Forum

Education a solution to abortion problems

By Bert Tryba

William Moore's essay "Abortion deprives children of life" (ODE, Aug 1, 1989), written with a gilded pen, presents a view of abortion based on Christian religious doctrine. On

Commentary

critical examination the brass, hidden beneath polished phrases and noble-sounding concerns for life, can be seen. Abundant historical evidence attests murderous Christian bigotry modeled on "God's" wrath wielded against old men, women and innocent children described in scripture.

Rational people recognize unwanted pregnancies are tragedies that profoundly affect the women concerned. Humanists favor appropriate sex education stressing responsibility, starting in elementary school years, that promotes understanding contraceptive devices and practices. Christian anti-abortionists could help reduce unwanted pregnancies by supporting such education.

The more contraceptive options a society has, along with education to use them, the less society has to depend on abortion. The pill is the only widely available, effective U.S. birth control method besides sterilization. Research and development of contraceptives has been hampered in the United States by threats of boycotts by religious groups.

A persistent myth propagated by the anti-abortion minority is that abortions usually take place late in pregnancy. Actually 91 percent of all abortions in the U.S. take place in the first trimester (50 percent occur in the first eight weeks). Only 8 percent of all abortions are performed in the second trimester (6.1 percent occur before the 16th week). Only a tiny fraction, one-one-hundredth of one percent, are performed during the third trimester, and those exclusively for medical rea-

THE FAR SIDE

Lawon

Moore willfully engages in emotional, dishonest exploitation of language. Judaic law affirms that human life begins at birth - not before. By calling a fetus a "child" and by cleverly using the term "human." generally connoting a person already born. Moore seeks to load pro-choice advocates with guilt. Moore refuses to recognize the issue is a private matter of the woman concerned. She alone must resolve the problem of an unwanted pregnancy with the aid of her partner and medical and social counsel. Only they know the particulars involved. A less emotional analogy that the terminology used by Moore can clarify the real issues.

Scriptural injunctions to "increase and multiply" must be understood as the desire of rulers and clergy - seeking personal interests of power and wealth - to dictate population growth. Many leaders still harbor ideas of "manifest destiny" and regard births as future warriors and missionaries. This argument which can be modeled on economic and political criteria not requiring "God," is interestingly presented by Thomas Nixon Carver in "The Religion Worth Having" (Houghton Mifflin, 1912). Carver suggests Mormans are an example Such views divide the world into "we" and "they." The more "we's" the better. Humans serve the ends of religion.

Human population is best considered from the perspective a skilled orchardist accords his fruit trees. The flower buds of an apple tree are not called "apples" though they have the potential to become apples if properly fertilized and allowed to grow under favorable conditions. A visit to an abandoned orchard gone wild will readily convince the reader that it is necessary for the orchardist to prune and trim the branches. even some with fertilized blossoms, if the maximum crop of quality fruit is to be obtained. We are dangerously misled if we believe that we are superior to Nature and not subject to its

By GARY LARSON

laws.

Currently there are five billion people in the world. In 40 years, experts predict there will be more than 10 billion. The evidence provided by ecologists and environmentalists shows the world cannot support present world population with increase consumer expectations associated with higher levels of education, urbanization and increased materials consumption.

We must urgently stop population growth and collectively work to resolve world social, economic and political problems through intelligent use of science and technology encouraging people to seek satisfaction in ways that do not clash with Nature.

Nearly 10 percent of the world's population (more than 400 million) are affected currently by malnutrition. Already more than 40,000 children under the age of one die every day from malnutrition and preventable infectious diseases.

In the U.S., more than 34,000 children wait to be adopted; 82 percent of them are older, or

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