

Abortion - The Great Injustice

By H.P. Dunn

Australian Catholic Truth Society No.1712 (1984)

1. Civil War

There is a civil war going on in this country right under our noses. The casualties are enormous. Nobody knows exactly how many young Australians are disappearing without trace but the annual loss must be at least 20,000. In New Zealand about 5,000 are dying each year. And scarcely anyone sheds a tear. The Government, paralyzed by untra-democracy, seems unable to stop the slaughter. By comparison the road toll, which attracts so much attention, is of little consequence.

These young lives are being lost through abortion. Has our country any enemies? Of course it has. We have fought in foreign wars at least once every generation since our history began. And our current enemies, real but unidentified, are delighted at our abortion toll. For all we know they might even be subsidizing our abortion clinics. This is a very cheap and safe form of warfare for them - we kill ourselves off and in a few more years they will be able to walk in unopposed.

In the USA the lives lost through abortion in one year total over one and half million, which is more than all that country's war deaths in her whole history. Throughout the world there must be about 40 million induced abortions each year. Indeed abortion now emerges as a global disaster comparable with the Black Death (1349-50) in which half the population of Europe perished. It can also be seen as the mechanism of the possible demise of Western culture. If it needs a million people to produce one genius, we are discarding our future geniuses ruthlessly.

2. Historical

Every society has had abortions but it has been only in the past 50 Years that the progressive advances in surgery, anesthesia, blood transfusion and antibiotics have made the operation safe and common. Russia introduced abortion as a central plank of Communist policy after the 1917 Revolution. An essential logic forced her to do so - rejection of God and His law, easy divorce and sexual freedom. But she has twice gone through cycles of restricting, relaxing and again restricting abortion, as it repeatedly devastated her society. Other Communist countries and Scandinavia, materialistic and post Christian, soon followed suit but the English speaking world resisted the trend until 1967, the year that the British Abortion Act was passed. Britain's abortions then soared from about 1,000 a year to over 180,000. They seem to have stabilized at that level, probably a measure of reproductive exhaustion. Any abortion statistics must be regarded as minimum figures because of under-reporting. It serves the interests of patients, governments, and the tax burdens of clinics and surgeons to keep the figures low.

We cannot point the finger at "the degenerate English". Even without explicit legal permission abortions in Canada, Australia and New Zealand have increased rapidly. We have abortion on demand de facto if not de jure.

3. Definitions

Obviously great numbers of people are in favor of abortion but it is also obvious that few of them understand, or even want to understand, exactly what is involved. A few definitions are needed. In all the emotional and confusing discussions and debates about this subject the only way to achieve clarity of thought is to refer repeatedly to two simple questions.

Q1. - What is the fetus?

Q2. - What is abortion?

A1. - What is the fetus?

We have known for 100 years that human life begins at conception when the male sperm unites with the female ovum (egg cell). But now we have the spectacle of doctors talking like peasants and saying that human life begins at quickening (when the mother first feels the baby's movements during the fourth month); or when the cord is cut; or when the baby is two days old; or even when it learns to read and can communicate! These preposterous suggestions are made because they are essential in order to justify killing the child early in pregnancy, or soon after birth, if it proves to be abnormal.

It is unscientific and anti intellectual to deny that life begins at conception. At that time the child receives its genetic endowment, and from then onwards it is different from every other human being since the dawn of history or in the future. All it does during the next nine months is to differentiate into various organs and to grow.

It is absurd to deny that this small, even microscopic, living organism within the reproductive tract of the mother is a genuine human being. It is not a "potential" human being. It is a perfect human with an anatomy and physiology appropriate to each particular stage of its life. Life is a continuum from conception through to death.

More significant still, this living human organism has also a metaphysical character which is of infinite importance compared with its physical nature. It has an unique immortal soul created by God, breathed into it by God at the start of its life, and destined to live in His presence for all eternity.

When Mary and Elizabeth greeted each other after the Annunciation, they had no doubts, in spite of their ignorance of embryology, that what they carried in their wombs were unborn children of transcendent significance for the world. St. John leaped for joy within his mother in the presence of the Savior and the Blessed Virgin burst forth into her Magnificat. The Unborn Child had arrived to bring salvation and justice to all future generations of unborn children.

A2. - What is abortion?

Anyone who supports abortion must be forced to face up to the horrors of these procedures. It is no longer acceptable to hide behind ignorance, euphemisms or sentimentalism, such as: "The doctor had to take my baby away"; "I wasn't allowed to have the baby"; "We'll have to terminate your pregnancy" (which really means "We'll have to exterminate your baby"); "We'll perform a therapeutic abortion".

This last adjective makes doctors feel good, but it is a misnomer. Abortion is not a therapy for any systemic disease. The only accurate term is "induced abortion" and that should be used honestly in all cases; it also avoids confusion with the common accidental, or spontaneous, miscarriages.

The child must die

The essence of induced abortion is the death of the child. It is necessary to stress this ugly fact because it is through the death of the child that the benefits of abortion are believed to flow to the individual and society. In some cases the child does not die and importunately clings to life with a remarkable tenacity. The operation is then a failure and in the USA there have been damages claims against doctors for allowing the child to survive. One child even sued the doctor, through its parents, because he failed to abort it and it had come to birth with a rubella defect. Are we all going mad? But note that there is a certain crazy logic among abortionists.

In the notable Glasgow scandal (1) a similar situation was described in Court. A hospital porter rescued a live 26 week fetus just before it was to be thrown into the incinerator. The press report is quoted to illustrate the pass that modern medicine has come to.

