

ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

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Overview and Purpose of this Paper

The very fact that something is *true* often does not hold quite enough sway for most people to believe it. This is especially the case when that which is *true* is also *unthinkable*. With this brief paper I will attempt to direct a much-needed spotlight on a disturbing truth that has been unthinkable to Apostolics, and to our society at large—but is in the process of becoming *less disturbing* with the desensitization that occurs with the passing of time. Hinrich Lohse, the Reichskommissar for the Ostland for the occupied Eastern territories of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi machine said in June of 1943, “*Just imagine that these events were to become known to the enemy! And were being exploited by them! In all probability, such propaganda would be ineffective simply because those hearing and reading it would not be prepared to believe it.*”¹ He was speaking, of course, of some of the atrocities of the holocaust—atrocities that, however well documented, are still accounted by some as having never happened.²

I am not writing, however, about atrocities from which we are removed by decades of time. Rather, I am writing of the *present erosion* in our society of the very old biblical and Judeo-Christian ethical standard regarding the sanctity of human life and the atrocities that are the natural consequence of such erosion. It is important that we are aware of this erosion, and its resultant abhorrences—for awareness of such an issue is the first step in combatting the insidious forces which eat away at the foundations. And the sanctity—the sacredness—the value—of

¹ As referenced in Francis A. Schaeffer and Dr. C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, Revised Edition, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1983) p.xii

² The Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) and other revisionist groups are very active in denial of a holocaust in WWII. International meetings (attended by government representatives from several nations), papers, blogs and more are dedicated to such denial of established historical fact regarding the Holocaust.

human life is and must remain foundational in our Apostolic worldview and our broader Judeo/Christian worldview.

We presently live in a world where, in more places than we may realize, it is deemed *perfectly acceptable* to kill other human beings simply because they have been deemed *inconvenient* to others; or because someone determined that their life no longer had any intrinsic *value*; or because they represented a *burden* to others. While I am speaking of unborn babies and the atrocity of abortion on demand, I am *also* speaking of those who would or are euthanizing grandma because she is a burden; or giving a lethal dose of morphine to someone “who is going to die anyway;” or refusing life-saving treatment for a man because he is over a certain age (or a child because they have some mental deficiency); or allowing a down-syndrome newborn to die on a table so that her parents would not have to face the financial and emotional burden of raising her. These are not the plot lines of a recent sci-fi novel, nor are they the infrequent state of affairs in a few far-flung hospitals in Sweden, nor one of the 130 or so memorialized scenes from the life of Dr. Jack Kevorkian. Rather, they represent the growing number of occurrences and “medical” and social decisions that take place daily here in North America, in Europe and across much of our ever-shrinking world. There is a great deal of difference between *allowing* someone who is “at death’s door” to die—and *doing something* to end their life—and this is a line that has become increasingly and purposefully blurred in our society.

In this paper I shall present a brief overview of the importance of the biblical understanding of the sanctity of human life—*how* and *why* human life is both *special* and *precious*; how and why this understanding and ethic is under attack in our current culture; and why we must be *aware* of the attack and *work* to prevent its deepening assault. In particular I will deal with:

1. The biblical view of the sanctity and value of human life, including why life is precious and why “society” has neither the mandate nor the right to dictate when a person’s life has supposedly become “*devoid of value*”;³
2. The history of the humanistic philosophies⁴ that have served to erode the perceived value of human life in the Western culture;
3. The forces at work in our modern and post-modern culture and institutions which are undermining the perceived value of human life in our society. We will deal with the issues of abortion, infanticide, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia and the philosophical constructs that are making these once-unthinkable acts, both thinkable and doable in our society.
4. Why we, as Apostolic ministers, should sound the warning about the assault upon our societal values regarding human life and the ramifications of the assault upon the lives of those we lead and serve.
5. How medical technological advances have seemingly blurred a line that once seemed clear—and how to apply biblical principles in *life* choices and *end-of-life* choices—biblical principles that demonstrate the intrinsic value of all human life in the face of such medical advances; and
6. Principles that we should teach people under our care so that they will understand the biblical values regarding the sanctity of human life—thus preparing them to make informed decisions regarding important life issues, especially end-of-life issues.

³ The idea that society has both a right and duty to determine when a human life has become “devoid of value” was first set forth in a book published in 1920 by Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche entitled *The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value: Its Measure and Its Form*. The book was reprinted in English in 1975 by Robert Sassone. This book was seminal in the formation of a worldview that served to devalue human life—and has been theorized by more than a few to have contributed significantly to the rise of Nazism in the 1930’s and 40’s. More about this association will appear in the body of this paper.

⁴ By “humanistic philosophies,” I refer to “secular humanism” and even certain aspects of “religious humanism” that tend to dethrone God and deify man as the final arbiter of what is *true* and what is *not*—what is *moral* and what is *not*. Many prominent humanists, names well known in western society over the last 100 years, have codified their belief system, and their means of achieving the advancement of their ideas, in the publishing of the Humanist Manifestos I, III and III, in years 1933, 1973 and 2003, respectively.

- a. Why such teaching is critical in a world where there is a growing sentiment that our biblical worldview, including our view of human origin and the value of human life, is ill-informed and unenlightened.
- b. Why and how the western healthcare community is *learning* and *imparting* bioethical viewpoints to their patients—our congregants—that are quite different from biblical principles, and why God’s people must be aware of the *changing* bioethical standards being touted among healthcare professionals.

Before I get into the biblical constructs of why human life is both special and precious—and why it should be treated with the tenderest of care—I would like to further make the case for the *immediate* and *pressing* need of addressing such a topic in a *theological* setting.

Theology, being the study by humans of God and the Word of God, finds its value in *practical application* by people. In our present society, the technological advances made in medicine have been astounding. We now have the means of keeping people alive longer than ever before in our recorded history of the practice of medicine.

Recent struggles over the appropriate care of well-publicized incidents in the lives of Karen Ann Quinlan⁵ and Terry Schaivo⁶, to name just two, have brought

⁵ Karen Ann Quinlan, at age 21, slipped into a coma following a mix of drugs and alcohol, and entered into what doctors called a “persistent vegetative state” (PVS). Doctors told the family that her condition was irreversible and that she would remain in a PVS for the rest of her life. Following nearly a year, her parents asked that she be removed from the breathing machine she was on and allow her to die. The hospital refused. This started a battle which became highlighted nationally in what became known as the “right to die” cause. In March of 1976 Karen Ann’s parents were given the right, by the New Jersey Supreme Court, to “determine her medical treatment, including the right to discontinue all extraordinary means of life support.” She was removed from the ventilator over a period of five days—yet remained alive for another nine years—dying of pneumonia in 1985. The creation of the “living wills” (also called an “advance directive”) is attributed to the case. See www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/history.

⁶ The Terry Schaivo case is another case involving someone who slipped in to a PVS. Following eight years, her husband sought permission to have her feeding tube removed and to allow her to die. Her parents challenged and a long series of court battles ensued—ending with her feeding tube being removed on March 18, 2005 and her dying on March 31, 2005. The Schaivo case brought the “right-to-die” cause back into the national spotlight, and involved

these advances to the forefront in the public mind. The direction taken toward nationalized healthcare, and directives issued pursuant to “ObamaCare⁷” recently, have once again raised the stakes in the preservation of the sanctity of human life in our society. Most recently the debate of the trend toward socialized medicine and its postured ill-regard for the sanctity of human life was brought to the national stage when a caller to the conservative Mark Levin radio talk show identified himself as a Chicago-based neurosurgeon who had recently returned from a meeting of neurological surgeons in Washington, D.C. wherein his group was purportedly briefed on “Obama’s ‘Healthcare Plan for Advanced Neurological Care’” issued by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The caller, who identified himself as “Jeff,” stated that they were told, and that a non-publically-available document published by HHS stated, “basically...that if you’re over 70 and you come into an emergency room (for something requiring stroke or aneurism therapy), and you are on government-supported care—that you’re going to get ‘comfort care.’” He went on to state that the document uses the term “units” instead of the more personal term, “patients;” and that the document states clearly that “for patients [units] over 70 years of age—advanced neurosurgical care was *not generally indicated*.”⁸

The call, on November 22, 2011, prompted a great deal of media chatter in the days and weeks following with people claiming that the man was a hoax, and

such nationally-recognized personalities into the fray as 2012 Presidential candidate and Operation Rescue founder, Randall Terry and, then, President George W. Bush. See www.terrifight.org

⁷ ObamaCare is officially known as *The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* which was signed into Federal law on March 23, 2010 by U.S. President, Barack Hussein Obama II.

