

# In Defence of Life

## Edmonton Pro-life's Newsletter

www.edmontonprolife.org

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'educating for life'

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### Prolife Education - it's not just for students!

Education is the foundation on which pro-life victories are made. Pro-life education is the pro abortions worst nightmare. If we reach women with the facts before the abortionist does, they will choose life for their babies and the abortion chambers will sit empty.

Pro-life education can be approached in various ways. Let's start with the basics. Educate yourself educate children/grandchildren, school classes, teachers. The Internet can be very helpful here. Go to our web site, www.edmontonprolife.org or check out the many other pro-life sites available, then share this information with your immediate family members. Branch out from there to your extended family. Then try your newfound knowledge out on friends or neighbors. Don't forget the members of your church or the people you work with. Always present the information in a calm, factual and loving manner. Imagine the impact you can have as one individual! Set a goal of educating at least 3 people you know every month until you've exhausted your list. Then make more friends.

Make sure you're educated and that you present yourself well. You represent the entire pro-life movement to these people. Don't wait for speaking opportunities to come to you. Go out and seek them. Many churches, groups or organizations would appreciate benefiting from your knowledge. Ask people

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you know to initiate an invitation for you to speak to their group. But don't be shy. Babies are dying with each passing day. You can't be responsible for saving them all, but make it your goal to do what you can to save a few.

If you are uncomfortable with the idea of talking to individuals, you can accomplish this task while letting someone else do the work. Arrange to educate your church, bible class, club, organization or circle of friends by asking Edmonton Pro-life to do it for you. Make it your long-term goal to periodically have pro-life speakers address your group on the issues of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.

Let's all make a renewed effort to do whatever we can, regardless of where we are, to educate others about the reality of abortion. Life literally depends upon it.

### HOW TO DEFEND YOUR PRO-LIFE VIEWS IN 5 MINUTES OR LESS

By Scott Klusendorf

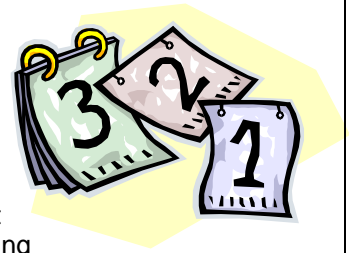
Suppose that you have just five minutes to graciously defend your pro-life beliefs with friends or classmates. Can you do it with rational arguments? What should you say? And how can you simplify the abortion issue for those who think it's hopelessly complex?

Here's how to succeed in three easy steps:

1) Clarify the issue. Pro-life advocates contend that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenseless human being. This simplifies the abortion controversy by focusing public attention on just one question: Is the unborn a member of the human family? If so, killing him or her to benefit others is a serious moral wrong. It treats the distinct human being, with his or her own inherent moral worth, as nothing more than a disposable instrument. Conversely, if the unborn are not human, killing them for any reason requires no more justification than having a tooth pulled.

In other words, arguments based on "choice" or "privacy" misses the point entirely. Would anyone that you know support a mother killing her toddler in the name of "choice and who decides?" Clearly, if the unborn are human, like toddlers, we shouldn't kill them in the name of choice anymore than we would a toddler. Again, this debate is about just one question: What is the unborn? (Continued on page 3)