"...it was suggested by the Procurator Fiscal that, while the Abortion Act gave doctors the right to terminate pregnancy, it did not take away from them the duty to take every step to try to revive a child which might be viable... The view was expressed by certain medical witnesses that, the operation being an abortion, the object of which was to prevent the child's survival, resuscitatory measures might not be expected. When it was suggested to one consultant that, where there was a late termination of pregnancy, it should be treated as a possible live birth, the view was expressed that to do so would be to deny the purpose of the operation, and 'legally you are not entitled to expect it to survive'."

How do doctors feel in their new role of baby killers? Since the above case it is the rule in many hospitals when there is a late abortion (which is really a premature delivery) that a pediatrician must be pre-sent in the operating theater. The gynecologist does the operation whose aim is that the baby should die, and the pediatrician then works hard to ensure its survival. Crazy logic again.

Stages of Pregnancy

In early pregnancy an abortion may not be a great risk for the mother. But, whatever the procedure chosen, it is 100 per cent fatal for the baby.

The Age of Viability

This is the stage of pregnancy at which the baby is capable of surviving outside the womb. It is a useful medico legal concept, even though it cannot be defined precisely. In the recent past it was always set at 28 weeks and no doctor would interfere with a pregnancy until that date had been passed, but with the advances in pediatric care it is now back to 26, or even 24, weeks. There are even two reported survivors at an estimated 21 weeks, weighing about one pound (950g.).

"Menstrual Extraction"

It is hard to find a more dishonest term than this misnomer. It is a new technique in which abortion is induced at the earliest possible time, even before the mother knows for certain that she is pregnant. If her period is a few days overdue, or even up to two weeks late, the contents of the womb can be sucked out by inserting a small plastic tube through the cervix and applying suction with a large syringe. What comes out may be simply menstrual endometrium but in most cases it is early pregnancy tissue and the (unrecognizable) baby.

Up to 14 Weeks

The cervix is dilated by instruments and the fetus, being small and fragile, is removed from its uterine home either by forceps and curette or by a suction curette. This latter method involves

inserting a large plastic tube into the womb and applying suction by an electric pump. In both techniques the baby is fragmented in being expelled from the warm sanctuary of its mother's uterus. The arms and legs are pulled off, it is decapitated, its thorax is crushed, its gut spills out.

From 16 to 24 weeks

The baby is now too large to be dragged out through the cervix but, thanks to the advances of modern science, it can be disposed of in other ways.

Intra-amniotic saline

A long needle is inserted through the mother's abdominal wall into the cavity of the womb and a large amount of liquor (the fluid in which the baby lives and moves) is sucked out with a 50ml. syringe. An equal quantity of concentrated salt solution is then injected. This kills the baby in an hour or two. It is literally pickled alive, its skin becomes scarlet and it looks like a radiation victim. A few hours later the uterus starts contracting and discharges its dead and already necrotic burden. The patient must therefore go through a painful miniature labour and witness the result of her abortion.

Things do not always work out as well as expected. In some cases the labour does not start; in others the small baby is still alive when delivered. In Japan the method was discontinued after Dr. Wagatsuma reported 25 mothers' deaths resulting from it. But, because of its convenience, it is still widely used in Western countries. Other chemicals are used sometimes. They all involve some maternal risks. All are fatal for the baby.

"Do-it-yourself abortions"

These remarkable substances are now widely used by abortionists. They are long chain fatty acids which cause the uterus to contract and either deliver the child at full term or abort it at an earlier stage. If you hear of "do-it-yourself" abortion projects in early pregnancy, they probably refer to the use of prostaglandins in vaginal pessaries as soon as the period is "overdue".

When prostaglandins are used the baby is not killed before being delivered but dies from prematurity soon afterwards. The following quotation highlights the grim realities of late abortions: (2)

"The do-it-yourself abortion appears to be on the way to a come back in the form of Prostin-E2, which is to be put out by the Upjohn Company of Michigan, and will be used in the form of a pessary to induce abortions, or, in the pro-abortion terminology, to bring on a menstrual period. Dr. Joseph Stanton, President of the Value of Life Committee in Boston, notes that the warning on the drug label for Prostin-E2 will read: 'Warning - a live born fetus may occur'."

Over 24 weeks

When the fetus is almost at the stage of viability the easiest and quickest abortion is by hysterectomy, which is really a miniature Caesarean section. The abdomen is opened, the womb is incised from top to bottom and the baby is lifted out. It may weigh about one pound. It makes some weak movements of its arms and legs and tries to breathe. Sometimes it manages a pathetic cry like a kitten, then after a few minutes it dies an asphyxial death from prematurity and exposure.

If it had been left in the womb for another few weeks it could have survived in its cot but what the mother wants is for it to die. That is the whole object of the exercise. Not infrequently there is a

mistake in estimating the maturity of the pregnancy and the baby refuses to die. Instead of being only 26 weeks it might actually be 30 weeks with a reasonable chance of survival. When it grows into childhood it will be a constant reproach to its parents who had sought its death.

Hysterectomy is quick, simple and financially rewarding to the aborting doctor. And what does he do when the child starts crying in the theater and he envisages a dissatisfied customer with months of incubator care in the pediatric ward? After his years of training in medical school and postgraduate posts, and his 24 centuries of Hippocratic tradition of service to his newborn patients, he comes up with a brilliant idea (which I have heard of several times in cases of late abortions or abnormal babies) - he drowns it in a bucket of water! Man's inhumanity to man.

Disposal

At the end of all this sordid business the problem of disposal of the remains has to be faced by the equally supine nursing staff. Incineration is the favored method for the larger victims. Smaller ones go out with the sewage.

In the most shocking exposure of the cold blooded abortion racket in Britain by Litchfield and Kentish (3) there are several accounts of doctors selling the fetuses for profit. After all, why throw away a perfectly useful young corpse? Some went to soap makers who found that infant fat makes the best product. Others were sold to medical research establishments where the parenchymatous organs were minced and used for tissue culture work or other interesting projects.