See <http://www.conservapedia.com/ObamaCare>

⁸ An audio file of the show can be downloaded at <http://marklevinshow.com/Article.asp?id=2339236&spid=41445>, with the referenced portion occurring between the runtime of 44:35 and 49:16. A transcript can be found at <http://marklevinshow.com/2011/11/24/obamacare-death-panels-are-coming/>. The call, according to Levin at runtime 51:00-51:05, was “vetted” by his staff and they verified that the caller “is who he says he is.”

others indicating that there are clear indications that the man, who was vetted by the show staff—and appropriately so—was indeed the real deal.⁹

Whether the call and its content were legitimate, the reaction to it certainly called attention to societal fears that are simmering under the surface. While some may look at such a call as “conspiracy theories run amok,” there has been a great deal of talk at some very high levels regarding the likes of a mandatory “duty to die” for those who have a life that is deemed “devoid of value.”

Consider that none other than the famous co-discoverer of DNA, proud signer of the Humanist Manifesto II, and Nobel prize recipient, Francis Crick, called in 1978, “*for a new ethical system, featuring abortion and infanticide, which would [also] make it mandatory for all persons over eighty years of age to be put to death.*”¹⁰ One wonders if Crick changed his mind as he passed into his 80’s—Crick died at the age of eighty-eight. “*Margaret Sanger, who was the original founder of Planned Parenthood, famously said, ‘The most merciful thing a large family can do for one of its infant members is kill it.’ Nobel Prize Laureate James Watson, co-discoverer of DNA [along with Crick]—hardly fringe—said, ‘Because of the limitations of present detection methods, most birth defects are not discovered until birth; however, if a child was not declared alive until three days after birth, the doctor could allow the child to die, if the parents so chose, and save a lot of misery and suffering.’*”¹¹ Note the absolute dismissal of any idea that a child with a birth defect would have a life with any intrinsic value.

One college textbook, written by humanist and one time professor of philosophy at what is now Oklahoma State University, stated that “*no child should*

⁹ Related media articles and blog posts are numerous—and are clearly divided along ideological lines. Intrinsic information in the transcript indicates that the man possessed knowledge that further identifies him as a legitimate caller. Regardless of whether the call was legitimate in the information it purported—it is clear that the call touched off a lot of interest in both “right-to-life/pro-life” groups and those with a more progressive agenda.

¹⁰ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: The Conflict of Christian Faith and American Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), p.80

¹¹ <http://hankhanegraaff.blogspot.com/>, February 21, 2011 post entry.

be admitted into the society of the living who would be certain to suffer any social handicap—for example,” he said, “any physical or mental defect that would prevent marriage or would make others tolerate his company only from a sense of mercy.”¹²

Celebrated conservative author, and “scholar in residence” at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Thomas Sowell, recently wrote the following at the beginning of his editorial piece in *National Review Online*, entitled with the question, “*A Duty to Die?*”

“One of the many fashionable notions that have caught on among some of the intelligentsia is that old people have “a duty to die” rather than become a burden to others.

This is more than just an idea discussed around a seminar table. Already the government-run medical system in Britain is restricting what medications or treatments it will authorize for the elderly. Moreover, it seems almost certain that similar attempts to contain runaway costs will lead to similar policies when American medical care is taken over by the government.¹³

Truly, this seems to substantiate that the allegations raised; that our society and government—by virtue of their humanistic leanings and ideals—are indeed slouching toward an ethic regarding human life that devalues life that is deemed “inconvenient” to those around them. Thomas Sowell cannot be passed off as a right-wing conspiracy-theory lunatic: he is the author of many scholarly books, has taught at such prestigious academic institutions as Cornell, Harvard, Amherst—and Stanford, and has written frequently for the Wall Street Journal, Forbes and

¹² Millard Spencer Everette, *Ideals for Life* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1954) p.346ff, as cited in Schlossberg, p.80

¹³ <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/229733/duty-die/thomas-sowell>, May 11, 2010

Fortune magazines and writes a syndicated column that appears in newspapers across the United States.

These are *frightening* thoughts—*unthinkable* ponderings—yet they are the *realities* that are encroaching into the lives of those to whom we minister. We had best be aware of the trends, and prepare our people to make the right choices at difficult times. The bioethical questions, which are brought to the forefront in the midst of the humanistic ideals of our society’s culture, affect more than end-of-life issues—they also affect such questions as how to deal with *infertility* during the early years of trying to have a family. These are questions that will, in one manner or another, affect every family within our congregations. Some of the challenges we face are the result of medical advances and the seeming possibility to keep people alive unnaturally and mechanically when no curative treatment is medically possible. These challenges have caused at least one theologian-author to intone: “*many bioethical decisions simply do not have one absolutely binding right or wrong answer.*”¹⁴ He may be right—however there *are* biblical principles which, if applied to our lives, will help us navigate the crucial life-decisions from a biblical perspective. It may well be the saving of more than one soul.

The Biblical View of the Sanctity of Human Life

The Scriptures give us our understanding of, and respect for, the sanctity of human life. When I speak of its “sanctity,” I am speaking of the fact that human life has *intrinsic* value, because we were created in the image of God, and because *He* has placed such value on human life.

¹⁴ David VanDrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life: A Guide to Making Difficult Decisions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), p.16

In Genesis 2 the Scriptures relay the story of the creation of mankind, which was mentioned with little elucidation in the first chapter of our Bible. Both chapters give us important information regarding the nature of what God did in the creation of man—and the *value* that He placed upon that most-special of His creations:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26-28)

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)

These two passages at the beginning of our Bibles are referenced, directly or indirectly, several times throughout the holy Writ. Man was not created as the other life that surrounds us on the earth. There are three things in particular that distinguish us decidedly from all other life, be it animal, plant or the microscopic life that seems to fit neither taxonomical niche:

1. Man was made in the image and likeness of God, after His similitude;

2. Man was made a “living soul.” That is, man, each man, possesses an integral *soul* that was destined to abide forever more following his or her creation; and
 3. Man was given dominion over the rest of creation, in particular over all other life upon the earth. We are *not* like the life of plants or animals. We are distinct in these ways—and these are *significant* differences.
- For the sake of brevity, I shall only belabor one of these points below:

Made in the Image of God

The fact that man is made in the image of God is not a minor issue. Much has been written about this, and it is not necessary that I deal with this in detail—as it is a readily-understood point among Apostolics. There are a few thoughts, however, that I would like to point out for our discussion. First, it was not merely Adam and Eve who were made in the image of God—but all of mankind. What is so clearly iterated in Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 5:1 is reiterated when James reminds us that all men are “*made after the similitude of God.*”¹⁵ While mankind lost some of their glory in the fall of man¹⁶, we still maintain a certain, “*image and glory of God.* (I Corinthians 11:7)”¹⁷ It is not that we are pure as *He* is pure, but rather that we generally maintain other aspects that resemble our Creator, such as the ability to reason and make judgments; to feel and demonstrate a range of emotions such as love, hate, jealousy, and more. We also resemble the only bodily