## Upcoming Events – Save the Dates!



- **September 20, 2008 – Walkathon.** Edmonton Prolife holds its annual walkathon at Rundle Park. We hope to have a reunion of sorts this year. If you have ever participated in the Edmonton walkathon we encourage you to plan on being here this year. This is our ONLY major fundraiser for the year! We hope to see many of you at the walk. The pledge sheet is included with this newsletter. Please consider supporting Edmonton Prolife by walking or sponsoring a walker. Call Karen at 425-1637 for more information.
- **40 Days for Life campaign (September 24 - November 2),** Wherever you are or whatever you're doing, you can pray to end abortion. And you can pray for God's guidance for those involved in prayer vigils and pro-life action around the country. Also please consider fasting. Some people are unable to fast from food for health reasons; that's understandable. Fasting simply involves renouncing an activity that can put a barrier between you and God. It could be television, the Internet, chocolate, coffee, etc. You really can do without it. Take the time you usually spend in those activities and give it back to God. For prayers and other ideas for activities and more information about this international event visit <http://www.40daysforlife.com/about.cfm>. To find out how you can help make this event bigger in Edmonton next year call Karen at 425-1637.
- **October 5 Life Chain 2008** - Plans are now underway for organizing Life Chain 2008. Your commitment will last one hour but your presence will make a difference for life. Church contacts are desperately needed if we plan on meeting our goal of filling 50 city blocks. The commitment of church volunteers will be two meetings and sharing info with your pastor and church secretary. You will need access to the internet. If you cannot be a church contact but wish to attend Life Chain, call Karen to be added to our supporter list. Last year's event was supported by Holy Family parish, Go Life U of A Prolife group, St. John Evangelist Parish, St Alphonsus Parish, Edmonton Latin Community, The Canopy, Mark Isinger and friends, Alberta Prolife, The Back Porch many individuals and families. Please let us know if you will commit to bring 10 people to fill a block. If you want to be part of the biggest prolife prayer event in Edmonton call Karen at 425-1637. Please place the poster in the middle of this newsletter in your community.
- **October 3 - 5, 2008 The Right to Wear White Retreat** - The Right to Wear White is a Christ-centered non-denominational retreat. All the sessions are focused on the message of purity before marriage and derived from Biblical principles. Our desire is to encourage young girls, with the help of their moms, to follow the truths in our Father's message of "the gift of purity before marriage." We believe it is one of the strongest foundations for building their future marriage. Phone: 780-497-2581 or email [dawn@righttowearwhite.com](mailto:dawn@righttowearwhite.com) [www.RightToWearWhite.com](http://www.RightToWearWhite.com)
- **November 21 to 23, 2008 Rachel's Vineyard Retreat** – Healing the pain of abortion – one weekend at a time. The next interdenominational Edmonton and area retreat will be held this fall. Contact: Marlene Javorsky at [majbutterflies@aol.com](mailto:majbutterflies@aol.com) or Carla Houston at 780-963-4048 or [carlahouston@shaw.ca](mailto:carlahouston@shaw.ca) for more information or to register.
- **Join others in an hour of peaceful, prayerful activism against the daily slaughter of innocent babies. Morgentaler Abortion Clinic: 12490, 109 A Ave.**

The fourth Sunday of every month. Candle light Rosary at 7:30 pm. Contact Maryellen at 476-4026

For information on any of the above events, call the Edmonton Prolife office at **425-1637** or email us at

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Webmaster: Eileen Rebstock

New board members welcomed. Meetings held bimonthly first Tuesday, 5:30 pm, at EPL office. All EPL members welcome to at

At this point, some may object that your comparisons are not fair—that killing a fetus is morally different than killing a toddler. Ah, but that's the issue, isn't it? Are the unborn, like toddlers members of the human family? That is the one issue that matters.

Remind your critics that you are vigorously "pro-choice" when it comes to women choosing a number of moral goods. You support a woman's right to choose her own doctor, to choose her own husband, to choose her own job, and to choose her own religion, to name a few. These are among the many choices that you fully support for women. But some choices are wrong, like killing innocent human beings simply because they are in the way and cannot defend themselves. [1] No, we shouldn't be allowed to choose that.

2) Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy. Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm this.[2] Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. "This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn't part of the common knowledge," he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*. [3]

Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is not morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be. Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address. Put simply, there is no morally significant difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today. Differences of size, development, and location are not relevant. Think of the acronym SLED as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences: [4]

Size: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more valuable than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.

Level of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than you and I. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one valuable. But if that is

true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer's disease.

Environment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-valuable tissue mass to valuable human being? If the unborn are not already human and valuable, merely changing their location can't make them so.

Degree of Dependency: If viability bestows human value, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.

In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal (and valuable) because they share a common human nature. Humans have value simply because of the kind of thing they are, not because of some acquired property they may gain or lose during their lifetimes.

3) Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest. Ask the tough questions. When critics say that birth makes the unborn human, ask, "How does a mere change of location from inside the womb to outside the womb change the essential nature of the unborn?" If they say that brain development or higher consciousness makes us valuable humans, ask if they would agree with Joseph Fletcher that those with an IQ below 20 or perhaps 40 should forfeit their right to life? If not, why not? True, some people will ignore the scientific and philosophic case you present for the pro-life view and argue for abortion based on self-interest. That is the lazy way out. Remind your critics that if we care about truth, we will courageously follow the facts wherever they lead, no matter what the cost to our own self-interests

## Defining the Human Person

Application of the Above Principles to the Life Issues  
Up to this point I have discussed how abortion and euthanasia cut short the full manifestation of the individual human mystery in our midst. Inasmuch as each of us contributes positively to the emergence of the history of our families, friends, community and even the world, these actions have negative "world changing" consequences. The negative consequences of these actions also extend to the culture (the medium through which societal values are transmitted). These Levels 3/4 could be altogether forgotten. The net result

would be that our culture would call us to our lower selves and to forget our higher selves, making it the undoing of the human mystery.

