

Efforts to Impose Dogma

The furious battle for the soul of America is intensifying, as those who oppose abortion are hoping that the new Supreme Court will rule against it, enabling them to impose their religious views on the rest of America. We draw the curtain aside to witness now the first serious shots that were fired in that battle, a little over three decades ago.

Shock waves raced across the nation when it was announced on January 22, 1973, that the U.S. Supreme Court—in *Roe v. Wade*—had upheld the right of a woman to exercise her choice in the matter of abortion. If the nation had not been split on the subject before that fateful morning, it certainly then began dividing—and rapidly. While even before, there had been differing opinions, now deep emotions flooded the women of the nation. Many were grateful that they now could have control over their reproductive destiny; others were outraged. Men similarly fell into split camps. The anti-abortion forces began consolidating their alliances, laying plans, and drawing strategies to put an end to abortions once and for all, by introducing a human life amendment that would protect fetuses from conception through birth.

Roe v. Wade set off an eruption of opposition to the Court's approval of the constitutionality of women's right to abortion. It enabled women to control their childbearing, if contraception should fail, and consequently, their health and family stability, as well as their opportunity for education and qualifying for employment. Gone now are the days when a married woman needed to depend on her husband to provide a livelihood. All women today need to have employment opportunities, as it fundamentally affects their well-being and indeed, their very lives.

Two basic camps exist, those who favor choice or abortion—and those

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who oppose abortion and call themselves pro-life. Inasmuch as both sides draw their basic philosophy and convictions from religious writings and teachings, it should be obvious that any law restricting a woman's right to abortion based on religious dogma would be unconstitutional, or at least should be so declared. But people with strong religious convictions are not always willing to try persuasion, often instead seeking the force of law to codify their religious views. This book will bring surprises to both the pro-life and pro-choice camps.

While prior to the court decision, those who favored the right of a woman to choose an abortion had the momentum, forces afterward began to reverse, as anti-abortionists experienced a new surge of energy. That energy has not flagged to this day and has continued to increase, as witnessed by numerous court decisions placing restrictions on planned abortions. Such legislation has curbed the availability of abortions, and social and economic pressures have closed abortion facilities, persuading hospitals to discontinue abortion procedures.

The *Roe* decision was a direct blow to the religious doctrine and the power of the Roman Catholic Church. That religious institution has exercised almost unbelievable power in the political world since before A.D. 300—more than seventeen centuries. The role of the Church in the international community of states was expressed at the United Nations by Archbishop Agostino Caseroli, Secretary of the Council for Public Affairs of the Church. In part, he declared:

"It's right to belong to the international Community' even though it is 'only the Holy See'—and no other Church or religious body who is 'recognized as a full member of the Community . . . admitted to take its place and act in it like the States'. . . That 'right' rests upon the fact that the Church is posed with outstretched wings covering the whole globe, an independent and sovereign power . . . which imposes itself because of its stature, its history, its influence.

"The sovereign power, thus imposed upon the States, is . . . spiritual in nature' and 'its real kingdom is the kingdom of conscience' Therefore . . . when one accepts the Catholic Church in this way, almost as the conscience of humanity' it follows that all mankind is asked to accept the Catholic Church as 'everybody's friend,' its voice of conscience in international affairs."¹

On his first trip to the United States, Americans got their first look at Pope Benedict XVI, who clearly told us how we ought to live, speaking as our conscience. On the third anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, speaking of his pending sainthood, Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, one of the first to request his beatification process, proclaimed, "He was the conscience of the world."² Is it appropriate for any person to proclaim himself—or for any organization to assume itself—to be the conscience of the world?

The most sacred attribute any human being possesses is his or her conscience. And it is not subject to anyone—not even to God, unless one willingly submits it to Him. No religious institution, no political institution, no social institution, including the family, is to force anyone's conscience in religious matters, for to do so is a direct violation of God's law, which is, "love your neighbor as yourself." Since people do not want their conscience forced, it goes without

saying that they have no right to force anyone else's conscience. For a religious institution to claim it has the right to be the conscience of the entire world and everyone in it is blatant blasphemy, which is taking the place of God. For it is the Holy Spirit who directs but does not force our conscience—not that of any man, any woman, anyone, high or low.

Those opposing abortion picked up on the choice language of the decision and agreed that women had a choice—a choice of whether to get pregnant or not. Once pregnancy occurred, choice ended. They also proclaimed loudly and clearly that while the members of the Court may not have known when life began, they did, and it was at conception.