¹⁵ James 3:9 KJV

¹⁶ Romans 6:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” (KJV)

¹⁷ Barnes’ Notes on the Bible states concerning this phrase in I Corinthians 11:7, “*The phrase ‘the image of God’ refers to the fact that man was made in the likeness of his Maker Gen. 1:27; and proves that, though fallen, there is a sense in which he is still the image of God. It is not because man is truly [righteous] or pure, and thus resembles his Creator; but it evidently is because he was invested by his Maker with authority and dominion; he was superior to all other creatures; Gen. 1:28.*”

form that the Creator took upon Himself “*the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.* (Philippians 2:7)”¹⁸

Beyond this there is one aspect that is rarely approached theologically, but given the issue at hand, this aspect seems especially important to consider: Man was made to *live eschatologically!* As one author put it, “human beings are *destined for life.*”¹⁹ By this it is meant that the Scriptures make it clear that mankind was originally created to live forever. Consider the narrative near the end of Genesis 3:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22-24)

Man, from the beginning, was created to live *forever*. He was created to live an *eschatological life!*²⁰ This is not true of the animals among God’s creation. Death came as a result of the curse—and it came as an *enemy*, not a friend. This enemy called death loses its sting *only* through the gospel²¹—yet this is *only* because the physical death of our bodies *becomes* the passageway to eternal life in Jesus Christ! Without the gospel, death is a dreaded thing. It is an *unnatural* thing in that man was created to life forever—and when a man dies who is not born of

¹⁸ Adam was the “figure,” the “die as struck,” the “image” of “him that was to come;” that is of Christ Jesus. (Romans 5:14). It seems that this verse is actually stating that Adam was formed physically after the pattern of Jesus Christ; the Creator looking *proleptically* into the future when the Christ would be born—and patterning Adam after that “image.”

¹⁹ VanDrunen, p.46

²⁰ Ibid., p.48

²¹ I Corinthians 15:50-57

the water and of the Spirit—their physical death becomes a passage way to an eternal death—an eschatological death! Death is an unnatural imposition upon humankind; something that was not a part of the original design for man.

I belabor this point a bit so that we can understand that the language of the humanistic framework used in our society—and in the medical community in particular—is not in line with the Word of God. Literature of our day regarding preparation for dying and hospice care speaks frequently, and without regard to the gospel, that “*death is a natural part of life,*” that “*death is natural—and not something to fear.*”

As Scott Stiegemeyer stated in his March 21, 2008 blog post for Concordia Theological Seminary,

Death is unnatural in the sense that it is not the design of the Creator. It's not supposed to happen to you. When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden, it was not His purpose for them to die. Death is not just a part of the “circle of life” as in that horrible Disney song. Holy Scripture describes death as the curse for sin (Romans 5).

As a thing unnatural, death is not something I am willing to make peace with. There will be no coming to terms. No armistice. Contrary to the well-intentioned but ethically challenged right-to-die crowd, death is not a friend to be welcomed as the deliverer from this world's troubles. Death is the enemy whom Christ has destroyed!²²

Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 15:26 that “*the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*” Death is our enemy—not a friend in the circle of life. Only for those who have prepared themselves through obedience to the gospel does

²² <http://seminaryblog.com/2008/03/is-death-a-natural-part-of-life/>

Paul’s proclamation—“*for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*”—become a reality. Yet *nowhere* does even the Christian have the imperative to hasten its coming.

How the “Culture of Death” Developed

We shall not go back to the beginning, but we shall look at the development and advancement of philosophies in our Western society that have gained prominence through the last few centuries—and have accelerated in the last 100 years to become the veritable bane of our present society.

Kant and Hegel

In 21st-century America, very few are familiar with the writings of Georg Hegel and Immanuel Kant, yet the philosophies that they set forth in the late 18th and early 19th centuries gave rise to realities that affect every part of our Western society. While Kant influenced Hegel, and while Kant, in turn, was influenced by the likes of Spinoza and others—I will begin our discussion starting with Immanuel Kant—a man of Scottish ancestry and German upbringing. While Kant initially began studying under the ministry of a Pietist sect (similar to early Methodism), and was invited to enter the ministry,²³ he seemed to despise that early instruction and moved toward studies regarding logic, science and metaphysics. Most of his early writing (1740 through 1762) was related to science—then he branched into theology with the treatise, *The Only Possible Ground for Proving the Existence of God*.²⁴ It was not until 1781 that he published

²³ Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization, Volume X – Rousseau and Revolution* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p.531

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.534

a work that was twelve years in the making, *Critique of Pure Reason*. It was a work that historian and self-described atheist, Will Durant, described as “one of the most destructive analyses that the Christian theology has ever received.”²⁵

Kant reasoned that “the things of the world must be viewed as if they received their existence from a highest intelligence. The idea [of God] is thus really a heuristic, not an ostensive, concept...”²⁶ He went on to reason that the more imperative reason for religious belief is that such religious belief is “indispensable to morality.” He said, “If there is no primordial being, distinct from the world, if the world is...without an Author, if our will is not free, if the soul is...perishable matter, then the moral ideas and principles lose all validity.” He was in essence stating that we are justified in creating God so that morality has meaning. He actually stated it this way, “we are justified in representing the cause of the world in terms of an anthropomorphism...namely as a being that has understanding, feelings of pleasure and displeasure, and desires and volitions corresponding to these.”²⁷

In a later work, published in 1785 and entitled, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, he attempts to further couch feelings related to morality in terms of the functions of human reasoning. He asked, “whence have we the conception of God as the supreme good? He answers his own question, “simply from the idea of moral perfection, which reason frames a priori²⁸, and connects inseparably with the notion of a free-will.”²⁹

²⁵ Ibid., p.535

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1st Edition, p. 671 as cited in Durant, p.538

²⁷ Ibid., p.468; 700 as cited in Durant, p.539

²⁸ “a priori” means that which is “existing in the mind prior to and independent of experience;” “not based on study or prior examination” - a priori. Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/a priori](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/a%20priori) (accessed: January 10, 2012).

²⁹ Immanuel Kant; Ed. by C.A. Sainte-Beauve, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*; The Harvard Classics (New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son, 1910) p.320

He later stated in his *Critique of Practical Reason* in 1788 that “it is clear that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin completely a priori in the reason.”³⁰ His concept of God was not that God created man—but that *man created God*. One of his writings, published after his death, made this abundantly clear:

*God is not a substance existing outside me, but merely a moral relation within me...The categorical imperative does not assume a substance issuing its commands from on high, conceived therefore as outside me, but is a commandment or prohibition of my own reason.*³¹

Thus the fundamental idea of Kant’s “critical philosophy” was “*human autonomy*”—the idea that man’s morality and ultimate destiny are derived from his own ability to reason. This is the basis for the widespread humanistic thought that pervades our modern institutions; be they institutions of government, education, public media, healthcare or more. Immanuel Kant has been called “*the central figure in modern philosophy.*”³² Men like Fichte, Hegel and Schelling “*built [their] metaphysical castles upon the...idealism of Kant.*”³³ Indeed, Germany’s literature (and later, literature throughout much of Europe, and later still, the United States) soon began to feel Kant’s influence³⁴, for—as historian Will Durant noted—“*the philosophy of one age is likely to be the literature of the next.*”³⁵

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel followed on the heels of Kant in saying, “*Pure reason, incapable of any limitation, is the Deity itself.*”³⁶ One of the

³⁰ Durant, p.541

³¹ Ibid., p550

³² <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>

³³ Durant, p.551

³⁴ Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization, Volume XI – The Age of Napoleon* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1975), p.658

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Walter Kauffmann, *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary*, New York, NY: Doubleday, 1965), p.61

formulations for which he is best noted is the “dialectic” (literally, the art of conversation) of “thesis, antithesis and synthesis.” This is essentially the idea that “*an idea or situation potentially contains its opposite, develops it, struggles against it, then unites with it to take another transient form.*”³⁷ This is the philosophical construct that is the genesis for modern “*situational ethics*” being taught in schools throughout our country today. The way that Hegel’s theory works is that an idea is put forth (that which appears to be a *Truth*)—this is called the *thesis*; then a “truth” that is the opposite of that apparent truth (the *antithesis*) is voiced and struggles against the thesis until it is blended with it, forming a *synthesis* (a *NEW truth*). This new “truth” is now the new “thesis” against which an antithesis is formed—and on goes the cycle. In Hegel’s construct—there is no “truth” that is inviolable. There are no “absolute” truths in this way of thinking. All truth is *situational* and subject to question (one wonders if Hegel believed his idea was inviolably “true”).