#### A. Application to the Abortion Issue

Let us first examine the cultural consequences of the abortion issue. A cycle of individual and cultural harms could occur from any one of a number of negative issues (e.g., racism, avoidable poverty, accepted political oppression, etc.).

As noted above, abortion cuts short the full manifestation of the individual human mystery in our midst. Any culture which attempts to legalize a harm to an individual must provide some rationale for why we (as members of the culture) should act contrary to our intuitive recognition of the Silver Rule (Do no harm).

People who operate at Level 3/4 (i.e., contribution towards others and the common good) will not knowingly legislate a harm. If abortion is a harm to individual human persons, to the dignity of the individual, and to the culture, one must ask why so many Level 3/4 people seem to be indifferent to or even in support of it. In my view the answer is linked to four contemporary opinions about human personhood and rights. These opinions cannot be justified from any objective, systematic point of view. Perhaps worse, they lead to a myriad of new individual and cultural harms, which go far beyond the abortion and euthanasia issues. Each of these opinions redefines "person," and "inalienable rights" in a more subjective, Level 1/2, and potentially destructive way. It does not matter whether these opinions (redefinitions) have been forwarded intentionally or unintentionally, the fact is that they are currently doing harm and will inevitably do more harm in the future. Therefore, they must be immediately corrected and re-grounded in a systematic and objective base. They may be summarized as follows:

1. "Person" is divorced from human life
2. "Person" is linked to a specific quality of life or development
3. The redefinition of "inalienable rights"
4. The subjectivization of the intrinsic ordering of rights

As explained in the previous section, these re-definitions will influence the other cultural categories which will, in turn, focus the culture on Level 1/2 concerns (possessions, power, and ego-gratification) to the exclusion of Level 3/4 concerns (contribution, the common good, love, intrinsic human dignity, and the Ultimate). This refocusing of cultural concern opens the way for other harms arising out of exaggerated Level 1/2 desire which, in its turn, opens the way to additional cultural harms, etc.

The first three of the above opinions may be examined together. The proponents of abortion had to divorce personhood from human life because they could not deny that a human life existed at conception.

It was clear that the conceptus is a life (for it is metabolizing, growing, sub-dividing, surviving, etc.). It is also clear that the conceptus is uniquely human, for it possesses the complete genetic structure of a unique human being and even the sequencing of cell divisions leading to that fully-developed human being. Therefore a single-cell embryo is a unique human life. However, in order to justify abortion, human personhood was distinguished from "unique human life." It became almost commonplace to hear that "even though a unique human life was present, human personhood was not." Since it was further contended that rights belonged only to "persons," it fell to the courts to define when personhood occurred. This had two effects: 1) it undermined the objective ground of human personhood, and 2) it gave the courts the unprecedented power to decide when personhood (and inalienable rights) exist.

This separation of human personhood from human life opens a cultural Pandora's box. If rights do attach themselves to persons, and there is no objective ground of the definition of "person" (i.e., the occurrence of a unique human life), then personhood (and inalienable rights) could be defined in any arbitrary way that a legitimate or powerful authority wills it. By changing the definition of "person" one can define who should get rights and who should not. By losing the objective ground of personhood (i.e., the occurrence of a unique human life) one automatically undermines the inalienability of the right to life and all other subordinate rights.

We have given our most important social possession (the source of our freedom and protection within society) over to an external authority. Will it stop merely with the abortion issue? Could a court some day define person as a "being who has reached the age of reason," or a "being who has a reasonable degree of independence," or a "being with a minimum 98 I.Q.," or even a "being incapable of being depressed"? Why not? According to the Court, we are no longer intrinsic rights holders at the moment our unique human life occurs. We are extrinsic rights recipients at the moment the Court declares our personhood to exist.

If the culture should become dominantly Level 1/2 it could lead to any arbitrary proscription of any inalienable right to any individual or group based on any subjective characteristic which the cultural authority deems to be indicative of personhood.

