

The sanctity of life



The Christian response to abortion in our western culture has been a matter of preserving the sanctity of life. Although it would seem to be cut and dry to a Christian that abortion violates that sanctity of life, it continues to face constitutional evolvment, differing worldviews, the scrutiny of the medical profession, and with respect to school text books. All of these concerns illustrate a wayward compass, lacking the ability to find true north. Society continues to weigh the simple yet complex definitions of personhood.

Abortion is purported to be morally justified by pro-choice advocates in the postmodern culture. The question of what is right or wrong is argued within both sides of the issue. For instance the religious community cannot reach agreement cites Rothstein and Williams, (1983) what a “ person” consists of or when a “ person” begins life.

This paper will contend that the postmodern attitude towards abortion has been characterized as ambivalent, and in a postmodern theistic society which has been exposed to liberal schools of thought changing Christian and family values to err on the side of science and convenience. Further, decision makers on the pro-choice side have used their agenda to further their secular beliefs through education, giving rise to sexual promiscuity.

Additionally, there have been declines in moral thresholds, in theological literacy, and in respect for the importance of gender roles, resulting in society’s ambivalence and a reduction in regard for the sanctity of life.

Disputes over abortion are usually very heated due to the involvement of conflicting world views. Abortion is going to have difficulty attempting to reside within a Christian worldview, based purely on their opposing logic. Furthermore, abortion cannot maintain itself within the worldview of liberal

postmodernism. Challengers of abortion are aware they are supporting unborn babies; although they may not be cognizant they are also supporting the Christian worldview. Also supporters of legal abortions identify that they are securing a “ woman’s right to choose” even though they may not be completely aware of their support to the postmodern worldview.

A worldview adds perspective and helps us identify with the world around us, and how we deduce and appraise not only what we see, but how we compare ourselves to our understanding of life. Religion has the ability to hone a persons’ worldview, which starts to develop and institute a moral awareness which tends to give form and shape our moral perspectives. (Durkheim 1954), “ Religion serves as a main source for determining ‘ right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust.”(p. 43).

In order to have a suitable understanding of the postmodern view of abortion, both opposing worldviews must be examined in order to balance our understanding as to why a person in a theistic society embraces a pro-abortion stance. This comparison will also show why there is difficulty in finding a common ground, and why a postmodern worldview conversion or construction is not practical at this point, leading to the rise in secular decision making.

Comparative analysis of two opposing worldviews: Man is a created being and has a composition pre-determined by an intelligent and purposeful design, as opposed to man’s indiscriminate evolvment and has no fixed nature or design. Man is an immortal spirit being which indwells a mortal body, and in contrast, man is wholly a physical animal and or machine. Moral

law governs universally through marriage, sexual activity, and family, and in contrast morality is culturally and or individually determined. (Luker, 1984) “ Argues that pro-choice activist women ‘ share almost no common premises and very little common language’ with antiabortion activist women; in particular, the worldviews and conceptions of motherhood held by the two different groups of women are antithetical.” (p. 2).

The culture war on abortion has many fronts, and those who adhere to liberal postmodernism or answer to liberal postmodern ideology are likely to frame lawful abortion as a set of rights or privileges. Professor Stanley Hauerwas author of “ Theologically Understood” goes on to say that “ Christians in America are tempted to think of issues like abortion primarily in legal terms such as “ rights.” He explains “ rights’ as an agreement between members in a society, who have nothing in common. Professor Hauerwas states that within a liberal society such as ours, the law functions as a mediator of such agreements. He gives an example of our system of law by saying “ lawyers are to America what priests were to the medieval world.” In other words according to professor Hauerwas,

Is abortion right or wrong? Or ‘ is this abortion right or wrong?’ rather, the first question is, Why do Christians call abortion, abortion and with the first question goes a second, Why do Christians think that abortion is a morally problematic term? (p. 5).

Professor Hauerwas demystifies years of elusions by calling abortion, abortion which is already an achievement based on principles. Let’s call a spade a spade, pro-choice is really pro-abortion isn’t it, or what about “

termination of pregnancy,” and with the use of this terminology the postmodernist have reduced the church’s involvement, and reallocated the moral responsibility onto the medical profession. (Emerson, 1996) “ For most of the twentieth century, abortion was removed from public scrutiny by defining it as a question of medical judgment. (p. 44).

Well by circumventing the church we can easily foretell any future decision making within a postmodern society towards abortion by defining that mistake as “ take God out of anything and it dies” as pointed out here by Friedrich Nietzsche, “ parable of a madman” “ Do we smell anything yet of God’s decomposition?” Isn’t this the crux of postmodern wisdom which is inserting God’s insignificance into the minds of our youth like a Botox injection giving off the same expression of emotion?

As pointed out by (Sire, 2004)

A culture cannot lose its philosophic center without the most serious of consequences, not just to the philosophy on which it was based but to the whole superstructure of culture and even each person’s notion of who he or she is. When God dies, both the substance and the value of everything else die too. (p. 211).

This leads me to my next point on Postmodernisms thinking on the sanctity of life, which has created a pro-abortion crisis in America. In the United States alone the abortion rates had increased, in 1974 898, 000 to 1, 533, 000 in 1980. These figures tell us that on an average day in Washington D. C., our nation’s capital 4, 257 abortions are outnumbering live births.