From Kant to Humanism

Kant and Hegel and their brand of philosophy gave rise to the exploits of natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt (arguably the most “famous” person in the world, during the general age that produced the likes of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon Bonaparte)^{38,39}. Von Humboldt was the chief inspiration for Charles Darwin and his studies that lead to

³⁷ Durant, Volume XI, p.649

³⁸ David McCullough, *Brave Companions* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p.5

³⁹ Gerald Helferich, *Humboldt’s Cosmos* (New York, NY: Gotham, 2004), p.xvii; the timeframe of von Humboldt’s popularity overlapped that of Jefferson and Bonaparte, began about the time of Washington’s death (2 years after Washington’s Presidency ended), and about 8 years following Franklin’s death. von Humboldt has at least 12 species, 10 geographical features, 21 places, 16 universities, colleges or schools, a sea on the Moon, and an asteroid named for him. Places that bear his name appear in Europe, North, Central and South America, on the Moon and in the heavens. His influence remains widely-felt, though his name means little to most Americans today.

“*On the Origin of the Species.*”⁴⁰ It was said that Darwin carried three books with him during his travels on the Beagle to inspire him—“*the Bible, Milton and Humboldt.*”⁴¹ He said that he “*almost adore[d]*” *Humboldt.*⁴² Kant and Hegel also created the framework for Karl Marx, his *Communist Manifesto*, and the advent of Marxist socialism as well as for German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and his ideas of the “*Superman*” which would survive only by “*human selection, by eugenic foresight and an ennobling education.*”⁴³ Kantian/Hegelian philosophy gave birth to Marxism and to Darwinian and neo-Darwinian evolution—and together these gave birth to Nietzsche and the thought that man, and not God, is the final arbiter of Truth and the master of human destiny. This worldview is the foundation of the godless, liberal, humanistic mindset that dominates the educational and governmental elite in Western societies. It is a worldview that has been codified, amplified and put into action. It is affecting our society in countless ways—and therefore is affecting *us*.

Humanistic Influence in Western (Including American) Society

The “father of American progressive education,” and in essence, the father of the American public school system as we know it, John Dewey (1859-1952), was a champion of secular humanism (he is believed to have written most of the *Humanist Manifesto* (Humanist Manifesto I)), and was an ardent Darwinian evolutionist who wrote about the supposed relationship between Darwinian evolution and ethics, the relationship of education to ethics, and the advancement of his ideas of “*social progress and reform.*”^{44,45} Dewey looked at the

⁴⁰ McCullough, p.5

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Hefnerich, p.xviii

⁴³ Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1961), p.319

⁴⁴ John Dewey, *Early Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIUP, 1972), pp.34, 54

⁴⁵ <http://dewey/pragmatism.org/creed.htm>

development of a public school system as the primary means of promoting his humanistic ideals. In his famed “*Pedagogical Creed*,” *Article Five: The School and Social Progress*, he was clear about his vision of changing the society through education. He wrote:

*“I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform...I believe that all reforms which rest simply on the enactment of law, or the threatening of certain penalties, or upon changes in mechanical or outward arrangements, are transitory and futile...that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of social consciousness [which he suggests be developed, en mass, in individuals through the public education system] is the only sure method of social reconstruction.”*⁴⁶

Note the terms “social progress and reform,” and “social reconstruction.” Dewey believed strongly in the elimination of the idea of a supreme being with inviolable standards from our society. He said, “*There is nothing left worth preserving in the notions of unseen powers, controlling human destiny, to which obedience and worship are due.*”⁴⁷

His philosophy for “social reconstruction”—the reshaping of our society—was much the same as that of Adolf Hitler’s. Hitler said, “*He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future.*”⁴⁸ “*When an opponent declares, ‘I will not come over to your side,’ I say calmly, ‘Your child belongs to us already. What are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time*

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ John Dewey, Larry A. Hickman, Thomas M. Alexander, *The Essential Dewey*, Volume 1, Pragmatism, Education Democracy (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), p.403

⁴⁸ Adolf Hitler. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2012.
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/adolfhitler378177.html>

they will know nothing but this new community'.⁴⁹ Note the humanistic bent of his doctrine, "*I begin with the young. We older ones are used up...but my magnificent youngsters! Are there any finer ones in the world? Look at these young men and boys! What material! With them, I can make a New World. This is the heroic stage of youth. Out of it will come the creative man, the man-god.*"⁵⁰ Some may see this as a stretch to tie the thinking of Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey and Adolf Hitler together—but the fact remains that the thinking of the latter two was derived largely from the former two and others who followed them.

The Unthinkable Becomes Thinkable

What was *unthinkable* to Americans and much of the Western world in Hitler's day was the *natural progression* of the indoctrination of Hitler's Kantian/Hegelian philosophy when all other doctrines were removed from their thoughts. Through the medium of the Hitler Youth, whose numbers swelled from 1,200 to nearly 7.3 million during the pre-war era of 1923 to 1939,⁵¹ Adolf Hitler was able to indoctrinate an entire generation of German youth and take them from a worldview in which mass genocide was *unthinkable*—to a worldview that allowed them to carry out mass genocide for what they believed, largely, to be a righteous cause. In a single generation, a blatant disregard for the sanctity of human life was spawned and utilized with consummate efficiency once their moral foundations had been removed through education, and replaced with a new idea. It was, perhaps, in Hitler's thinking, the "antithesis" to the biblically-moral "thesis." It was, as suggested by Christian philosopher Francis A. Schaeffer, and former

⁴⁹ From a speech made November 6, 1933.

⁵⁰ <http://www.oppapers.com/essays/The-Hitler-Youth/329966>

⁵¹ <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/hitleryouth/hj-timeline.htm>

U.S. Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, a situation where “*one era is quite certain intellectually and emotionally about what is acceptable...yet another era decides that these “certainties” are unacceptable and puts another set of values into practice. On a humanistic base, people drift along from generation to generation, and the morally unthinkable becomes thinkable as the years move on. By “humanistic base” we mean the fundamental idea that men and women can begin from themselves and derive the standards by which to judge all matters.*” As Schaeffer and Koop said in their epoch book, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, “*There are for such people no fixed standards of behavior, no standards that cannot be eroded or replaced by what seems necessary, expedient, or even fashionable.*”⁵² What happened with the Hitler Youth was, of course, *accelerated*—because all other ideas had been *removed* from consideration. It was the principle of “*prima facie*” at work: What is espoused and repeated without opposition will become accepted as fact. It was Hitler’s M.O., “*Make the lie big,*” he said, “*make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.*”⁵³

Yet what is happening in our current-and-expanding Western culture is that today’s humanist proponents have a good many adherents who are mindlessly “goose-stepping” to the same beat. The educational system—together with swiftly-moving advances in technology, including information technology—have set the stage for the precipitous *erasure* of long-standing Bible-based moral teachings and the advent of a God-less moral atmosphere and a growing “*culture of death,*”⁵⁴ as it has been called.