The fourth of the above opinions (the subjectivization of the ordering of rights) must be examined separately for it concerns a different aspect. Abortion has been justified by placing the clear liberty rights of a mother over the "unclear" life rights of the unborn human being. Once the personhood of the unborn human being had been negated or thrown into question, it was

simple for proponents to add that the mother's right to custody over her own body carried greater weight.

This reasoning runs contrary to good philosophy and common sense. It also contradicts the implicit ordering of rights used by the legal system throughout the last two hundred years.

The right to life has, throughout history, been implicitly ranked above the right to liberty. If one is dead, one's right to liberty is irrelevant. Hence, the right to life should be considered objectively more fundamental than the right to liberty.

It seems that the ambiguous status of the unborn human being's personhood allowed the courts to think that the clearer status of the mother's liberty claim outweighed the less clear status of the unborn human being's life claim. This reasoning is unsound because clarity is a matter of subjective apperception. If a person declares, " $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$  is not clear to me," does this mean it is not true? Should the truth of the Pythagorean Theorem be subject to a particular person's clear apperception of it? Clarity cannot replace necessity as a criterion for resolving rights conflicts. The former is subjective, the later, objective.

There is yet another reason why clarity is not a decisive criterion for the resolution of rights conflicts; namely, moral necessity (the obligation to minimize harm in accordance with the Silver Rule). When one is unclear about what to do in a moral dilemma or a rights conflict, one ought to err in favor of the least possible harm. A court would not be convinced by a nuclear power plant's case resting on the following reasoning: "We were unclear about whether core meltdown would take place. So, in the absence of objective evidence to the contrary, we took a chance and killed 200,000 people." The abortion case is not much different: "We were not clear about whether an unborn human being is a "person;" therefore, in the absence of any clear mitigating criterion, we took a chance and killed eight million of them."

Whenever we have used the "clarity argument" to subordinate objectively more fundamental rights to less fundamental ones, we have caused great civil disorder. Whenever this invalid subordination is done, it undermines the Silver Rule which leads to a perception of injustice which, in turn, leads to civil strife. This, in its turn, leads to greater violations of the Silver Rule until the fundamental error is rectified. How can it be rectified? Through a three-step program:

1. Refusing to subordinate an objective criterion (a necessity criterion) to a subjective criterion (the clarity criterion).
2. To resolve rights conflicts through use of the necessity criterion whenever possible.

3. In times of uncertainty, erring in favor of according rights and personhood. To do otherwise could deny the right to life not only to individuals but whole groups.

How did our legal system get to the point of forgetting these seemingly elementary objective criteria? I believe it has arisen out of a fundamental failure to study objective legal criteriology in the areas of personhood and inalienability. These issues seem so abstract and philosophical that they are frequently relegated to (and hidden in) the domain of the philosophers. Since more positivistic methods of legal argumentation cannot replace objective criteriology in the areas of "person," "inalienability" and "rights," law professors and the judiciary will have to resurrect the study of criteriology to prevent not only needless prejudice and death, but also civil strife and the decline of the culture.

Why will the culture experience further decline if the above error is not rectified? Two major reasons may be adduced. First, it was mentioned above that once the definition of "person" is detached from "occurrence of a unique human life," any subjective redefinition can occur.

Secondly, legal definitions of "person" find their way back into the definitions of the other nine categories of cultural discourse (happiness, success, quality of life, love, suffering, ethics, freedom, rights, and the common good). Why? Because what becomes legal becomes normative, and what becomes normative becomes moral. For example, if the legal system should define personhood in terms of "degree of independence from others," then less independent people, by implication, would have to have a lesser quality of life. This lesser quality of life, in turn, would further imply less opportunity for happiness and success, which could be viewed as a life of intrinsic suffering. Should we allow these more dependent people to come into a world filled with such a burden? Would it not be the more "loving" and "virtuous" thing to head their inevitable misery off at the pass. Would it be "ethical" to use scarce resources to benefit them when there are other more independent people in the world? It seems that the "common good" would dictate that we ought to subordinate the life rights of the more dependent to the liberty and property rights of the more independent. At this juncture the life of the more independent has been deemed by the culture to be more worthy than the life of the more dependent. Any number of negative social consequences, including genocide, can follow from this reasoning.

