannel communications between the bishops and the Carter campaign produced plans for a face-to-face meeting between Carter and the bishops. Soon the meeting took place, with the bishops’ executive committee sitting silently as Carter made his pitch. He once again shared his view that abortion was immoral; all he disagreed on was the question of strategy. He recited all the areas that they did agree upon, from health care to minimum wage laws. Surely, Carter reasoned, those areas also affected human life, and the Democrats had a much better record on them than did the Republicans.

It didn’t work. At that time one of the most influential figures in the National Council of Catholic Bishops was Archbishop Joseph Bernardin. The Bernardin of 1976 developed a very powerful case for abolishing abortion. Appearing before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee in March of that year, he went out of his way to refute the argument (later advanced by Mario Cuomo) that opposition to abortion is a purely “religious” position which Catholics must not try to impose on non-Catholics. Abortion, Bernardin said, “is not wrong simply because the Catholic Church or any church says it is wrong. Abortion is wrong in and of itself. The obligation to safeguard human life arises not from religious or sectarian doctrine, but from universal moral imperatives concerning human dignity, the right to life, and the responsibility of government to protect basic human rights.”

With the election fast approaching, Bernardin kept up the fire. Some weeks before Carter met with the Bishops’ executive committee, he issued a statement anticipating Carter’s argument that the Democrats’ other positions were in accord with Church doctrine, aimed as they were at countering the threats to life from hunger, disease, drug and alcohol abuse, and other ills. Bernardin agreed that human life is threatened in a number of ways in our society. Abortion, however, stands out because it is “a direct assault on the lives of those who are least able to defend themselves. . . . [I]f we become insensitive to the violation of the basic right to life, our sensitivity to the entire spectrum of human rights will ultimately be eroded.” After the meeting

Bernardin repeated those views, reminding his listeners that the bishops had expressed strong disagreement—“indeed outrage”—with the Democrats’ abortion plank. “We . . . repeat today, with all the moral force we can muster, the need for a constitutional amendment to protect the life of the unborn.”

This was the high-water mark of the bishops’ campaign against abortion. Their power was not quite enough to stop the Democrats from putting the abortion plank in their platform, yet the plank’s reference to abortion was hardly an endorsement. It merely suggested that it was “undesirable” to attempt to overturn the Supreme Court’s decision “in this area,” and Carter’s own gloss on it suggested the possibility of some other means of curbing abortion. Even so, the bishops were not appeased; they remained firm in their opposition—“indeed, outrage,” as Bernardin put it.

The critical year was 1980. In two different places in their 1980 platform, the Democrats, forthrightly and affirmatively, endorsed a license to abortion. Under “Reproductive Rights,” they proclaimed that “a woman has a right to choose whether and when to have a child” and announced their firm support for (not merely their feeling “that it is undesirable to overturn”) *Roe v. Wade*. And, under “Privacy,” the platform called abortion “a fundamental human right,” and insisted that any funding for “reproductive” services must not exclude funding for abortion. This time neither Carter nor any other party leader had even bothered to meet with the bishops, much less attempt to appease them. The Democratic Party was now the abortion party and, in case the bishops had any objection, there was an implied response: stuff it.

The bishops were literally dumbstruck. There was no expression of “outrage” from them, though it would have been far more appropriate now than when Carter was dancing around the issue in 1976. Abortion was thrust right in the bishops’ faces and they said nothing—not that year, not for the next three years. And when they finally did speak, abortion was no longer their main topic. We’ll get back to that shortly. For now we have to ask: What could have occurred between 1976 and 1980 to cause the Democrats, who had been waffling on the issue, to become so firmly and confidently on the side of abortion? Here we have to make our way partly by speculation, though there are clues along the way. One event, or series of events, was a widespread campaign of vilification by pro-abortion feminists. The late 1970s marked the high season of American feminism; triumphalism was in the air, and so were displays of rage at any who dared stand in their way. A torrent of abuse was therefore unleashed against the Catholic clergy: What right did these celibate males have to talk about women’s reproductive rights? What did they know about bearing children? What did they even know about sex? Get your rosaries off my ovaries! Mixed with these taunts was what appeared to

be a resurrection of the old Know-nothing charge that the Vatican was trying to “meddle” in American politics—only this time it was not coming from Republicans but from people associated with the left, people who usually voted Democrat. And that was what really hurt. It was coming from people who had marched with them in the '60s, mourned with them when Nixon beat McGovern, cheered with them when Nixon was forced from office. It was coming from their friends.

The Democratic Party has always been a coalition, and, at least since the time of the New Deal, it has consisted of four major groupings: African-Americans, Southern whites, liberal intellectuals, and Catholics. Each was in it for different reasons: blacks joined it in the 1930s not for civil rights (the Democrats had a miserable record there) but for economic assistance; Southern whites were in it partly for the same reason, though they also counted on the national party not to interfere with state racial segregation. Liberal intellectuals had grander ideas: they wrote treatises envisioning a better future for America and they believed that the Democratic Party could be the vehicle for realizing it. The Catholics were more or less contented with the political power they had built up over the years and wanted to make sure their gains were protected from Know-Nothing backlash.

Of the four components, two were conservative, the Southerners and the Catholics; but conservative in different ways. The Southerners were conservative on race, which translated into political conservatism. The Catholics were conservative culturally, for they were loyal to a Church which resisted many of the cultural fashions of the twentieth century, from sexy Hollywood movies to eugenics, birth control, forced sterilization of the mentally impaired, and abortion. In effect, Catholicism functioned as the Democratic Party's immune system, fighting off certain cultural trends they deemed toxic but which attracted many of the party's secular liberals.

What happened between November of 1976 and August of 1980 was the breakdown of the Democratic Party's immune system. It was subverted from within, by liberal Catholics, who could not put aside the friendships they had formed in the 1960s. They started the process after their friends burst out with crude, nasty polemics against the Church for standing in the way of “reproductive rights.” Instead of asking whether there might be something wrong with their friends they began asking whether there was something wrong with their Church. Was it too dogmatic, too uncompromising? Was there too much focus on abortion, to the exclusion of other issues where the Democratic party—*their* party—was more clearly in line with Catholic social doctrine? As the young Catholics of the '60s approached middle age at

the close of the '70s they were still mulling over these questions when the thunderclap came. The thunderclap was Ronald Reagan.

No Republican leader annoyed Catholic liberals as much as Ronald Reagan. An ex-B movie actor, an ex-New Deal Democrat, he deserted his party for the Republicans and turned on many Hollywood leftists during the Communist investigations of the 1950s. In their minds, his geniality was phony, his economic philosophy heartless, his anti-Communism mindless and profoundly dangerous to world peace. Now he had—whether through genuine conviction or political opportunism, most likely a mixture of both—assembled his own coalition of conservative Catholics and Southern evangelical Protestants, and added them to the traditional fiscal conservatives already in the Republican party. The Catholic liberals were appalled. Reagan was raiding both their church and their party, pulling right-to-life Catholics, who traditionally voted Democrat, into the Republican fold. He was getting them to join the party of the rich, the party that had looked down its nose at Catholic immigrants and tried to Protestantize their children. Worse, he was getting Catholics into bed with white Southern evangelicals, who only a few years earlier had been calling the Church “the Whore of Babylon.” And what did these Southerners think about blacks? Their private “Bible” schools, which they set up in the wake of school desegregation in the South, seemed suspicious. They said they established them because public schools had eliminated God and Judeo-Christian morality, but the Carter administration was investigating them, suspicious that they might make end-runs around desegregation. Indignant, these former Democrats also moved into the Republican fold. Liberal Catholics, convinced that these Southerners were indeed racists, were appalled that Reagan was marrying them up with the anti-abortion Catholics, bringing both into the new Republican coalition.

In caring for and feeding the coalition, Reagan’s team made radical changes in the Republicans’ abortion plank. In place of its namby-pamby 1976 plank (devoted almost entirely to explaining how complex the issue was, how even Republicans differed on it, and how important “public dialogue” was), the 1980 plank put the complexity part into a dependent clause—“despite the complex nature of its various issues”—and then forthrightly declared that abortion “is ultimately concerned with equality of rights under the law.” Now, at last, the two parties made their positions starkly clear: For the Democrats, abortion was “a fundamental human right”; for the new Republican Party, unborn children deserved protection under civil rights law.

Logically, we might expect liberal Catholics to applaud the Republicans’ new position and urge their party to re-write its own plank along similar lines. After all, they agreed with their Church that abortion was evil because

it killed human beings. But logic can become strangely inverted during times of social conflict. In *Wayward Puritans*, the sociologist Kai Erikson, borrowing an insight from Emile Durkheim, notes that social “deviance” can actually be used to reinforce the community’s boundaries.

The deviant is a person whose activities have moved outside the margins of the group, and when the community calls him to account for that vagrancy it is making a statement about the nature and placement of its boundaries. It is declaring how much variability and diversity can be tolerated within the group before it begins to lose its distinctive shape, its unique identity.

In themselves, the boundaries can be quite fuzzy at times. Anne Hutchinson’s “antinomian” doctrines differed only in degree from orthodox Puritanism; the same was true of the doctrines of the Quakers. But by fastening upon certain specific differences, in manner or dress, the community boundary-police is able to draw everyone in line by saying, in effect, “You don’t want to be like *them*, do you?”

Erikson’s thesis can be applied to a variety of communities today, and even to smaller groups. Among inner-city black teens, those who show too much interest in school may be accused of “acting white.” Everyone gets the message and avoids such deviant behavior. In this way the cohesion of the group is actually reinforced by the deviant. Orthodoxy thus consists not so much of affirmation of a philosophy or way of life but in *not* being like people the community scorns. This may explain why Catholic liberals in the Democratic Party uncomplainingly accepted the party’s pro-abortion plank. To have protested would have been “acting Republican” or “sounding like Reagan.” It also helps to explain why the bishops, who made such a fuss over the mild 1976 plank (which merely opposed a pro-life constitutional amendment) shut their mouths for three years in the face of a much greater provocation in 1980.

Anyone who thinks that the bishops operate independently, handing down decrees and getting those below to obey, has it almost exactly backwards. The bishops’ pronouncements well up from currents of thought circulating among people below them, in some cases from those far below them. Not from the pews, though. From Catholic seminaries, from Catholic journals and theological associations, from philosophy and theology departments in Catholic universities, and, most immediately, from the staffers who serve the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The overwhelming majority of those occupying these seats of influence are Democrats, and some are Democratic activists. For them, any move toward condemning the Democrats’ position on abortion only helps the Republicans, and helping

the Republicans only helps to inaugurate or perpetuate social policies that are, in the final measure, un-Christian. Therefore, to single out the Democrats' abortion plank for condemnation is to side with the forces opposed to the Church's program of peace and justice. Objectively speaking, as the Marxists used to say, it is anti-Catholic.

That was the dialectic of liberal Catholics in the early 1980s, and it helps to explain the bishops' ambivalence toward the pro-life movement. Individual bishops and cardinals, like John O'Connor and Bernard Law, were stalwart in their support, but collectively there was a certain dismissiveness in the way the bishops regarded pro-life activists. James Robinson, the bishops' lobbying director, referred to them as "they," "the anti-abortion people," and expressed the hope that some day the U.S. might be able find an "accommodation" on abortion. Robinson and others representing the bishops were particularly estranged from Republicans in Congress who sponsored pro-life legislation. Robinson complained every time a representative offered an amendment, "they'd like everyone down here to drop what they're doing" and support it. Anyway, he added, most of the amendments "weren't going anywhere"—all the more likely because they weren't getting support from the bishops. Even leading pro-life Republicans in Congress like Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Henry Hyde from Illinois were often snubbed. Wilfred Caron, then serving as the bishops' general counsel, went the length of circulating a memo—later leaked to the press—attacking the Helms-Hyde "human life bill" as unconstitutional. The usually congenial Hyde angrily charged that Caron had put himself in the company of the National Abortion Rights Action League.

So we had silence, three years of silence, from the bishops after the Democrats had made abortion "a fundamental human right." When the bishops finally did speak, it was in a different key. In 1983 they issued *The Challenge of Peace*, an extraordinarily long-winded letter endorsing a nuclear freeze, mutual disarmament, a comprehensive test ban treaty, and "maximum political engagement with governments of potential adversaries." It sounded like the work of an especially pious staff member of the Democratic National Committee, and in fact its proposals meshed perfectly with what congressional Democrats were proposing that year and what the Mondale presidential campaign would offer in 1984. Only near the end of the book-length document was anything said about abortion, a plea to "all those who would work to end the scourge of war to begin by defending life at its most defenseless, the life of the unborn." So abortion was to be folded into the larger theme of "reverence for life."

The chairman of the Bishop's Committee on War and Peace, which drafted *The Challenge of Peace*, was Archbishop (later Cardinal) Joseph Bernardin. For those dismayed by what appeared to be the bishops' retreat from the campaign against abortion, Bernardin had an answer. In two separate addresses, one at Fordham University in December of 1983 and the second at St. Louis University in March of 1984, Bernardin spelled out his now-famous "seamless garment" doctrine. By all means, he said, let us defend the right to life of unborn children; but we must be equally in support of the "quality of life" of other defenseless people: "the old and the young, the hungry and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker." "Quality of life" translates into specific positions on "tax policy, employment generation, welfare policy, nutrition and feeding programs, and health care." We can't just oppose abortion "and then argue that compassion and significant public programs on behalf of the needy undermine the moral fiber of the society or are beyond the power or scope of government responsibility." To be sure, he said in his St. Louis speech, we do not "equate" the direct taking of life through abortion with assaults on human dignity (though in his Fordham speech he had said that Catholics must be "equally visible" in fighting both), but we argue for "a continuum of life which must be sustained in the face of diverse and distinct threats." A consistent ethic of life, then, means that Catholics can take a variety of routes in the protection of life. "No one is called to do everything, but each of us can do something."

It was hard to believe that this was the same Bernardin who in 1976 had refused to fall for Jimmy Carter's trick of listing all the "quality of life" programs that the Democrats supported. At that time, Bernardin's reply was forthright: the right to life is the most fundamental, because once you abandon it, "the entire spectrum of human rights will ultimately be eroded." But now that the Democrats had quite brazenly abandoned it, Bernardin was saying that Catholics can diffuse their energies into a wide variety of causes, from peace demonstrations to sheltering illegal immigrants. "Each of us can do something."

Whatever Bernardin's intentions, the effect of these speeches was to encourage pro-abortion positions to use "the shopping cart defense" before Catholic audiences. Look at my whole shopping cart, they would say. Look at my votes against cutting welfare, standing up for the hungry and the homeless, and the undocumented immigrant. Look at my votes on tax policy, employment generation, welfare, nutrition and feeding programs, health care, the nuclear arms race. Then they point their finger at their opponent's shopping cart, noting that he had voted "wrong" on all these "quality of life" issues. Therefore, the pro-abortion politician triumphantly concludes, "if you're

looking for the most consistent right-to-lifer, here I am!” For twenty years, that has been the approach of Democratic politicians whose abortion positions came under fire. Cuomo, Ferarro, Mondale, and Kerry were especially fond of it. In 1998 the bishops finally remembered the reply to this ruse. In their 1998 pastoral letter they sharply reminded politicians that abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide, can never be justified no matter how many meritorious programs are thrown into the cart. Programs addressing racism, poverty, hunger, unemployment, and health care should indeed be pursued. *“But being ‘right’ in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life.* Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the ‘rightness’ of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community.” (Emphasis in the original.) Welcome words, no doubt, but a little late. Half of those calling themselves Catholic don’t go to church anymore (except for weddings and funerals) so they have few opportunities to hear the bishops, and even those who do are not likely to hear much by way of their pastors, who shy away from topics unsettling to their congregations. The anti-abortion fight has now really gone back to organizations unaffiliated with the National Council of Catholic Bishops—old ones, like National Right to Life and Nellie Gray’s annual March for Life, and some of the newer guerrilla groups like Priests for Life.

Plus one more organization: the Republican Party. First under Reagan, and now under George W. Bush, the Republican Party has become the pro-life party. It is currently divided over embryonic stem cells, but in the congressional voting a majority of Republicans stuck with President Bush in opposing the funding of it, while Democratic support was overwhelming. On other issues involving the taking of innocent human life, such as euthanasia and assisted suicide, the breakdown is the same. Of course there are “pro-choice” Republicans; their names are well known. And, if it were not for the developments that occurred between 1976 and 1981, they might be in the mainstream of the party leadership today. Arguably, the Republican Party was headed toward pro-choice in the early 1970s, the very time when Ted Kennedy and younger Democrats like Bill Clinton, Jesse Jackson, and Al Gore were all on the side of life. But the parties finally criss-crossed in 1980. The Democrats decided to join “the party of death,” as Ramesh Ponnuru calls it, not only because abortion had become fashionable with the party’s cultural elites—the Republicans had the same types in their party—but because the countervailing forces within their party had abandoned the fight. The Catholic Democrats left the battlefield because they hated the Reagan Republicans and refused to endorse anything in their platform, even the one

plank they knew was right. Loyalty to their new friends and their old party trumped their religious and moral convictions. The Democrats' immune system thus broke down, and that was no less a causal factor in the party's embrace of abortion than a more direct, active cause would have been. The analogy to an immunodeficiency disease like AIDS, is apt. AIDS never directly kills anyone. What it does is to open them to opportunistic infections which their immune systems would normally have countered.

In the meantime, the bacillus of abortion is everywhere in America, and there is no guarantee that it will not finally take hold of the Republican party. Pro-lifers have reason to be concerned about the desertion of key Republican leaders in the debate over embryonic stem cells. Also worrisome, particularly as the 2008 presidential race draws near, is the popularity among Republican voters of former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose position on abortion is identical to that of the Democrats. A Giuliani presidency would bring about a party realignment that could be fatal to the pro-life movement.

Nevertheless, there are grounds for hope, at least within the ranks of the Republicans. The Catholic-evangelical coalition of pro-life activists remains active, which is one important reason why Christine Todd Whitman was never talked of as a Republican presidential candidate, why Arlen Specter never had a chance of becoming Senate Majority leader, and why Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe will never become co-chairs of the Republican platform committee. They are in the Republican "big tent," but nearer the exit flaps than the center, which is why the title of Whitman's recent memoir, *It's My Party, Too*, has such a whining sound.

And the Democrats? There are still some pro-life Democratic politicians, but they pretty much keep their heads down. In Congress they usually vote the right way, but don't make speeches about it lest they run afoul of the party's boundary-police. Pro-lifers can only wish them well, all the while keeping their powder dry for the real battle, which, if it comes, will be within the Republican party.

Finally, what about the flagship of liberal Catholic Democrats, the class of 1960? The survivors are in their 60s and 70s now and try to make what sense they can of the tumultuous times they have gone through in the past four-and-a-half decades. The New Frontier ended abruptly in Dallas in 1963; the Great Society never arrived; the War on Poverty faded out even before 1976, the year that President Johnson predicted it would end in victory. Then came Jimmy Carter, with scores of legislative proposals that he could get through a Democratic Congress, followed by Ronald Reagan, who threw

everything into reverse. Clinton's presidency seemed more a holding action than anything, and his personal monkeyshines left an embarrassing smudge. And now, God help us, Bush. Bush, they know, got into office and was kept there by of a small sliver of votes, and a significant portion of those votes came from church-going Catholics who didn't like the Democrats' abortion plank. Well, dammit, *they* don't like it, either, but what can they do? They can't leave a party that pays homage to their dreams of peace and social justice. This abortion business was never even on the horizon when they first voted. Why did it have to come up, how did it get in there? Confusion, frustration, crankiness intrude into their recollections. Better to think about the past, when progress was the order of the day. Everything was so *clear* on that frosty day in front of the Capitol. A torch had been passed to a new generation—their generation—and didn't Kennedy say that he would not trade places with any other generation? The way was straight and they were starting on it. Yet somehow it got all twisted, all screwed up.

Anger and frustration can't last. At some point they give way to resignation, perhaps even to a kind of serenity. It could be that somewhere, right now, maybe in a pastor's study or a Catholic university's library, an elderly man or woman has pulled from the shelf a dusty blue-cloth edition of *The Phenomenon of Man* and has started reading again about the coming of the noogenesis, the movement of human consciousness into higher regions, with the Omega Point finally in sight. And now smiles, and reads more.

South Dakota:

Time to Challenge *Roe* or Bad Strategy?

John Burger

A little state made a big splash in the pro-life pool this year, and while many in the water were gleeful, some sitting on the side didn't like getting wet.

South Dakota's Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act, signed into law March 6, 2006, by Gov. Michael Rounds, is the kind of legislation many pro-lifers can only dream of seeing throughout the country. The law makes it a felony to perform an abortion at any time during pregnancy—even of children conceived in rape or incest. It exempts from prosecution aborting women, and physicians who, in attempting to “prevent the death” of a pregnant woman, unintentionally cause the death of her unborn child. The bill says abortion should be prohibited in order to protect the rights, interests, and health of the pregnant mother and the rights, interests, and life of the unborn child, as well as the mother's “fundamental natural intrinsic right to a relationship with her child.” The legislation says that the guarantee of due process of law under the Constitution of South Dakota “applies equally to born and unborn human beings and that under that constitution a pregnant mother and her unborn child each possess a natural and inalienable right to life.”

Supporters cheered the legislative milestone, coming two years after passage of a similar bill. The 2004 bill was vetoed by Gov. Rounds on grounds that it would not have preserved abortion restrictions already in place were the bill enjoined by the courts.

With this new legislation, wrote American Life League president Judie Brown, the state's lawmakers displayed “true grit”: She expressed the hope of many pro-lifers, including legislators who promoted the bill, that the law would eventually present a challenge to *Roe v. Wade* at the Supreme Court. She hoped that the Court would “use this bill, and its definition of a human being, as a vehicle to declare the personhood of pre-born children as beginning at fertilization.”

Others were wary, though, warning that even with the recent confirmation of two apparently pro-life jurists—Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito—the high court probably still had at least five judges who would vote to reaffirm *Roe*, and that even if President Bush had another chance to appoint a justice, nothing could be assured.

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Incrementalism

Many pro-lifers argued that it was better to keep working for incremental change, and that the courts and the American public would not yet accept a radical shift back to the days when abortion was illegal. Michael New, assistant professor of political science at the University of Alabama, has done research on how incremental laws have been effective in keeping down the number of abortions. He feels the “time and treasure” of the pro-life movement could be better spent on initiatives other than passing and defending a sweeping ban.

Political scientist Mark Stricherz, author of the forthcoming book *Why the Democrats are Blue*, said the South Dakota legislation would be an albatross for pro-life candidates, especially Republicans fighting to save their congressional seats in a year when a Democratic takeover in Congress is a real possibility. If the Republicans lose the Senate, Bush would have a much harder time getting a pro-life Supreme Court justice confirmed.