⁵² Francis A. Schaeffer and Dr. C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, Revised Edition, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1983) pp.16-17

⁵³ Adolf Hitler. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2012.
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/adolfhitler378177.html>

⁵⁴ The term, “culture of death” was used twelve times in the *Evangelium vitae*, published by Pope John Paul II in March of 1995. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html. The term has been used in recent years to describe the growing

Transience and Acceleration—the Disorienting Nature of “Future Shock”

Schaeffer and Koop noted the acceleration of the change of moral ideas in our modern time: “*Perhaps the most striking and unusual feature of our moment of history is the speed with which eras change...what was unthinkable in the sixties [they wrote in 1979] is no longer unthinkable. The ease and speed of communication has been a factor in this.*” They said, rather prophetically, “*The thinkables of the eighties and nineties will certainly include things which most people today find unthinkable and immoral, even unimaginable and too extreme to suggest. Yet—since they do not have some overriding principle that takes them beyond relativistic thinking—when these become thinkable and acceptable in the eighties and nineties, most people will not even remember that they were unthinkable in the seventies. They will slide into each new thinkable without a jolt.*”⁵⁵

It has been noted that “*what we regard as thinkable and unthinkable about how we treat human life has changed drastically in the West. For centuries Western culture has regarded human life and the quality of the life of the individual as special. It has been common to speak of ‘the sanctity of human life.’*”⁵⁶ It seems that the centuries-long ideal has been turned on its ear in a very short time indeed.

This is not happening simply due to the propagation of humanistic philosophies and a socialistic agenda in the educational institutions of the West—although those are essential factors of cause-and-effect—but also due, as has been suggested, to the acceleration of the “*ease and speed of communication*” in our society. Since this was suggested in the 1970’s the speed of such change has been

cultural acceptability of abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide and other related doctrines (philosophies) which “violate...the integrity of the human person” and “insult human dignity.”

⁵⁵ Schaeffer/Koop, p.17

⁵⁶ Ibid.

astounding. This alone has loosed our society-at-large from previously-long-held religious moorings. The effect of “transience” or *change* in our society, brought about by technological advances and the advanced speed of communicating those changes, is disorienting enough to make people feel lost and bewildered *in their own culture*. This is because there is no permanence to our culture anymore. Traditions have fallen to the onslaught of transience. Alvin Toffler brought this out vividly in his incredibly insightful book, *Future Shock*. Toffler indicated how sudden change is disorienting—as we can see in the case of “culture shock” when someone travels for a foreign soil. A traveler may find themselves “*in a place where yes may mean no, where a ‘fixed price’ is negotiable, where to be kept waiting in an outer office is no cause for insult, where laughter may signify anger.*” Yet Toffler brings to light the similar and compounded effects when *the future* is superimposed on the present through not merely “change”—but the fact that tremendous changes are hitting our entire society at an accelerated pace. We are thrust into a new society so quickly that we cannot adjust—and then major change hits us again. To a child—especially a child growing up without any strong biblical traditions in his or her daily diet—the only thing that seems constant IS change. There is no chance for long-held societal mores to be inculcated into their lives—for it seems that there are none to grasp hold of. It is not “culture shock”—it is “future shock.” As Toffler said, “*The malaise, mass neurosis, irrationality, and free-floating violence already apparent in contemporary life are merely a foretaste of what may lie ahead...future shock is a phenomenon, a product of the greatly accelerated rate of change in society. It arises from the imposition of a new culture on an old one. It is culture shock in one’s own society.*”⁵⁷ The “*feeling of impermanence*”⁵⁸ is fed and intensified by living in a state of constant

⁵⁷ Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York, NY: Bantam, 1971), pp.10-11

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.45

“transience”—a state where everything is constantly changing—and by the humanistic/evolutionary teaching that man is merely a product of time and chance. These are the actualities of our current culture—and they are synergistic in their promotion of the concept that human life is *cheap, expendable* for the most insignificant of reasons, and not worth the expense of maintaining should that life become “devoid of value.”

Recent Changes in the View of the Sanctity of Human Life

“The Hippocratic Oath, which goes back more than two thousand years, has been traditionally taken by graduates of American medical schools at the time of their commencement. The Declaration of Geneva (adopted in September 1948 by the General Assembly of the World Medical Association and closely modeled on the Hippocratic Oath) became used as the graduation oath of more and more medical schools. It includes: ‘I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception.’”⁵⁹ This is the basic precept that has been traditionally adhered to and believed in Western society up until the last several decades. It is interesting to note that many medical schools who have adopted the Declaration of Geneva oath have dropped the clause “*from the moment of conception.*”⁶⁰ Some, such as Albany Medical College, have replaced “*from the moment of conception*” with “*even under threat.*”⁶¹

As Dr.’s Schaeffer and Koop opined, “*Judeo-Christian teaching... [laid] a foundation for a high view of human life as unique—to be protected and loved—because each individual is created in the image of God. This stands in great contrast to... [ancient] Roman culture. The Roman world practiced both abortion*

⁵⁹ Schaeffer/Koop, p.17

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.17; 20

⁶¹ As given at the 2009 commencement exercise in Albany, NY

and infanticide, while Christian societies have considered abortion and infanticide to be murder.” They went on, “Until recently...with some notable and sorry exceptions, human beings have generally been regarded as special, unique, and nonexpendable. But in one short generation [during the time of Roe v. Wade] we have moved from a generally high view of life to a very low one.”⁶²

To anyone who would care to look with any objectivity, our societal mores regarding the preciousness and sacredness of human life have clearly deteriorated since even the time of that writing. I believe that this is because of the humanistic idealism that has pervaded most of the institutions of learning and government in Western culture, including the United States. This idealism is pervasive in the majority of media outlets in this country as well. While I cannot cite a source for that last statement—other than some radio talk-show host—one can simply notice the ubiquitous biases in both the reporting and the rhetoric.

Fortunately a large percentage of our U.S. population have had enough teaching—moral teaching stemming from the Scriptures—lingering as a vestige in our society, to give the population at large a slight conservative bent. This is reflected in some recent polling data by the Gallup organization. Gallup related in a May 2011 article that *“Gallup's 2011 Values and Beliefs survey, conducted May 5-8, finds ... public agreement about the morality of abortion. Just over half of Americans, 51%, believe abortion is "morally wrong," while 39% say it is "morally acceptable." Americans' views on this have been fairly steady since 2002, except for 2006, when they were evenly divided.”*⁶³ This is despite the near constant barrage of negative comments in the media and by the political left regarding the “right to life” community.

⁶² Ibid., p.20

⁶³ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147734/Americans-Split-Along-Pro-Choice-Pro-Life-Lines.aspx> Retrieved 1/16/12

Reported polling data from Gallup indicate a fair amount of conservative value relative to the abortion issue throughout the years from 1975 (two years after Roe v Wade) up to the present time. When asked the question, “*Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?*” the majority of respondents have consistently felt that it should be legal only “under certain circumstances” with lower and fairly-closely-matched responses for “legal under any” and “illegal in all” circumstances. For example, the 1975 data indicate 54% of respondents felt it should be legal only under certain circumstances while 22% felt it should be illegal in all circumstances, and 21% legal under any circumstances. The 2011 data is not far off with 50% responding “legal under certain,” 22% “illegal in all,” and 27% responding “legal under any.” While there is a general trend toward a more liberal stance, the overall conservative bent is comforting—yet the direction is not encouraging—especially when there is a pronounced trend toward socialized medicine in the current administration in Washington and when media outlets continually spout that mantra as well. A reasonable speculation would be that “illegal in all” circumstances would have generated the highest percentage in the 1940’s or 50’s, but as no polling data exists for those decades, it remains merely speculation—it is speculation, however, that is based on other, very apparent evidences of a deeper moral fiber present in American society prior to the 1960’s.