Other accounts are heard of babies being decapitated and their heads being perfused to keep the brains alive for experiments. Doctor - monsters give a new meaning to the ancient prayer, "Requiescat in pace". No scientific advances can ever come from unethical experiments. One reason is that the true scientist must hold to certain basic virtues, mainly justice and truth. As a class abortionists are untrustworthy.

So end, in the cause of sexual freedom, the lives of millions of our fellow human beings, conceived in love (we assume), formed in the image of their Father in Heaven, destined for immortality but now discarded, dismembered or burned, unwanted, unremembered, unbaptised.

The Risks of Abortion

Abortion protagonists are always assuring the gullible public that this is a minor procedure without risk. This is a dangerous assertion. Of course the earlier the interference the less hazardous abortion is but, in the very nature of things, any physiological process (pregnancy and delivery) must always be safer than its artificial interruption.

Abortionists commonly quote official mortality statistics for abortion and for pregnancy as a whole and, if the former is, say, 0.1 deaths per 1000 abortions and the latter 0.3 per 1000, they claim that abortion is safe and therefore a good thing. But the argument is not quite so simple.

It is important to determine precisely what the definition of maternal mortality is. In most English speaking countries "maternal mortality" is calculated on obstetric deaths plus abortion deaths, therefore the "maternal" figure must always be greater than abortion deaths alone. In this country, New Zealand, (the definition includes all deaths up to six months after delivery or miscarriage. The main cause of "maternal mortality" at present is traffic accidents!

The immediate hazards of induced abortion are unchanged even with modern techniques. They are: hemorrhage, infection and perforation of the uterus. The remote hazards are equally serious but may

not show up for years. They are: sterility (tubal obstruction caused by infection at the time of the operation); incompetence of the cervix (caused by forcible dilatation of the cervix during the abortion); Rh sensitization which may lead to the deaths of subsequent babies; and uterine rupture during a later pregnancy.

These risks were stressed in the Wynn Report (4) which in 1974 was presented to Mrs. Justice Lane's Committee. The House of Commons had appointed it to look into the working of the Abortion Act 1967. The Wynns' findings were attacked by the abortion faction but numerous medical articles since then have confirmed the accuracy of their conclusions.

Incompetence of the Cervix

Rupture of the cervix musculature during abortion makes it weaker. During a subsequent pregnancy it is liable to dilate silently and allow a premature birth, possibly four, six or even eight weeks before the due date. Premature babies are, of course, at risk of death, cardiac abnormalities ("hole in the heart") or brain injury causing them to become spastics. The Wynns estimated that the cost to the country of the sequel of abortion is greater than that of the problem for which the abortion was originally induced. In other words, it would be cheaper in the long run to give a girl \$ 1 000 to have her baby (and save its invaluable life) than to look after her handicapped subsequent child.

Abortionist doctors reacted sharply against the Wynns but surely they will believe Professor Dixon, of the University Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Bristol. He (5) reported 211 patients who had previously had vaginal terminations of their first pregnancies. Of them 43.2% were pregnant again within a year of being aborted - which suggests that the reasons for the operation were inconsequential or non-existent.

Hazards of menstrual extraction

This "lunch hour abortion" is sold to the public as "less dangerous than crossing the road". But any interference with pregnancy, however early, is not without some risks.

Reasons for Abortion

If abortions are performed so frequently it would be logical to ask what are the medical indications for the operation? The aim of every ethical surgeon is always to have an incontrovertible "indication" for each procedure.

There are now scarcely any articles in the medical literature holding that certain diseases should be managed by inducing abortion. It can be confidently stated that there are no medical indications for "therapeutic" abortion, that is, no conditions in which induction of abortion is a lesser risk than leaving the pregnancy to proceed normally until term, or at least viability.

Those who have little experience of obstetrics are reluctant to accept this because they often do not realize the dangers of interfering. If the patient is so ill that pregnancy will be fatal, abortion (or Caesarian) is also a major hazard for her. It is by no means a panacea.

To illustrate the point: An obstetrical professor who had normal views on pregnancy management, the rights of the child and the best interests of the mother, had a patient with chronic renal failure. He carried her through pregnancy and delivery satisfactorily. Of course her expectation of life was limited before pregnancy but was no worse after it, and she had brought to life a perfect child.

The next year she was pregnant again but her first professor was overseas and she fell into the hands of a second professor who was an enthusiast for abortion. He talked this unfortunate Catholic woman into having an abortion. And she died of renal failure two days later. Unfortunately abortionists never learn.

Psychiatric disease

The leading indication for abortion is now "psychiatric disease". In countries where abortion is legal or is accepted de facto (Australia), about 90% of the patients are listed as "psychiatric". This simply means, in common parlance, having an "anxiety state". During pregnancy everyone at some stage suffers from anxiety - the mother, the father, the mother-in-law, the nurses and even the doctor. This must be regarded as the norm. The duty of the doctor is to call forth toughness, resilience and self-confidence from his patient; it can be done, even in teenagers. But if he makes abortion his first suggestion he sabotages the woman's innate strength and protective instinct.

Suicide

One of the most difficult problems to handle is the patient who says: "If I don't get an abortion I'm going to kill myself. And it'll be your fault." This is clinical blackmail. It is met with only in abortion and drug situations.

Suicide is very rare in pregnancy. Rosenberg and Silver found the incident was only one sixth of the rate in non pregnant women of comparable age. Doctors have a suicide rate that is twice the average, and among psychiatrists it is 70 times that of pregnant women. It would seem more appropriate if the women were advising the psychiatrists rather than the other way round.

The unwanted child fallacy

In an abortion interview the key question is: "Is this an unwanted pregnancy?" What it really means is: is this an unwanted child? If the mother replies "wanted", there is no hesitation about managing her pregnancy normally. But if she uses that fatal little prefix, "un-", the child will die.