Less than 20 percent of Americans support a restriction against abortion in cases of rape and incest, Stricherz pointed out in a column in the *National Catholic Register* in March. A right-to-life U.S. congressman, he said, would face a tougher time winning reelection if he had to get behind a law like South Dakota’s.

In an interview in July, Stricherz said it would be better to wait until there is one more pro-life jurist on the Court before initiating a challenge to *Roe*. If *Roe* is struck down, pro-lifers could then start passing tough anti-abortion laws in the states, including protections for babies conceived in rape or incest.

New thinks pro-lifers should work for a supermajority, like six or seven pro-lifers on the high court, not simply one more. “I think there are some people on the Court who fundamentally have a lot of problems with *Roe* but don’t necessarily want to be that pivotal vote that overturns it,” he said. “I think Anthony Kennedy might even fall into that category. I think he probably does think it was poorly decided, but at the same time I don’t think he’s comfortable being that swing vote that flips the decision.”

Future court nominations

But a law like South Dakota’s will only hurt the chances of getting pro-life judges confirmed to the Supreme Court, Stricherz and others contend. *National Review*’s Ramesh Ponnuru predicted that the pro-abortion lobby “will be able to use the South Dakota law in order to say, ‘If you confirm this guy [a pro-life judicial nominee], it’s a vote to ban all abortions nationwide.’”

Not everyone agrees. State Sen. Brock Greenfield, who also is state director of South Dakota Right to Life, was opposed to the ban in 2004 but voted

for the new bill this year. “This time around I just felt we were in a better position” vis-à-vis a potential trip to the Supreme Court, he said. “We certainly don’t want to jeopardize the chance of the next Supreme Court nominee, if he or she is a strict constructionist. But, as it was put to the South Dakota Task Force to Study Abortion last year by [veteran pro-life leader] Dr. John Willke, ‘There *is* only one issue in determining the deliberations over who the next justices will be. It’s abortion.’”

The South Dakota Task Force to Study Abortion, a panel the legislature had set up last year, brought together expert testimony and scientific evidence that life begins at conception and that each human being is totally unique immediately at fertilization. “So I don’t know that any bill that passes in South Dakota or any other state necessarily is going to be a make-or-break issue for the next nominee,” Greenfield said in an interview. “If the next judicial nominee is a strict constructionist, that person is going to be raked over the coals, whether or not this bill passed or failed in South Dakota.” And Rep. Roger Hunt, the prime sponsor of the bill in the South Dakota House and a member of the task force, predicted that the law might even make it easier for Bush to nominate a pro-life judge because “we’ll see more representatives have to take a position.”

“We’ve upped the ante,” Hunt said. “It makes it more critical to have a pro-lifer on the court. When there’s a critical time in history, people will have to stand up and be counted.”

The law went into effect July 1, but opponents collected enough signatures to put it on the ballot in November. South Dakota allows a public vote on any bill passed, if significant controversy lingers. Greenfield said he and all pro-life groups in the state are behind “Referred Law 6,” as the ban is now known. “It’s so important to prevail at the polls,” he said.

Early surveys showed the issue at a “virtual dead heat,” he said. Results of a poll released July 31 showed that support had fallen to 39 percent, with 47 percent opposing the ban and 14 percent undecided. But supporters pointed to the results of the June 6 primaries to demonstrate South Dakotans’ support for the measure: Legislators who voted for the ban in the House and Senate fended off primary challengers, while four lawmakers who opposed the ban went down to defeat.

Limited rape exception

Ponnuru, however, said that insisting on banning abortion even for cases of rape and incest, which account for about 3 percent of abortions, significantly lowers public support. “I imagine that if there had been a rape and incest exception in the law, we’d be polling about 25 percent higher in South

Dakota,” he said. Thinking strategically, he asked, “do you go for something that has a 100 percent chance of stopping 97 percent of abortions, or try to get that extra 3 percent at the risk of reducing your likelihood of keeping the law on the books to about 30 percent to 40 percent?”

Stricherz insisted that if the pro-life movement worked within the parameters of public opinion, it could pass laws that would save most of the lives that are now being snuffed out legally. “About 90 percent of women abort not for the ‘hard’ reasons—health, rape, incest, and life of the mother—[but] for the ‘soft’ ones: economic, social, and family; the woman sees the unborn child as a threat to her education, job, or relationship,” Stricherz said. “Well, Americans oppose legal abortion for those ‘soft’ reasons. So why not try to ban abortion in cases that not only save the vast majority of women and unborn kids but is also supported by most of the public?”

Legislator Hunt, however, said there is a “limited” accommodation in the law for hard cases, though the words “rape and incest” do not appear in the bill. “If we use the word ‘rape,’ you might as well not have the bill. It will become a major reason to have an abortion.”

But Section 3 of the bill says that nothing in the ban “may be construed to prohibit the sale, use, prescription or administration of a contraceptive measure, drug or chemical, if it is administered prior to the time when a pregnancy could be determined through conventional medical testing and if the contraceptive measure is sold, used, prescribed or administered in accordance with manufacturer instructions.” Hunt said this allows women to “seek a contraceptive” within eight to nine days of a rape or act of incest. “In the first eight or nine days there is no conventional medical test to ascertain pregnancy,” he said.

In fact, American Life League quibbles with the law for that very reason. The legislation “protects all human life from implantation forward,” said the group’s vice president, James Sedlak. “It doesn’t do anything from fertilization to implantation.” But the wording prevents “wrongful allegations” of rape reported three or four months into pregnancy, Hunt said.

Outlook

If supporters prevail in November, a court challenge will probably follow. And if the case reaches the Supreme Court, it’s not just the text of the law that will come into play, predicted a hopeful Sedlak: Accompanying the case will be a well-documented argument laid out by the Task Force: that human life, worthy of all protections, begins at conception.

“What we’re really hoping for is that in addition to saying the law is okay, the court will also declare personhood for the child in the womb, saying it

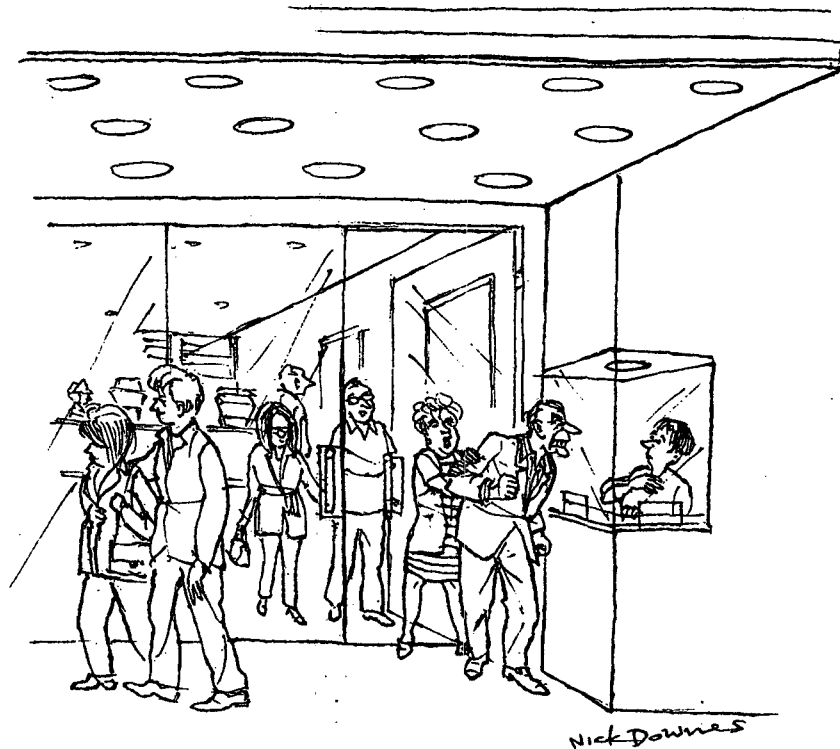
JOHN BURGER

can now be shown scientifically that a life begins at fertilization and that this is a new human life entitled to all the rights and protections of every other human life from fertilization,” Sedlak said. “And therefore, it would not only strike down *Roe v. Wade*, which would just return things to the states, [but] declare personhood for the pre-born baby and would simply outlaw direct abortion throughout the country.”

He believes there is more support for such a ban than other pro-lifers are willing to admit. The South Dakota bill, he said, has emboldened about a dozen states to pass strict abortion bans. Some of those who oppose the South Dakota ban on strategic grounds agreed that there is some value to it.

“It does have certain value in demonstrating that there’s a vibrant public resistance to *Roe*,” said Ponnuru. “We’re constantly told, ‘Oh, everybody’s basically made their peace with it; everybody’s fine with it.’”

South Dakota’s ban, if it does nothing else, reminds everyone that that’s not the case.



“George, please—it’s not his fault you found the ending contrived.”

The Content of Faith and the Pursuit of Truth

Patrick J. Mullaney

In his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, Pope John Paul II addressed mankind's perpetual quest to "to meet and engage the truth more and more deeply."¹ The desire for truth, he wrote, is a part of human nature, a property of human reason that continually asks the simple question of why things are the way they are.² While acknowledging the importance of reason, though, John Paul cautioned against a belief that it is the sole avenue to real knowledge:

The world and all that happens within it, including history and the fate of peoples, are realities to be observed, analyzed and assessed *with all the resources of reason but without faith ever being foreign to the process*. Faith intervenes not to abolish reason's autonomy nor to reduce its scope for action, but solely to bring the human being to understand that in these events, it is the God of Israel who acts . . . Here the words of the Book of Proverbs are pertinent: 'The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.' (16:9) That is to say that with the light of reason human beings can know which path to take, but they can follow that path to its end, quickly and unhindered, only if with a rightly tuned spirit they search for it within the horizon of faith. Therefore, reason and faith cannot be separated without diminishing the capacity of men and women to know themselves, the world and God in an appropriate way."³ [Italics added.]

The fullness of knowledge cannot be reached without an external element, the content of faith. And there is a consequence to pursuing truth without it. Various rationalist philosophical systems have, he wrote, "given rise to different forms of agnosticism and relativism. . . . A legitimate plurality of positions has yielded to an undifferentiated pluralism, based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid . . . On this understanding everything is reduced to opinion, and there is a sense of being adrift."⁴

John Paul went on to observe that humanity's propensity for philosophical inquiry has had an enormous effect on human history and culture. From its whole fields of knowledge, from anthropology to logic and the natural sciences,⁵ as well as "the postulates which inspired national and international legal systems in regulating the life of society,"⁶ have evolved.

This article will endeavor to apply John Paul II's thoughts to several topics concerning the truth about human life: How have the natural sciences pursued the *origin* of human life? Does evolutionary theory contain John Paul II's element of the content of faith and, if not, is the theory suspect on

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that basis? Further, if we may speculate that the content of faith is essential even in empirical science, must it also be present in the ethical realm, including the realm of our national law, both the Constitution and the democratic process, as they concern themselves with the *treatment* of human life?

These objectives, of course, require defining the term “content of faith.” In *Fides et Ratio*, n. 7, John Paul II stated that “God desires to make himself known; and the knowledge which the human being has of God perfects all that the human mind can know.”⁷ Thus the “knowledge of God,” essential to proper human knowledge, comes from God himself. More specifically, it comes from the “truth of revelation” and is an order of knowledge known by faith, which “impels reason continually to extend the scope of its knowledge until it senses that it has done all in its power, leaving no stone unturned.”⁸ According to John Paul, Christian revelation accepted in faith is the true lodestar for mankind as it makes its way along the path to any truth.⁹

We may now undertake to consider natural science and its teachings on how human life began. Put very simply, contemporary evolutionary theory professes that we are the product of what is known as an *algorithm*. An algorithm is a type of process, such as long division, which always yields the same results whenever it is carried out. Its most interesting aspect is that it is utterly simple (simple enough for “a dutiful idiot to perform,”¹⁰ to use the phrase of the prominent Darwinist Daniel Dennett), utterly mindless, an automatic progression based on blind chance. In evolutionary terms life is the result of one or several algorithms existing in nature that are known as Natural Selection. These allow organisms to accumulate beneficial mutations over time as their repeating result, a result that for no reason or purpose has “generated over billions of years . . . a single branching tree—the Tree of Life.”¹¹ Further, the current ultimate product of nature’s algorithm, humanity, is not to be understood as an *intended* consequence. The consequences of algorithms such as Natural Selection are of blind chance, not design.¹²

If a core point of evolution is, well, that things evolve, it follows that species in general, including mankind, are not eternal or immutable, but rather transitory realities randomly changing. It didn’t take long for the same point to infiltrate the world of ethics and religion. None other than Friedrich Nietzsche saw the teleological implications of Darwinism, proclaiming: God is dead.¹³ Centuries earlier, Thomas Hobbes had outlined the necessary consequences for ethics if life were random and not governed by external ideals or universal truths. In the beginning, according to Hobbes, it must have been that there was no morality whatsoever; man existed in “a formless state of nature” without a defined right or wrong. One day, the story goes, rather than fight or run, someone reacted to a conflict with another by reaching out

for help from a fellow man. By soliciting help in exchange for something in return, that man introduced a mutation into social history: cooperation with another for mutual benefit.¹⁴ A “social contract” was formed for survival, and the interests of another were taken into account—not as a moral imperative, but for one’s own benefit. Building upon that theme, society itself was conceived, civilizations ultimately formed, and mankind has remained organized to this day for only that purpose. Hobbes made clear that in this system, morality is a social construction and not an external mandate: Right and wrong are “Qualities that relate to men in Society not in Solitude.”¹⁵

From this oversimplified account of Darwin and Hobbes we can begin to see John Paul II’s point. If life is not the product of a purposeful designer—as the content of faith found in the Creation account of Genesis teaches—there really are no rules. Nobody made *us*—so nobody made *them*. Prevailing truths are changeable mental constructs; untethered pluralism is a necessity and all positions on moral matters are in fact equally valid. It is easy to see that “truth” would be imposed by the strongest and most vicious group. It is, of course, exactly this that John Paul II refers to when he speaks of agnostic and relativistic worldviews’ creation of a sense of “being adrift.”¹⁶

It is interesting in this context to consider the nature of the ongoing challenge to evolutionary theory known as intelligent design. In an article titled “Science & Design” in the October 1998 issue of *First Things*, William Dembski pointed out that evolution’s algorithmic progress is *cumulatively complex*; that is, the gradual development of higher life forms occurs through addition to or removal from the existing components of an existing and functioning organism. Because change occurs randomly, it also occurs comprehensively; for life to evolve, not only must change occur upon a functioning organism, but neither addition nor removal can cause its total loss of function. Over time organisms survive and accumulate favorable changes, explaining the greater complexity of higher forms of life over lower.

But Michael Behe, a biochemist at Lehigh University, in his book *Darwin’s Black Box* questioned the possibility of cumulative complexity. He argued that the cell, the template for evolutionary change, is not an object that can be made *more* complex because it is—by nature—*irreducibly complex*. An *irreducibly complex system* is one with numerous parts integrated in such a way that removal of even one causes the entire system to cease functioning.¹⁷ For evolution to occur through cumulative complexity, a cell would need to continue to function after the addition of a new part through Natural Selection. But, explains Behe, “an irreducibly complex system cannot be produced . . . by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part

is by definition non-functional.”¹⁸ Behe continues: “Since natural selection can only change systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to evolve as an integrated unit, in *one fell swoop*, for natural selection to have anything to work on.”¹⁹ [Emphasis added.]

If Behe is right, life is no longer the result of a plodding law of nature, without goals, which “has neither plan nor purpose [and] is wholly undirected.”²⁰ Rather, it is a remarkable phenomenon inexplicably organized into species, each existing in its current form without the immediate ability to change into another and each exhibiting incomprehensible complexity and specification. As evolution by “one fell swoop” is a far more complex occurrence than the simple algorithms of Natural Selection, it follows that it is much less likely to occur. In fact, as Dembski suggests, one-fell-swoop mutations are so unlikely that it is within the current competence of statistical probability methods to infer a cause to biochemical life: an intelligent design.²¹

Dembski and Behe are scientists; neither has so far argued that empirical evidence demonstrates God as the designer. Still, it is interesting to note that science may be beginning to uncover through negative implication exactly what John Paul II said must be present in any pursuit of truth: reason plus the content of faith. Life must be from an intelligent Creator, as Genesis teaches, because it *couldn't* be from anything else.

By the same line of reasoning, the ethical norms of Hobbes (and many others) are called into question. If in fact physical life has been designed, maybe other aspects of human life are also the consequence of such design. As Dembski points out, constraints accompany design. Psychosocial constraints may be present in us, transgressions of which will result in detriment to society.²² Current evidence of the harm to society from violations of previously undisputed moral imperatives can be interpreted as proof of what has been from Aristotle onward the authority imposing these imperatives: the natural law.²³

Keeping in mind these inferences both to a designer of life and to the constraints limiting the proper exercise of the free will, we can now turn to how we treat life in the United States. As a first observation, Americans deal with life in varying ways depending upon the particular issue presented. For example, abortion has been for many years the subject of constitutional adjudication by the Supreme Court; in contrast, embryonic-stem-cell research and therapeutic cloning have been the subjects of the democratic process, with legislation being enacted to both allow and fund each. Still other questions—such as

the disposition of supernumerary in vitro embryos, and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and manipulation—have not been addressed by any legal authority, but left to individual or even commercial considerations.

Each of these methods of adjudication has its own particular characteristics. The abortion question has evolved according to the mandates of applicable constitutional philosophies. The non-prevailing philosophy, generally referred to as “conservative,” considers the issue within a sharply defined horizon: What was the intent of the Framers in enacting the life and liberty rights contained in the Fourteenth Amendment’s Due Process Clause?²⁴ Did they intend abortion as an implied liberty, or pre-natal life as an enumerated right, or neither? The point is that the conservative jurist by his own constraints pursues the standard for respecting the lives of an entire class of humanity solely within the confines of existing law, making the law a complete reading of reality on the subject. The conservative conclusion that the Framers did not envision any pre-natal life right voids the Constitution of any obligation to this class of persons.²⁵ That conclusion, a “coordination of observed facts,” is classic positivism.²⁶

The “liberal” or “activist” jurist engages in a different methodology. Any obligation to recognize or protect pre-natal life is left to the individual making the abortion decision. The resulting “freedom to choose” becomes, first, a license to adopt and impose an individual’s own moral code and, second, also a voiding of any constitutional obligation to life. The law’s deferral to the individual here represents the existentialist ideal; the individual’s right to be wholly free of external mandates is paramount, even when life itself is at stake.²⁷

Democratic resolution of life issues resembles the liberal constitutional philosophy. By putting a particular issue—e.g., the funding of embryonic-stem-cell research—to a vote, the political community manifests its freedom from any universal moral constraints; life need not be protected simply because it is life. Rather, we are free to affirm the legitimacy of a choice any vote may offer against life. We are equally free to enact such a choice into law.

The same existential ideal supports leaving life issues—like disposition of in vitro embryos—unregulated, to be resolved by the individual.

As no external standard directs any one of these methods, we can observe a belief by their advocates in the systematic omniscience of each, a “pride” that that method has the competence and authority to resolve—often adversely—the fate of human life. Much as nature’s undesigned evolutionary algorithms bring human life into being, Americans claim the undirected freedom to reduce to irrelevancy the value of that life. Hobbes’s vision of right and wrong as social constructs is fully realized in America.

America’s approach to life thus varies considerably from that of John

Paul II. In his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul wrote that from the *rightness* of respecting all human life—from conception to natural death and known to all by “the light of reason and the hidden action of faith”—there is also known to all the *natural right* to life.²⁸ That right, being prior to political institutions and individual judgment, cannot be “questioned or denied” by subjecting it to a vote, by constitutional theory, or by personal belief.²⁹ Attempts to do so recast the entire structure of human relations, violating the “inviolable dignity of the person” by subjecting the defenseless human person “to the will of the stronger part”³⁰ and having as their consequence the breakdown of a genuinely human coexistence leading, ultimately, to a disintegration of society itself.³¹

There can be no more blatant clash than that between *Evangelium Vitae* and Hobbesian America. Rather than making the individual an abstraction and subordinate to other concerns, John Paul II’s standard of respect for the dignity of the human person not only entitles the person to a right to life, it places the person at the center of a proper ethical point of reference. Not a social construct, this standard is a constraint—a law—designed into and known to us through our nature, as we use our reason in a manner that is guided by faith.³²

Evangelium Vitae thus defines the content of faith that *Fides et Ratio* asks us to apply to our pursuit of the truth about human life. We must simply and always respect the intrinsic dignity of the person, placing it above competing concerns and defining our freedoms, both political and individual, within the scope of its demands.³³ America is fundamentally at odds with John Paul II—in its constitutional position finding virtue in a freedom to abort the unborn child, in the use of its democratic freedom to conduct research on human embryos, and in the freedom we grant the individual to determine the fate of unborn life, from genetic manipulation to disposition of in vitro embryos. John Paul II believed the entire universe has been designed, from life’s origins to the proper exercise of the human free will. He, therefore, questioned any freedom without design; he insisted that when we exercise our freedom, we use what he referred to as our *sapiential dimension*. He pointed out how mankind’s historical pursuits have accumulated in us an enormous technological power over nature, and warned of the danger of that power: “This sapiential dimension is all the more necessary today, because the immense expansion of humanity’s technical capability demands a renewed and sharpened sense of ultimate values. If this technology is not ordered to something greater than a merely utilitarian end, then it could soon prove inhuman and even become a potential destroyer of the human race.”³⁴

John Paul II was right to be concerned. Princeton biology professor Lee

Silver, in his 1997 book *Remaking Eden*,³⁵ foresaw a future in which genetic engineering—combined with reproductive cloning—produces two intended classes of human beings, the Naturals and the GenRich. The latter, being engineered, will possess all the favorable human attributes: superior intelligence, health, strength, etc. The Naturals will be like the rest of us. Over time the GenRich will properly come to dominate the Naturals. Silver writes: “All aspects of the economy, media, the entertainment industry, and the knowledge industry are controlled by members of the GenRich class. GenRich parents can afford to send their children to private schools rich in resources required for them to take advantage of their enhanced genetic potential. In contrast, Naturals work as low-paid service providers or as laborers, and their children go to public schools. . . . Now, Natural children are only taught the basic skills they need to perform the kinds of tasks they’ll encounter in the jobs available to members of their class.”

Dr. Silver, without apology and in the name of one of America’s foremost academies, advocates an ethic not of equality based upon the intrinsic worth of all men, but one in which attributes are designed into some individuals for the very purpose of granting them power over others.