This reasoning, with all of its negative consequences, abounds in our contemporary culture. It can be found in current journals of ethics, law, and medicine, and heard daily on the radio and television. If the culture as

a whole is going to move out of this mindset, it must recover the above principles of personhood and make a concerted effort to bring itself back to Level 3/4 thinking. Perhaps the reverse is more appropriate. We must first recover Level 3/4 thinking so that our hearts will be disposed to looking for the objective truth about personhood. This is precisely the purpose of the Life Principles Program.

#### B. Application to the Euthanasia Issue

The euthanasia issue may be viewed in a similar way. As you may know, the Hemlock Society and other organizations have, in the last five years, proposed Initiatives and legislation for physician-assisted suicide and lethal injection for persons gripped by terminal illness. This is a significant departure from previous legislation which attempted to allow people freedom from unwanted life-prolonging measures. In the past the medical profession was faced only with the decision of giving a person extraordinary life prolonging treatments. Current initiatives and legislative efforts would now allow physicians to administer life ending drugs to people who would not die of natural causes. Physicians would now be able to administer death as well as healing. The following diagram indicates the cycle of individual and cultural harms which would follow upon these new political initiatives.

What are the individual harms which would follow upon these initiatives? First, the literature of pain and symptom management indicates that the vast majority of requests for physician assisted suicide are reversed when pain and depression are treated adequately. Since pain and depression can be relieved in the vast majority of cases of terminal illnesses to the satisfaction of patients, then most suicide requests would be reversed if medical professionals were simply able to carry out their functions with the benefit of modern technology. Therefore, these suicide requests, if honored, would have been terrible mistakes in the view of those making them. Even Derick Humphry (co-founder of the Hemlock Society and author of *Final Exit*, the controversial "self-help" suicide book) admits that "only a small percentage of terminal physical pain cannot be controlled today." In the same vein, Dr. Pieter Admiraal (an anesthesiologist, clinical pharmacologist and leading Dutch advocate of legalized euthanasia) admitted to Dr. Carlos Gomez that pain control and alertness can be achieved in practically all cases — given sufficient effort and sophistication on the part of all involved — and that euthanasia for pain control is therefore both unnecessary and unethical.

The second harm to individuals arising out of euthanasia is the potential for abuse. The relatives and friends could convince a vulnerable dying person to "move on with the inevitable" in order to facilitate an inheritance. A physician could persuade a patient to

avail herself of assisted suicide or lethal injection if he were angry or felt she was unjustifiably consuming medical resources. Marginalized or less wealthy people could be persuaded by health insurance costs to select assisted suicide more often than their wealthier counterparts. No matter how many protections we try to build into the law, they can all be accidentally or intentionally circumvented to the detriment of the dying person.

The third harm to individuals is concerned with the possibility of involuntary euthanasia as The Report of Dutch Physicians on Euthanasia makes clear. In Holland, the Dutch government report cited thousands of cases of involuntary euthanasia in 1990, initiated and carried out by doctors, without patient knowledge or request, because the doctors thought it appropriate. This, despite carefully thought-out, written safeguards supposedly ensuring patient control and fully informed consent. Evidently, given the Dutch experience, euthanasia appears to be uncontrollable. Their situation should have been a best-case scenario: a small country without significant racial conflict or economic pressure on the health care system, with carefully constructed safeguards (much tighter than those proposed thus far in the English-speaking world). And yet, perhaps 1 in 10 deaths there is involuntary, at the hands of doctors.

Dutch physicians expressed a wide range of motives for perpetrating involuntary euthanasia: anger towards the patient, a belief in the unworthiness of the patient, the low quality of life of the patient, the declining condition of the patient, etc. The moral belief of physicians outweighed those of the patient. Since involuntary euthanasia is easy to cover up, the high incidence of it was not discovered until physicians admitted it in the Dutch Report.

My intention here is to show how individual harms can lead to cultural harms which in turn open upon even greater individual harms. What are the cultural harms arising out of the above three individual harms? Three cultural harms are of particular significance:

1. View the last months of life as wasted or insignificant.
2. The imposition of the duty to die.
3. Negative effects on the ten categories of cultural discourse.

The first cultural harm is connected with the devaluation of the last months of life. According to advocates of euthanasia, the last months of life can frequently be degrading and debilitating. Loss of autonomy, mobility and self-sufficiency can make a person feel that they are nothing but an encumbrance. The result is a severe decline in their feeling of self worth. If one is living simply for possessions, power, and ego-gratification, then loss of the ability to

compete, to seek new opportunity or to be independent or autonomous could be viewed as the loss of all purpose and meaning in life.