Twenty-five percent of all pregnancies are terminated in this manner and

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forty percent among teenagers, and approximately twenty percent of all women in the United States have had a legal abortion. Sixty percent were under twenty five years of age, and eighty two percent were unmarried at the time of their abortions, and sixty nine percent of these individuals were white. This is the latest available information provided to us by researchers at the (Henshaw, Koonin & Smith institute, 1991).

The above information shows the influential state and the wide acceptance of abortion and its use as a solution rather than as a last resort. Another way we see secular conditioning, is through what we read, which raises the question are we neglecting to effectively teach any alternatives to abortions such as adoption?

For a number of generations we have been stealth fully preconditioning society by removing God from public education. Here for example a member of the Texas board of education is reported saying (Castro, 2010) “ There seems to be a misinformed view of religion in American history, that America is somehow founded on Christianity, “ Mize said. “ We just ask that things be historically accurate.”(¶7).

The following message certainly points to a valid concern held by many Christians, and alludes to a valid misrepresentation on prolife options within our school textbooks. The following independent study is brought to us by (Kathy Shepherd & Elaine Hall, 1994) “ from 1988 through 1993 sampling 27 textbooks representing 16 publishers covering a period of 6 years.”(p. 267). They referenced topics such as, abortion and legal cases such as Roe v. Wade, pro-life, birth control, teen pregnancy, and reproduction. Citations for

abortion were indexed more than 60 times and adoption citations were indexed under 13 headings. Also with this study acknowledgement to abortion was tendered 4 times more page space than adoption.

That study certainly lessens the burden of understanding a postmodern view towards the ultimate decision to dismiss life, since a form of preconditioning has shown a dismissive slide of pen towards alternatives methods of abortion. (Geersten, 1977) “ The textbook often provides the “ central focus” and “ organizing framework” for courses, and students, in turn rely on textbooks as their most readily available source of information about the course topics.” (p. 102).

Postmodern theists are also finding difficulty with the abortion issue when it comes to their education as pointed out here, (Schmalzbauer, 1993) contends that “ Evangelicals for the most part tend to adhere to their education group rather than their religion with regards to their abortion attitudes.” (p. 6). Education will no doubt reconstruct the minds of our youth as pointed out by (Evans, 2002) when he commented on Wuthnow, 1988 “ education is a more powerful opinion structuring force than religious discourse itself, and most studies find that the more education a respondent has, the more liberal his or her abortion attitudes.” (p. 418).

This adds to why a postmodern theistic society raises and nurtures its most influential citizens into embracing such secular ideas as Humanism, Naturalism, and Theistic Existentialism?

(Bruce Steve, 1996) “ Postmodernism is here to stay and to evolve. It is a major paradigm shift that has vast and deep impact on the world. When

modernity hits hard on Christianity, many sociologists predict the inevitable demise and even eradication of Christianity by secularism.” (p. 115). Also having the wrong personalities controlling how textbooks are studied can only point to the trickling down effect of God within the hearts of man.

(Strickler and Danigelis, 1999) Point out that education is shaping the very future of Christendom. “ By the mid-1990’s abortion had been legal for two decades, the population had become more educated and more secular, and other sociodemographic trends found abortion increasingly acceptable.” (p. 188).

Another reason our postmodern society leans towards abortion as a first consideration rather than as a last resort rests within their understanding of God. The postmodern cultures knowledge of the bible clearly illustrates the ease of which abortion decisions are made. According to the attitudes in society, the concept of God has not changed, and Americans declare their attitudes outline their public disposition. Timothy Renick, (2007) mentions a vast many Americans purport their own religious institutions take part in public strategy issues, and the majority of Congress members consult their individual religious values when voting on legislation. He further notes that America is still very Christian minded, more so than “ Israel is Jewish or Utah is Mormon.” (Timothy Renick, 2007)

Yet surveys show that the majority of [postmodern] Americans cannot name even one of the four Gospels, only one-third know that it was Jesus who delivered the Sermon on the Mount, and 10 percent think that Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife. (Hey, at least they know that Noah was associated with an ark-or is that Arc?) (p. 26).

(Timothy Renick, 2007) continues to paint a solemn picture of postmodern Christianity's understanding of the bible by saying,

Many high school seniors think that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife. Renick also claims that devout Christians are, on average, at least as ignorant about the facts of Christianity as are other Americans. Sixty percent of evangelicals think Jesus was born in Jerusalem; only 51 percent of the Jews surveyed made the same mistake. And things are not getting any better. (p. 26-27). (Renick, quotes Prothero, 2007) comments on America which has become a nation “ deeply religious and profoundly ignorant about religion.”(26).

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Once again here we are asking how a Christian in a postmodern society can consider abortion as a viable solution to a complex moral issue. The abortion debate has polarized Americans like no other national problem since 9/11 or Watergate. The abortion issue has created a vast partitioning across Americas cultural, and religious lines, which is also evident at the individual, political, and ecclesiastical levels.

(New International Version, 1984)

You may say ' I am allowed to do anything.' But I reply, ' Not everything is good for you.' And even through ' I am allowed to do anything," I must not

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become a slave to anything...But our bodies were not made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. (1 Cor. 6: 12-13).

Thomas Jefferson is regularly addressed as one of the finest proponents of religious freedom in the nineteenth century. In a letter dated 1816 he writes about moral decisions which he acknowledges the individual is heir to his own decision and no one else, (Lokensgard, 2009) “ But I have ever thought religion a concern purely between our God and our consciences, for which we were accountable to Him, and not to the priests” (p. 43).