We can see how John Paul II’s call to faithfulness is also a call for Americans to be true to their founding principles. Dr. Silver’s ethic stands in stark contrast to that on which our nation was based: “We hold these *truths* to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” In Dr. Silver’s world these words are historical curiosities, the quaint remnants of a bygone era. In John Paul II’s, they are the monument defining the boundaries of America’s law and individual judgment, securing life and liberty by imposing upon all a respect for the dignity of the human person, a respect grounded in the use of reason guided by the content of faith. Our Founders thought like John Paul II.³⁶ We can only hope our future leaders will as well.

NOTES

1. *Fides et Ratio*, n.1.
2. *Fides et Ratio*, n.3.
3. *Fides et Ratio*, n.5.
4. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 5.
5. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 5.
6. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 3.
7. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 5.
8. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 14.
9. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 15.
10. Daniel Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, at 51

PATRICK J. MULLANEY

(Touchstone Press, 1995).

11. *Ibid.* at 51.
12. *Ibid.* at 51.
13. Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom* (1882).
14. Dennett, *supra*, at 459.
15. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, at 115; see also, Molesworth, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, III, at 113.
16. *Fides et Ratio*, n.5
17. Dembski, "Science and Design," *First Things*, Oct. 1998, at 25.
18. *Ibid.* at 25.
19. *Ibid.* at 25.
20. *Ibid.* at 25.
21. *Ibid.* at 26.
22. *Ibid.* at 26.
23. *Ibid.* at 27.
24. See Bork, "Constitutional Persons: An Exchange on Abortion," *First Things*, Jan. 2003. Certain conservative justices also take *stare decisis* into account, bringing them closer to the liberal philosophy on abortion. See Meehan, "Lessons from the Alito Hearings," *Human Life Review*, Winter 2006.
25. Mullaney, "John Paul II and America's Laws on Life," *Human Life Review*, Summer 2005.
26. Comte, *The Course of Positive Philosophy*, I, at 5 (2d Ed., Paris, 1864).
27. Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, at 17 (English, Marite, at 201); see also Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. IX, at 354 (Doubleday, 1974).
28. *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 2.
29. Mullaney, *supra*, Footnote 25.
30. *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 20.
31. *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 20.
32. *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 2.
33. *Fides et Ratio* does not specifically state that respect for the dignity of the person is essential to the truth of human life. However, John Paul II's pontificate was grounded on exactly that standard. See A. Laun, *John Paul II: Pope of Life and Pope of Responsible Procreation*, Proceedings of the Sixth Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life, at 398 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001). And certainly *Evangelium Vitae* is the intellectual product of the method of thought advocated in *Fides et Ratio*. Further, the "truth of revelation" that John Paul II writes is the lodestar of any pursuit of truth may be the passage, "whatever you do to the least of my brethren, you did it to me." In the case of *State of New Jersey v. Alex Loce*, Mother Teresa used that passage in a typewritten request to the Supreme Court of New Jersey, asking that they review the case on appeal. The *Loce* case presented the issue of whether unborn life is entitled to constitutional protection. Mother Teresa wrote to the Justices:

To make it easier for us to love and protect one another, Jesus made us this promise . . . "Whatever you do to the least of my brethren, you did it to me . . . When you receive a little child in my name . . . you received me." Today, the least and most unprotected of our brethren, is the little unborn child. We have all been created by the same loving hand of God. It is your responsibility to protect the rights of all of God's children that come before you, regardless if they can speak for themselves or not. As you are making your decision to hear this case, I beg you to protect the rights of God's poorest of the poor, please do not turn your back and reject the rights of the little unborn child. I beg of you to do what Jesus would do in this situation."
34. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 81
35. Silver, *Remaking Eden: Cloning and Beyond in a Brave New World*, Avon Books, New York, N.Y. (1997).
36. The same natural-rights ethic is present at the second critical point in American history, the Reconstruction. The Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment also protects life and liberty as *natural rights* and imposes upon the Constitution the *obligation* to guarantee them. See Congressman John Bingham, Cong. Globe, 35th Cong., 2d Sess. 982 (1859); see also Mullaney, "Unborn Life's Protection: Exactly What Does Constitute Us?" *Human Life Review*, Summer 2004.

Dylan Must Die

Stephen Vincent

Why?

That is the question any compassionate reader has after reading the lengthy *Denver Post* account of the death by dehydration of 4-year-old Dylan Walborn, who was born with multiple disabilities. Dylan died at home, 24 days after his feeding tube was removed, in the arms of his mother, while his father looked on, with the previous approval of doctors and nurses, and the full consent of the law.

Why?

Dylan, who suffered a stroke in his mother's womb, was not a healthy child by any definition. He could not walk, talk or perform voluntary movements; he needed tube feeding and suffered seizures. Doctors said he would not live a year, yet his strength surprised them all. His first years were happy enough though severely challenging for his parents, Kerri Bruning and Dave Walborn, who never married. Though they'd been engaged briefly after their son's birth, the *Post* writer explains, "their short romance dissolved in the difficulty of caring for a severely disabled child and they called it off." Still, they arranged their lives and jobs to have apartments near one another and share the care of Dylan, who lived with his mother.

According to the *Denver Post*, when the seizures became more frequent, his parents began thinking about what was best for Dylan. Would he really want to live? A deadly thought, as it turned out.

Modern Macbeths

The article, by the paper's staff writer Kevin Simpson, begins with Dave Walborn holding Dylan, "all 32 pounds of him," and saying, "Dylan, it's OK if you want to go. I don't want you to hang on for me." The child gives no discernible response, yet Walborn finally joins the boy's mother in deciding that "Maybe it was time to let go." Of course, for Walborn to "let go" in the scene the *Post* writer describes, would mean to drop Dylan to the floor. But what Dylan's parents did over the following days, after the gastrointestinal tube was removed to cut off nutrition, was more than to drop their son. They watched him starve over the course of more than three weeks, growing bone thin, limp, lifeless and finally too weak to breathe. At one point, they even fretted that they were giving him too much water, and cut

Stephen Vincent writes from Wallingford, Connecticut.

back on the few ounces he was receiving to keep him comfortable and help digest the pain killers. So much for Dylan wanting “to go.”

At sometime during the 24-day ordeal, why didn't the nurse who made daily visits to monitor his “progress,” the relatives who stopped by to take pictures and offer “going away” presents, or the doctors who received reports of his decline, take time to observe that perhaps Dylan was stronger than they'd thought. Maybe he wanted *to stay*. Bruning's mother, “Grandma Vicki,” was a churchgoer who was praying for a miracle of healing, and even suggested that Dylan's resilience was a sign from God. But in the article she never confronts her daughter on the issue, and seems to accept that she knows best. The article's author writes that Dylan's parents saw the boy's persistence only as a sign that “Dylan will leave them when he's ready.”

Indeed, Kerri Bruning sets a high standard for God's intervention that even the widow of Naim, whose son was raised by the command of Jesus, would not have demanded. “Unless he opens his eyes and says to me, ‘I'm going to eat. I'm going to develop,’ then I'm not going to consider this an act of God,” she said firmly.

Yet let me be careful. It would be easy to paint Dylan's mother as a Rocky Mountain Lady Macbeth, who would “have pluck'd my nipple from [my babe's] boneless gums/And dash'd the brains out . . .” Dylan's father may play a somewhat less introspective Macbeth, with his doubts about the enterprise overcome by his girlfriend's insistence and a final “fatal vision.” Their characters, with allowances for modern twists of mind, may indeed fit the roles, and they may be subject to the most severe moral censure. Yet if Dylan's parents are moral monsters, they had a lot of help from the finer medical minds of our time, as well as the imprimatur, so to speak, of a part-time Christian minister, who prayed with them for God's guidance. If they had heard the words “wait” or “what?” or “why?” from an authoritative source, they may have been shaken to their senses and thought twice about their decision.

In Shakespeare's play, after Macbeth wields the knife and kills King Duncan, there is a pounding at the castle door that wakes him from his trance—BOOM! BOOM!—the sound of conscience, culture, the law of God and of man straining with all the might of right to enter the horrid scene. *The King is Dead!* Yet when Dylan dies—24 days after his tube was surgically removed under the auspices of the Denver Children's Hospital—there is silence. Conscience is convenience, the culture is death, the law is approving and God has been assigned a part-time pastor's role. I can imagine Dylan's mother with that “damned spot” upon her hands, seeking to wash it clean and suffering all the more because no one will tell her what she

did was wrong. She will see Dylan's face, at waking or at sleep, and will know in her own mother's heart that she crossed a moral border, broke a taboo more deeply rooted than the murder of a king—*she killed her own child*—because she would not give her mother's milk, the most basic care of food and drink. She is able to live with the guilt, at least by daylight, because she receives smoothing smiles of support instead of censure for her deed. It would be wrong to call her a victim, but she is definitely a casualty of our culture of death, one of the walking wounded whose worst tendencies toward self-interest and justification were validated when they should have been restrained from the start.

There is one small but telling scene in the *Post* article that is the equivalent of the knocking at the door. Kerri asks her mom, who visited regularly in the days after the tube's removal, if she supported her decision. Her mother says, "I guess . . . I just don't understand." The door was opened a little for Dylan's mom to rethink, but she refuses to turn back. She goes forward with a harder heart, no doubt, more resolved against this small resistance that Dylan must die.

Touching moments

But again, let me be careful. We only know of Dylan's parents what we read in the Denver *Post*. The reporter evidently was present during much of Dylan's 24-day ordeal (which raises questions about what kind of parents would invite a writer to view and report on these events), but we don't know their inner thoughts or private conversations. We have a journalistic treatment, perhaps accurate, perhaps not, certainly not the entire story. To read between the lines may be dangerous because a reporter gets to pick and choose his facts, to place events and quotes where they will have the greatest effect to make his own point, and to set the story in the direction he desires.

Although the article is largely sympathetic to Dylan's parents and the idea of euthanasia in general, it is possible to conclude that Dylan's parents were not acting in his best interest. Dave and Kerri, the article reports, were dating other people; they were moving on with their lives after their brief engagement years before. As Kerri says in the article, "We weren't meant to be together, but Dylan was meant to be with both of us." How could they ever go their separate ways, marry another and have their own families, with Dylan needing 24-hour care?

Perhaps that wasn't the motivation for removing the tube. Maybe they truly were concerned about Dylan's well-being, as they claimed, and the possibility that his more frequent seizures were causing him constant, inexpressible pain, that they could only judge by the tears that flowed from his large eyes.

Who is to say that anyone, even of pro-life conviction, could not come to the same conclusion after four long years of constant home care? And before we condemn Dylan's parents, let us consider, as Kerri said of Dave, "There are men who run out on women with normal children, let alone one with 24-hour needs." Dave arranged his life around his child.

The *Post* article gives a very moving description of Kerri giving her son a massage after a bath, a daily routine she performs with palpable warmth and love. She talks to him and for him, strokes him gently, kisses and caresses him. This mother is obviously not a monster. Yet she continues this routine after the feeding tube is removed and she notices his wasting flesh and protruding bones. One wonders how these physical facts register in her mind.

At another point in the article, she says, "His whole life has been a puppet show—it's what we wanted it to be." This, perhaps, is the explanation. She does not see Dylan outside of what she wants him to be. How could she, since he has never expressed a thought or a preference? If she thinks that she would be better off with him "in heaven," would she not naturally think that it would be his preference as well?

The reader may wonder, Why not give Dylan to an adopting couple? The answer may be the same one many women heading for abortion give sidewalk counselors who offer adoption services. "This is my child," they say. "I don't want anyone else to have it."

"Substituted judgment"

Who would be the sidewalk counselors for Dave and Kerri, to wield a STOP sign? Not the medical profession that has abandoned DO NO HARM as its first principle. Not the "ethics committee" at Denver Children's Hospital, which Dylan's parents needed to consult before the feeding tube could be legally removed. Certainly not a judge or lawmaker. Colorado's "best interest" version of its "substituted judgment" law had set up the equivalent of the Roman *pater familias*, with a modern utilitarian twist. Not only sickly and unwanted babies can be cast aside. Anyone of any age—from boys like Dylan to bothersome grandparents—could be starved to death if they could not speak and eat for themselves.

In the case of Terri Schiavo, who died a dehydration death in Florida a few months before Dylan's tube was removed, Michael Schiavo needed to show that Terri had expressed during her life some desire not to be kept alive in her condition. A legal case had to be made, a judge had to decide and a public record was developed that eventually activated the Congress and the President in Terri's behalf. Terri, of course, also had her heroic family fighting for her life against her estranged husband's wish to have her put to

death. Interesting to note, also, is that the *Post* article never claims that Dylan was in a “persistent vegetative state,” the term that was a death knell for Terri. A veteran pediatric nurse, the article states, described Dylan as “one of the most severely brain-damaged kids she has seen in 26 years.” Yet the only medical assessment offered in the article is “severe cerebral palsy.” Dylan apparently could see, respond to stimuli and voices, and even attended preschool one day a week, where the healthy students accepted and assisted him.

Throughout the Schiavo ordeal, many legal and medical experts expressed surprise over the public nature of the case. Thousands of patients in Terri’s condition, they assured us, are removed from life support and feeding tubes each year with little fanfare, with approval of relatives and medical staff. In Dylan’s case, we see how accurate these experts were. Few knew about Dylan until the *Denver Post* published the lengthy account last December, about a month after he died. The article itself gives some insight into the frequency of death by dehydration: Dylan’s case was one of about five that the Denver Children’s Hospital consults on each year for the removal of feeding tubes. A national expert is quoted as saying, “It’s absolutely not an unusual case.”

Other voices

Since Dylan, in his short life, could not speak for himself, it is right that others say something in his behalf. Unfortunately, his parents, though they loved him in their own way, chose wrong for him.

Valerie Brew-Parrish, who is disabled after a childhood bout with polio, writes with passion and insight about the treatment of persons with disabilities. She told this writer, “Do any adjectives exist in our vocabulary that can adequately describe my fury, outrage, horror, disgust and overwhelming grief at the loss of this innocent child? Reading this account [in the *Post*] of this deliberate murder by starvation was equivalent to entering the Twilight Zone. . . . Yes, Dylan had significant disabilities. He also had inalienable rights. Dylan supposedly was born into an enlightened society that protects those children that need protecting. Dylan’s life should have been celebrated. He should have been loved, not discarded because he was not deemed perfect.”

Dr. William J. Burke, professor in neurology at St. Louis University Health Sciences Center, said that eight states besides Colorado have “best interest” laws that allow guardians to render their own judgment about removing feeding tubes for incompetent patients. He called such laws “a major new step in the euthanasia movement. You can be killed by dehydration even if you never indicated you wanted to die in this way. In the previous cases like Cruzan or Schiavo, someone had to provide evidence that you said you wanted

life to be ended in this way if you got into a certain medical condition.”

He added, “Something I am continually amazed about is the fact that most people do not realize how painful it is to be dehydrated to death. Hasn’t anyone ever been thirsty or hungry? The starvation/dehydration procedure is really torturing a person to death.”

Dylan’s story is ultimately a story of love that was misplaced or lacking. Dylan’s grandfather, who came to visit in the last days, said it best to the *Post* reporter: “He taught me that love is special, because I found it with a very special boy, a boy with special needs.”

Yet love that turns too easily to sentiment or self-interest was not enough to save Dylan. What is needed is law. There are other Dylans, severely disabled children, teens and adults who have no one to express their “best interest.” The words of Pope John Paul II, delivered to a medical symposium in March 2004, a bit more than a year before his own death, serve as a sound guide for the legislation that is needed.

I should like particularly to underline how the administration of water and food, even when provided by artificial means, always represents a *natural means* of preserving life, not a *medical act*. Its use, furthermore, should be considered, in principle, *ordinary* and *proportionate*, and as such morally obligatory, insofar as and until it is seen to have attained its proper finality, which in the present case consists in providing nourishment to the patient and alleviation of his suffering.

Law can be a clumsy “cure” when it comes to the intricate and intimate issues surrounding medicine and death, as was seen in the Schiavo case. At the end of the long court battle, polls showed that Americans did not favor the efforts to save Terri’s life, perhaps thinking—not without reason—that they would not want the Supreme Court, the President and Congress to get involved when they fall ill. But legislation for end-of-life issues is needed if the medical profession will not follow its basic tenet of DO NO HARM. It is needed so that we need not ask of the thousands of patients whose lives depend on receiving food through a tube, the question that haunts the case of Dylan Walborn: Why?

Literature for the Pro-Choice

Edward Short

“History,” Hugh Trevor-Roper told his students in his valedictory to the Oxford History School in 1980, “is not merely what happened; it is what happened in the context of what might have happened.”¹ Trevor-Roper was not a particularly good historian—he made a terrible ass of himself when he insisted on the authenticity of those obviously forged Hitler diaries—but he was right about the importance of might-have-beens. To ignore such lively possibilities is to subscribe to historical determinism. For years Marxist historians claimed that the impact of the individual on events was negligible because impersonal trends, not people, drove history. It has only been fairly recently that historians have begun repudiating that immense fallacy. Might-have-beens are crucial to this task because historians can only measure an individual's impact by asking what history might have looked like without this or that individual. The case of Churchill vividly illustrates this. If Lord Halifax instead of Churchill had become prime minister in June 1940, after France had fallen and the invasion of England seemed imminent, it is questionable whether Halifax would have pushed for total victory to rid the world of Nazism. His fondness for appeasement throughout the 1930s suggests that he would have done a deal. He would have spared his compatriots Churchill's blood, toil, tears, and sweat; and Nazism might have triumphed indefinitely. What might have been, had there been no Churchill, is rather horrifying.²

One of the might-have-beens that has always intrigued me is what English literature might look like if the different societies for which it was written had agreed with the pro-choice view that abortion is not only defensible but actually humane. The first thing that strikes one in considering this possibility is that it would almost certainly have resulted in fewer authors. How many of those that were unwanted or simply unplanned would have survived is, of course, impossible to say. But a world favorable to abortion would probably not have been favorable to the survival of Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, the Brontes, Dickens, Thackeray, Kipling, or Saki—to name just a few English authors.

It requires some suspension of disbelief to imagine the parents of, say, Swift reasoning that the most humane alternative to an inconvenient birth might be abortion. The Anglo-Irish were a peculiar people—they drank a

Edward Short is at work on a book about John Henry Newman and his contemporaries.

lot, gambled a lot, built houses they could never afford to finish, and loved suing each other—but they were never known to care a pin for the sort of theoretical thinking that would later lead to the French Revolution, which, in turn, produced the moral relativism that animates the pro-choice position. Still, we are speaking of contra-factual history and if, somehow, pro-choice views had obtained in 18th-century Dublin, Swift might never have seen the light of day.

As it was, Swift claimed that he had been born in his father's house at Number 7 Hoey's Court, a smart residence before it succumbed, like so many of Dublin's Georgian houses, to disrepair. But in her recent biography Victoria Glendinning asserts that "Such a house could not have belonged to Swift's impecunious father, [who was] clinging on to a less than glorious legal career . . ." ³ The house probably belonged to Swift's uncle, Godwin, a prosperous businessman, who took young Jonathan in after his father's death. Swift's father died in his twenties after siring five daughters and six sons. About Swift's mother Abigail, we know little other than that she took no part in her youngest son's upbringing. The one time she returned to Dublin to visit her grownup son she stayed in a boarding house where she told the landlady that she had come to town "to receive the addresses of a lover and under that character received her son. . ." ⁴ Mother and son clearly shared the same droll sense of humor. In all events, if Georgian Dublin had subscribed to the tenets of Planned Parenthood it is questionable whether that awkward tryst would ever have taken place. And without Swift we should never have had "A Modest Proposal" (1729), which provides one of the greatest of all critiques of the pro-choice mentality by satirizing the arrogance and the ruthlessness of those who treat human life as though it were nothing more than a matter of expedience.

The peculiar solicitude that advocates of so-called reproductive rights show women—their contention, for example, that aborting babies somehow redounds to the dignity of women—is of a piece with the philanthropy of Swift's projector who, deploring the number of poor Irish mothers, "followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for alms" observes that "whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve well of the public." ⁵ The solution he proposes has nothing if not a certain elegant finality. "A young healthy child well nursed is at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasee, or a ragout." ⁶ The solution to the problem is cannibalism, the benefits of which Swift's projector sets out with studied

reasonableness. It will decrease the number of papists (as much a nuisance for the Protestant Anglo-Irish as unwanted black children were for Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood); provide poor tenants with money to pay their rent; enhance the national cuisine; free parents of the burden of supporting costly children; give the owners of taverns something new to offer their customers; and improve relations between husbands and wives.

If readers adopted his proposal, Swift's projector insists, "Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sows when they are ready to farrow, nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of miscarriage."⁷ Addressing parents, the projector suggests further uses for their children: "Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies and summer boots for fine gentlemen."⁸ If there is any difference between that reasoning and the reasoning that says that aborted fetuses can serve the interests of scientific research by furnishing the means for life-enhancing stem-cell research, I don't see it.

If we try to imagine an English literature informed by the pro-choice view, what do we see? We would not see the attention that the literature we actually have pays to children, especially to children fighting for their lives against cruel and uncaring adults. We would not see David Copperfield, Pip, Jane Eyre, or Heathcliff. Dickens would never have written *Oliver Twist* (1838) because his pro-choice audience would never have stood for Oliver's mother dying so that Oliver might live. After all, if one writes in a culture convinced that bad odds in life should be obviated through abortion, one will not expend much energy trying to understand the struggles of unwanted or unloved or inconvenient children. In such a society, responsible abortion would already have relieved the world of these struggles. So the great comic tradition in the English novel, beginning with Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) would not have materialized. Nor, for that matter, would the children of Saki or the motherless Bertie Wooster. Or that most wretched of all wretched children, Punch, the exiled hero of Kipling's great story, "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" (1892). The critic V. S. Pritchett once remarked that "Saki did not suffer as Kipling suffered, but we hear of an aunt whom his sister described as a woman of 'ungovernable temper, of fierce likes and dislikes, imperious, a moral coward, possessing no brains worth speaking of and a primitive disposition.'"⁹ In a pro-choice world keen on keeping the unhappy unborn, no one would have to suffer the barbarism of aunts.

We would never have seen the great heroines of Henry James, not only

the sordidly abused Maisie Farange in *What Maisie Knew* (1897) but Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1882) and Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902)—all heroines who reminded James of something George Eliot had once said: “In these frail vessels is borne onward through the ages the treasure of human affection.”¹⁰ In a world built on pro-choice assumptions the survival of these vessels would have been dubious. The pro-choice mind abominates frailty. Indeed, it is convinced that the difficulties that make for frailty should not so much be overcome as simply removed. Yet James, like Yeats, was fascinated by difficulty. He deliberately immersed his heroines in its trammels. “To see deep difficulty braved is at any time, for the really addicted artist, to feel almost even as a pang the beautiful incentive, and to feel it verily in such sort as to wish the danger intensified. The difficulty most worth tackling can only be for him, in these conditions, the greatest the case permits of.”¹¹ So Isabel Archer should not only be given a precarious start in life but a labyrinthine bad marriage. Why? Because only such difficulties would allow us to see “a certain young lady affronting her destiny”¹²—and forming her moral sense, which becomes part and parcel of her eventual strength. James concentrates the action in his heroine’s consciousness so that the reader can see the formation of that sense in all its richness. The dignity that this conception of fiction accords the difficult is a dignity that the mean economies of the pro-choice simply cannot afford. In fine, in Isabel Archer, we have a pro-life heroine *par excellence*, who could scarcely have emerged from a culture favorable to abortion.