People having a predominately Level 3/4 perspective frequently view the last months of life as the most poignant. From this perspective, loss of one's Level 2 potential can frequently lead to a heightened capacity for Level 3/4 activities (reconciliation, forgiveness, intimacy, generativity, reflection on the Ultimate, faith, sharing of personal wisdom, etc.) The patient is not the sole beneficiary of these activities. Children, friends, colleagues, churches, and community organizations can sometimes benefit more from these activities than the dying person. An over-zealous policy of honoring suicide requests could not only deprive Level 3/4 people of the most poignant time of their lives, it could also hinder Level 2 individuals from freely and naturally moving to Level 3/4. The dying and those surviving them could be adversely affected for generations.

The devaluation of the last six months of life can also undermine the ability to deal with suffering. If one feels that life is fundamentally possession, power, ego-gratification and autonomy, the loss of these things in terminal illness will be interpreted as meaningless suffering. Deprivation of the powers necessary for one's whole purpose in life will seem to be an irreversible decline in dignity. If one equates suffering with nothing more than self-deprecation, one will be severely tempted to end it quickly.

A Level 3/4 perspective, however, is open to higher meaning and good in suffering. For example, suffering can be viewed as a means of purifying one's attitudes to reach a deeper, more humble, and more comprehensive capacity for love, wisdom, faith, and the pursuit of the common good. This is manifest in many of the sayings of our popular wisdom: "There is no cheap wisdom." "Wisdom comes from assessing both success and hardship." "There is no love without humility." "One's ego must be tempered in order to give oneself away." "Idealists can become ruthless without humility and love."

From a Level 3/4 point of view, then, suffering initiates the process of humility, depth, and new perspectives which opens upon a greater capacity for wisdom, love and faith. This enables us to optimize the positive contribution we can make with our lives.

When one is terminally ill, one is virtually compelled to accept help from one's friends. At first this can feel disempowering and humiliating. However, this difficult task can have profound benefits. If one aims to purify one's love through this seeming disempowerment, it shatters the pretense of the ego and allows one to grow in the humility so necessary for love. This, in turn, helps one to enter into a community of interdependence. By fostering humble

interdependence, suffering orients both individuals and groups toward common cause, common ideals, and a community of mutual respect and care.

The predominant obstacle to these Level 3/4 ideals is our inability to accept help. Yet when one allows others to help, one finds oneself growing in freedom and contributing more to unity, community and the common good. If we do not stem the tide of euthanasia, we may lose this all-important benefit of suffering. What will the next generation think of love then?

The second cultural harm arising out of recent euthanasia initiatives may be termed "the duty to die." Proponents of assisted suicide and lethal injection frequently claim that it is their right to have this option. Those who do not want this option, it is contended, do not have to avail themselves of it. Why take it away from those who want it? Is this not another instance of pro-lifers unjustly interfering in the lives of others?

The answer to these questions lies in what by now is an old socio-political and legal cliché: "One person's option is another person's duty." This cliché correctly acknowledges that every new option carries with it an implicit or explicit duty. Once society legalizes the option of euthanasia, certain groups within the society might feel that it is not simply an option but a duty. Vulnerable people could be pressured to avail themselves of an option that they would not have otherwise wanted. What could be the source of this pressure? Feelings of being a burden to their family, a burden to society, a burden to the doctor, an illegitimate consumer of resources, etc. In short, people can feel obligated by an option if others or the society suggest that it is the moral or appropriate thing to do. The new option opens the way for a new duty imposed on those who would formerly not have been inclined to even think about suicide.

The people who would be most vulnerable to this new unwanted duty would be those who have judged themselves to be less worthy to live. These would include the clinically depressed, the marginalized or economically deprived, those with low self-esteem, those who feel themselves a burden to their families, and those with a heightened sense of anxiety from their illness. Indeed, even those suffering from reversible depression<sup>7</sup> could also find themselves vulnerable. Hence a significant portion of the population could find itself pressured to commit suicide when they are not suffering, depressed, or desirous of the option.