The commonly accepted belief is that the child is thereby doomed to be unwanted next year, and in five years, and in twenty years, and will end up as a maladjusted delinquent. This preposterous proposition is believed implicitly by many psychiatrists who are influenced by Freudian errors.

It takes little experience of life to know that one changeless characteristic of women is: they change their minds. In fact they themselves describe this charming fickleness as "a woman's privilege". During pregnancy they invariably feel differently at every stage - in the first trimester, at quickening, during the last weeks, in labor, immediately after birth, while breast feeding, and on returning home.

Unfortunately the abortion question is put to them at the 8-12 weeks stage when they are depressed, tired and nauseated. The pregnancy is often unwanted; the baby is not yet a reality to them.

The Family Planning Association has a slogan: Every child a wanted child. The abortion organizations say: Every child has a right to be born wanted. A more accurate statement would be: Every child has a right to be born. Its parents have a duty to make it wanted, now and in the future. To reject a child as unwanted is a sin of injustice.

Other diseases

Nowadays it is hardly necessary to consider each major system illnesses because they have all been disproved so often as justification for abortion. In my own major review of the world literature on this subject" (6) I provided 62 references which in toto support this contention.

On the matter of malignancy, for example, I quoted the late Sir Stanford Cade, the foremost British authority on cancer: "The course of the majority of malignant tumours is not directly affected by pregnancy. It is not a dilemma of mother versus child..."

Ribeiro and Palmer (7) confirm this in a major article on breast cancer and pregnancy. "Patients presenting with early breast carcinoma in the first trimester should be treated in the same manner as non pregnant patients. There is no harm in allowing the pregnancy to continue..." And then, in that inexplicable and illogical fashion that is met with so often among modern doctors, they add: "...unless it is against the express views of the patient and her husband".

The doctor's duty is to his patient (and he immediately has two of them here, whatever the mother may think), to his professional integrity and to justice. It is not to the husband, or to society, or to their particular social problems.

Criminal abortion

It is often assumed that legalizing abortion will reduce the number of criminal abortions. Pass the crime on to the doctors because they will do the job so much better, even if a little more expensively.

There are two fallacies in this concept. One is that criminal abortions are both numerous and fatal. They are probably very few because deaths from this cause are rare - less than 200 a year in the USA; in Australia about 6; in New Zealand an average of only one!

The other fallacy is that the criminal abortionists will be put out of business. To imagine that there is only a fixed quantum of induced abortions in the community and that, as legal abortions go up, criminal ones will go down is a fanciful concept that ignores both human nature and the observed facts.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, (8) whose Report accurately predicted all the disasters that have come to pass since Britain legalized abortion, pointed out that liberal laws do not reduce criminal activity.

Nearly 10 years after the British Abortion Act was passed the Lane Report (9) was able to say: "It is a notorious fact that, both before and since the Abortion Act came into force, a substantial... number of illegal abortions have taken place..."

The abnormal child

In recent years eugenic indications for abortion have become much more common and persuasive. The reason for this is that we now have new techniques for diagnosing abnormalities at an early stage in pregnancy, notably ultrasonic scanning and amniocentesis.

Ultrasound can outline the fetus at a very early age, at least by eight weeks, and by 16 weeks most gross anatomical abnormalities can be demonstrated. But the accuracy of the technique is sometimes very disappointing.

Amniocentesis

In this method a long needle is passed through the mother's abdomen into the cavity of the uterus and a sample of liquid is removed for examination of its cells and chemistry. The chromosomal nature of the cells shed by the baby's skin or lungs can be determined and a fairly accurate diagnosis of some genetic abnormalities, notably mongolism (Down's syndrome), can be made.

In the chemical analysis tests are made for alpha-fetoprotein. If this is found in excess the child may have a nervous system defect such as spina bifida (the lower part of the spinal canal being open) or anencephaly (a defect of the back of the skull) - these babies seldom live for more than a day.

Clinical application

The laboratory work is brilliant but the clinical use of amniocentesis, even putting the most charitable interpretation on doctors' thought processes, is often stupid. It cannot be stressed too strongly that: there is no point in doing an amniocentesis unless an induced abortion will certainly follow if the diagnosis is unfavorable. Otherwise the whole procedure is merely a self assuring exercise for both patient and doctor. "Your baby's all right!" Smiles all round. But at what a cost!

Dangers

It is almost routine now to offer patients with a bad history, or those over the age of 40, an amniocentesis at 16 weeks to see whether or not they are carrying that object of hatred and rejection, a mongol child. But this is a risky procedure and it is naive to imagine that it can be performed in an innocuous fashion.

The needle, which is inserted "blind", might injure or kill the baby. It might penetrate the mother's bowel, bladder or large blood vessels, leading to peritonitis or hemorrhage. It might pass through the placenta and precipitate Rh sensitization; this may be fatal not only for this baby but also for any subsequent one. There is a significant risk that the procedure will itself cause a miscarriage to occur.

Mistaken diagnosis

There is a naive and touching belief in the infallibility of modern medical diagnosis and treatment. If this were true, doctors would not be so nervous when they fall ill; and undertakers would be out of a job. If I say: "Abortion of a child, whether normal or abnormal, is a gross injustice", the unrelenting profession regards me as obscurantist, un-scientific, reactionary and narrow minded. O Lord, keep my hands unstained by innocent blood.

Human rights do not attach solely to normal citizens. The abnormal at any age have the right to life, to justice, to love and care.

The Law Should Uphold Human Rights

Historical

The modern legislative trend relaxing abortion laws must be regarded as retrogressive. It is completely opposed to the ancient legal codes. The Sumerian Code (c. 2000 B.C.) is the oldest known system to penalize a citizen who caused an abortion.