It does not take much to imagine how ill-advised, imprudent, and indeed irresponsible the pro-choice mind would regard the birth of Samuel Johnson. His parents were both elderly—his father, Michael, was 52 and his mother, Sarah, was 40. In these two unhappy people the advocates of “reproductive rights” would doubtless see a wretched pair doomed to give birth to wretched children and they would be right. Johnson’s only brother Nathaniel, whom he described as a “lively, noisy man,” was a failed book-binder who died young and miserable—possibly by his own hand.¹³ Johnson himself was a wretched child and an even more wretched adult. As he later recorded in a fragment of autobiography, “I was born almost dead, and could not cry for some time.”¹⁴ Later, he would tell Boswell that his had been a “life radically wretched.” Nonetheless, at his birth there was a male midwife named George Hector who looked down at the grotesque pock-marked child, held him up before the exhausted mother and cried: “Here is a brave boy.”¹⁵ Had anyone suggested to Hector that Sarah and Michael should not have brought this sickly child into the world, he would have been

scorned as not only wicked but cowardly.

The cowardice of the pro-choice position has not been inconsequential. C. S. Lewis once pointed out that “courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point.”¹⁶ Johnson, echoing Aristotle, put the matter even more categorically: “Sir, you know courage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues; because, unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other.”¹⁷ No one who grasps this ABC truth can be surprised by the disrepute into which the very concept of virtue has fallen since our high court legalized abortion.

Walter Jackson Bate, the best of Johnson's biographers after Boswell, observed that:

the reason why Johnson has always fascinated so many people of different kinds is not simply that he is so vividly picturesque and quotable . . . The deeper secret of his hypnotic attraction . . . lies in the immense reassurance he gives to human nature, which needs—and quickly begins to value—every friend it can get. To begin with, there is the moving parable of his own life . . . As in the archetypal stories in folklore, we have a hero who starts out with everything against him, including painful liabilities of personal temperament—a turbulent imagination, acute anxiety, aggressive pride, extreme impatience, radical self-division and self-conflict. He is compelled to wage long and desperate struggles, at two crucial times of his life, against what he feared was the onset of insanity. Yet step by step, often in the hardest possible way he wins through to the triumph of honesty to experience that all of us prize in our hearts . . .¹⁸

This shows why, for Johnson, “the only end of writing is to enable readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it.”¹⁹ The uses of difficulty were not lost on him.

With no Johnson, we would have no “Life of Richard Savage” (1744), surely one of Johnson's finest works, which he later included in *The Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81). When Johnson met Savage he commiserated with the proud, down-at-heels poet and saw in him a type of frustrated talent. Savage claimed to be the illegitimate son of the fourth Earl Rivers and Lady Macclesfield—a claim which was later discredited, though Savage had grounds for believing it to be true. In any case, Savage was no saint—he was a spendthrift, drank recklessly, and even killed a man in self-defense outside a Charing Cross coffee-house by running him through with his sword—but he nonetheless confirmed Johnson's conviction that “there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful.” In trying to sum up his unfortunate friend's life, Johnson indulged in a fair amount of special pleading, writing in one memorable passage:

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars,

among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had not money enough to support even the expenses of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk or in the winter with his associates in poverty among the ashes of a glass-house . . . On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house among thieves and beggars, was to be found the author of *The Wanderer*, the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senates, and whose delicacy might have polished courts.²⁰

This was warmly partial. But for Johnson the partiality of compassion was a moral obligation. As he said in his conclusion, “Those are no proper judges of his conduct, who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty; nor will any wise man presume to say, ‘Had I been in Savage’s condition, I should have lived or written better than Savage.’”²¹ Here was a might-have-been with a useful moral: We are none of us entitled to make pharisaical comparisons.

However, for pro-choice readers, the whole question of Savage’s life would be moot because for them it would be a life that need never have been lived in the first place. After all, to their way of thinking, one of the great benefits of abortion is that it spares the world of drunkards and wastrels, murderers and orphans. For Johnson, such a view would have been simply flagitious. Indeed, so ready was he to show compassion to others that he even attributed compassion to Savage, whose selfishness was notorious. If we replace “Savage” here with “Johnson” we can get a good sense of the fellow-feeling that Johnson prized above all else—fellow-feeling that the pro-choice advocate must condemn as wrong-headed and inexpedient.

Compassion was indeed the distinguishing quality of Savage. He never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakness, to attack the defenseless, or to press upon the falling; whoever was distressed was certain at least of his good wishes; and when he could give no assistance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavored to soothe them by sympathy and tenderness.²²

Another 18th-century writer who might have written quite differently if he had grown up in a society convinced of the benefits of abortion was Thomas Gray. What would have been Gray’s thoughts if while strolling through that country churchyard he had thought not of the obscure country dead but of the obscure country aborted? Would the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) contain lines like these?

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

Some village—Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

What would have been the point? The mute inglorious Miltons, village-Hampdens, and Cromwells guiltless of their country's blood would not have been in that country churchyard because they would never have been born. Apropos Gray himself, it is worth noting that he was the fifth of 12 children and the only one to survive infancy. He nearly died from a fit but his mother, a milliner, had the presence of mind to grab a pair of scissors and slit open one of his veins, which saved him. It is not easy imagining this indomitable woman adopting the pro-choice position.

Roe v. Wade argues that the fetus is not entitled to even the most rudimentary protection of the law because it is a legal nullity. Pro-choice advocates claim that this reasoning is so persuasive that only religious fanatics can contend otherwise. Well, James Joyce was no religious fanatic. He was much too proud to be bound by religion. Still, in *Ulysses* (1922) he has Stephen Dedalus observe of a slow-witted schoolboy: "Ugly and futile: lean neck and tangled hair and a stain of ink, a snail's head. Yet someone had loved him, borne him in her arms and in her heart. But for her the race of the world would have trampled him under foot, a squashed boneless snail. She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own. Was that then real? The only true thing in life? . . . *Amor matris*: subjective and objective genitive . . ."23

Would Joyce have clung to this most basic of realities if he had grown up in a society that regarded the fetus as a disposable parasite? Probably not. The most fastidious of romantic apostates would have had nothing to cling to. As it was, the training he received from the Jesuits might not have convinced him of the indispensability of the sacraments but it helped him recognize the primacy of love in a world all too ready to squash the weak and defenseless.

The pro-choice reader might counter that the pro-choice position is not concerned with the weak and defenseless but with the unwanted. Why should any woman be forced to bring a child into the world that she is not ready to rear? Why not simply terminate a pregnancy that might otherwise issue in an unwanted child? So many unwanted children grow up to be criminals and drug addicts: Why consign them to such a fate? Here we might cite one of Yeats's late verses, "Among School Children" (1925) in which he asks:

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape

EDWARD SHORT

As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?²⁴

The difference between what Yeats is asking here and what the pro-choice advocate asks when he asks why we should not be at liberty to do away with unwanted children is that Yeats asks his question of a society that did not imagine that abortion was an option. It is a given that the youthful mother in these lines would have her child. That is what makes the question compelling. Given that women do endure the pangs and uncertainties of labor and motherhood for the love of a child, what would they say if they could see their children “with sixty or more winters” on their heads? Yeats asks his question to prompt his readers to consider the nature of love. He is not asking the question to suggest that mothers should think twice before bringing children into the world who will only grow old and die. If his audience had been in the habit of simply ending troublesome pregnancies, there would be no point in Yeats’s question. He could hardly expect them to recognize the sacrificial core of love if they were intent on treating the child in the womb as unreal. In rejecting that child, the pro-choice mind rejects the sanctity of life and we need not look far to see what appalling child abuse, abuse of the old, and abuse of the sick has ensued.

Recently a speaker at a pro-life dinner predicted that the days of *Roe v. Wade* were numbered. Since 1973, we have become a nation of infanticides—we have connived at 40 million abortions, leaving us with 40 million might-have-beens—and our collective guilt has become insupportable. We must repeal *Roe v. Wade* to begin trying to expiate that guilt. This reminded me of the scene in the final act of *Macbeth* when a Doctor of Physic is called to Dunsinane to attend to the sleepwalking Lady Macbeth. How nicely it captures our own insomniacal guilt.

Enter Lady Macbeth, with a taper.

Gentleman: Lo you! Here she comes. This is her very guise; and, upon my life,
fast asleep.

Doctor: How came she by that light?

Gentleman: Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; ‘tis her command.

Doctor: You see, her eyes are open.

Gentleman: Ay, but their sense are shut.

Doctor: What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentleman: It is an accustom’d action with her, to seem thus washing her hands . . .

Lady M.: Yet here’s a spot.

Doctor: Hark! She speaks. I will set down what comes from her . . .

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

- Lady M.: Out damned spot! Out I say! . . . What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? . . .
- Doctor: Go to, go to: you have known what you should not.
- Gentleman: She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.
- Lady M.: Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh! . . .
- Doctor: This disease is beyond my practice . . .
- Lady M.: Wash your hands, put on your night-gown; look not so pale.—I tell you
Banquo's buried: he cannot come out on's grave.
- Doctor: Even so?
- Lady M. To bed, to bed: there's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone . . .
- Doctor: Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.—
God, God forgive us all!²⁵

In Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, before Raskolnikov murders his landlady, he resolves that he will not succumb to what he calls the "disease" of guilt. "So far as he was concerned," Dostoyevsky writes, "there could be no question of his suffering from the symptoms of this disease . . . there was consequently no danger of reason or will-power being in any way affected during the carrying out of his plan, simply because what he intended to do was 'not a crime.'"²⁶ No one could have subscribed more confidently to Raskolnikov's dismissive contempt for the very notion of crime than Lady Macbeth, and yet her guilt becomes every bit as harrowing as his. Macbeth himself is rather different. He fully acknowledges the living hell to which his murders banish him and when he pleads for some cessation of his guilty torment there can be no question as to the reality of crime.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?²⁷

The Doctor responds that "the patient must minister to himself." What should we do with our own "rooted sorrow"? Like Lady Macbeth, we have light continually by us: the light of reason and the light of faith. We have the light of conscience. We also have the light of literature, which, thank God, is not pro-choice but resoundingly pro-life. We must use this light to acknowledge

EDWARD SHORT

the “unnatural deeds” that have bred “unnatural troubles” in our “sickly weal” and continue to denounce the murder of the innocent.

NOTES

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5. *Satires and Personal Writings of Jonathan Swift* (Oxford, nd.), p. 21.
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23. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (The Bodley Head, London, 1992), p. 33.
24. William Butler Yeats, *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (Macmillan, London, 1956), pp. 213-14.
25. *Macbeth*, Act V, Sc. 1, 18-72.
26. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. David Magarshack (Penguin, 1951), p. 90.
27. *Macbeth*, Act 5, Sc. 3, 40-5.

RU-486: A Bitter Pill

Laura Echevarria

On September 28, 2000, I appeared on the PBS program *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* to discuss the Clinton-era FDA's approval of the abortion drug RU-486. I was debating the then-president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Gloria Feldt, who called the approval “a giant step forward for women, a quantum leap in reproductive health technology and an option that American women have wanted for many years.”

I have no doubt she'd say the same thing today. But my own warning on that program has been borne out by events. I said that “the chance of a woman dying as a result of taking RU-486 still exists,” despite the FDA protocols that Feldt was confident would protect women; and since then, at least five American women have died following RU-486 abortions.

A deadly and dangerous drug

These are not mere statistics; they were flesh-and-blood young women. There was Orianne Shevin, a 34-year-old attorney and mother of two young children from Sherman Oaks, Calif., who died in June 2005. There was Hoa Thuy Tran, a 21-year-old mother of one who died in 2003; Holly Patterson, the California teen who died in September of that same year; and Chanelle Bryant of Pasadena, California who died in December 2004. These women all died of deadly bacterial infections following RU-486 abortions. Then there was Brenda Vise of Chattanooga, Tenn., who died in September 2001 of an undetected tubal pregnancy that ruptured. (RU-486 has no impact on ectopic pregnancies and is contraindicated in such instances.) Investigations of two recently reported deaths concluded that one of the deaths was unrelated to the abortion method. The other death is still under investigation.¹

Severe side effects and near-deaths connected with this abortion method may be underreported. It is mandatory for drug manufacturers to report deaths or side effects associated with a drug—but for doctors, such reporting is only on a voluntary basis. Yet even the voluntary reports submitted so far are shocking. In the February 2006 issue of *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*, Doctors Margaret Gary and Donna Harrison reported their findings about over 600 “adverse event reports,” or AERs, received by the FDA between

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September 2000 and September 2004 concerning the RU-486 abortion method.²

According to Gary and Harrison, the most common complications were hemorrhage, infection, and ruptured ectopic pregnancy. Other complications included heart attack, pulmonary embolism, pancreatitis, and allergic reactions. Several patients had continuing pregnancies because the abortion drug combination “failed” to cause an abortion.

What is known in shorthand as “RU-486” is actually a two-drug abortion technique: The first drug is RU-486 itself, known generically as mifepristone, and the second is a prostaglandin, known by the generic name misoprostol. RU-486 only “works” in a confirmed pregnancy and is only approved for use by the FDA in pregnancies up to 49 days or seven weeks.

RU-486 acts by blocking progesterone; as a result of this blockage the woman's body fails to recognize that she is pregnant, and in turn causes the death of her unborn child by cutting off the critical supply of nutrients needed by the developing baby. According to FDA protocols, the second drug—the prostaglandin misoprostol—is supposed to be given to the woman orally. Its action is to cause uterine contractions that expel the now-dead baby.

Significantly, in each of the four known cases involving deadly infections, the women were given the misoprostol, the second drug, to take vaginally and at home. There is suspicion that deviating from the FDA-approved guidelines for RU-486 may make a woman susceptible to an infection that can be lethal. But doctors sometimes use FDA-approved drugs for uses other than those for which they were originally intended, and change the dosage levels or the way a drug is administered. For example, alternate protocols, developed by the abortion industry and promoted by the National Abortion Federation, include changing the dosages of the drugs involved in the RU-486 abortion method.

In addition, in the September 2005 issue of the *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*, Ralph Miech—a retired Brown University professor of molecular pharmacology, physiology, and biotechnology—wrote that there is reason to believe that RU-486 itself may suppress a woman's immune system, leaving her body without its normal defenses. Prior to the four deaths from infection, deadly infections from the type of bacteria responsible, *Clostridium sordellii*, were considered rare.³

In addition to blocking progesterone, RU-486 also acts as an antiglucocorticoid. Glucocorticoids are a class of hormones that are produced in the adrenal system and include cortisol. When these hormones are produced properly and at the right levels, they work to maintain body temperature, regulate our metabolisms and reinforce the immune system.

Renate Klein, a biologist and co-author of the book *RU-486 Misconceptions, Myths and Morals*, is an associate professor in women's studies at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. She and several other pro-abortion feminists were early critics of RU-486. In December 2005, Klein addressed the immunosuppressive characteristics of RU-486 in an opinion piece: "The Canadian woman's death in 2001 [during the Canadian trials for RU-486] was explained by pointing to the antigluocorticoid effect of RU-486. This weakens a woman's immune system, making it impossible for her to fight bacteria, and leads to septic shock and rapid death."⁴

Because deviations from the FDA-approved protocols may have contributed to the four deaths from infection, Planned Parenthood Federation of America announced on March 17, 2006 that it would begin following the FDA protocol of orally administering the second drug and would no longer give the option of vaginal insertion. Danco, the U.S. distributor of the drug, insists that there is "no causal relationship" between the deaths and the use of the RU-486 abortion method. But the evidence strongly suggests that RU-486 itself has properties that can make use of the drug dangerous.

Of the American women who died, most suffered the lethal bacterial infections with symptoms ranging from nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain to dizziness, weakness, and falling blood pressure. Why were these symptoms overlooked? Because the symptoms *exactly* mimic the side-effects of the normal RU-486 abortion method. And it gets worse. In July 2005, Danco warned in a "Dear Health Care Provider" letter that pelvic examinations may not pick up on infections that may occur following the use of RU-486. This letter was issued following the death of Orianne Shevin in 2005.

A politicized approval process

Did the FDA committee that recommended approval know that such tragedies were possible? Yes. During the FDA approval hearings held during the Clinton administration, I sat and listened to the safety concerns expressed by experts and activists regarding the safety of the RU-486 abortion method. The approval committee heard one physician testify about a woman who almost died when she lost over half of her blood volume. (This happened during the U.S. drug trials of RU-486.) Despite these concerns, six of the eight members of the FDA's Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee voted in favor of recommending approval and two abstained.

Considering that RU-486 is neither a life-saving medicine for cancer nor a drug designed to alleviate the severe or debilitating symptoms of a disease, it is not unreasonable to ask *why* the Clinton FDA thought it was

acceptable to put young, healthy women at even a minimal risk of death.

Judicial Watch, the conservative watchdog group, spent five years trying to obtain documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) pertaining to the approval of the drug. In April 2006, researchers released a report of their findings as well as copies of documents obtained from the Clinton Library. Included in these documents were several letters and memos showing exchanges between President Clinton and Edouard Sakiz, the chairman of the Roussel Uclaf drug company, as well as memos between Donna Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, President Clinton, and FDA Commissioner Dr. David Kessler.

In his May 16, 1994 letter to Mr. Sakiz, President Clinton expressed his hope that plans to introduce RU-486 into the United States would come to “fruition”:

In January 1993, I asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services to promote the testing and licensing of mifepristone (RU-486) and other antiprogestins in the United States.

I understand that since at least that time, your company has been in negotiations with The Population Council, Inc., a nonprofit organization with whom you have had dealings on mifepristone since early in the last decade. Those discussions, I understand, have been directed toward the purpose on which I charged the Secretary. I am grateful for the effort those negotiations represent.

In order to permit the appropriate testing, development, and distribution of your product, I urge, at the conclusion of your negotiations, that you bring your plans to fruition . . .⁵

In a November 15, 1993 confidential memo to the White House, Donna Shalala suggested that in order to make RU-486 available to the United States some diplomatic pressure might be needed to persuade Roussel Uclaf and its German parent company, Hoechst. She wrote, “The French and German governments might be displeased to learn that their companies are not accommodating a request made by the United States Government.”⁶

After continued pressure from the Clinton administration, President Clinton himself received a letter in May 1994 from Mr. E. G. Afting, the president and CEO of Roussel Uclaf. Afting wrote, “I am now pleased to inform you that we have decided to contribute mifepristone (RU-486) for abortifacient purposes (and other gynecological uses) to the people of the United States of America, completely free of charge, by voluntarily assigning our relevant patent rights to the U.S. Government. This is an unconditional gift, we ask for nothing in return.” These rights were then handed over to the Population Council.⁷

According to the Shalala memos obtained by Judicial Watch, Roussel Uclaf and Hoechst strongly resisted introducing the abortion drug into the

United States because of worries over “damages it might incur by permitting RU-486 to be marketed in the United States. Dr. Sakiz was worried about product liability actions against Roussel Uclaf if a woman had an incomplete abortion and delivered a deformed fetus.”⁸ Dr. Sakiz wanted legislation passed guaranteeing protection for his company from such lawsuits, but the Clinton administration hesitated to provide such immunity. There had been only one precedent for such immunity—the 1976 Swine Flu Act. This legislation held the federal government responsible for the vaccine administered during the Swine Flu epidemic because, as one congressman said at the time:

We have asked the drug companies to produce this vaccine. We have told them how to do it. We have told them the dosage we want, what strength. We gave them the specifications because we are the only buyers, the Government of the United States. This is not the usual process of going out and selling. But if someone is hurt, we think people ought to have a remedy.⁹

Congressional action

In May 2006, the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources held a hearing titled “RU-486—Demonstrating a Low Standard for Women's Health?” A memo addressed to members of the subcommittee included extensive background on the approval of the drug as well as the deaths associated with it. In response to Committee Chairman Mark Souder's (R-IN) request, the acting commissioner of the FDA, Andrew von Eschenback, M.D., reported that there have been eight deaths worldwide, “nine life-threatening incidents, 232 hospitalizations, 116 blood transfusions, and 88 cases of infection.”¹⁰ According to the FDA, these incidents—which include the ones reported by Drs. Harrison and Gray—bring the total number of cases with adverse event reports as of March 31, 2006, to 950.¹¹

The memo from Congressman Souder to subcommittee members notes that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) held a workshop on May 11, 2006, regarding the bacteria that caused the majority of deaths following the use of RU-486:

The infections are not accompanied by a fever, and symptoms match those that are expected after taking the RU-486 regimen. . . . Each of the women infected with *C. Sordellii* after RU-486 were dead within 5-7 days. . . . Workshop presenters noted that the rapid growth of *C. Sordellii* bacteria likely forecloses effective treatment; that there is no currently identifiable “window of opportunity” for treatment once a woman is infected, even with major interventions such as hysterectomy. *The fatality rate has been 100% for the women who contracted C. Sordellii infection after RU-486.* The presenters at the CDC's scientific workshop also noted that antibiotic prophylaxis was unlikely to provide any protection in the RU-486/*C. Sordellii* context. (Emphasis added.)¹²

Congressman Souder also remarked on the unusual approval process applied to the RU-486 New Drug Application (NDA). When the Population Council filed the NDA for RU-486, the FDA originally placed the application under standard review. However, by the time approval came in September 2000, the drug had been approved under a regulation called Subpart H.

Subpart H accelerates approval for drugs needed for “serious or life-threatening illnesses.” The language of the regulation reads: “This subpart applies to certain new drug products that have been studied for their safety and effectiveness in treating serious or life-threatening illnesses and that provide meaningful therapeutic benefit to patients over existing treatments (e.g., ability to treat patients unresponsive to, or intolerant of, available therapy, or improved patient response over available therapy)”¹³

When presented with this change in the approval process, the Population Council argued against it, stating, “It is clear that the imposition of Subpart H is unlawful, unnecessary and undesirable.”¹⁴ In response, the FDA asserted that “this subpart applies to certain new drugs that have been studied for their safety and effectiveness in treating serious or life-threatening illness. FDA has determined that the termination of an unwanted pregnancy is a serious condition within the scope of Subpart H.”¹⁵ The testimony of the FDA’s Dr. Janet Woodcock, MD, may shed light on the Population Council’s objections: “[Under Subpart H], if FDA concludes that a drug product shown to be effective can be used safely only if distribution or use is restricted, the Agency will require post-marketing restrictions.”¹⁶ By applying Subpart H, the FDA could approve the drug faster but employing the subpart allows for restrictions, which is likely why the Population Council objected.