The third cultural harm concerns the ten categories of cultural discourse. By now it must be evident that the legalization of euthanasia will inevitably affect our view of quality of life, suffering, and love. If we as a culture accept more incomplete and even superficial interpretations of these central concepts, we will

collectively think less of ourselves. We will undervalue our intrinsic goodness, dignity and mystery which is grounded in our view of suffering, freedom and love. This undervaluation of our worth will lead to an undervaluation of the goals of our lives. This, in turn, will lead to an underestimation of the value of commitment (freedom) which will, in turn, lead to an undervaluation of the virtues necessary to achieve the deepest aspects of wisdom, love and faith. This will lead to an undervaluation and superficial understanding of ethics which, in the end, will lead to a superficial understanding of rights. The culture is perilously close to embracing a philosophy which does not understand the need for ethics and which views rights as "what is owed to me" instead of "what I owe to others." If this cultural philosophy becomes pervasive, it will open the way to a myriad of new individual and cultural harms, and the cycle will continue.

### Conclusion

The goal of the Life Principles Program is to help the culture move out of this self-destructive momentum. If this is to be done, we must get our bearings. As a culture we must choose the meaning and level of discourse which we believe to be most indicative of our human potential (Level 3/4). Once this is done we must acknowledge the objective definition of "person" which is most consistent with this choice. When this is accomplished, it must be conveyed to our judiciary and our legislatures so that these two servants of the culture will not act counter to what we believe and hold about ourselves and our destiny. In communicating to our judiciary and legislature, we must indicate clearly what we mean by "person," "inalienability," "rights," and "the objective ranking of rights." We must further ask that all antithetical laws and court decisions be reversed. When this is accomplished, a healing cycle will ensue.

The future of the pro-life movement lies in a comprehensive education grounded in a profound grasp of life's purpose. The more deeply we grasp the meaning of life, the more profoundly we will grasp its value, dignity, and mystery.

This concludes the four part educational series on Personhood. If you would like to read all four parts please visit our website at [www.edmotnonrpolife.org](http://www.edmotnonrpolife.org) and go to the archived newsletters.

If you would like to have a presentation on the life principles please call Karen at 425-1637.

## Morgentaler debate reminds us of what we'd rather forget

**Randall Denley**

The Ottawa Citizen

*Sunday, July 06, 2008*

The selection of abortionist Henry Morgentaler was a brilliant coup by this year's Order of Canada committee. The list for what is supposed to be Canada's highest honour is usually cluttered with entertainers, former politicians and people you've never heard of. It generates obligatory newspaper coverage and a polite yawn from the public.

This year, the Morgentaler appointment has given the order new profile, pushing the story to the top of the news agenda and generating a flurry of opinion writing. It's almost as if the Order of Canada really mattered. It should, too, but the barrier to entry is so low that being able to put C.M. after your name really doesn't mean much.

Champions of women and their causes are always popular selections for the order, so maybe Morgentaler was no surprise. The selection committee even managed to craft Morgentaler's citation without using the word abortion. He was chosen "for his commitment to increased health care options for women, his determined efforts to influence Canadian public policy and his leadership in humanist and civil liberties organizations."

There you go, who's against "increased health care options for women?"

Morgentaler reflected his usual grace and moral certainty in his reaction to the award. Those who oppose his enthusiastic endorsement of abortion constitute "the usual suspects: the Catholic Church, fundamentalists, women opposed to women's rights," he said. And don't think abortion is all just about making life simpler for women. The decline in unwanted pregnancies means a reduction in crime, Morgentaler argued, taking credit for preventing murders. There's a thought that sounds closer to eugenics than increased health care options.

The Morgentaler award has people stirred up because it's a reminder of a situation we'd rather forget. It's not a figure one often hears, but there were 96,815 abortions in Canada in 2005. That's 28.3 abortions for every 100 live births. This at a time when Canada is experiencing a labour shortage and schools are closing for lack of children. Even if there were no moral dimension to the issue, abortion would be bad public policy.

In 1988, Morgentaler won a Supreme Court battle that overturned Canada's abortion laws. Every government since has seen the issue as too hot to handle, so we have no law. The public is divided among those who believe abortion is a basic right, those who oppose it and the "moral dilemma" people in the middle.

I can understand the arguments of those who think abortion is just another medical procedure, as shallow and self-centred as they are. I can certainly understand the people who oppose taking what will be a human life. The ones I don't get are those who argue that a first trimester abortion is OK, because the fetus isn't really a person, but that abortion is not so good later in the pregnancy. Why, because the dead baby looks more like us?