Language became a tool in the controversy in a most masterful manner. Scientific terms such as *zygote*, *embryo*, and *fetus* were readily replaced with the finished product—*baby*—and used at every stage of the pregnancy. Revisionism blurred distinctions and confused the public. And we can understand from personal experience that our conceived children were “babies”—at least to us. While not scientific, it satisfied our emotional needs, and it seemed natural. But to use such language when the debate on abortion raged only served to blur the white with the black and produce gray areas.

The Catholic bishops were aware of their theological and political affinity with Evangelicals on the subjects of abortion, prayer, and the teaching of the Bible in the public schools. They also were pushing to secure tax funding for their religious schools. They expected they had a strong ally in their quest to reshape America into their mold, socially and religiously. And this was to come about through a strong religio-political alliance. They were not to be disappointed.

Consequently, the movement advanced by the Catholic bishops got a powerful ally when the Evangelicals joined. It is well known that Evangelicals may well be the most powerful public-shaping communications network on television, as well as radio. At any given time, as one surfs television satellite offerings or turns on the radio, one finds conservative channels and stations promoting religious presentations, while mixing in their political agenda. Before their transformation, they waved the Bible. Now it's the flag *and* the Bible.

Their early Evangelical allies made and continue to make the movement most formidable. Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family, the late Dr. Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority, Pat Robertson of the 700 Club, Dr. Robert A. Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral and Hour of Power, along with numerous others, have commanded audiences that number in the millions, while their fund-raising ability is staggering. The transformation of the Evangelicals—who most astutely avoided political involvement, because they preached that Christ's kingdom was not of this world—took place almost suddenly. Traditionally, they opposed tax funding for religious schools, as well as religious exercises in the public school system. The dramatic changes came virtually overnight, because of the abortion issue. It is unlikely that they will ever surrender their newly acquired political power. Historically, religious powers have never voluntarily surrendered their political power—they have only sought to increase it. But then, that is human nature, isn't it?

The creation of the abortion issue gave the National Conference of Catholic

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Bishops the opportunity to politically mobilize in America, by seeking to impose their dogma on society. The abortion issue enabled "regular" physicians to gain credibility, eliminating competition through licensing laws, which a century earlier gave them a monopoly control in medical issues. This they did through lobbying to outlaw abortion. The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, issued by Catholic Bishops in 1975, called for the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Ultimately, such mobilization would serve as a catalyst to unite church and state and implement papal/Evangelical dogma into public policy, with which the majority of Roman Catholics disagree.³ Those steps will effectively give to the Catholic Church and its Evangelical allies the monopoly control in the area of morality, both in social and religious issues, in public and in private.

As the National Conference of Catholic Bishops faced the threat to their Church teachings, they formulated plans. Activism required purpose, organization, funding, and communication. By mobilizing the Roman Catholic Church to fight the right gained by women, the movement got a skyrocket's boost:

"On November 20, 1975, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops unanimously adopted the *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities*."⁴ It was clearly their intention to become deeply involved in antiabortion political activities. It has been obscured that "the RTL (Right to Life) movement serves as a secular arm of the institutional Roman Catholic Church. . . . Catholics and the Catholic Church overwhelmingly dominate the RTL movement . . . the Church provides the movement's financial and institutional base." In the United States local Catholic churches provide physical facilities, fund-raising help, and volunteer workers. And in 1973 they set up an independent lobbying group, the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA). It was charged to secure a constitutional amendment to overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decisions. They then proceeded to produce an extraordinary document, *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities*. The thirteen-page paper detailed a blueprint for political mobilization that received unanimous approval by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) started as a small group of committed volunteers. . . . The NRLC had its origins inside the Church organizationally and in its public image. But it quickly moved to disassociate itself from the Church. . . . From its earliest days, NRLC has attempted to downplay the Church-RTL movement connection."⁵

Antiabortion Catholic supporters dominated local RTL groups from the outset, Catholic symbolism, imagery, and—most important—Catholic financial backing, was prominent.

Out of the *Pastoral Plan* arose a number of RTL organizations that gave strong support to the Bishops' goal.⁶

"At first glance it would seem that the Roman Catholic bishops are protecting the lives of unborn babies by proposing a constitutional amendment. But before the Supreme Court decision, *TIME* magazine reported in its March 9, 1970 issue that experts estimated that as many as one million illegal abortions took place in the U. S each year. No law can prevent women from having abortions."⁷

The goal was to secure passage of a pro-life amendment that would protect the unborn child to the maximum extent possible. "The *Plan* notes that it is absolutely necessary to encourage the development in each congressional district of an identifiable tightly knit and well organized pro-life unit."⁸ Despite the disclaimer that its congressional district unit "is not an agency of the Church, nor is it operated, controlled or financed by the Church," the *Plan* stipulates that each unit is to have a chairperson who serves as a liaison with church-sponsored profile groups.⁹

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops had no hesitancy about demanding the placement of their religious doctrine into United States law and imposing it on the entire nation, regardless of the consciences of their own members or other individuals. That was an un-Christ-like act, void of compassion toward the living and a direct violation of the non-Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution, which prohibits the government from establishing any aspect of religion. Incorporating religion into law is the most obvious way of establishing religion. Most of all, it is contrary to the way God operates His kingdom.