The Humanist Mantra

When I speak of “the mantra” here, I speak of the myriad utterances that have their base in the philosophical underpinnings that are so intertwined in the worldview of left-leaning governmental officials and educational elites that they cannot help but be expressed when they or their (often mindless) adherents speak. The mantra was codified by James Dewey and others in the famed Humanist

Manifesto of 1933, and received further elaboration in the 1973 version (Humanist Manifesto II), and later in the 2003 version. One signer of all three documents, Lester Mondale, was the older half-brother of former U.S. Vice-President Walter Mondale.⁶⁴ The Humanist Manifestos I, II and III have a socialist/anti-God base; and stand against moral values that derive their base from the Bible or any moral code seen as coming from a supernatural source. In other words, in their view, all morality is derived from man—and not God, and is therefore relativistic and situational. Here are some quotes from the first Manifesto⁶⁵:

- *Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.* [Translation: there is no Creator—and therefore no “Judge”]
- *Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.* [Translation: We are just animals—products of natural evolution; there is no “soul”]
- *Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values... Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.* [Translation: we don’t receive our values from any God]
- *We are convinced that the time has passed for theism.* [Translation: Bible-believing churches should be done away with]
- *Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern*

⁶⁴ When Walter Mondale was a U.S. Senator he addressed the Fifth *International Humanist and Ethical Union World Congress* held in Boston in 1970. See http://philosopedia.org/index.php/Lester_Mondale

⁶⁵ http://www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I

world. [Translation: All churches should become Unitarian humanistic churches—the sooner the better]

- *The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.* [Translation: Capitalism is evil because we say so, and socialism will usher in Utopia]

Through this we can see what John Dewey thought as he was working out his thoughts on public education as a tool for “social reform” in America. The Humanist Manifesto II was even more direct⁶⁶:

- *Traditional moral codes and newer irrational cults both fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow. False "theologies of hope" and messianic ideologies, substituting new dogmas for old, cannot cope with existing world realities.* [Translation: Theology is bankrupt and cannot meet human needs]
- *Traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so... We find insufficient evidence for*

⁶⁶ http://www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II

belief in the existence of a supernatural...As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. [Translation: Religion is repressive and harmful. Even though evolution does not pass scientific scrutiny, we believe that creationism must—just don't call us on our hypocrisy!]

- *Humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.* [No Translation needed]
- *Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. Traditional religions ...[are] obstacles to human progress.* [No Translation needed]
- *We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction.* [Translation: We make up our own morals based on what we think is best for the situation. Keep your Bible out of my business!]
- *We reject all religious, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom...*[They state this after affirming individual human dignity—yet the individual is not important to the humanist, rather the society as a whole is what must be served. It is apparent that they feel that “moral codes” “suppress freedom.”]
- *In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized.* [Note: They decide what “unduly” means]

- *To enhance freedom and dignity the individual must experience a full range of civil liberties...It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.*⁶⁷ [Note the code words, “die with dignity”]
- *We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government.* [Translation: One World Government]
- *World poverty must cease. Hence extreme disproportions in wealth, income, and economic growth should be reduced on a worldwide basis.* [Translation: Disproportions in wealth and income reduced = Socialism. They believe socialism’s “redistribution of wealth” will “end poverty,” even though every time it has been tried it *produces* poverty!]
- *We would resist any moves to censor basic scientific research on moral, political, or social grounds.* [Translation: Research on embryonic stem cells]

Such statements made in isolation would not be cause for concern—yet this is hardly being done in a corner. We hear the mantra—perhaps in differing words, but in matching ideologies— from both the political left and from the media. Also,

⁶⁷ It should be noted that their constant use of terms similar to “death with dignity” all stems from the idea promoted that life “devoid of value” is a life that should not continue. The problem is that they want to set the social agenda as to what constitutes a life devoid of value.

the signers of the Manifestos are well known elitists. The impressive list of signers include: John Dewey (father of American Progressive Education and the American Public School System), R. Lester Mondale (brother to former Vice-President Mondale), Isaac Asimov (noted author), Francis Crick (co-discoverer of DNA and Nobel Prize Laureate), Sidney H. Scheuer (onetime Chairman of the National Committee for an Effective Congress), B.F. Skinner (noted Behavioral Scientist, former Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, and author of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*), John Anton (famed Professor at Emory University), Betty Friedan (Founder, National Organization of Women), Irving Horowitz (Editor, Society Magazine), Sir Julian Huxley (former head, UNESCO, Great Britain), as well as a very long list of other senior professors, corporate presidents, journalists, scientists, teachers, executives, authors, ministers, poets and union directors from across the world. Many of the signers are educators at the highest levels from major universities across the globe. They are training our population—including *our* school teachers, journalists, government leaders and medical professionals.

With the mantra being proclaimed in universities across the land, on airwaves, in political speeches—it is inevitable that the mantra will have its desired effect. Hitler’s idea worked for him: “*Make the lie big make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.*” Schaeffer bolsters this point; “*by constant repetition, the idea that man is nothing more than a machine has captured the popular mind. This idea keeps being presented year after year in the schools and in the media, however unfounded and unproven the hypothesis. Gradually, after being generally unquestioned, it is blindly accepted.*”⁶⁸ It is the *prima facie* principle at work. This is why we must counter the *prima facie* voices with our own voice!

⁶⁸ Schaeffer/Koop, p.21

Sounding Out

In is imperative that the ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ raise our voices counter to the *prima facie* voices that prevail in our day. If the ubiquitous voices of the humanistic worldview go unchallenged, those voices will be blindly accepted. While I understand that we counter many things in our culture—I also recognize that our awareness and understanding of the issue at hand needs to be *generally elevated* if we are to counter the culture of death being foisted upon our society.

What was *discussed* in medical journals and in classrooms in the seventies is being *implemented* in more and more venues across our Western society. Joseph Fletcher—major promoter of “situational ethics,” said this in 1973 in an article regarding “death with dignity” in the American Journal of Nursing:

It is ridiculous to give ethical approval to the positive ending of sub-human life in utero as we do in therapeutic abortions for reasons of mercy and compassion but refuse to approve of positively ending a sub-human life in extremis. If we are morally obligated to put an end to a pregnancy when an amniocentesis reveals a terrible defective fetus, we are equally obliged to put an end to a patient’s hopeless misery when a brain scan reveals that a patient with cancer has advanced brain metastases.”⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Joseph Fletcher, Ethics and Euthanasia, American Journal of Nursing 73:670 (1973) as cited in Schaeffer/Koop, p.99

Here he argued several things that must be countered from a biblical perspective:

1. A baby *in utero* is not sub-human life—but is precious human life! Psalm 139 gives us the marvelous perspective that we are fearfully and wonderfully made in the womb. The Psalm is rich with personal pronouns—telling us that baby in the Psalmist’s mother’s womb was none other than HIM (the Psalmist), and not some impersonal mass of tissue: “Thou hast covered *me* in *my* mother’s womb (v 13); Thine eyes did see *my* substance, yet being unperfect (v16).
2. In this scenario a doctor ordered (likely without much discussion of the process—or the *purpose*) an amniocentesis. This is a common procedure—yet most pregnant women (and their spouses) are not told why. The reason for an amniocentesis is primarily to look at the amniotic fluid for any signs that a baby has a birth defect, such as Down syndrome.⁷⁰ One online medical encyclopedia did give this as a precaution, “*The serious emotional and ethical dilemmas that adverse test results can bring must also be considered.*”⁷¹ Indeed, a negative test result brings incredible pressure upon a couple to abort their baby—and council is often given to abort, as Fletcher said, “*for reasons of mercy and compassion*”—or as Bing and Hoche said in their pivotal book of the 1920’s, because the life of a Down syndrome child is, in their view, “*devoid of value.*” For this reason, many Christian pro-life advocates recommend *against* having an amniocentesis performed.
3. Fletcher argues that one is morally obliged to end a cancer patient’s life prematurely—as one would put a horse out of its misery—claiming that