Again in the Assyrian Code (c. 1500 B.C.) the fetus is referred to as a human life and a man. And indirectly in the Book of Exodus, (21, 22-23) "If men fall out and one of them strikes a woman who is pregnant, so that the child is stillborn, but she herself lives, he must pay whatever sum the woman's husband demands and the judges agree; if her death follows, then life must pay for life."

Recent legislation

The constant theme of legal history is: protection of the unborn child. Now we are asked to believe that this has all been a mistake. New laws in most Western countries during the past 20 years have generally removed from the child the protection of the law, but we can detect the first movements back to more restrictive legislation, the latest example being the Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion Act (1977) in New Zealand.

Some abortion pressure groups seek not only "reform" (meaning "relaxation") of existing laws but even complete repeal, making the matter "a private one between the patient and her doctor".. This would be abortion on demand - the absolute death knell of the child.

The "reformers" blind themselves to the fact that abortion is different from all other operations - it is the only one which, of its nature, is a criminal act. Its essence is the taking of the life of a third party, the unborn child. It is entirely proper that the State should regulate or prohibit it.

In Australia the Menhennet decision has, in practice, brought abortion on demand. It is now almost impossible for an abortion prosecution to succeed. One country after another has tried to achieve well regulated abortion but this is an impossible aim. There is no middle ground between a strict abortion law and a lax one. To quote Prof. Lewis, of London: (10) "Too late they (the British Government) realized that, if you change the law (even if you do so merely to make it more clear to the public), you imply liberalization; liberalize the law and you open the floodgates." The reason all these laws fail is that fundamentally they are trying to work out a right way of doing a wrong thing. And that is impossible. Favorite slogans of abortionists are: "Abortion - a woman's right"; and "A woman's right to choose". These are fallacious. It is not, and never has been, a woman's right to kill her child, born or unborn.

Human rights

The most fundamental right, from which all other rights spring, is the right of the innocent to life. This does not derive from human government but from the Creator, who is the ultimate origin of love, of life and of law. It is illogical to claim that the child in the womb has no legal rights. In fact most legal systems allow him to inherit if his father should die before his birth; and he may later sue for damages suffered during intrauterine life. In countries which until recently had capital punishment, a woman could not be executed until her child was born because, as an innocent citizen, he ought not to suffer the injustice of indirect judicial death.

The Hippocratic Oath

The great Greek pagan physician Hippocrates (c.460-357 B.C), proclaimed his Oath which for 24 centuries has sublimely expressed the ideals of Medicine. One section states: "I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and will abstain from whatever is deleterious or mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. With purity and holiness I will pass my life and practice my art..."

The Declaration of Geneva

The modern version of the Hippocratic Oath is this Declaration which was formulated following the revelation of the inhumanity and mass murders perpetrated by Nazi doctors under Hitler's orders.

Among other things it states: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception; even under threat I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity." Since the revolutionary work of Professor Sir William Liley (11), of Auckland, the child in the womb is now seen as a patient in his own right, capable of being investigated, diagnosed and treated. When a pregnant woman places herself in a doctor's care he immediately has two patients. May he kill one of them at the request of the other? Never.

The Morality of Abortion

There may be many areas of uncertainty in modern theology but in the matter of abortion there is not the slightest doubt about the ethical status. Abortion is the direct killing of an innocent human being and has always been regarded as murder. Perhaps homicide would be a better term, more consistent with modern legal definitions.

Murder implies aggression with malice aforethought; in all charity we must assume that these elements are rarely present. Most women have their judgment disturbed by fear and extraneous pressures. Most doctors act on the mistaken premises that the fetus has no rights; that it constitutes a real threat to its mother; and that they have the authority to decide its fate.

Direct killing

"Direct" is emphasized because sometimes indirect killing, even though foreseen and permitted, may not be wrong. A mother with, say, a cancer of the cervix, may be treated with radium or deep X-rays even though this may indirectly harm the unborn child or possibly precipitate an accidental miscarriage. But induced abortion always means direct killing of the child.

Innocent

"Innocent" is stressed because the fetus is sometimes considered an unjust aggressor on the life of the mother. This is stretching imagination too far. The baby did not force itself on her. It did not ask to be conceived. It is incapable of volitional thought or aggression. It may be a threat, not because of its intention, but merely because it happens to be in that situation at that particular time. And, indeed, the threat concept is greatly exaggerated.

Human being

"Human being" is the final important phrase. Those who advocate abortion are forced to work out a philosophical system which is denigratory of the fetus in order to justify its destruction. They say it is not a human being, a human person or a human life., it is a parasite on the mother that can therefore be removed if necessary. The abortionists have another slogan: "A woman has the right to do what she likes with her own body." Her own body! This is almost invincible ignorance. As every schoolboy knows, the baby is a separate individual right from the time of conception. All the mother does is give it shelter, accommodate it, feed it, nourish it from her own resources and, in the case of normal women, cherish it.

As early as the six weeks stage its heart is already pumping its own blood which has the same ABO group and Rh type which it will have to the end of its life. It is already a boy or a girl; the color of its eyes and its hair are already determined; and it cannot grow up into anything other than a human baby.

Ethical assessment

The killing of the unborn child is always wrong, whatever the circumstances. It contravenes the Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill. This is not a Catholic, nor even a Christian, commandment. It was given by God to Moses and through him to the whole human race. But the obligation, being derived from the Natural Law and therefore inherent in all human beings, antedated Moses. The obligation to protect innocent human life rests equally on all men, of all religions and in all ages.

Christ came to redeem us, to illumine the old law and to give us a clear insight into His plan for our salvation. He provided us with the sacraments and other means of grace to help us, He gave us the apostolic succession to guide us, and He consoles us by sharing our unending sufferings.