The *Pastoral Plan* received wide publicity and generated substantial dismay in both Catholic and non-Catholic circles. The *National Catholic Reporter* criticized the *Plan* and suggested that the Church was seeking to create a "Catholic party." Another response came from the National Association of Women Religious, with about 3,000 nuns in membership, which affirmed opposition to abortion but "warned that a constitutional ban would be an imposition of one (religious) view on the rest of society."¹⁰

Ray White, National Right to Life Committee executive director, stated, "The only reason we have a pro-life movement in this country is because of the Catholic people and the Catholic Church."¹¹

Many Americans, including some government officials, were outraged at the lengths to which the bishops proposed to go in order to enforce their religious dogma on non-Catholics. The *Pastoral Plan* not only disregarded the constitutional prohibition against religious establishment, but the principle separating church and state was in its periscope; torpedoes were being launched.

Numerous anti-abortion organizations were conceived and born on the fast track. On the other hand, organizations arose seeking to protect the constitutional right of women to have an abortion. These represented religious, professional, service, and public interest categories.¹² The National Abortion Rights Action League, successor to the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (both acronyms were NARAL) continued its work, joined by a few others, such as Planned Parenthood Federation of America, RCAR, and NOW.¹³

The *Roe v. Wade* decision pointed out that historically, abortion was legal in both Colonial America and the United States, until about the middle of the nineteenth century, when physicians led a concerted drive to outlaw it state by state. Old English common law had been incorporated in the colonies and the newly formed United States, providing for abortion rights until quickening. To believe that abortion was not legal prior to the 1973 Supreme Court decision

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is to be grossly uninformed. Abortion opponents have done masterful work in presenting information that is inaccurate and calculated to further their cause.

Who in 1973 could have imagined where this issue was headed? Or how vital it was to the viability of the Roman Catholic Church? The importance of overturning abortion rights legislatively or through the courts cannot be underestimated, when it comes to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. One of the leading cardinals and proponents of the Church's effort to end abortion rights, prior to his death, was New York's John Cardinal O'Connor. His remarks make it clear that there is no higher priority—that it underpins all else. He sounded a clarion call for war on all fronts against abortion rights, as a means of maintaining the authority and the very existence of the Roman Catholic Church. He warned: "The fact is that attacks on the Catholic Church's stance on abortion—unless they are rebutted—effectively erode Church authority in all matters, indeed on the authority of God Himself."¹⁴

Who in 1973 expected a serious discussion coming from the Roman Catholic Church, that women should be placed in prison when they have an abortion, for thereby killing their fetus? The battle over abortion rights is far from over. Recently an article appeared in a lay Catholic newspaper, *The Wanderer*. In October 25, 2007, it referred to *Newsweek* writer Anna Quindlen. She raised a valid point: "There are only two logical choices: hold women accountable for a criminal act by sending them to prison, or refuse to criminalize the act in the first place. If you can't countenance the first, you have to accept the second"

A man recently was convicted for committing two homicides. He shot and killed a pregnant woman, and of course, the fetus quit developing, denied the borrowed life of the mother—through the placenta—of blood, oxygen, and nutrients. James K. Fitzpatrick, a contributing editor, comments:

"I was not calling for jail time for every woman who aborts her child . . . if we persist in the position that all women who have had abortions . . . should be free from criminal penalties, we will end up, like it or not, making the point . . . conceding that we don't really think the fetus is an unborn child."¹⁵

Horrors. Are we headed for serious consideration of jailing women who have had abortions? All of them? What else is coming around the corner?

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops sought for an ally that would enable them to win elections, elect anti-abortion people in state and federal legislatures, and put a supportive president in the White House, who, in turn, would place cooperative judges and justices into the entire federal judiciary system. Their goal has never changed. As recently as November 25, 2007, the *National Catholic Register*, a lay Catholic weekly newspaper, headlined on their front page: "U.S. Bishops: Abortion 'Preeminent' Issue for Catholic Voters."