Danco, the U.S. distributor of RU-486, states that 575,000 women have used the drug. This number is based on units shipped, not on the number of prescriptions that have been written for the abortion drug. It also assumes that each woman has been given one tablet, not the FDA-approved three tablets. The number of women who have actually used the RU-486 abortion method is likely much lower than Danco claims.¹⁷ The memo from Congressman Souder points out that “the mortality rate from abortion in the first eight weeks of pregnancy is 0.1 per 100,000 . . . [But] using the figure of 575,000 women having taken RU-486, this works out to a known death rate [for RU-486] of approximately 1.39 per 100,000, nearly 14 times greater than surgical abortion.”¹⁸ (Emphasis in the original.)

Because Danco’s method of calculating usage is probably inaccurate, the death rate in RU-486 abortions is likely much higher than Souder’s figure of 1.39 per 100,000. Factor in the additional problem of the FDA-approved protocols having been rewritten and largely ignored by the abortion groups

involved in the administering of the drug, and the odds of a woman dying increase substantially.

Also notable are other portions of Dr. Woodcock's testimony before the subcommittee. She acknowledged that Danco is conducting a follow-up study on pregnancies that continued after the use of RU-486. Stating that there were fewer than 20 continuing pregnancies, Dr. Woodcock testified that "Danco informs the Agency [FDA] it has been unable to collect outcome data on any of them because of difficulties enrolling patients."¹⁹

Although the abortion drug combination was not approved for use in minors, Dr. Woodcock notes that literature since approval of the drug "has been published supporting the safety and effectiveness of mifepristone in females under age 18." Her testimony then parenthetically includes reference to one study that was published in the journal *Contraception*. Dr. Woodcock also included statistical information on the patients who had taken RU-486: "Approximately 94 percent of cases occurred in women aged 18 years or older, with an average age of 27 years, median age of 26 years, and a reported age range of 13-46 years. Age was unspecified in 3.8 percent of cases."²⁰ (Emphasis added.)

Legislation sponsored in the House by Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R-Md.), H.R. 1079, would suspend government approval for RU-486 and investigate exactly how the dangerous drug came to be approved during the Clinton administration. The legislation, named "Holly's Law" after Holly Patterson, the California teen who died in September 2003, is sponsored in the Senate by Senators Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) and Sam Brownback (R-Kan.).

The FDA response

Because of the potential dangers of an RU-486 abortion, the FDA has approved two label changes to RU-486 since its approval and two revised warnings regarding the possibility of serious and deadly infections following its use. In the May 2006 workshops, the FDA joined with the CDC and the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases in an effort to address growing concerns about deadly bacterial infections, including those following RU-486 abortions. As Dr. Woodcock testified, "The goal of this public workshop was to identify research needs and priorities in order to enable progress in understanding the virulence, pathogenesis, host factors, and nonantimicrobial risk factors" associated with the recent infections involving *C. sordellii* and another bacterium (*C. difficile*, unrelated to RU-486 abortions)²¹

Workshop participants concluded that more research, surveillance, and communication are needed, as well as clinical investigations into toxin

production and the use of antibiotics with RU-486 abortions. Dr. Woodcock admitted: "While an exact pathway forward, and a precise timeline, are unclear at this point, FDA is committed to continuing to work with others, both within and outside of the federal government, to improve our knowledge of these dangerous diseases and the public health concerns they raise."²²

The future of RU486

The distributor of the RU-486 abortion pill has a political agenda and it is this agenda that will guide any decision the company makes regarding the fate of the drug. Traditionally, drugs that are pulled from the U.S. market are pulled by the companies responsible for introducing them into the U.S. Since RU-486 is the only drug Danco distributes, the financial and political costs to the company make it highly unlikely that that will happen in this instance.

The FDA is, at present, only in the preliminary stages of researching the deadly bacterial infections that have taken the lives of otherwise healthy women. As Dr. Woodcock's testimony indicates, the FDA plans to study the issue extensively.

Members of Congress and their staffs have done a great public service in exposing the dangers of RU-486. Whether Congress has the legal authority to take legislative steps against the drug is not yet clear. At this point, making information readily accessible about the dangers of RU-486 abortions is the best way to protect American women.

Can more women die? Yes, as long as RU-486 remains on the market. What I said six years ago remains sadly true today: "The chance of a woman dying as a result of taking RU-486 still exists."

NOTES

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4. Professor Renate Klein, "RU-486-Messy, Unpredictable, Unsafe," On Line Opinion, December 23, 2005.
5. Letter from President William J. Clinton to Mr. Edouard Sakiz, Chairman of Roussel Uclaf, May 16, 1994.
6. Memo to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, Carol Rasco, from Donna Shalala, November 15, 1993.
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THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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14. Souder, op. cit.
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"I have your test results, Mrs. Vickers. Let me get in my doctor's outfit and I'll tell you about them."

Democrats for Life Revisited

Mary Meehan

Janet Robert, president of Democrats for Life of America, is delighted that the Democratic National Committee's attitude has changed since 2002, "when they wouldn't even talk to us."¹ The 2004 election, in which Democrats lost at both presidential and congressional levels, finally made party leaders take another look at their loud and aggressive support of abortion. Howard Dean, the former governor of Vermont, told NBC's *Meet the Press* soon after the election: "I have long believed that we ought to make a home for pro-life Democrats. . . . We can have a respectful dialogue, and we have to stop demagoguing this issue."

Dean, who had made a strong early showing as a presidential candidate in 2004, but then flamed out in the Democratic primaries, was soon elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee. He continued to welcome pro-lifers to the party and held a meeting with about 20 pro-life Democrats in Congress. Democrats for Life executive director Kristen Day, who attended the meeting, said Dean listened to the congressional pro-lifers and that the National Committee definitely has been "more supportive" since he took over.²

Have top Democrats really seen the light?

Other Democratic leaders also changed their tune. *Newsweek* reported that Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.), the losing presidential candidate in 2004, told supporters that "[Democrats] needed new ways to make people understand they didn't like abortion. Democrats also needed to welcome more pro-life candidates into the party, he said."³ Edward Kennedy, Kerry's Senate colleague from Massachusetts, declared: "Surely we can all agree that abortion should be rare, and that we should do all we can to help women avoid the need to face that decision."⁴ And Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), soon to be frontrunner for the Democrats' 2008 presidential nomination, conceded that "abortion in many ways represents a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women." She suggested that government can "educate and inform and provide assistance so that the choice guaranteed under our Constitution either does not ever have to be exercised or only in very rare circumstances."⁵

Some may have thought the Democratic choir had finally learned a verse

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from an old Hank Williams song: “Praise the Lord, I saw the light.” Well, not quite. Senator Clinton’s comments, for example, were in a January 2005 speech in which she praised *Roe v. Wade* as having advanced “freedom and equality for women” and told her audience that she looked forward “to working with all of you as we fight to defend it in the coming years.” Her talk mainly promoted more contraception, although she also mentioned “more funding for prenatal care.”

The national Democratic leaders who are courting pro-lifers these days are not backing away from support of legal abortion. Yet by calling abortion a tragedy and saying we should reduce its frequency, they are helping to change the public conversation on the issue. They have mounted a horse that may take them—and the country—in directions they hadn’t anticipated. Many Democratic abortion supporters in Congress could wind up voting for a Democrats for Life initiative to reduce abortions. Thus, despite their support for abortion, they may actually help save lives. One hopes it will become a habit.

Carol Crossed, vice president of Democrats for Life, believes the change in language may lead to a change in public attitudes. She suggested that “people are going to start thinking about: ‘Why is abortion a tragedy? What do you mean—a tragedy?’ Then they’re going to find out about women and the pain that women are going through—physical, emotional pain—about fetal development and what is an unborn child and all of these things.”

Democrats for Life, though, is still a small and struggling group. It has done much on conviction and a shoestring budget; but it clearly needs far more members and money. In a two-part series in this *Review* in the summer and fall of 2003, I wrote about the group’s origins in 1999 and its early years. This article reports on its current national operations, the initiative to reduce abortions, and activity at the grass roots.

Making a little go a long way

The organization’s operating budget last year was less than \$100,000. Its staff is tiny, consisting of two women who work part-time, and mainly from home, because they are taking care of their small children. But they know what they are about. Executive director Kristen Day used to be chief of staff for a pro-life Democratic congressman. Her deputy, Cayce Utley, has experience as a teacher, a Democratic congressional campaign aide, and a legislative fellow in Congress. Together, Day and Utley handle everything from lobbying on Capitol Hill and running a website (www.democratsforlife.org) to fundraising events and routine office work.

The officers and board of directors have a rich diversity of experience.

Janet Robert, the Minnesotan who currently serves as president, and five other board members have all survived the rough-and-tumble of running for Congress as Democrats. None won, although Joseph Turnham came very close in his 2002 bid for an Alabama seat. Turnham currently chairs the Alabama Democratic Party. Patrick Casey also came close in two tries for a Pennsylvania seat. He's the son of the late Governor (and pro-life champion) Robert P. Casey of Pennsylvania. Patrick's brother, Robert P. Casey Jr., is running for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pa.). Other board members have been active in business, science, education, and nursing. Carol Crossed, the vice president, has long experience in organizing and lobbying.⁶

It's a strong board and, as might be expected—especially where Democrats are concerned—sometimes has strong disagreements. One resulted early this year when Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) lined up 55 Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House to sign a “Statement of Principles.” Most signers, like DeLauro, were longtime abortion supporters; but some were strong pro-lifers. “We envision a world in which every child belongs to a loving family,” the signers said, “and agree with the Catholic Church about the value of human life and the undesirability of abortion—we do not celebrate its practice. Each of us is committed to reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies and creating an environment with policies that encourage pregnancies to be carried to term.” There was much to like about that part, but the signers went on to say that “we acknowledge and accept the tension that comes with being in disagreement with the Church in some areas.” On the other hand, they emphasized their agreement with Catholic social teaching. The Democrats for Life board approved a response to the DeLauro statement that welcomed its support for programs to reduce abortion—but didn't address the inconsistency of signers who had voted steadily to *support* abortion. Carol Crossed thought there was no need for the board to say anything. Democrats for Life, after all, is not a Catholic group; its members include people of various faiths. But if determined to speak out, she thought, the board should have come up with something better than what she called the “stupid” and “nothing” comment it issued.⁷

In May, though, the board commended the South Dakota legislature for passing a law to ban abortion, stressing that a Democrat had introduced the bill in the state senate and that many Democrats had voted for it. (The law now faces a referendum in South Dakota; if it survives that, it's expected to provide a major challenge to *Roe v. Wade*.) And in June, Democrats for Life commended Louisiana legislators for passing a similar, although less radical, law. “We are so proud that Democrats led this effort,” Kristen Day declared.⁸

But some members share Jay Ware's misgivings about an outright legal ban. Ware, a former board member, worries about women who "get pregnant—and they're alone, and they're scared, and they're poor, and they're abandoned, and no one cares." Helping them, he believes, is "what the Democratic Party really needs to be about." He was blunt in declaring, "I don't like what they did in South Dakota. . . . You've made it illegal, but what have you done about the women who are despairing in South Dakota?" He would consider making abortion illegal if alternatives were much improved and "if I felt that you could enforce that law." But he suspects that abortionists would still "be allowed to operate in the inner city where they were getting rid of the poor." Ware said he has "always had a problem with the idea" of criminalizing abortion. He added that he loves Democrats for Life "because they haven't voted me off the island, and I can say that out loud."⁹

The board, though, has a combined approach: primary emphasis on alternatives, but also support for legal action against abortion. Kristen Day, referring to House pro-life leader Christopher Smith (R-N.J.), noted that "we work with Congressman Smith on a lot of issues," including opposition to the RU-486 abortion drug. Day also helped gain Democratic senators' support for a Smith bill to promote research on stem cells from umbilical cords, which he had introduced as an ethical alternative to destruction of human embryos. Day said that "we really called around a lot" and explained that people were blaming Senate Democrats for "holding up this lifesaving measure." Congress passed the bill last year.¹⁰

Democrats for Life has good contacts with the African American pro-life group called LEARN (Life Education & Resource Network). And Dr. Alveda King, a niece of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., spoke at a Democrats for Life breakfast last January. Alveda King recalled talking with a Democratic woman who was running for office but reluctant to speak about her pro-life convictions. King told her, "We're going to do everything we can . . . so that you can put your politics and your convictions together."¹¹ Lack of funds has stymied outreach efforts to other communities, as well as membership recruitment in general. Leaders' reluctance to give a national membership figure suggests that it's fairly low. Some state chapters, though, have respectable figures, given their relative youth. Carol Crossed conceded that membership growth is "very slow," adding that "there certainly isn't any money invested in that kind of thing."

Democrats for Life has established its own political action committee, but raised only \$10,000 for it in the first six months of this year—and that money was donated by its president and vice president. Leaders are happy, though, that they have *any* money to distribute to candidates. They sent one

of their first donations to Bob Casey's campaign for the U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania. If elected, Casey will join Senator Ben Nelson of Nebraska as a reliable pro-life Democratic vote in the Senate.¹² (Nelson, running for re-election this year, appears to be well ahead of his opponent.) Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democrats' minority leader in the Senate, is still often—and mistakenly—called a pro-lifer. He used to be, but he has slid so far to the other side that last year NARAL Pro-Choice America gave him a 100 percent score for his voting record.¹³ On the House side, 24 pro-life Democrats—and some with mixed records—face re-election. Several pro-life Democratic candidates have a chance to win open seats. This year's election may slow, or even stop, the long decline in numbers of pro-life Democrats in Congress due to retirements, party switches, and backsliding.

A minority report

David Carlin is a national board member of Democrats for Life as well as the group's contact in Rhode Island. He's a college teacher and writer. He served a dozen years as a Democrat in Rhode Island's state senate, attaining the rank of majority leader there. But he has been a major critic of the national party for years. When interviewed for this article, he was about to publish a book called *Can a Catholic Be a Democrat? How the Party I Loved Became the Enemy of My Religion*. Carlin has become so disillusioned with the national party that he believes pro-life Democrats "are fighting a war that has already been lost." Referring to the Second World War, he added: "We are like those Japanese soldiers who didn't give up until 20 or 30 years after the war was over."

Institutions are notoriously difficult to change, but I hope Democrats for Life will prove Carlin wrong. Giving up their effort would guarantee that whenever the Republicans lose power, the Democrats will come in with a wrecking crew, canceling pro-life policies and appointing Supreme Court justices who will give *Roe v. Wade* a new lease on life. If Democrats for Life can move more state Democratic parties to neutrality on abortion, that in itself will be a great contribution. If they can raise serious money for organizing, they should be able to do far more than that.

In any case, Carlin's book is one of several that should make it hard for Democratic leaders to gloss over their support of abortion with nice words and symbolic gestures. By the time this article appears, Kristen Day's book should also be out. Critical, but more optimistic than Carlin's, it's called *Democrats for Life: Pro-Life Politics and the Silenced Majority*. Scheduled for publication next year is a book by journalist Mark Stricherz, *Why the Democrats Are Blue*, focusing on why so many Catholics have left the party.

Pamela Winnick, another journalist, is writing *Without a Prayer*, dealing with the party's secularization. She hopes it will be published in January 2008, "just in time for the Dem primaries."¹⁴ Howard Dean may be facing a series of migraine headaches.

The 95-10 Initiative to reduce abortions

For more than a year, Democrats for Life leaders have been refining a legislative package to reduce abortions. Talks with groups ranging from the National Council for Adoption to people in the insurance industry have delayed completion, since the leaders want to be sure that 1) Congress will pass the package, and 2) it will work.

Disagreements over contraception also contributed to the long delay. As originally announced last year, the package would have required insurance companies to cover contraception. Father Frank Pavone, head of Priests for Life and a friend of Democrats for Life, had major problems with that provision. He stressed that "so much 'contraception' is, in fact, early abortion under a different name." Some board members shared this concern, and some doubted that contraception does prevent abortion. Former board member Jay Ware suggested that it's a mistake to view contraception "as some sort of magic bullet." He added, "It won't be. If contraceptives haven't solved this problem yet, a newer one isn't going to." And there may have been concerns—certainly there should have been—about the effects of some methods on women's health. (The health warnings about birth-control pills are daunting, especially for smokers and women over 35. The "Plan B" or morning-after pill—which often causes nausea, stomach pain, or headache—is not supposed to be used routinely as a contraceptive. But it almost certainly will be, now that the Food and Drug Administration has approved making it available without prescription.) Finally, there was a need to have a bill that all pro-life members of Congress could support. The board decided to drop contraception from the package and to keep the focus on helping the pregnant woman.¹⁵

Their plan is called the "95-10 Initiative" because the goal is to reduce abortions by 95 percent within ten years. I believe we would need reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, plus protective legislation for the unborn in every state, to achieve that goal. But it's certainly a worthy goal, and the 95-10 plan could help us toward it. The plan is still being fine-tuned at this writing, but most of it should be introduced soon by Rep. Lincoln Davis (D-Tenn.) as the "Pregnant Women Support Act." Major features are likely to be:

- Grants to states for toll-free numbers and advertising campaigns to publicize groups that support pregnant women and new parents. (Kristen Day

said the model is a program in Michigan where “the abortion rate went down by 11 percent after this was implemented.”)

- Grants to community health centers and pregnancy aid centers for purchase or upgrade of ultrasound equipment (because women who see their unborn children on ultrasound are less likely to abort them).

- A requirement that abortion providers disclose to women information about the risks of abortion, post-abortion medical services, and alternatives to abortion.

- Making permanent the current states’ option to cover pregnant women and unborn children under Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

- Increasing insurance coverage for pregnant women through an anti-discrimination provision—and through government subsidy of premiums for women who are not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid and SCHIP, yet too poor to pay high premiums.

- Making permanent the adoption tax credit in the U.S. tax code and also increasing its dollar amount.

- Grants to maternity homes for adoption counseling and education in parenting skills.

- Increasing funding for the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) nutrition program. (“In rural Tennessee,” said Rep. Davis about his home state, the WIC program has “been a lifesaver for a lot of the mothers.”)

- Increasing funding for the block grants to states for child care.

Other provisions are designed to help groups with very specific needs:

- Assistance to parents whose unborn children are diagnosed with Down Syndrome or other disabilities—including referral to support groups and establishment of a national registry of families willing to adopt handicapped newborns. (Day remarked that this is “very similar” to a bill already introduced by Senator Kennedy and Senator Sam Brownback, the Kansas Republican.)

- Assistance to pregnant women and new mothers who are threatened by domestic or dating violence.

- Grants for demonstration projects to help pregnant and parenting college students complete their education. (Day said this is essentially the same as a bill backed by Feminists for Life of America.)

- Expanding the eligibility of parenting college students for federally subsidized child care.

- Grants for work-study programs enabling teenage parents to work with Head Start or similar programs, so they can earn some money to help them stay in high school—and also develop job and parenting skills.

◦ Grants for free home visits by registered nurses to new mothers who want parenting advice and information. (Day reported that “this is based on a Missouri program, Nurses for Newborns.”)¹⁶

The 95-10 initiative is fairly complex, and some might see it as a grab-bag of ideas. But it makes sense, as an approach of the kind suggested by Feminists for Life president Serrin Foster: Make a “task list,” Foster advises, and then “systematically eliminate” conditions that push women toward abortion.¹⁷

Many liberal Democrats in Congress may wince at the idea of required disclosure of information by abortion providers. Some Republicans may worry about subsidies to pregnancy aid centers and maternity homes. Federal subsidy always involves some federal control, and often creates an unhealthy psychological and political dependence. But the subsidy horse left the barn some time ago. Republicans helped drive it out by supporting federal subsidies for pregnancy aid centers for abstinence programs and by supporting state subsidies for them as well.¹⁸ Fiscal conservatives from both parties may worry about increasing federal subsidies for child care. Wouldn't a substantial increase in the minimum wage make more sense? And how about encouraging cooperative child-care efforts on campus, so that parents work a certain amount of time in the child-care center their children attend?

At the end of the day, I suspect, members on both sides of the aisle will support the 95-10 initiative, or something like it—some because they believe it's the right thing to do, some because they're weary of intense partisan divisions over abortion, and some to soften their own public images (the Democrats' image of being the party of abortion, the Republicans' image of relying mainly on bans and seldom offering positive alternatives). Whatever their reasons, they may help save many lives.

Reports from the grass roots

Carol Crossed travels the country to start new Democrats for Life chapters and help existing ones. Although the group claims 41 chapters, some are still under formation or else inactive at present. When a chapter falters, Crossed blows on the embers to get it started again. She currently suggests two major goals for state chapters. One is to change the language of state party platforms from support of abortion to neutrality. (“We're not asking for miracles here,” she remarked.) Some state parties, perhaps as many as ten, do not have platform language supportive of abortion.¹⁹ Several Democrats for Life chapters elsewhere have tried to change party platforms, apparently without success so far. At least, though, they have announced their presence in the party and—especially in North Carolina—their willingness to fight.

Crossed also urges formation of Democratic pro-life caucuses in state legislatures. The model here is Pennsylvania, which has 49 state legislators in such a caucus. Oklahoma also has one, with 28 members. But in many a state legislature today, if pro-life Democrats started their own caucus, they could meet in a broom closet. California and Colorado apparently have no pro-life Democrats in their legislatures, and Florida has only two. Texas activist Lois Kerschen estimated that her state legislature has six to ten pro-life Democrats. Minnesota has an impressive 23.

Illinois chapter contact David Seiler estimated there are 15-20 in his state's legislature. There used to be more, he said, but the Republicans "have been pretty successful" in convincing downstate voters "that Democrats cannot be truly pro-life since the party platform is pro-choice." In 1996, Seiler recalled, his congressman, state senator, and state representative were pro-life Democrats, but "those positions are all held by Republicans today."

When I interviewed 20 state chapter contacts around the country, I found that many declined to state their membership figures. But Indiana has 30-40 members, Virginia about 85, Florida "approaching 100," and Minnesota about 120. Some gave the numbers on their mailing lists: Michigan has over 50 people, Colorado about 75, Maryland over 100, and Texas around 500. The Texas chapter, which predates the national group, is large enough to hold its own convention in odd-numbered years. In the even years, it meets as a caucus (and has a booth) at the Democratic state party convention.

