



WHOSE LIFE DO WE PROTECT?

Is when life begins unassailable or is it subjective?

Most of us know that the practice of the ancient Greeks and Romans and other ancient societies to expose unwanted infants to the elements ensuring their certain death is wrong. Civilized societies, nurtured by a Christian ethic, recognize that all life is precious, a gift from God and a privilege afforded to us by a Creator, but that assessment is doomed to disintegrate. Therefore, Congress passed the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act in 2002 by overwhelming margins in both Houses. This bill protects infants who, in the course of an abortion, are born alive. The country's consciousness was alerted to this problem by Christ Hospital (Chicago) nurse Jill Stanek, who observed that such infants labeled as "live-birth abortions" were allowed to die. Instead of calling it what it is . . . infanticide . . . doctors and others involved in the abortion procedure saw the infants as merely fetuses, the sad recipients of someone else's choice . . . one for whom there was no voice . . . until Jill Stanek "blew the whistle" on the practice. Americans, once they knew what was happening were outraged; many could not believe that such a practice could ever take place, let alone in a hospital bearing Christ's name. However, many have tried to justify the procedure, even stating that determining when life begins is "above their pay grade," but science has once again brought the klieg light of truth by showing us via powerful microscopes and ultrasounds that what was once unseen is clearly a unique human from the moment of conception.

No chance of survival

Kansas' infamous abortion facility in Wichita takes no chances with its third trimester babies; using a sonogram to guide him, the abortionist injects digoxin into the baby's heart to ensure that human heart will never beat again. This eliminates the problem of what to do if an "accidental" birth happens.

The slippery slope

An article by a tireless combatant in the battle to protect the unborn, Wesley Smith, writes in one of his blogs about the slippery slope that accompanies the muddled thinking of those who deem themselves "compassionate" and caring toward the helpless. He reports on articles printed in the *Hastings Center*

Reports a prestigious bioethics journal that espouses the protocol that an unborn child's life may be ended if:

- They have no chance of survival (not always diagnosed correctly);
- They may survive after a period of intensive treatment, but expectations of their "future" are grim;
- They have an extremely poor prognosis; whose suffering may be severe, sustained, and cannot be alleviated.

The authors (Hilde Lindemann; Marian Verkerk in an article entitled "Ending the Life of a Newborn"; *Hastings Center Report* 38, 1pp.42-51) approve of the Dutch Groningen Protocol which in the Netherlands allows doctors to kill dying and disabled babies without legal consequence. The Dutch, according to Smith, justify their bizarre and ruthless attack on infants by their belief that "even newborns have a fundamental interest in not prolonging a life that is or will become an intolerable burden to them." The Dutch National Association of Pediatricians debate upon the "quality of life" includes the amount of suffering that is to be accepted, the capacities for communication and to live a self-supporting life taking into consideration their ultimate dependence on care-giving facilities.

A precipice

Historically speaking we are on a precipice, teetering on the tower of expediency and self-interest. When we can hide our eyes and cover our ears from the reality of scientific truth and gloss it over with ignorance or "compassionate" justification, we are no better than the Germans who watched the box-cars full of what their leaders determined to be an "inferior race" go by their homes.

Praise God that we do have a law on the books that protects those hapless victims of choice; whether it is being enforced is another story. Praise God there are some who recognize that a human life has intrinsic value whether it is "accidentally" born or not. The shame is on us when we place priorities on lives that are less blessed than our own and adopt a utilitarian world view regarding those lives.