⁷⁰ <http://www.surgeryencyclopedia.com/A-Ce/Amniocentesis.html>

⁷¹ Ibid.

the cancer patient is now, quite literally, “sub-human.” It is the argument that the person’s life is devoid of value. Yet there IS value, *intrinsic* value, to all human life. VanDrunen, in his *Bioethics and the Christian Life*, argues that the dying and those who are close to them benefit greatly from ongoing community with one another—and much can be gained from close interaction during their last days.⁷²

Fletcher is not a lone voice in sounding out this type of reasoning. A major bioethics work, published in 1985 by Peter Singer and Helga Kuhse through Oxford University Press, *Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants*, is still widely referenced in medical ethics publications today. In fact, it was referenced in an early 2012 publication of the *Journal of Medical Ethics* included paper entitled “*After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?*” wherein the authors argued that because abortion is deemed morally-acceptable by society [rather glossing over the strong segment of our society that disagrees], and whereas “the newborn and the fetus are morally equivalent”—it is morally-acceptable to kill a newborn.^{73,74}

The paper argues in a rather circular fashion that, “*both a fetus and a newborn certainly are human beings and potential persons, but neither is a ‘person’ in the sense of ‘subject to moral right to life’.* We take ‘person’ to mean an individual who is capable of attributing to her own existence some (at least) basic value such that being deprived of this existence represents a loss to her. This means that [are you ready for this?] many non-human animals and mentally retarded human individuals are persons, but that all individuals who are not in the

⁷² VanDrunen, pp. 183-184

⁷³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/9113394/Killing-babies-no-different-from-abortion-experts-say.html>, Retrieved March 3, 2012

⁷⁴ <http://jme.bmj.com/content/early/2012/02/22/medethics-2011-100411.full.pdf+html>, Retrieved March 3, 2012

condition of attributing any value to their own existence are not persons. Merely being human is not in itself a reason for ascribing someone a right to life.”⁷⁵

Here the authors actually seem to be arguing that your cognizant family pet may be a “person” who has an inherent “right to life,” but that neither a newborn baby nor a comatose adult are a “person” with an inherent “right to life.”

Unfortunately, it is this type of writing that makes it frequently into the medical and nursing journals to which our medical professionals regularly subscribe. We would be foolish to think that such morally-bankrupt philosophies are not—at this moment—affecting the medical community that we and our congregants interact with on a routine basis. Many people in our congregations are, in fact, members of the healthcare community and are subject to the frequent pourings-forth from among their peers.

Other issues, made more complicated by advances in medical technology, are equally important for the minister/counselor to become knowledgeable concerning. We shall consider some of them below.

Complex Bioethical Issues

Infertility Treatments

Great strides have been made in the treatment of infertility—and it is naturally appealing to a childless couple to consider some medical means of increasing their chances of having a child. Yet the industry of infertility treatment raises several bioethical questions. We shall only deal with those which are pertinent to sanctity of life issues, although other bioethical questions may be raised as well. Some infertility treatments include the creation of several human

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.2

embryos (unique persons—in a biblical sense, if not in the sense of the U.S. Constitution as currently viewed since *Roe v Wade*), not all of these embryos are brought to birth. Some are frozen using cryogenic technology. What are to become of these people-in-embryo? In my opinion, it would be unethical for a Christian to use an infertility treatment that calls for the potential of creating multiple embryos when the aim is have a single child. Additionally, some infertility treatments often result in multiple babies competing, quite unnaturally, inside a mother’s womb for the nutrients needed to sustain life and growth. In several known cases of quintuplets and other large progenies of children, the sacrifice (abortion) of some children to increase the chance of survival of others is sometimes indicated by the medical community as “*necessary*” if any of the children are to survive. Prospective Christian parents should be aware that their actions in trying to have a family may result in the unnatural creation of a situation where children need to die for the saving of other children—and that they should not engage in such actions based on the moral injunctions related to the sanctity of human life.

Organ Transplantation

I shall not deal here with the morality of whether it is or is not right to donate body organs, such as eyes, hearts, lungs, etc. after death or donations during the course of your life such as being a bone-marrow or kidney donor. On a personal level, I do not see a valid biblical or moral reason not to donate such organs. Yet organ transplantation can create some bioethical issues—or at least highlight some underlying bioethical sentiments that are contrary to Scriptures. It is amazing that mankind can now take the donated heart out of a recently-deceased auto-accident victim and place that heart into another human whose heart has ceased to function properly—and give that person a new lease on life with a new

heart. It is amazing that a child whose kidneys have ceased to function can receive the kidney (or kidneys) of a donor, and live a normal life. Nonetheless—as wonderful as this is to the recipient and their family—there is usually a greater need than supply. How are decisions made as to who gets a kidney and who does not? Of course, compatibility between the donor and the recipient is an issue with many transplants (such as kidneys)—yet beyond the compatibility issue lays another issue. Is an older person denied a life-saving transplant just because they are 70—even if they are otherwise in good health and making a meaningful and positive impact on their community? Is a child denied because they have some other “defect,” and are therefore deemed to have a life that is, at least somewhat, “devoid of value.” “Surely not!,” you might say. Yet this IS the case. In a January 18, 2012 Associated Press story it was reported this week that, *“The parents of a three-year-old New Jersey girl was [sic]denied a needed kidney transplant because of her “mental disabilities.”*⁷⁶ Chrissy Rivera, the child’s mother, stated that *“a doctor at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia told her and her husband that their daughter would not be eligible for a transplant because of her [daughter’s] mental condition.”*⁷⁷ Their daughter, Amelia, was born with Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome, a rare genetic defect which causes varying degrees of mental retardation as well as some other issues. The mother’s story was also relayed on a website dedicated to the syndrome. She quotes the doctor, *“No. She is not eligible because of her quality of life; Because of her mental delays.”*⁷⁸

While a child with Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome can have other physical issues, such as heart defects, which could make a transplant much more risky, there was no evidence presented that this was the reason for the denial. The reason

⁷⁶http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_DISABLED_CHILD_TRANSPLANT?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT Retrieved January 19, 2012

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ <http://www.wolfhirschhorn.org/2012/01/amelia/brick-walls/> Retrieved January 19, 2012

given, according to the sources cited, was that the child’s “quality of life” and her “mental delays” were the deciding factor. The quality of life argument does not hold water—for God, the Author of life, grants many wonderful blessings to people with a variety of illnesses and handicaps—and to their families *through* them; and the Author of life upholds the sanctity of human life through His Word, including the basic commandment, “thou shalt not kill.” The doctor’s statement indicates a worldview that does not allow for those with mental disabilities to lead fulfilling, meaningful lives. This is simply not the case—as a myriad of testimonials would confirm.⁷⁹ While the hospital has distanced itself from the opinion of the doctor since this became a national new story, the doctor’s opinion represents a Kantian/Hegelian worldview where all ethical matters are situational and where “absolutes,” such as the absolute sanctity of human life, are *passé*.