State and local party leaders' treatment of Democrats for Life chapters ranges from ignoring them, to a polite but arms-length relationship, to a friendly welcome. At least two chapters (Indiana and Michigan) have been able to use state party headquarters for meetings. But some party leaders apparently haven't been listening to Howard Dean. When the Ohio chapter's Lou Koenig appeared at a forum of candidates for state-party chair, he cited Dean and asked the candidates how they would reach out to pro-life Democrats. "You could have heard a pin drop," Koenig recalled. Out of eight or nine candidates, only one answered the question. That man placed second in the election, though, and Koenig met with him to encourage his openness to pro-lifers. Everett Thomas, the Indiana president, said his chapter had a booth at a Democratic editors' meeting, and the chapter secretary "had a long and angry conversation with another woman there who is militantly pro-choice." Yet the chapter signed up "several people at that event." Lois Kerschen is encouraged because more Texas party leaders are "coming forward and saying that they're pro-life Democrats or giving us their cards, saying 'I'd like to work with you.'" Some chapters showcase, on advisory boards or in other ways, pro-life Democratic incumbents whose names carry weight in the party;

this helps get attention from party leaders as well as the media. South Dakota and Washington State include state legislators on their working boards.

Peter Small, Iowa state coordinator, has focused on the state legislature and the tough work of long-term organizing. The powers-that-be in the national and Iowa parties, he believes, “are so vehemently opposed” to pro-life Democrats’ attaining power that it’s almost pointless to deal with them. The effort must be “very much a struggle from below.” Referring to the national Democrats for Life, Small said, “It appears to me that the national organization has spread itself too thin.” He believes it should focus its resources on building state chapters, rather than on national Democratic politics and federal legislation.

Rick Middleton, the Michigan chapter contact, remarked that an effort to change the state platform’s abortion language “would be out of the question” now because the chapter lacks “the size, resources, and pull” to do so. North Carolina chapter president Eva Ritchey, though, led efforts to change her state party’s platform in both 2005 and 2006.²⁰ To do this, she had to go up against the power that NARAL Pro-Choice America wields in the party. This year Ritchey tried to replace the pro-abortion plank with language promoting alternatives to abortion. NARAL mobilized and defeated that, then defeated a compromise effort. But Ritchey is not about to quit. She remarked that “we learned a great deal about the process, the dynamics and the strength of the adversary.” And by “refusing to stand in the shadows any longer,” she added, they identified more pro-life Democrats.

Last spring Minnesota chapter members put forward in some local party caucuses and district conventions a proposal to have the state platform welcome pro-lifers as well as their opponents. The proposal had “a late launch with no real organizing,” said chapter director Patrick Mullins, and the state convention defeated it. But he added that “our membership was energized” by the struggle. Massachusetts chapter contact Brian Keaney reported on an effort last year: “We had people attend the platform committee hearings all across the state asking for a conscience clause to be inserted into the platform. [The proposed amendment would have recognized party members’ “deeply held and sometimes differing views on issues of personal conscience like abortion and capital punishment.” In language closely tracking Senator Kennedy’s statement, it would have declared, “All Democrats agree that abortion should be rare and that we should do all we can to help women to avoid the need to make that decision.”] Unfortunately, what we got instead was a platform that offered ‘unwavering support for the provisions in *Roe v. Wade*.’” There is, though, a conscience clause of sorts for party *leaders*. Keaney said this is “not exactly where we want to be, but it’s a start.”

No one should be surprised by initial defeats of efforts to change platform language. It may be best to take Eva Ritchey's approach and try to knock out pro-abortion language with language on positive alternatives. Might as well go for the gold—and give ex-Democrats a strong reason to come back to the party and fight.

Some chapters are involved in lobbying. Patrick Mullins noted that the Minnesota chapter is working with legislators "to introduce and pass a [state] version of the 95-10 initiative." The Virginia chapter is doing the same. New York chapter contact Jill Payne said members there "have done some low-key lobbying on pro-life issues, mostly connected with other pro-life groups that organize visits to the state capital." Payne's husband, John, who heads the state chapter, also has testified against the death penalty before a legislative committee. Members of the California chapter have done some informal lobbying against a bill for doctor-assisted suicide. But chapter contact Karen Wheeler remarked that "we're a long ways from having an official lobbyist."

Chapters can provide information about candidates, but when it comes to actual campaigning, the members make their own decisions. My general impression is that some members are fairly active in campaigns. But many are not, partly because in some areas there are no pro-life Democrats running for office. That's not a problem in Pennsylvania, with Bob Casey's U.S. Senate campaign, several pro-life Democrats in the U.S. House, and many in the state legislature. Some chapter members apparently will campaign for the re-election of Democratic Governor Edward Rendell, an abortion supporter, as well as for Bob Casey, Rep. John Murtha, and other pro-life Democrats. Chapter president Christopher McNally commented that by canvassing traditional Democrats in the western part of the state, chapter members can help both pro-life candidates and "pro-choice Democrats like Governor Rendell who support programs that reduce the incidence of abortion. . . . We think that harnessing pro-life Democrats with pro-choice Democrats is the surest strategy to advance the public interest on a broad front of issues." This approach, though, may upset some Pennsylvanians. Casey opponent Rick Santorum, a pro-life Republican, is in political trouble partly because he backed his abortion-supporting Senate colleague, Arlen Specter, against a strong pro-life challenge in the 2004 Republican primary.²¹

Two Democrats for Life members are running for the state legislature in Florida. That's an important example for other states because, as Carol Crossed says about candidate recruitment, "we've got to bring 'em from the ground up." The Florida chapter's treasurer, Bob Hagenmaier, ran for Congress in 2004 and encountered much pressure from Democratic activists to

hide his pro-life views. Although he did very well in the Hispanic part of his district, he lost the general election to his better-funded opponent. He urges other pro-life Democratic candidates to “go for Republican votes.” He also advises them to be forthright in dealing with abortion: “Be brave. Be not afraid. . . . Where would we be if Abraham Lincoln [had] avoided discussing abolition of slavery during his campaigns?”²²

Besides having pro-life Democratic candidates to support, this year members of the South Dakota chapter can take part in the intensely fought referendum over the state’s new abortion-ban law. State representative Mary Glenski, one of the legislators who voted for the ban, is also vice president of South Dakota Democrats for Life. She’s well aware that some key pro-lifers elsewhere in the country worry that the South Dakota law, if it survives the referendum, could reach the Supreme Court before the Court has an anti-*Roe* majority (if it ever does). “But I keep thinking of how slavery was done away with in this country,” Glenski remarked. “People didn’t think that was the right time, either.”

Oklahoma state representative Rebecca Hamilton, who is helping to form a Democrats for Life chapter in her state, had just finished a difficult primary when interviewed. “Several of us have been very viciously attacked by people within the Democratic Party who want us to go away,” she reported, adding that pro-abortion Democrats had recruited her primary opponent. But Rep. Hamilton won 75 percent of the vote.

California chapter members have few if any pro-life Democratic candidates to campaign for this year. But media exposure is important, too, so they accepted an invitation to take part in a *30 Days* documentary for the FX channel on cable television. The *30 Days* program is a reality show; the particular segment involved an abortion supporter from Georgia who spent 30 days in the California pro-life community. That included, said Wheeler, “a very interesting and productive discussion” with Democrats for Life, including talk about the 95-10 plan. The program hadn’t aired by the time I interviewed Wheeler. “You can’t tell what’s going to end up on the cutting-room floor,” she remarked, but “we went ahead and took the chance.”

Summing up

One can imagine practical things that Democrats for Life might do to extend their reach. Many chapter websites, for example, need to be updated, expanded, or generally spiffed up. Perhaps some chapters should recruit more retirees as officers and board members, thus gaining activists who have good experience and much free time. Student interns might be another source of help. And a “Friends of Democrats for Life” group, even if it’s only a section of

the national website at first, could appeal to non-Democrats for much-needed dollars. There may be many pro-lifers who can't quite bring themselves to join—or rejoin—the Democratic Party, yet understand the importance of what Democrats for Life are trying to do.

While the group's engine needs more fuel, its train seems to be running on the right track. Karen Wheeler remarked that “we have some of the most amazing people come forward to be active in Democrats for Life—people with intelligence and passion and practicality. I can't help but think that good things will come.”

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THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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APPENDIX A

[Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights and author of many books, including The War on the Bill of Rights and the Gathering Resistance (Seven Stories Press, 2003). This column appeared on Jewish World Review (jewishworldreview.com) June 12 and is reprinted with Mr. Hentoff's permission.]

Insisting on Life

Nat Hentoff

A longtime friend of mine is married to a doctor who also performs abortions. At the dinner table one recent evening, their 9-year-old son—having heard a word whose meaning he didn't know—asked, “What is an abortion?” His mother, choosing her words carefully, described the procedure in simple terms.

“But,” said her son, “that means killing the baby.” The mother then explained that there are certain months during which an abortion cannot be performed, with very few exceptions. The 9-year-old shook his head. “But,” he said, “it doesn't matter what month. It still means killing the babies.”

Hearing the story, I wished it could be repeated to the justices of the Supreme Court, in the hope that at least five of them might act on this 9-year-old's clarity of thought and vision.

The boy's spontaneous insistence on the primacy of life also reminded me of a powerful pro-life speaker and writer who, many years ago, helped me become a pro-lifer. He was a preacher, a black preacher. He said: “There are those who argue that the right to privacy is of a higher order than the right to life.”

“That,” he continued, “was the premise of slavery. You could not protest the existence or treatment of slaves on the plantation because that was private and therefore out of your right to be concerned.”

This passionate reverend used to warn: “Don't let the pro-choicers convince you that a fetus isn't a human being. That's how the whites dehumanized us . . . The first step was to distort the image of us as human beings in order to justify what they wanted to do—and not even feel they'd done anything wrong.”

That preacher was Jesse Jackson. Later, he decided to run for the presidency—and it was a credible campaign that many found inspiring in its focus on what still had to be done on civil rights. But Jackson had by now become “pro-choice”—much to the appreciation of most of those in the liberal base.

The last time I saw Jackson was years later, on a train from Washington to New York. I told him of a man nominated, but not yet confirmed, to a seat on a federal circuit court of appeals. This candidate was a strong supporter of capital punishment—which both the Rev. Jackson and I oppose, since it involves the irreversible taking of a human life by the state.

I asked Jackson if he would hold a press conference in Washington, criticizing the nomination, and he said he would. The reverend was true to his word; the press conference took place; but that nominee was confirmed to the federal circuit court.

However, I appreciated Jackson's effort.

On that train, I also told Jackson that I'd been quoting—in articles, and in talks with various groups—from his compelling pro-life statements. I asked him if he'd had any second thoughts on his reversal of those views.

Usually quick to respond to any challenge that he is not consistent in his positions, Jackson paused, and seemed somewhat disquieted at my question. Then he said to me, "I'll get back to you on that." I still patiently await what he has to say.

As time goes on, my deepening concern with the consequences of abortion is that its validation by the Supreme Court, as a constitutional practice, helps support the convictions of those who, in other controversies—euthanasia, assisted suicide and the "futility doctrine" by certain hospital ethics committees—believe that there are lives not worth continuing.

Around the time of my conversation with Jackson on the train, I attended a conference on euthanasia at Clark College in Worcester, Mass. There, I met Derek Humphry, the founder of the Hemlock Society, and already known internationally as a key proponent of the "death with dignity" movement.

He told me that for some years in this country, he had considerable difficulty getting his views about assisted suicide and, as he sees it, compassionate euthanasia into the American press.

"But then," Humphry told me, "a wonderful thing happened. It opened all the doors for me."

"What was that wonderful thing?" I asked.

"Roe v. Wade," he answered.

The devaluing of human life—as the 9-year-old at the dinner table put it more vividly—did not end with making abortion legal, and therefore, to some people, moral. The word "baby" does not appear in Roe v. Wade—let alone the word "killing."

And so, the termination of "lives not worth living" goes on.

APPENDIX A

[This column appeared in the August/September 2006 issue of *Free Inquiry* and is reprinted with Mr. Hentoff's permission.]

Who will Decide You Should Die?

Nat Hentoff

Writing in *Free Inquiry* on assisted suicide and later on the contentious end of Terri Schiavo's life, my fellow secularist Tom Flynn (I'm in the atheist division) has said, "If we trust our fellow human beings to choose their occupations, their significant others, their political persuasions, and their stances on religion, we should also defend their right to dispose of their most valuable possessions—their lives—even if disposing of life is precisely the choice they make" ("The Final Freedom," *FI*, Spring 2003).

Any competent person in this nation does indeed have the right, in law and by Tom Flynn's logic (up to a point) to commit suicide. But the practice of assisted suicide (lawful in Oregon and being proposed in other states), along with certain other aids proposed by death-with-dignity advocates, complicates the issue.

As Tom Flynn has also written, "Advocates who rail about 'the culture of death' [including this writer] overlook the fact that all too often ours is a culture of life coerced . . . In my view, our culture systematically forces life and suffering on countless individuals who would rationally, gratefully let go of life if they could. If death-with-dignity measures carry the risk of abuse, let us acknowledge the risk and seek to curb abuses . . ." ("Life: Right or Commodity?: Introduction," *FI*, August/September 2005).

It would be useful if Flynn in a future article would explore those possible abuses and suggest how to deal with them. In an effort to be helpful, I will go first.

The impelling desire to commit suicide often attends clinical depression. I speak from personal experience. Years ago, when that blackness occurred, I spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to kill myself with the least pain. But, then, a doctor put me on lithium, so here I am writing for *Free Inquiry* and still causing trouble elsewhere.

In Oregon, of the thirty-eight persons who in 2005 were assisted in committing suicide, only two had been referred for psychiatric evaluation. How many were suffering from clinical depression? How many doctors involved in assisted suicide are skilled in diagnosing clinical depression? As I can attest from my own consultation with physicians when I was in a depressed state, many are not. I know of other patients who have had similar experiences.

Increasingly, unlike Flynn, some of the most influential champions of the right to dispose of our most valuable possession are willing to downplay "the risk of abuse" and ignore safeguards. Ludwig Minelli, the founder of Dignitas, an organization based in Switzerland that assists suicide, is planning to establish a chain of centers to help people such as the terminally ill who choose to die as well as "people with illnesses and mental conditions such as chronic depression." According to

Mr. Minelli, “We never say no.”

Dr. Phillip Nitschke, an Australian who travels widely to lobby for legal assisted suicide, described in the 2001 *National Review Online* an egalitarian basis for providing life-ending resources “to anyone who wants [them], including the depressed, the elderly bereaved, and the troubled teen.” Inclusion of that last category could mean a significant reduction in the world’s population.

Even the preparation of advance directives may not guarantee protection from possible abuses. Many Americans were motivated by the Terri Schiavo case to prepare specific advance directives, detailing precisely the conditions under which they would not want—or want—to continue living. Yet, increasingly, hospital ethics committees and individual doctors are permitted to disregard advance directives that do not agree with these ethicists’ and caregivers’ appraisals of certain patients’ “quality of life.” When that terminal veto of a patient’s desires is declared—including a patient who is still able to speak for himself or herself—the only alternative may be to find another hospital in that state or perhaps in another state that will take the patient. If there’s time.

Coerced death for those who have explicitly expressed a desire to stay alive is part of the increasing number of “futile care” policies in hospitals in Philadelphia, Houston, Des Moines, and other cities—including some Catholic hospitals. In Houston, for example, as reported in the August 21, 1996, issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*—which I read regularly, along with the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, in self-defense—there is the extensive “Multi-institution Collaborative Policy on Medical Futility.” This policy was formulated to deal with the conflicts that take place in many hospitals around the country between “a health care team that believed that continued aggressive support was inappropriate or futile—and a surrogate decision maker who insisted on ‘everything being done’ for the patient.” (As an inveterate insister on life, I have underlined in my advance directive that “everything” should indeed be done to keep me alive. I have since added that I should not be taken to any hospital in Houston, or in any other city that has “futile care” policies.)

How do these “health care teams” know—with any method approaching certitude—that a particular life is no longer worth living? Houston’s “Multi-institutional Collaborative policy on Medical Futility” does not shrink from answering that question: “*We concluded that we need to treat futility as the courts treat pornography, acknowledging that while it cannot be defined, we certainly know it when we see it. . . .* In this conclusion, we concur with the recent American Medical Association Council on Ethical and Judicial affairs that ‘futility cannot be meaningfully defined’ but that ‘denial of treatment should be justified by openly stated ethical principles and acceptable standards of care.’” [Emphasis added.]

The person who inconveniently wants to stay alive is effectively denied an appeal. But do not lose heart. The Houston policy states that it “clearly preserves the patient’s right to be transferred.” Advance directives for those who insist on life, therefore, should include a continually updated list of hospitals that do respect a

APPENDIX A

patient's wishes to be transferred to stay alive.

Writing in support of self-ownership, including the ownership of one's life, Flynn emphasizes: "Faced with the starkest possible expression of self-ownership—with individuals who freely elect to end their lives rather than consuming more resources, or to avoid further pain, or just because they want to—too many of us can't shake that inchoate conviction that something terrible is going on" (*FI*, August/September 2005).

But there are those of us who freely want to keep owning our own lives—despite the doctors and hospitals that insist that they are more qualified to decide whether our "quality of life" justifies continued self-ownership. And we will not be made to feel guilty if our insistence consumes more resources, including hospital beds.

Accordingly, I state here—and will provide a copy of this issue to my health proxy designated through a power of attorney—that I refuse to be coerced out of life in this growing culture of death.

APPENDIX B

[Paul Greenberg is the editorial page editor of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* where this column appeared on June 28, 2006. By Paul Greenberg; used with permission, © 2006, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.]

Among the Pro-lifers

Paul Greenberg

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The last time I was asked to talk at a Right to Life convention, I got to deliver the keynote on the opening day. Ho boy. Having grown up listening to various spellbinders on the lawn of the Caddo Parish courthouse in Shreveport, La., including the late great Uncle Earl K. Long, I always wanted to deliver a real stemwinder of a keynote to a responsive crowd.

And, believe me, these pro-lifers respond. But that was seven years ago in Milwaukee, and this year in Nashville, they've put me at the tail end of the convention—on the program for the final dinner. It's simpler being a keynoter at the beginning of the festivities, when everybody's still fresh.

But to speak on the last night of a convention, and offer some kind of summation of the past year, and a glimpse of what the future holds, that's a challenge. So I did what I do at work when that blank screen starts staring me down like a cobra. I try to conjure up the spirit of some writer I admire, and imagine how he—or she—would approach such an assignment. Somebody like Nat Hentoff, the renowned jazz critic and liberal columnist for the *Village Voice*.

Nat Hentoff must have scandalized the *Village Voice*'s usual readers when, early on, he came out on the pro-life side of this issue in his casual, unpretentious way—as if unaware that he was defying all the household gods of his particular slice of the political spectrum.

Maybe it was his devotion to civil rights that led Mr. Hentoff to defend the rights of the unborn. Or maybe he was just following his fascination with life and the creative process, which is probably what made him an aficionado of American jazz. He must be the only Jewish, atheist, jazz-loving, pro-life newspaper columnist in the country—to all of which I can only say: God bless him!

Mr. Hentoff not only saw what was at stake in each life-and-death case he covered, and began to seek out, but he could see where it was all leading. Sure enough, abortion on demand now is reflected on the other end of life's spectrum by an enthusiasm for euthanasia.

These days, somebody taking a good hard look at partial-birth abortion, or contemplating the prospect of using embryos to create body parts, can scarcely escape the feeling that we're no longer looking down that slippery slope but up. Yep, we've come a long way since *Roe v. Wade*.

A long way down

It's all part of the same intellectual trajectory, or rather descent. And the temptation that has led us this far down is the oldest one in the book, and I mean *The*

APPENDIX B

Book. As the serpent told Eve in the Garden, just taste of this one fruit, and ye shall be as gods! Now we can decide who shall live and who shall die. And soon we will be immortal, replenished by a constant supply of replacement parts from the vast embryo farms of the not-too-distant future.

In the end, I can only tell my listeners a story—a parable. It's a little jewel of a short story by Ursula K. Le Guin called "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." In her mythical city of Omelas, "bright-towered by the sea," all is perfection. There is accomplishment without effort, love without sacrifice, faith without clergy, victory without courage, art without labor, triumph with never a defeat

There is just one small catch: "In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window... ." And in this closed-off room, there is a neglected, abandoned, feeble-minded, starved child whom all must agree to leave so.

Those are the terms, and, when you think about it, they are the only terms on which a Utopia can be constructed by man: Absolute perfection—well, almost absolute—in exchange for paying no heed to the evil at its center. That's the price of any utopia, whether it's a Third Reich, worker's paradise, or Plato's Republic, in which all the decisions are made by a select group of guardians who will forever keep everything the absolutely perfect same.

Strangely enough, there are those who walk away from Ursula Le Guin's perfect city. To quote the author: "They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates ... they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas."

Call them pilgrims, sojourners, striking out with nothing more than faith. But with nothing less. And this year they came together for a few days in Nashville, Tenn.

APPENDIX C

[Elizabeth R. Schiltz is an Associate Professor of Law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis, Minn. Her story about the prenatal diagnosis of her son has been recently republished in *Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics* by Melinda Tankard Reist (Spinifex Press, Australia). Reprinted from the July 20 issue of *BusinessWeek*. Copyright 2006 by The McGraw-Hill Companies.]

Confessions of a “Genetic Outlaw”

Elizabeth R. Schiltz

A new method for screening embryos for disease may provide more reason to brand some people dissidents for bringing their kids into the world.

From time to time, we are all confronted with the disconnect between how we see ourselves and how others see us. I’ve always seen myself as a responsible, law-abiding citizen. I recycle, I vote, I don’t drive a Hummer. But I’ve come to realize that many in the scientific and medical community view me as grossly irresponsible. Indeed, in the words of Bob Edwards, the scientist who facilitated the birth of England’s first test-tube baby, I am a “sinner.” A recent book even branded me a “genetic outlaw.” My transgression? I am one of the dwindling number of women who receive a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome and choose not to terminate our pregnancies.

So when I hear about medical breakthroughs like preimplantation genetic haplotyping (PGH)—a new technique to screen embryos in the in vitro fertilization process for 6,000 inherited diseases—I can’t help but see 6,000 new reasons that parents will be branded as sinners or made to feel socially irresponsible for bringing their children into this world.

Diagnostic advances. PGH is a refinement of preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), a form of genetic testing developed in Britain in the 1980s. The procedure typically is performed within a few days after fertilization when the embryo consists of eight cells. One or two cells are taken from the embryo.

The DNA is extracted from the individual cell, replicated to create a big enough sample to work with, and then analyzed for chromosomal abnormalities. About 200 different genetic conditions can be identified through this procedure, including Huntington’s disease, muscular dystrophy, sickle cell anemia, and Down syndrome. If an unwanted condition is identified, the tested embryo is not implanted. If no condition is identified, the embryo can be implanted in the mother’s womb and will grow into a healthy baby. PGH exponentially increases the number of conditions that can be identified in an embryo before implantation.