At a minimum, we should expect our federal government to discourage abortion as a choice, promote adoption and lead a debate on what abortion limits society might consider reasonable. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's mild disapproval of the Morgentaler appointment falls a few miles short of that. In the 20 years since the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Morgentaler, more than two million potential Canadians have been aborted. It's a stunning figure. And our national response is to promote the chief proponent of abortion to the Order of Canada. I'm not a Catholic, a fundamentalist or an opponent of women's rights, but I have a problem with that.

## What you can do about Morgentaler and the Order of Canada

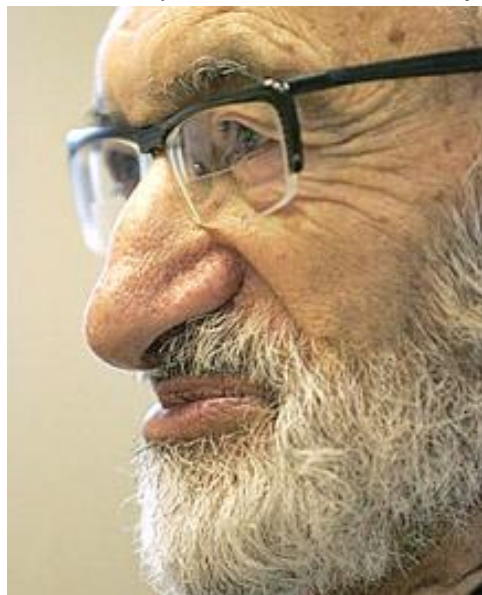
As I am sure you are aware there has been a huge uproar over Morgentaler receiving the Order of Canada. The previous article is one of many written across Canada in mainstream newspapers and other media not related to prolife groups. If you have not had the opportunity to respond there is still opportunities to make your opposition heard. Please consider writing two short letters to oppose Morgentaler's Order of Canada, one to the Order of Canada Chancellery requesting the termination of Morgentaler's appointment to the Order, and one to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Canadian Constitution establishes that any individual is free to request the termination of an appointment to the Order of Canada, in writing, to the Deputy Secretary. A conviction of a criminal offence is grounds for consideration of withdrawing appointment to the Order. In addition, it may be considered if an individual has been officially sanctioned, through fines

or reprimand, by an adjudicating body, professional association or other association.

Henry Morgentaler served 10 months in prison in 1975 after being convicted of performing illegal abortions. Following his conviction, in 1976 the Disciplinary Committee of the Professional Corporation of Physicians of Quebec suspended Morgentaler's medical license for one year, commenting that Morgentaler's attitude appeared to be "primarily directed to protecting his fees," and that "no really valid interview is held before proceeding with the abortion."

To contact the Deputy Secretary, The Chancellery:  
Ms. Emmanuelle Sajous Deputy Secretary Order of Canada Chancellery Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A1  
Tel: 613-998-8731 1 800 465-6890 Fax: 613-991-1681 esajous@gg.ca



The Governor General represents Queen Elizabeth II in Canada. As such, actions taken by the office of the Governor General are done in the Queen's name. Please take a few minutes to write a short letter to the Queen and ask her to instruct the Governor General to revoke the award. If you are a member of a pro-life organization, please consider sending a similar letter from your group as well. Apparently the Queen personally answers all her letter-mail correspondence, so you will likely receive a personal reply to your letter. To contact Queen Elizabeth II, write to:

Her Majesty The Queen  
Buckingham Palace  
London SW1A 1AA

Correspondence to the Queen should address "The Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen". Request that the secretary forward your correspondence to the Queen.

I am also providing a link to an absolutely well done article by Andrew Coyne, published in MacLean's magazine "It's time to talk about abortion Alone among developed countries, Canada has no abortion law. Is 'settling' for a non-decision any way for a democracy to behave? ANDREW COYNE | July 9, 2008 |"  
[http://www.macleans.ca/canada/national/article.jsp?content=20080709\\_112194\\_112194&page=5](http://www.macleans.ca/canada/national/article.jsp?content=20080709_112194_112194&page=5)

Andrew addresses just about every misconception about the truth of abortion here in Canada: How we got to where we are today, and paints a very clear picture of the abortion issues. If you do not have access to a computer to get the article online or do not have access to a public library to borrow the magazine, please call Karen at 425-1637 or email to [edmpl@interbaun.com](mailto:edmpl@interbaun.com) and she will mail a copy to you.