He was in danger as soon as He was born; now children are hated before and after birth. He was a political refugee as an infant, fleeing into Egypt by night; now there are millions displaced from their homelands. We suffer despair in the face of so much evil; He similarly cried out in the Old Testament phrase: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?".

Christian tradition

Since the earliest times the Christian Church has consistently condemned abortion as murder. Yet we now witness the spectacle of the clergy organizing abortion services! The growing participation of clergyman in the USA as prime movers in abortion reform and referral. Clergy consultation services offer women guidance and assistance in obtaining safe, legal abortions." (12)

The command, "Thou shalt not kill the fetus by an abortion", was found in The Didache (80-100 A.D.). In the East, Athenagoras (177 A.D.) and, in the West, Tertullian (240 A.D.) both described abortion as murder. Similar statements were made by St. Cyprian (258 A.D.), St. Hippolytus (235 A.D.) and the Council of Elvira (300 A.D.).

St. Basil the Great (375 A.D.) stated: "A woman who deliberately destroys a fetus is answerable for murder. And any fine distinction as to its being completely formed or unformed is not admissible amongst us." In the 5th century St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine and St. Jerome all held similar views.

Ancient and modern authorities are quoted in detail in a notable legal journal (13). For two thousand years, it says, "the Catholic Church has always and consistently and without exception denounced abortion as a moral evil, as a sin, and in certain circumstances even as a crime." It quoted the acceptance of abortion as "an unspeakable crime" in two Papal Encyclicals, in a reply of the Holy Office, in eight Papal Allocutions, and in the Second Vatican Council" (14) .

Is abortion ever justifiable?

This is the key question. The only logical answer must be "No". Abortion is wrong, it is a grave sin and a crime against the innocent. Its prohibition is absolute, not relative. No circumstances, however serious, can justify it. If we hold to the principle of justice we must adhere to it not only in the easy problems but also when they are difficult and heartbreaking.

Regrettably we must admit that the majority of Western countries answer with a "Yes". It is this failure to be absolutely opposed to injustice that has led step by step to the abortion nightmare of the present time. Anyone who makes exceptions in this matter, perhaps in cases of rape or fetal abnormality, is not really opposed to abortion at all. He is merely opposed to large numbers of abortions.

Those who would permit the occasional abortion, perhaps to show how broadminded they are, are pragmatists. That is, they believe that the end justifies the means; or in other words, that one may do evil that good may ensue. They act on expediency, not on principle. This philosophy was condemned by the ancient pagan philosophers. More important still, it was also condemned by St. Paul(15). The end does not justify the means.

Christ, our divine yet human model, never compromised on principle. He was never confused by the "grey areas" of which modern theologians are so enamored. He was a black and white man. Perhaps he had pregnant women in mind when He said: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The guilt is shared

All who co-operate in abortions, directly or indirectly, proximately or remotely, formally or materially, share in the guilt in greater or lesser degree. This applies not only to doctors and nurses but also to all those who counsel or facilitate abortion - politicians, professors and lecturers, writers and the news media, pornographers and women's "liberation" activists.

Shakespeare, in a similar shedding of innocent blood, had Lady Macbeth hopelessly trying to wash the stain from her hands. Dante (c. 1300 A.D.) wrote: "...for the river of blood draws nigh, in which boils everyone who does violence to others." (16)

The Impact of Abortion on Society

Abortion has split society down the middle, exactly as it has done the medical profession. It has produced more bitter divisions and ill will than anything apart from war. Families have been disrupted, marriages have ended. Such a large number of young people in society have been involved in abortion, some while still at school, that there seems to be scarcely any normal youth left, unscarred by sexual adventures or the killing of their own offspring.

One of the reasons for the "generation gap", that silent conflict between parents and children, is that the teenagers realize instinctively that their child-rejecting parents do not really love the young. Or, if Mother has had an abortion, or screams from an abortion bandwagon, they will hate her for killing their brother or sister and they will see that they themselves must have narrowly missed that fate.

One of the traumatic experiences of growing up is discovering that parents are not perfect. If they have feet of clay it is bad enough, but if they turn out to be killers it can be devastating. Keep your precious money, give me jeans, bare feet, drugs, an unkempt appearance, anything that will separate me from materialism!

Demographic impact

Contraception makes a small dent in the population graph. Sterilization permanently removes a large section of the younger marrieds from the childbearing area. Abortion makes the greatest impact of all on the demographic structure of the country. The birth rates in all Western countries are at the lowest levels on record. I have always believed that any country with a birth rate less than 20 per 1000 has lost the will to live.

Australia's birth rate in 1977 was about 16.2; New Zealand's 17.0. Australia's growth rate was 1.1 % and, if it were not for immigration, it would have been only 0.79%. New Zealand's growth rate in 1977 was only 0.1 % - Zero Population Growth! And a corollary of that is - zero economic growth.

ZPG is a demographic fiction, a biological impossibility because of the inexorable ageing of the population. It is merely a moment in the country's history when the falling curve of the birth rate crosses the rising death rate graph. Britain in 1977 for the first time on record had a higher death rate (12.0) than birth rate (11.9). A dying country. And all brought about by the anti-life techniques introduced by the medical profession. What wars and sickness have failed to do, society and its doctors have managed to achieve.

Why the Abortion Explosion?

It is only when a proper diagnosis of this extraordinary phenomenon is made that the cause can be clearly identified and rational treatment instituted. It is not simply a matter of women's lacking financial resources or social contacts. Providing money, services and friendship will therefore not do anything more than treat the malaise symptomatically.

Abortion must be seen as just one facet of the whole syndrome of sexual abnormality. If a person supports abortion we can deduce accurately that, ipso facto, he must also support the other elements of the syndrome. The main ones are: contraception, sterilization and then abortion. It is important to recognize that there is an inevitable progression from the first to the third.