This incredible technology has been heralded as a significant advance in our ability to offer couples who know they are carriers of certain genetic conditions “their first realistic chance of having healthy children.” It has also been described as an improvement over cruder techniques for preventing the birth of children with inherited conditions. Instead of screening for certain x-chromosome-linked conditions by destroying all male embryos, doctors can screen male embryos to determine

APPENDIX C

which ones actually have the particular condition.

PGD generally is considered by many to be preferable to the more commonly performed prenatal genetic tests, such as amniocentesis. And all of these techniques are more precise than even cruder predictive tests, such as those based on hormones and proteins found in a pregnant woman's blood.

From my perspective, though, our increasingly sophisticated technological capacity to identify genetic defects in our children also presents some very real threats to the kind of world we will be passing on to them. A few years ago, author Christine Rosen wrote, "Those who oppose discarding unfit embryos or aborting unfit fetuses will soon become—perhaps already are—a dissident culture, tolerated at best, but more likely heavily regulated by a society that increasingly expects only healthy children to be born."

Counting the cost. Scientists are beginning to tell me precisely how much dissident acts like not aborting my son cost society. A study published in 2000 in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics* concluded that the average lifetime cost of each "new case" of Down syndrome is \$451,000. This study differentiated the lifetime costs of various types of prenatally diagnosed disabilities leading to abortions in one hospital in Michigan. For reasons I can't fathom, Down syndrome turns out to be the most expensive by far. In contrast, the lifetime costs of conditions like spina bifida (\$294,000) and cleft lip or palate (\$101,000) seem almost negligible.

This study was offered to quantify the cost of banning "second trimester elective terminations for prenatally diagnosed abnormalities." Imagine the public outrage that would greet the publication of a study calculating the cost of not terminating pregnancies if it were broken down into a category such as family income. Although most of our civil rights laws now include "disability" in the litany of prohibited bases for discrimination—along with race, gender, and ethnic origin—our enlightened liberal commitment to diversity appears to go only so far. While we are willing to mandate accommodation to make jobs or public transportation accessible to a person with spina bifida, the social cost of accommodating her birth is increasingly being seen as exceeding her worth.

Eugenics by default. This emerging public consensus in favor of eugenics is not the product of any sort of reasoned debate. There has been no referendum, no debate in Congress, no move to amend the Constitution. It's emerging from the collective force of countless decisions by loving and caring mothers and fathers, in consultation with conscientious medical professionals who are using the truly miraculous and astonishing discoveries of brilliant scientists plunging deeper and deeper into the mysteries of life. These people are not intentionally practicing eugenics in order to create a perfect master race. They are simply trying to alleviate potential suffering and protect the quality of the lives they are bringing into the world.

But it is time for us to acknowledge the collective effect of these private decisions. Do we truly endorse the implicit message we are sending to our disabled

brothers and sisters—that our commitment to diversity does not extend to genetic diversity? We need to confront the disconnect between how we see ourselves—as an enlightened, liberal society committed to fully integrating people with disabilities in all sectors of life—and how people living with the disabilities we would identify for extinction must see us.

Making choices. Perhaps if we honestly confront this disconnect, we could start providing some more informed support to those loving and caring parents who are making difficult decisions in the offices of those conscientious medical professionals. We might tell them that studies show that people living with disabilities judge the quality of their own lives much higher than others expect. We might share with them stories of the incredible grace, joy, and happiness that many parents of children with disabilities experience. And when we hear about parents driven to despair by the difficulties of caring for a child with a disability, we might start asking ourselves how many of those difficulties stem from the erosion of a societal consensus about our responsibility to care for the most vulnerable segments of our society, rather than from the disability itself.

I would not want scientists to stop delving into the mysteries and wonders of the human genome. I am glad that I knew my son had Down syndrome before he was born. If one of these scientists found a “cure” for my son’s Down syndrome, I almost certainly would give it to him. But I will admit that I would pause beforehand. I would think hard about this real-life conversation between a teenager with Down syndrome and her mother. The daughter asked her mother whether she would still have Down syndrome when the two were together in heaven someday. The mother, taken by surprise, responded that she thought probably not. To which her daughter responded, “But how will you know who I am, then?” And I would also think hard about whether the world would really be a better place without my son’s soft, gentle, deep, almond-shaped eyes.

APPENDIX D

[Robert P. George is McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. Eric Cohen is a fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and editor of the ethics and technology journal *The New Atlantis*. The following appeared August 9, 2006 on *National Review Online* (nationalreview.com) and is reprinted with permission.]

A Clarifying Five Years

Robert P. George & Eric Cohen

In the five years since President Bush announced his policy on the federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research, his opponents have accused him of putting ideology before science and of subordinating sound public policy to sectarian religious scruples. The over-the-top rhetoric has been accompanied by grotesquely exaggerated promises about the therapeutic value of embryonic stem cells and outright lies, such as false claims that the Bush policy banned all stem-cell research. The truth is that the policy bans no stem-cell research, and while it forbids the use of federal funds in research involving new embryo destruction, it authorizes funding of research using embryonic-stem-cell lines created prior to the announcement of his policy on August 9, 2001.

Then there was the manipulation of the public by embryonic-stem-cell activists. Politicians initially made their case against the Bush policy by claiming that cryopreserved embryos in assisted-reproduction clinics are “going to die anyway,” then promised rejection-proof “biological repair kits” that would require the *deliberate creation and destruction* of cloned human embryos. They declare dismissively that human embryos are simply microscopic “clumps of cells,” ignoring the biological fact that we all began our lives as embryos—that the term “embryo” refers to a stage of development in the life of an enduring individual, whose moral worth hardly depends on size or appearance.

The stem-cell debate came to a head late last month, as Congress passed a bill to authorize funding for research involving the destruction of embryos, and President Bush used his first veto to stop it. The vote and the veto were long anticipated, and neither taught us much we didn’t already know about the issue. But a closely related stem-cell story turned out to be far more revealing.

Along with the controversial bill to overturn President Bush’s restrictions on federal funding of embryo-destructive research, Congress considered another bill—S. 2754, the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act. This piece of legislation would have authorized funding for scientists to explore techniques for producing embryonic-like stem cells without the need to destroy human embryos—in other words, all the scientific benefits of embryonic-stem-cell research without the ethical problems that have generated this divisive debate. And unlike the use of embryos left over in fertility clinics, these alternative methods would allow us to produce genetically controlled pluripotent stem-cell lines, which scientists argue are crucial for building useful models of dreaded diseases and

perhaps someday developing rejection-proof therapies. So they would give us the possible advantages of cloning without the need to engage in that morally abhorrent practice.

The “alternative methods” bill was co-sponsored by Senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum, normally bitter opponents in the embryo-research debate. It was passed in the Senate by a vote of 100 to 0. The bill also received a huge majority in the House, but it was brought to a vote under a suspension of the rules, and it unexpectedly did not receive the two-thirds it needed to pass.

In the hours before the vote, after seeing the bill sail through the Senate without opposition, Rep. Michael Castle (lead sponsor of the bill to support embryo-destructive research) distributed a set of false and self-contradictory talking points, arguing that what the “alternatives” bill would fund was both illegal and already supported by the NIH and that such research didn’t exist and would pull resources away from other important science. None of it was true, but the vehemence of Castle and his colleagues was deeply telling.

What exactly were these members voting against when they chose to stop the Specter-Santorum bill? They voted against helping American scientists find ways to obtain the benefits of embryonic-stem-cell research and so-called “therapeutic cloning” without the moral hazards and political controversy. They voted against finding common ground.

How promising is this common ground? It is always hard to predict the progress of science, but it seems more and more real each month. The scientific methods the bill would support have shown serious, if preliminary, promise in the past year. And they are not purely speculative, or even just limited to animal work. Last August, scientists at Harvard showed they could turn a human skin cell into the equivalent of a human embryonic stem cell without needing to destroy an embryo. Other scientists—Americans, Australians, Japanese, and others—have pursued this and similar techniques and made undeniable progress.

More work remains to be done, the outcome of which is of course still unknown, just as is the case with embryonic-stem-cell research. But surely the prospect of a way around the ethical dilemmas should attract our attention and support. Surely it makes sense for the government to invest in finding such a fruitful common ground.

But Castle’s minority voted instead for continuing the controversy. They apparently preferred the “issue” of stem cells over the science of stem cells. And they were clearly concerned that effective scientific alternatives would take their issue away.

Such political worries are perhaps understandable. Last year, the nonpartisan Genetics and Public Policy Center published a poll that asked “would you be willing to delay progress in medical research in order to find sources of stem cells that do not involve embryo destruction?” Forty-six percent of respondents said they would accept a delay. (And now that we know Hwang Woo Suk’s much ballyhooed cloning research in South Korea was a fraud, there is no reason to think cloning research is ahead of research that does not involve the destruction of

APPENDIX D

embryos anyway.) The poll also asked supporters of the bill that would overturn President Bush's funding policy if their views would change should techniques to develop embryonic-like cells without the destruction of embryos become available. They found that support for the embryo-destructive bill would drop by a quarter.

Some opponents of the Bush stem-cell policy have argued that we should support any and all stem-cell research, and not limit any particular type, so that science can advance on all fronts at once. The president has argued that we should support all *ethical* stem-cell research, so we may advance medical science while always respecting human dignity and protecting human life.

But those members of the House who voted against the Specter-Santorum bill did not choose all effective avenues of science *or* all ethical avenues of science. Instead, they would support *only* ethically controversial stem-cell research. They would support the research *only* if it involves the destruction of embryos. Otherwise, they are not interested.

That is not a position for the advancement of science on all fronts, but for keeping a political issue alive even as science advances and leaves it behind. It is hard to imagine a more blatant example of political cynicism overpowering a constructive solution. As the president put it: "It makes no sense to say that you're in favor of finding cures for terrible diseases as quickly as possible, and then block a bill that would authorize funding for promising and ethical stem-cell research."

The president has made clear he will use his executive powers to accomplish as much as he can of what the Specter-Santorum bill would have done. The search for ethical ways of pursuing stem-cell research will not end with Castle's gambit. But the notion that President Bush's stem-cell opponents are motivated simply by the desire to advance science on all possible fronts has been exposed as a lie by the House minority's shameful ploy. What they want, it appears, is to use stem-cell research for their political ends. And what they believe, rather perversely, is that support for embryo destruction is the new litmus test for being pro-science. Who, we are left to ask, are the real moderates now?

APPENDIX E

[Dr. Maureen L. Condic is an associate professor of neurobiology and anatomy at the University of Utah School of Medicine. The following appeared July 20, 2006 on National Review Online (nationalreview.com) and is reprinted with permission.]

Sliding Down the Slope

Maureen L. Condic

Michael Kinsley recently published an editorial in the *Washington Post* (“False Dilemma on Stem Cells,” July 7, 2006) in which he asserts that “The vast majority of people who oppose stem cell research either haven’t thought it through, or have thought it through and don’t care.” Kinsley bases this conclusion on the following argument: Since fertility clinics routinely produce multiple embryos, select only a few for implantation and freeze the rest, those who maintain “embryos are human beings with full human rights” are forced to conclude that “fertility clinics are death camps—with a side order of cold-blooded eugenics.” Since no one is up in arms about the practice of fertility treatment, therefore no one “truly believes in the humanity of embryos” and pro-life advocates are merely exhibiting “willful ignorance and indifference to logic.”

Having thus dismissed opposition to embryonic-stem-cell research as intrinsically irrational, Kinsley asserts that in his view, embryonic-stem-cell research is morally justified because of the potential medical benefit this research may yield and because “I cannot share, or even fathom, [the pro-life] conviction that a microscopic dot—as oblivious as a rock, more primitive than a worm—has the same human rights as anyone reading this article.”

Leaving aside the numerous factual and scientific inaccuracies in Kinsley’s statements, allow me to offer the following fictional adaptation of his argument.

The year is 2036, and Mr. Smith, a spokesman for the patient-advocacy group “Citizens for Life-Saving Organs” is testifying before Congress in support of a proposed “Harvesting of useful organs act” (H.R. 8100). The legislation would allow removal of transplantable organs from patients with untreatable neurological conditions such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s, since such conditions have few systemic effects that would reduce the therapeutic utility of transplantable vital organs.

Mr. Smith’s beloved daughter Suzie is afflicted with a congenital heart malformation that will prove fatal if she does not receive a heart transplant. Mr. Smith testifies that “The U.S. government’s continuing near ban on organ harvesting is costing our society and the world too much.” Killing terminally ill patients in order to extract their organs is morally permissible, Smith argues, since such patients are “doomed anyway.” Smith thinks it is absurd for society to worry whether terminally ill patients are human beings, noting that “nothing prevents us from claiming humanity for ourselves and denying it to the human-like entities we evolve into as our physical and mental functions are degraded by terminal disease.”

While Smith acknowledges that some Americans question the morality of

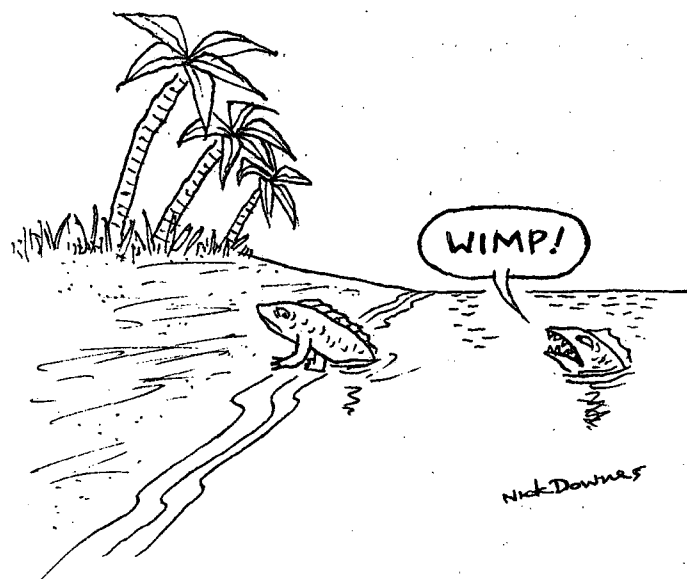
APPENDIX E

harvesting organs from living patients, he dismisses such concerns, saying “some people, including me, find it hard to make the necessary leap of faith to believe that a drooling, shaking, former human being in the last stages of Parkinson’s disease and, say, Nelson Mandela are equal in the eyes of God.”

Smith shows little patience for those who oppose what he believes to be the best hope for curing Suzie’s condition, stating “No other potential therapy—including conventional organ transplant—is nearly as promising for my daughter’s ailment.” Smith indignantly accuses any so-called “pro-life” supporters who oppose H.R. 8100 of hypocrisy, because, he claims they have not objected to the use of human-like entities for fertility treatments and for human embryonic-stem-cell research, two practices that are well established in America.

Smith concludes his testimony by confidently asserting that just as society’s “alarms” against the use of human embryos for fertility treatments and embryonic-stem-cell research “have been crushed by . . . grateful, happy parents,” so too will fall the current objections against using former humans with terminal diseases as a source of life-saving organ transplants.

What Kinsley apparently doesn’t understand is that this is what the slippery slope of his reasoning looks like from the other side. For his benefit and for the benefit of others who would become the likely focus of future efforts to harvest “the incredible life saving power” of one class of human beings in service of another class, I sincerely hope his flawed reasoning does not prevail.



APPENDIX F

[Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and a special consultant to the Center for Bioethics and Culture. The following appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle on June 18, 2006 and is reprinted with Mr. Smith's permission.]

Let Great Apes Be Apes

Wesley J. Smith

"I am an ape," Pedro Pozas, secretary-general of the Spanish Great Ape Project, declared recently.

No, Pozas wasn't commenting on his appearance. Rather, he was boosting Spanish legislation that would grant human-type rights to apes.

Animals can't comprehend the concept of rights, so why grant them such entitlements? Supporters of the legislation point to our close genetic relationship with chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans as justification. And it is true: The DNA sequence in our respective genomes varies only a little. But this small variance is responsible for vast differences. Indeed, there are tens of millions of measurable biological distinctions between humans and our distant primate cousins, which is why we have far higher brain capacities, walk on two legs and exhibit the many unique attributes that separate us from all other life on the planet.

But these facts won't matter to most supporters of the Spanish legislation, whose ultimate goal is the implementation of a broad animal liberation agenda that would eventually elevate all mammals to moral equality with humans.

Still, you have to start somewhere, and that's where the Great Ape Project—the inspiration for the Spanish legislation—comes in. Co-founded by Peter Singer, the godfather of the animal liberation movement, the project advocates that apes be granted full membership with humans in the "community of equals," thereby granting them the "right to life," the "protection of individual liberty" and the "prohibition of torture."

All animal abuse is clearly wrong and should be prevented through rigorous enforcement of strict welfare laws. This is a special concern when chimpanzees and orangutans are mistreated, given the poignant empathy we feel toward these magnificent animals. But by seeking to grant apes rights, rather than generally promoting their improved care, proponents of the project risk causing great human harm.

Take, as just one example, the purported right against torture. This seems reasonable until one reads the project's definition of torture as "the deliberate infliction of severe pain on a member of the community of equals, either wantonly or for an alleged benefit to others." Clearly, the primary aim here isn't to stop beatings or punish neglect, but when combined with the putative right to personal liberty, is clearly intended to prevent apes from being used in medical research.

A 2005 commentary written by primate researchers John VendeBerg and Stuart Zola in the science journal *Nature* demonstrates how foolish such a universal prohibition would be. Chimpanzees' genomic similarity to humans—the purported

APPENDIX F

rationale—is precisely the attribute that makes these animals “invaluable” for use in medical experiments.

One exciting example involves the development of revolutionary bioengineered substances known as monoclonal antibodies that offer tremendous potential to treat a wide range of human maladies, including cancer, multiple sclerosis and “virtually any disease caused by a viral infection.”

Chimpanzees are essential to this research because unlike other animals, their immune systems do not attack these genetically engineered antibodies. Consequently, the experimental substance remains in the chimps’ blood for extended periods, permitting researchers to fully evaluate its safety and efficacy before commencing human trials. Chimpanzees are also necessary in some areas of drug testing.

But perhaps most compellingly, they are the only other animal capable of being infected with the human HIV-1 virus, which for reasons not fully understood, does not usually make them ill. Thus, VendeBerg and Zola write, chimpanzees are “important for testing vaccines aimed at preventing HIV-1 infection or reducing the virus load in infected individuals.”

The loss of chimps as crucial medical research aids would be sufficient cause to reject the project. But there is an even more important, if esoteric, reason for refusing to grant rights to apes. The fundamental purpose of the project is to undermine our belief in human exceptionalism—the principle that human life has unique moral value simply because it is human. Animal liberationists abhor human exceptionalism as bigotry against animals. Thus, by persuading us to include apes in the so-called community of equals, supporters hope to slowly erode society’s belief in the unique importance of human life.

These misguided efforts overlook a crucial point: The way we act is based substantially on the nature of beings we perceive ourselves to be. In this regard, our self-concept as the world’s most important species is extremely beneficial, because it is both the stimulus for promoting universal human rights as well as the grounding for our distinctly human duty to treat animals humanely.

Spain’s Pozas may think of himself as being merely an ape, but the rest of us should reject his absurd moral reductionism. If we truly want to make this a better world, the answer is not to give apes unwarranted rights, but rather, to embrace the unique importance and solemn responsibilities that are essential aspects of living fully human lives.

APPENDIX G

[Hadley Arkes, the Ney Professor of American Institutions at Amherst College, is a fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. and author of many books, including Natural Rights and the Right to Choose (Cambridge). This essay appeared July 13, 2006, on National Review Online (nationalreview.com) and is reprinted with permission.]

Paging Dr. Weldon

Hadley Arkes

From California, this dispatch just in from an old friend, Bill Cox, the president of the Alliance for Catholic Health Care: A federal court of appeals in the Ninth Circuit has sustained the claim of the Alliance to have standing and defend itself against a law of California that compels all providers of emergency health care to deliver their services to all who present themselves for care—including the provision of abortions. The Catholic hospitals refuse to participate in abortions, even when those surgeries are claimed to be necessary to the life or health of the pregnant woman.

There is hardly a need to cover that vanishingly small number of cases, for there has been no want of hospitals and clinics in California ready and eager to perform abortions under any conditions. The story more likely to be missed here is this: If the Catholic hospitals manage to stand against the “public policy of California,” it is because they have been sheltered now by the timely moves of Rep. Dave Weldon (R., Florida) and the amendment he attached to an appropriations bill in 2004. Under the Weldon Amendment, all federal funds would be withdrawn from instruments of federal, state, and local governments that discriminate against “health care providers” that refuse to provide abortions, refer patients for the surgery, or cover the surgery in their own medical plans. The political class that forms the regime now in California complains that the Weldon Amendment works to prevent California from enforcing its public policy. Yes; exactly right. And a good day’s work that is.

It is also a telling example of the kind of leverage that is available with a Republican Congress and a pro-life majority in the governing party. It is one of those advantages easily overlooked as even members of the conservative base curiously fail to notice the many places at which a Republican Congress continues to make a difference, even while it suffers the flaws of character that we can count on finding among those creatures somewhere between the beasts and the angels. But that failure to notice has apparently affected even the conservative leaders in Congress. Don’t get me wrong: On matters like cloning and the destruction of embryonic stem cells, the Republicans in Congress have shown a sensitivity that runs beyond the things we might expect from most Americans, who understandably have their own business to distract them. But we have some other mounting crises, of serious concern to the conservative base, and they could be addressed, with powerful effects, by measures quite as simple and direct as Dave Weldon’s amendment. I’ll list two or three.

APPENDIX G

The deepening crisis over same-sex marriage

Some of us posted warnings as much as ten years ago about the extended effects of proclaiming in the law, not merely the legitimacy, but the essential “rightness,” and even the constitutional standing, of same-sex marriage. Lincoln remarked in his famous speech at the Cooper Union that if we conceded that slavery were right, then all words against it would be wrong, and may rightly be swept away.

The Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts established the legality of same-sex marriage, and now officers of the law at every level are drawing out the moral implications: Any justice of the peace who refuses to honor that law shall lose his commission. The public schools in many towns are now engaged in an active program to teach, even the youngest children, the rightness of the homosexual life and of families constituted by two fathers or two mothers. Mitt Romney, the governor of Massachusetts, reports the case of a father who protested over such instruction of his child. He was told by the superintendent of his local schools that the supreme court of Massachusetts had established the constitutional right to same-sex marriage, and it was the duty of the schools to instruct the children in the realities of the community in which they lived.

With the force of the same logic, the sweep of the movement reaches the churches and synagogues, as Maggie Gallagher has already noted in her tracking of these trends. In Massachusetts it could now be claimed that churches and religious schools and organizations that deny the legitimacy of same-sex marriage stand explicitly in opposition to the “public policy” of the state, established by the Supreme Judicial Court and supported now by the legislature. Those churches and religious schools may be stripped of their tax exemptions, but that is not all. One way or another, they can be denied their standing to use public facilities or even engage in public speech.