The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value

Before proceeding on to the next area of complex bioethical issues that have arisen, in part, due to increases in medical technology, this is a good place to insert a brief discussion regarding a pivotal book related to the topic. The entire “quality of life”—“death with dignity” terminology stems from the 1920 release by Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche entitled *The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value: Its Measure and Its Form*. The book was reprinted in English in 1975 by Robert Sassone, the original book was in German. The two authors had a heavy dose of the German philosophers of the preceding 140 or so years—including Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche—not to mention the sequiturs that stemmed from the conclusions of natural scientists von Humboldt and Darwin. This book was seminal in the formation of a worldview that served to devalue human life in our

⁷⁹ For example, See: <http://www.wolfhirschhorn.org/our-stories/>

modern era and was absolutely foundational in Hitler's Germany—as this book became popular in Germany and much of Europe in the decade preceding the rise of Nazism and was thus in the social mind of pre-Nazi Germany. Initially it was met with shock—but over the space of a decade, as the shocking *unthinkable* was discussed and debated in a public forum, the unthinkable moved from *unthinkable* to *thinkable* to *popular*.⁸⁰

A synopsis of the book, located on the website for the *Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies* at the University of Minnesota, ties a direct corollary from the book to “the Nazi policy of extermination.”⁸¹ It has been said that the book was the most quoted source by the defense at the Nuremberg Trials. The book has also provided the basis for many discussions on the subject of euthanasia and eugenics following the Third Reich “*with [its] juridical arguments in support of the killing of ‘life devoid of value,’ a ‘cost-benefit analysis regarding psychiatric care and described sick and disabled people as ‘people with deficits’, ‘elements of minor value’, ‘mentally dead’ and ‘ballast existences;’*” and the strong suggestion of the rightness of “*the painless killing of ‘incurably’ sick persons against their will.*”⁸²

A quick “Googling” of the name of the book or of the authors will show that this book is cited often in the promotion of “death with dignity” laws around the world. It received its foundation in Kantian/Hegelian philosophy, its testing ground in Hitler's extermination camps, and is still being used and cited or, at least, obliquely-referenced as a basis for discussion in legislative sessions and courtrooms across the Western world.⁸³

⁸⁰ <http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/documentary/hadamard/racism.html>, Retrieved January 19, 2012

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Two examples among many can be viewed at the following sites. Others can be found easily through in Internet search: <http://leg.state.nv.us/Session/68th1995/minutes/SJD322.txt> - and - <http://www.all.org/article/index/id/MjM4Nw>

Life Support, Pain Management and Acts that Kill

As stated near the beginning of this paper, there is a great deal of difference between *allowing someone to die* who would not maintain physical life without “extraordinary means” of intervention and the *performing of an act* that would take a person’s life who would not otherwise die without the performance of that act. I suppose that I should define some of these terms, as I intend their meaning to be understood for the purposes of this paper. Please note however that the terms “extraordinary means” or “extraordinary measures” have been used frequently in such bioethical debates—on both sides of the issue—and in various settings, yet without any uniform definition. By extraordinary means (measures) of intervention I mean the use of a medical device, system or agent that prolongs the physical life of an individual unnaturally, and without which the person would die in the immediate future. By the term “performing of an act” I mean either an intentional action that would cause a person to physically die in the immediate future, when that person would not die in the immediate future if the action be not performed. Additionally, I mean the “performing of an act” to mean the intentional lack of action (such as feeding, or another basic life necessity) through purposeful neglect with intention of hastening a death.

The lines between allowing a person to die and the performance of an act to hasten the death of an individual have been blurred greatly in the recent decades since *Roe v Wade*. In a Senate Committee on Judiciary, State of Nevada, March 22, 1995 an interesting discussion is recorded relative to a Senate Bill, (SB 234) which would prohibit the act of assisting suicide. In the discussion, one representative of Nevada Concerned Citizens, Ms. Lucille Lusk, offered an articulate view representing a traditional Judeo-Christian stance on the sanctity of human life. She stated, “*Nearly everyone supports the right of individuals to choose their own medical care, including the refusal or removal from artificial*

means of life support.” She went on to state that the Senate bill in question was an attempt “to prevent the crossing to an affirmative act that prematurely causes the death of a person who would not have otherwise died of natural causes at that time,” and to “prevent the movement toward the unwanted assisted suicide of elderly persons.” Her point was all but ridiculed openly by the Chair of the Senate Committee, Mark A. James (R), who proceeded to attempt persuasive argument in favor of assisted suicide.⁸⁴

The discussion was not only interesting, but it also pointed out the earlier mentioned statement by theology professor David VanDrunen in his timely book on bioethics: “*many bioethical decisions simply do not have one absolutely binding right or wrong answer.*”

Closing

Of necessity, I must cut short this discussion due to the appropriate constraints of this forum—yet I must at least make some closing remarks to wrap up the discussion. Because of the many medical advances that have been and are being made—more and more complex bioethical questions relative to the sanctity of life will be faced by our parishioners as they face their personal issues of life and death. For this reason, it is imperative that pastors and teachers become “engaged in”—as opposed to “removed from”—the necessary teaching of the biblical principles of the uniqueness, preciousness and sanctity of human life so that these principles become part of our nature as we grapple with the surrounding culture. It is imperative that these principles become engrafted into the makeup and thinking of the ministry and our congregants—for the challenges presented in

⁸⁴ <http://leg.state.nv.us/Session/68th1995/minutes/SJD322.txt>

this brief paper are challenges that each of us will face at some time in our lives. We must be prepare ourselves and our congregations—through study and proper preaching and teaching—to know how we will face the monumental times of our lives that are our inescapable lot.

In 2009 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published the fifth edition of *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.⁸⁵ In parts four and five of the document deal, respectively, with issues of care involving the beginning of life and the seriously ill and dying. This document consistently portrays a conservative stand on the absolute sanctity of human life. It acknowledges that “the Catholic health care ministry witnesses to the sanctity of life ‘from the moment of conception until death.’”⁸⁶ The same document also states, “... *two extremes are avoided: on the one hand, an insistence on useless or burdensome technology even when a patient may legitimately wish to forgo it and, on the other hand, the withdrawal of technology with the intention of causing death.*” It covers many issues such as nutrition and hydration to the seriously ill and dying in a way that largely lies within the bounds of scriptural principles regarding the intrinsic sanctity of human life.

In February 2012 national news reverberated with the story of the ObamaCare mandate that all hospital institutions comply with the law that requires all healthcare providers, including Catholic and other faith-based providers, provide free contraception (paid through employer’s health insurance) including abortifacients.^{87,88} In an interview I had with a representative of Dignity Health (formerly Catholic Healthcare West), I was told that “*the bishops have said that is one law they are going to ignore.*” He also suggested that there was serious

⁸⁵ Available online at <http://www.ncbcenter.org/document.doc?id=147> , Retrieved March 3, 2012

⁸⁶ <http://www.ncbcenter.org/document.doc?id=147>, p.23

⁸⁷ A substance that induces abortion.

⁸⁸ <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/290986/hhs-mandate-why-deroy-murdock>, Retrieved March 3, 2012

pressure from the [Obama] administration, and that he saw “*some signs that they [were] cracking.*”⁸⁹

Such conflicts are growing both in intensity and frequency—and I am afraid that they portend the future in our contention for biblical righteousness in the varied life issues surrounding medical ethics and the absolute sanctity of human life from the moment of conception. Things are bound to get worse; indeed, “*evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*”⁹⁰ We need to sound a clarion call and stand well above the moral baseness of our society that calls darkness light and light darkness.⁹¹

I call upon pastors, teachers and counselors to teach these principles, to become and stay aware of the social trends relative to the humanistic “culture of death” in our society, and to assist those who depend on them for guidance using Scriptures as your guide.

⁸⁹ Personal interview held February 10, 2012—name of interviewee withheld.

⁹⁰ II Timothy 3:13

⁹¹ Isaiah 5:20