If this is so, it is illogical to hold, as so many do, that expanded contraceptive services will be a prophylaxis against abortion. It is therefore important to stop the Family Planning Association from indoctrinating schoolchildren in their esoteric arts ostensibly to prevent abortion. The progression from contraception to abortion has been the life history of our society, of the medical profession and, a fortiori, of the FPA itself. It is now intimately mixed up in abortion services.

Abortion must also be viewed as an aspect of freedom, notably sexual freedom, and once people are "hooked" on it they will be reluctant to give it up. It is now an essential part of unfettered sexuality. Contraception ushered in the concept of sterile sexuality, the divorce of intercourse from fertility and fecundity. Abortion makes up for its occasional inefficiency and ensures that no new life will appear to complicate sexual activity.

It is therefore essential to the final success of the sexual revolution, whose achievements up to date have been the acceptance of - fornication among the young, adultery, divorce, contraception, sterilization, abortion, homosexuality and related perversions. In abortion the silent, defenseless child in the womb suffers violence. The increasing violence in society should not surprise us. St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 A.D.) had already pointed out that impurity leads inevitably to violence. Seven centuries later Sigmund Freud made a similar observation: sexual abnormality is intimately related to sadism and masochism. Abortionists are violent people at heart.

A global death wish

Women have come to hate their feminine nature, their fruitful wombs and the children who would otherwise issue from them. The whole world seems caught up in a gigantic death wish as though it seeks to eliminate the human species. Homo sapiens is an aggressive animal. He usually bursts out into a major war once in each generation but the fear of the consequences of atomic bombs has forced an uneasy peace. He therefore turns on the easiest victim to hand - the child in the womb. Who is the author of life? And who is the champion of death?

Satan is the prince of darkness and of death. More and more people are beginning to fear the palpable evil in society. It has been fashionable to deny the existence of the Devil but Christ did not suffer from any such constraints and uncertainty. He frequently referred to him: "I saw Satan cast

down from Heaven like lightning." And: "He was a liar and murderer from the beginning." Abortion is the Devil's work. He has many willing allies and many foolish dupes, some even wearing clerical collars. What is evil hates what is good. The quintessence of good and innocence is the unborn child, but he is the object of so much hatred and hysteria in our society.

Christ loves life

Protecting the innocent from injustice is the Prince of Peace and of Life. Christ referred to His identification with life on numerous occasions - "I am the way, the truth and the life"; "I am the bread of life"; "I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly".

And he had another statement which, if the pronouns are changed, seems to be particularly relevant to abortion: "She who saves her life shall lose it; and she who loses her life for my sake shall find it." The words of God to the Jews in the Old Testament (17) are also relevant in this context: "...this day I have set a choice before thee, life or death, a blessing or a curse. Wilt thou not choose life...?"

Humanism

A philosophy that sets its face against life is secular humanism, which is simply a fancy name for atheism. At least it is consistent in that it advocates not only abortion but also euthanasia for the aged and abnormal.

It is not surprising that, lacking devotion to Our Lord or completely ignorant of Him, many have almost lost their Christian heritage. They choose instead instant sex, sentimental love, temporary marriage and - imperfectly perceived - instant death in abortion.

The Churches

The Catholic Church stands almost alone in rejecting abortion in all circumstances. Along with Orthodox Judaism it adheres to the Mosaic Commandment.

The Anglican position, as expressed by the Church Assembly Board (18), sanctioned abortion if medical indications were thought to exist. The National Council of Free Churches expressed similar views (19). The late Dr. Alan Guttmacher, President of International Planned Parenthood Federation, the largest abortion referral agency in the world, stated that the liberal Jewish view was equally permissive. He added: "It was only after the firm establishment of the Protestant Movement that medically indicated interruption of pregnancy was given religious, ethical and legal sanction by any Church group." This highlights the real difficulties which confront the ecumenical movement.

On the other hand, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great Lutheran theologian who was hanged by the Nazis in 1945, wrote in his "Ethics":

"Destruction of the embryo in the mother's womb is a violation of the right to life which God bestowed upon this nascent life. To raise the question whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The simple fact is that God certainly intended to create a human being, and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life. And that is nothing but murder."

Professor Helmuth Thielecke, of the University of Hamburg: once conception has taken place it is no longer a question of whether the persons concerned have responsibility for a possible parenthood; they have already become parents."

Professor Karl Barth of Basle came to the conclusion: "He who destroys germinating life kills a man."

For an Orthodox Jewish statement we turn to Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits (20): "Based on these principles and precedents, present day rabbis are unanimous in condemning abortion, feticide, or infanticide to eliminate a crippled being, before or after birth, as an un-conscionable attack on the sanctity of life."

Plan of Action

This is a desperate struggle which points up the feebleness of the Christian witness in society and the timidity of the Church militant. As Malcolm Muggeridge puts it, our motto seems to be "Backward, Christian Soldiers"! This is the most worthwhile campaign we will ever be able to join. The Crusades were pale shadows when compared with the nobility of this clear-cut issue.

It takes only a handful of good men to revitalize society. One saint can support a million ordinary men by his courage and holiness. Christ started out as a minority of one but within three years He turned the world upside down. But the opposition is diabolical and, as He once said, some devils are cast out only by prayer and fasting. That is our formula for success - more prayer and, regrettably, more penance. The Mass is fundamental, but for everyday use the Rosary and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary will do the trick.

Only a resurgence of true religion in the churches and the schools will save society from the consequences of practical paganism. Secular education should be abandoned except for the children of avowed agnostics. The Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, should be made a national day of prayer and reparation for the evil of abortion. Surely the children of Bethlehem will come to the aid of the suffering children in the modern world.