During the hearings, several years ago, on the Defense of Marriage Act in Massachusetts, one Unitarian minister expressed the view that anyone who opposed same-sex marriage was engaging in hate speech. Time has shown that he is not alone in holding those views; there are many people, especially in the universities, who are quite prepared to make use of that argument, while using the levers of authority available to them. Christian fellowships on campus may be denied the right to refuse, as leaders, openly gay students, who reject the Christian teachings that form the character of the fellowship. And of course, serious Christians and Jews are pushed into silence as they are subjected to compulsory sessions in “orientation,” instructing them on the sickness and depravity of anyone who would raise a moral argument about the homosexual life. In Ireland, priests have been warned that they could violate the laws against “hate speech” if they preach the traditional teachings on homosexuality. It is not to be assumed that this possibility is too distant from us, for the ground has already been amply prepared.

All of this may move beyond the reach of Dave Weldon, who deals with appropriations in Congress, but not with the tax code and the regulations of the IRS. But

if Dave Weldon cannot leap buildings with a single bound himself, he knows the colleagues in other committees who could be summoned to the project. Even if amendments on these issues cannot get through at once, just to introduce these measures could administer a sobering lesson in alerting people to the things that need to be done. And if any of them could make it through in this session of Congress, it could offer the kind of protection that the Weldon Amendment is now offering in California. Weldon or one of his colleagues could move simply but decisively to foreclose the use of the tax code as a lever against the religious. After all, Congress frames and clarifies the provisions on exemptions in the tax code. Instead of waiting for the IRS to come forth with its own interpretation, Congress can head off the activists at the pass: Tax exemptions may not be withheld from institutions, entities, private or public, because they have refused to acquiesce in any moral endorsement of the homosexual life or same-sex marriage.

Abortions: partial-birth “live-birth”

The Supreme Court, this coming fall, will hear cases involving the federal bill on partial-birth abortion. There is reason to hope that a Court containing John Roberts and Samuel Alito will be able to flip or overturn the decision in *Stenberg v. Carhart* six years ago—the case in which the Court struck down the law on partial-birth abortion in Nebraska. But the outcome is by no means a sure thing. In the meantime, it seems curiously overlooked that the courts that have restrained the enforcement of the federal act have restrained only the law that forbids partial-birth abortion. It is still open to the Congress to insist that the federal taxpayer should not be made complicit in a surgery that is regarded as abhorrent by 70 to 80 percent of the public. If abortion is a “private choice,” it is not necessarily a “public good,” which deserves to be publicly funded. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania brought in a rider on this point last year, and he should do it again: The Congress may move simply to withhold federal funds from any hospital or clinic that houses this brutal surgery.

The argument will no doubt be sounded that the Congress is trying here to achieve indirectly what it cannot achieve directly: It is trying to use its spending power to legislate against abortion, when there is a serious possibility that the congressional act on partial-birth abortion will be struck down as unconstitutional. But if that argument is used, the Democrats step into a trap at two levels:

The Republicans may simply fall back on the Born-Alive Infants’ Protection Act (2002), the act that forbids the withholding of medical care from a child who survives an abortion. Since the passage of that act, even the drafters have been surprised to discover just how widespread is the practice of “live birth abortion,” the practice of delivering a child whole and then simply placing the baby in the Refuse room of the hospital, left there to die. In contrast to the bill on partial-birth abortion, not a single Democrat voted in opposition to the Born-Alive Infants’ Protection Act. Nor has anyone even suggested that this act is unconstitutional. And in contrast to the Bob Jones case, we have here a real statute of the United

APPENDIX G

States: it is truly against the public policy of the United States to withhold care from a child who survives an abortion. The Congress would be on firm ground in withholding funding from any institution that houses this “procedure,” and while we are at it, this telling item could be added to the list for the IRS in dealing with tax exemptions. Every hospital and clinic in the country benefits from tax exemptions, and the withholding of tax exemptions for hospitals that do live-birth abortions could provide one of the most powerful levers for the pro-life cause.

The Democrats would be compelled to resist. For what is at stake for them, in the withholding of federal funds, is the device by which the federal authority has been extended over the past 40 years in accord with the reach of the liberal agenda. If the Democrats do not resist, that whole scheme, so critical to the regime of liberalism, could come unraveled. And yet if they do resist, they put themselves at odds with a policy that commands strong support among the American public, including that of people who call themselves pro-choice. Even people who accept the legality of abortion have drawn the line at partial-birth abortion and live-birth abortions, and they have no particular passion to see abortions funded with money drawn from taxpayers. For the Republicans this is a win-win proposition: It is a move that is gentle, moderate, limited, and yet it promises to propel the Democrats into tensions and divisions that can only be crippling, never healing. The enduring mystery is just why these political moves, so simple, promising a real yield, have not been done over the past two years.

The mystery is deepened when it is put alongside the vast accomplishment of Dave Weldon, with a measure quite as simple as his amendment. And so the question to Weldon and his colleagues, like Sam Brownback: You did it before, why won't you do it again? Why won't you do it now, when it would avert some pressing dangers, advance a genuine good, and when you have, in your hands at this moment, the means to do it?

APPENDIX H

[*Julia Gorin, a contributing editor of JewishWorldReview.com, blogs at JuliaGorin.com. The following column appeared August 17, 2006. Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal © 2006 Dow Jones & Company. All rights reserved.*]

Petitioning for Life

Julia Gorin

The Web site of Ms. Magazine—yes, it still exists—is calling on readers to sign a petition: “I have had an abortion. I publicly join the millions of women in the United States who have had an abortion in demanding a repeal of laws that restrict women’s reproductive freedom.”

Well, so much for the right to privacy. If Ms. readers hadn’t had so many abortions, there might be more Ms. readers. As for the rest of us, here’s a petition we could all sign: “I wasn’t aborted.”

Having narrowly escaped being aborted, I’d be the first in line.

Like most Soviet-era fetuses conceived in Russia by couples who were already parents, I was scheduled for abortion as a matter of course. In a society where abortion was the only form of birth control, it wasn’t uncommon to meet women who had double-digit abortion counts. Often a couple would schedule the appointment before they even stopped to remember that they wanted a second child.

My husband, also a second-born, and I were lucky to have been two such afterthoughts, each brought into the world thanks to one of two parents’ change of heart. (Actually it was Anya Isaakovna, my mother’s usual at the public clinic, who sensed a tinge of reservation and kicked her out.) Coincidentally, both my husband and I were to be the third abortions, each of us having had two siblings who weren’t so lucky, which unfortunately was lucky for us.

Not quite so for my parents. Life’s turns dealt them a hand they couldn’t have foreseen 30 years ago while aborting, an act that people living in a nation of miseries can’t exactly be judged for. Indeed, among Soviet émigrés from the 1970s and ’80s, it’s very rare to see families with more than two children, the self-imposed quota among Russians of that wave. But in hindsight, as my mother said a few months after my newlywed elder sister and her husband died in a five-vehicle collision in 2000, had she known she would outlive one of her only two children, she would have had more.

In America there is room to judge, despite what the “sanctity of choice” crowd wants us to believe. Yet rather than do that, my intention is to plant a seed of consideration that may otherwise never occur to America’s reluctant with-child women and even girls. It’s a consideration that, for all our endless debating, goes unspoken, but that could alleviate heartache in later life and enrich our lives in ways we can’t predict.

My father was another abortion-to-be. In 1941, my then 17-year-old aunt Dina barely managed to convince my grandparents that the invading Germans meant to kill Jews and that the family needed to evacuate from Odessa. They got onto

APPENDIX H

literally the last ship out of the city, an overcrowded barge that had no food or clean water. Dina's 2-year-old brother, Rudik, didn't survive the journey to Uzbekistan. Heartbroken and shunning the idea of any "replacements" for Rudik, Grandma didn't think twice before setting out for an abortion when she became pregnant at 42. But through very insistent implorations, her Uzbek landlady talked her out of it.

That fetus went on to become a world-class violinist, first for the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra and later the Baltimore Symphony. He blazed one of the earlier trails out from behind the Iron Curtain to America, inspiring and facilitating many relatives and friends to abandon Russia for the free world.

Soon after arriving in Israel, a family friend named Zoya discovered she was pregnant with a second child and went in for the abortion routine. She was dumbfounded to encounter the following whispered line of questioning from the admitting nurse: "Do you not have a roof over your head?" There was a roof. "Do you not have enough food on the table?" There was plenty of food. Then an altogether alien concept to Zoya: "So why kill it?"

"I was shocked," Zoya recalled. "No one had ever told me I was *killing* anything. I'd never thought of it as a person. As soon as someone told me I was killing something, I didn't even consider it. I left." Much like my grandmother, today Zoya is the mother of a master violinist.

Even in the case of teen mothers-to-be, for all the ruination and dead dreams we are told will be visited upon their lives if they keep the baby, if someone has ambition to begin with, nothing has to stand in her way. Consider the story of Beverly D'Onofrio, dramatized in the 2001 Penny Marshall movie, "Riding in Cars with Boys." Beverly, played by Drew Barrymore, gets knocked up at 15. She marries the father, an older boy, only to discover that he is a drug addict. Over the next few years, things at home fall apart and the two separate, with Beverly retaining custody.

While for a time her opportunities are more limited than they would otherwise be (a chance to get into an elite writing program at New York University is dashed when she has to bring the kid with her to the interview), ultimately her dreams stay intact and her personal story paves a way to literary and cinematic success—not an easy feat even for the privileged. Beverly D'Onofrio got to have her cake and eat it too, and while the men in her life since no doubt have come and gone, she will always have her son.

Rather than debate what it is we're killing, we should consider what we may be saving—for our sakes as much as for "its" own. When you choose to abort, you alter the course of history. While the child up for abortion may or may not be the next Einstein, saving his life could one day save yours.

Every day of my mother's parental life was lived with a dread fear that something might happen to either of her children, and the reality of this possibility loomed large in our lives. In 1982, my father's aunt lost her only daughter and son-in-law in a plane crash that killed 50 and orphaned my cousin, whom our family adopted.

THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

In 1990, my older cousin lost her teenage firstborn in a car accident. Looking at my own family, and at our circle of acquaintances, I estimate that at least one in three couples has outlived a child.

Common wisdom in Russia—subsequently confirmed by science—was that you always keep the first child, since not doing so could affect your ability to bear children in the future. The apparent lesson in my family has been also to keep as many of the others as possible, since that firstborn's fate isn't assured.

My mother today aches to have more “close people,” as she calls immediate family, and mourns how few are those whose love is unconditional. Every time I get into a car or plane, I'm paranoid about my safety for her sake. Every time I think of taking a foreign writing assignment, I think of her and don't. Every time I imagine moving to another city, I think of my parents' desolation.

We don't have a crystal ball, but there's someone who does, and there is a reason for every stork He sends along. I am religiously illiterate, but I have come to understand on the most visceral level why pregnancies are called “blessings”—even if, as often as not, the blessing comes in disguise.

For all the reluctant mothers-to-be out there, you should know that when you're having even a momentary second thought, someone you can't see is whispering in your ear. Fortunately for my husband's and my families, on the third occasion our parents listened.

APPENDIX I

[Ted Harvey, assistant minority leader in the Colorado House of Representatives, can be reached at ted@tedharvey.com. The following appeared June 16, 2006, in Focus on the Family's online magazine, citizenlink.org, and is reprinted with Rep. Harvey's permission.]

Planned Parenthood Celebration Jolted by Abortion Survivor

Ted Harvey

I want to share with you an awesome experience I had in the Colorado House of Representatives on May 8. It is a humbling experience to look back and realize that God used me to play a role in His divine orchestration.

I was leaving the House chambers for the weekend when our Democrat speaker of the House announced that the coming Monday would be the final day of this year's General Assembly. He went on to state that there were still numerous resolutions on the calendar which we would need to be addressed prior to the summer adjournment. Interestingly, he specifically mentioned that one of the resolutions we would be hearing was being carried by the House Majority Leader Alice Madden, honoring the 90th anniversary of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains.

As a strong pro-life legislator I was disgusted by the idea that we would pass a resolution honoring this 90-year legacy of genocide. I drove home that night wondering what I could say that might pierce the darkness during the debate on this heinous resolution.

On Saturday morning, I took my 8-year-old son up to the mountains to go white-water rafting. The trip lasted all day. As we were driving home, exhausted and hungry, I remembered that I had accepted an invitation to attend a fundraising dinner that night for a local pro-life organization. One of my most respected mentors had personally called me several weeks earlier and asked me to attend, so I knew I'd have to clean up and head over.

After our meal, the executive director of the organization introduced the keynote speaker. I looked up and saw walking to the stage a handicapped young lady being assisted to the microphone by a young man holding a guitar.

Her name was Gianna Jessen.

Gianna said "Hello," welcomed everyone, and then sang three of the most beautiful Christian songs I have ever heard.

She then began to give her testimony. When her biological mother was 17 years old and seven and a half months pregnant, she went to a Planned Parenthood clinic to have an abortion. As God would have it, the abortion failed and a beautiful 2-pound baby girl was brought into the world. Unfortunately, she was born with cerebral palsy and the doctors thought that she would never survive. The doctors were wrong.

Imagine the timing! A survivor of a Planned Parenthood abortion arrived in town just days before the Colorado House of Representatives was to celebrate Planned Parenthood's "wonderful" work.

As I listened to Gianna's amazing testimony, the Lord inspired me to ask her if

she could stay in Denver until Monday morning so that I could introduce her on the floor of the House and tell her story. Perhaps she could even begin the final day's session by singing our country's national anthem!

To my surprise she said she would seriously consider it. If she were to agree, she wanted her accompanying guitarist to stay as well. A lady standing in line behind me waiting to meet Gianna overheard our conversation and said that she would be willing to pay for the guitarist's room. Gianna then said that she would think about it.

As I was driving home from the banquet, my cell phone rang. It was Gianna, and she immediately said, "I'm in, let's ruin this celebration." Praise God!

When Monday morning came, I awoke at 6 a.m. to write my speech before heading to the Capitol. As I wrote down the words, I could sense God's help and I knew that this was going to be a powerful moment for the pro-life movement.

Following a committee hearing, I rushed into the House chambers just as the opening morning prayer was about to be given. Between the prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, I wrote a quick note to the speaker of the House explaining that Gianna is an advocate for cerebral palsy. I took the note to the speaker and asked if I could have my friend open the last day of session by singing the national anthem. Without any hesitation the speaker took the microphone and said, "Before we begin, Representative Harvey has made available for us Gianna Jessen to sing the national anthem."

Gianna sang the most amazing rendition of *The Star Spangled Banner* that you could possibly imagine. Every person in the entire chamber was completely still, quiet and in awe of this frail young lady's voice.

Due to her cerebral palsy, Gianna often loses her balance, and shortly after starting to sing she grabbed my arm to stabilize herself, and I could tell that she was shaking. Suddenly, midway through the song, she forgot the words and began to hum and then said, "Please forgive me; I am so nervous." She then immediately began singing again and every House member and every guest throughout the chambers began to sing along with her to give her encouragement and to lift her up.

As I looked around the huge hall I listened to the unbelievable melody of Gianna's voice being accompanied by a choir of over 100 voices. I had chills running all over my body, and I knew that I had just witnessed an act of God.

As the song concluded the speaker of the House explained that Gianna has cerebral palsy and is an activist to bring awareness to the disease. "Let us give her a hand not only for her performance today, but also for her advocacy work," he said. The chamber immediately exploded into applause—she had them all in the palm of her hand.

The speaker then called the House to order, and we proceeded as usual to allow members to make any announcements or introductions of guests. For dramatic effect, I waited until I was the last person remaining before I introduced Gianna.

As I waited for my turn, I nervously paced back and forth praying to God that he would give me the peace, confidence and the courage necessary to pull off what I knew would be one of the most dramatic and controversial moments of

APPENDIX I

my political career.

While I waited, a prominent reporter from one of the major Denver newspapers walked over to Gianna and told her that her rendition captured the spirit of the national anthem more powerfully than any she had ever heard before.

Finally, I was the last person remaining. So, I proceeded to the microphone and began my speech.

Members, I would like to introduce you to a new friend and hero of mine—her name is Gianna Jessen. She is visiting us today from Nashville, Tennessee, where she is an accomplished recording artist.

She has cerebral palsy and was raised in foster homes before being adopted at the age of four.

She was born prematurely and weighed only 2 pounds at birth. She remained in the hospital for almost three months. A doctor once said she had a great will to live and that she fought for her life. Eventually she was able to leave the hospital and be placed in foster care.

Because of her cerebral palsy, her foster mother was told that it was doubtful that she would ever crawl or walk. She could not sit up independently. Through the prayers and dedication of her foster mother, she eventually learned to sit up, crawl, then stand. Shortly before her fourth birthday, she began to walk with leg braces and a walker.

She continued in physical therapy and after a total of four surgeries, she was able to walk without assistance.

She still falls sometimes, but she says she has learned how to fall gracefully after falling for 29 years.

Two years ago, she walked into a local health club and said she wanted a private trainer. At the time her legs could not lift 30 pounds. Today she can leg press 200 pounds.

She became so physically fit that she began running marathons to raise money and awareness for cerebral palsy. She just returned last week from England where she ran in the London Marathon. It took her more than eight-and-a-half hours to complete. They were taking down the course by the time she made it to the finish line. But she made it, nonetheless. With bloody feet and aching joints, she finished the race.

Members would you help me recognize a modern-day hero—Gianna Jessen?

At this point the chamber exploded into applause which lasted for 15-to-20 seconds. Gianna had touched their souls.

Ironically, Alice Madden, the majority leader and sponsor of the Planned Parenthood resolution, walked over to Gianna and congratulated her.

As the applause began to die down, I raised my hand to be recognized one more time.

Mr. Speaker, members, if you would allow me just a few more moments I would appreciate your time.

My name is Ted Harvey, not Paul Harvey, but, please, let me tell you the rest of the story.

The cause of Gianna's cerebral palsy is not because of some biological freak of

nature, but rather the choice of her mother.

You see when her biological mother was 17-years-old and 7-and-a-half months pregnant, she went to a Planned Parenthood clinic to seek a late-term abortion. The abortionist performed a saline abortion on this 17-year-old girl. This procedure requires the injection of a high concentration of saline into the mother's womb, which the fetus is then bathed in and swallows, which results in the fetus being burned to death, inside and out. Within 24 hours the results are normally an induced, still-born abortion.

As Gianna can testify, the procedure is not always 100 percent effective. Gianna is an aborted late-term fetus who was born alive. The high concentration of saline in the womb for 24 hours resulted in a lack of oxygen to her brain and is the cause of her cerebral palsy.

Members, today, we are going to recognize the 90th anniversary of Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood . . .”

BANG! The gavel came down.

Just as I was finishing the last sentence of my speech—the climax of the morning—the speaker of the House gaveled me down and said, “Representative Harvey, I will allow you to continue your introduction, but not for the purposes of debating a measure now pending before the House.”

At which point I said, “Mr. Speaker, I understand. I just wanted to put a face to what we are celebrating today.”

Silence.

Deafening silence.

I then walked back to my chair shaking like a leaf. The Democrats wouldn't look at me. They were fuming. It was beautiful. I have been in the Legislature for five tough years, and this made it all worthwhile.

The House majority leader wouldn't talk to me the rest of the day.

Was it because I introduced an abortion survivor, or was it because we touched her soul? She could congratulate an inspirational cerebral palsy victim and advocate, but was outraged when she discovered that the person she congratulated was also an abortion survivor.

The headline in The Denver Post the next day read “Abortion Jab Earns Rebuke.” The majority leader is quoted as saying, “I think it was amazingly rude to use a human being as an example of his personal politics.”

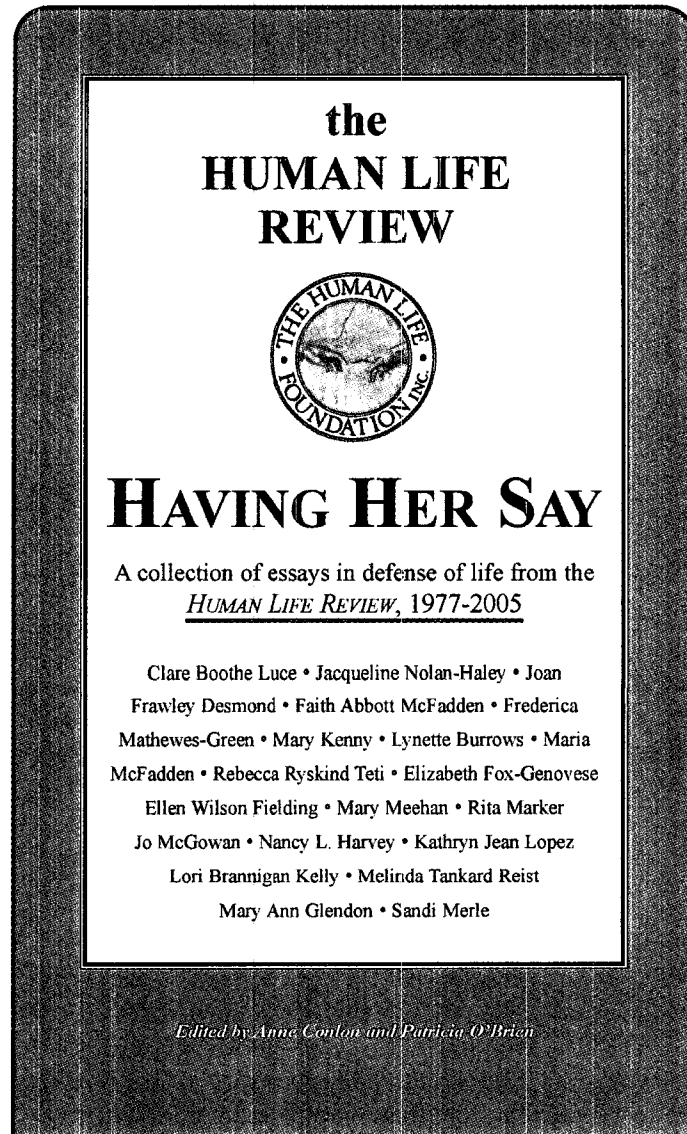
Yes, Representative Madden, Gianna Jessen is a human being. She was when she was in her mother's womb, and she was when she sang the national anthem on the floor of the Colorado House of Representatives.

The paper went on to quote Gianna, stating she was glad I told her story.

“We need to discuss the humanity of it. I'm glad to be able to speak up for children in the womb,” she said. “If abortion is about women's rights, where were my rights?”

All I can say is, “Glory to God!” He orchestrated it all, every minute of it, and I was so honored to have been chosen to play a part. May we all continue to be filled with and to fight for the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ!

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