Government help should be withdrawn from organizations which provide contraceptive and sterilizing services because of their gravitation towards abortion. Pornography and related influences which undermine normal standards of sexuality should be proscribed.

Everyone, but particularly the Churches and opinion formers in society, should have the courage to state plainly that, objectively speaking, abortion is a serious sin.

Whether it is one subjectively for each distressed woman and her advisers no-one can say. Ultimately we shall all have to face the Just Judge after death. How shall we justify our weakness, our cruelty and our ignorance of the true nature of the child in the womb when knowledge and pastoral teachers are at hand? Have abortionists no fear of the wrath of God?

Education

People should be taught the answers to the two fundamental questions, what is the fetus? And, what is abortion? The horror of abortion will turn sensitive souls against the operation. The young will be fascinated by the modern knowledge of life in the womb. At the stage when most abortions are done the fetus is moving and all his senses are fully developed. He drinks the liquor, sucks his thumb, bears the thumping of his mother's heart, bowel sounds, conversation, laughter and singing. The womb is a noisy place; 85 decibels have been recorded.

But knowledge alone is not sufficient to protect the child. Doctors and nurses know - but they still abort. The main thrust of education should be directed to human rights and duties, and their derivation from God.

The Social Campaign

In our own marriages the virtues of love and fidelity, purity and courage, should shine like a beacon in a darkening world. From the security of our homes we must stretch out our hands to help those with childbearing problems - health, poverty, or an unmarried predicament.

Most governments provide reasonable social services but there are always some deficiencies to be remedied. Financial assistance to families could well be expanded with increased maternity allowances, family benefits, and income tax deductions for children and their health or educational expenses. Domestic help for mothers and cheap holidays for families deserve more governmental backing. Young mothers with children should be honored by society with such titles as Mother of the Year or Family of the Year.

The Political Campaign

The best thing is for good men to get into public life. Why should we always be cast in a suppliant role? Getting to know your parliamentary representative is important; you must let him know your views in this important subject by speaking or writing to him. A brief inoffensive letter is all that is needed. If you do not do this he will be overwhelmed by the spurious results of many slanted public opinion polls.

Join a Society

An individual without the help of an organization is just a voice crying in the wilderness. To be really effective you must join one of the many Pro-Life Organizations which have sprung up in the last ten years. Massive support of them will give strength to good quality politicians.

Useful addresses

Australia: The National Right to Life Association-

STATE DIVISIONS Queensland: Box 1507, G.P.O., Brisbane 4001 N.S.W.: Box 3612, G.P.O., Sydney 2001 Victoria: P.O. Box 294, South Cariton 3053 A.C.T.: Box 86, P.O., Jamison Centre 2614 Tasmania: Box 1158M, G.P.O., Hobart 7001 South Australia: 597 South Rd., Everard Park 5035 West Australia: Box 16, P.O., Melville 6156 Northern Territory: Box 3016, P.O., Darwin 5794

New Zealand : Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child has about 70,000 members and over 60 branches. The national secretary: P.O. Box 12-286, Wellington North.

England: Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, 19 Queen Anne's Grove, London, W.4.

U.S.A: Hundreds of pro-life organizations co-ordinated by: National Right to Life Committee, P.O. Box 9365, Washington, D.C., 20005.

Canada: Right to Life Association, 17 Queen St. East, Suite 444, Toronto, Ont., M5C 1P9.

World's: champion pro-life fighter: Fr. Paul Marx, OSB, The Human Life Center, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, 56321, U.S.A.

REFERENCES

1. Death of a Baby: Inquiry in Glasgow. British Medical J. (1969), 14 June, p. 704-705.
2. Pro-Life News. Canada, Dec., 1977. Warning: The Child May Survive.
3. Litchfield, M. and Kentish, S. Babies for Burning. Serpentine Press, London, 1974.

4. Wynn, M. and Wynn, A. Some Consequences of Induced Abortion to Children Born Subsequently. (1974). The Foundation for Education and Research in Childbearing. London.
5. Richardson, J. A. and Dixon, G. Effects of Legal Termination on Subsequent Pregnancy. British Med. J. (1976), 29 May, 1303-1304.
6. Dunn, H. P. (1968). Therapeutic Abortion In New Zealand. N.Z. Med. J., 68. 253-258.
7. Ribeiro, G. G. and Palmer, M. K. (1977). Breast carcinoma associated with pregnancy: a clinician's dilemma. British Med. J., Dec., 1524-1527.
8. Legalised Abortion: Report by the Council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. British Med. J.. (1966), 1, 850-854,
9. Quoted in British Med. J.. (1976), 11 Aug., p. 431.
10. Lewis, T. L. T. (1970). Aust. N.Z. J. Obstet. Gynaec .. p. 244.
11. Liley, A. W. (1963). British Med. J., 2. 1107.
12. The Auckland Star, Dec. 19, 1970.
13. The Catholic Lawyer (1971), 17. 13-23.
14. Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. n.27, 51.
15. Romans, 3. 8.
16. Divina Comedia. Inferno. Canto XII.
17. Deuteronomy, 30. 19.
18. Church Assembly board. Abortion - an Ethical Discussion, London, 1965.
19. National Council of Free Churches. The Times. 23 March, 1965.
20. "Abortion and the Law", ed. David T. Smith, The Western Reserve University Press, Cleveland, 1967.

GOD'S WORD

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you were born I consecrated you." Jeremiah, 1:5.

"For thou did form my inner parts, thou did knit me together in my mother's womb." Psalm 139.

"Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me." Matt. 18: 4-5

"Let the little children come to me, and do not prevent them., for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19:14.

Nil Obstat: Peter J. Kenny Diocesan Censor. Imprimatur: Peter J. Connors Vicar General
Melbourne. 7th August, 1978.