A just released document, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility From the Catholic Bishops of the United States," makes it clear that all Catholics are duty bound to God and to the Church to vote as the Church has instructed them.¹⁶ While members who follow that directive will be faithful Catholics, they will not be faithful citizens, for they will be laying the groundwork to radically change our nation, contrary to our Constitution, which all political elected officials must swear to uphold. Apparently, the oaths of some are either the

result of misunderstanding the Constitution, or to them their oath does not matter. The Church is not telling its members for whom to vote, yet it is obvious that one party is off limits, owing to its pro-choice stance in honoring the Constitution, while the other party is in line with establishing Roman Catholic and Evangelical dogma as the law of the land. That is clearly forbidden by the Constitution's First Amendment. Pro-choice candidates for the 2008 presidential nomination understood and respected the Constitutional directive that people may freely practice their religion, but the nation's lawmakers are forbidden to yield to religious pressures and pass laws "respecting an establishment of religion." To do otherwise is fraught with far-reaching dangers and immeasurable adverse consequences.

In short order, Evangelical Protestants and the conservative wing of the Republican Party were being organized to implement the *Pastoral Plan*.

"A new group of activists, including Richard Viguerie, a computer-mail genius; Paul Weyrich, an issues and strategy expert; Howard Phillips, a grass-roots political whiz kid; and Terry Dolan, a fund-raiser with a special instinct for the jugular, began to organize. Many of the people they reached out to opposed abortion or saw the political value of doing so."¹⁷

Weyrich belongs to the Eastern Rite Catholic Church, and he planned an organization, deciding both the leader and name of the group that would mushroom into national prominence: the late Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority. Weyrich, Catholic founder of not only the Moral Majority but also the Christian Voice and Religious Round Table, stated: "If we didn't know the pope agrees with us, us Catholics in the New Right would have serious conscience problems. I would never work counter to the Church's official position."¹⁸

That the Catholic Church has both privately and publicly denounced Catholic politicians for refusing to vote to outlaw abortions has taken place so often that it is common knowledge. It is also known that church officials have threatened Catholic politicians with excommunication for supporting abortion rights. The most common response on the part of these "renegade" Catholics is that while they personally believe that abortion is wrong, they cannot, under our constitutional system, vote to establish Catholic doctrine as the law of the land. Such voting would be contrary to the constitutional separation of church and state and would be dangerous public policy, fanning flames of sectarian warfare. And they are correct in that analysis and in that stand.

Making abortion an election issue was put on the front burner by the election of antiabortion congressional candidates. And all this in spite of the fact that the Constitution states unequivocally, "but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." While the government was not making a religious test an issue, the voters clearly were, and politicians wanting to be elected were not shy about stating their views in order to gain political support.

In its efforts to eliminate the right to abortion, Catholic political skills have been apparent by changes in strategy and tactics. In their early years they had but one goal: a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortions. In the process they provoked emotional confrontation with legislators, often using preserved fetuses as props. We can understand the revulsion that takes place upon seeing

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such things. As a non-professional medical person, I have a strong aversion to watching surgery or even to witnessing any body part in a bottle. Probably many others feel the same way. This normal emotional reaction is the basis of many people's opposition to abortion.

Various responses are analyzed and dismissed by the church. One response that such Catholics make is: "We represent the wishes of our voters." Critics dismiss this by asserting that such politicians are selling their votes to get reelected. The same could be charged about those who vote against abortion. Their basic argument against these "unfaithful" Catholics is that all legislation should represent laws that benefit the "common good."

That would be the goal of a democracy with majority rule. But under a republic, as the United States was established, there are certain inalienable rights that protect the minority, but these are rejected because they are not in harmony with Catholic morality and are considered in violation of the common good by anti-abortionists. But all these terms—*the common good, values, justice, fairness, the true and the good*—are connected to morality. The compelling argument the Catholic Church makes is that she is the one to define the common good, due to her (the Church's) claimed competence in the areas of faith and morals. Further, it asserts that she teaches not her own plan for the human universe but rather God's plan.

But all who believe in Christ do not agree with Catholic morality. What of the Jews, Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists, etc. who do not accept the New Testament or Jesus as the Messiah? Why does the Church expect that all laws should reflect her views of morality? It will make those with whom the Church disagrees to be second-class citizens.

When charged with imposing its dogma on society, the Catholic Church counters that she only proposes the truth but does not impose it. This is somewhat misleading. How do you imagine that the state of Connecticut outlawed all contraceptives, except through the political influence exercised by the Church? The burdensome law was challenged ultimately in the U.S. Supreme Court and found to be unconstitutional. One need only look at the history of the Middle Ages to discover that this has been her pattern for two millennia, as she does all in her power to get the State to adopt Catholic moral principles, which in turn the government imposes on society, applying penalties for disobeying the laws of the land. In this manner, non-Catholics lose their free exercise of religion, while the Church establishes its dogma in society.

Catholic politicians respond, "Legislation affects people of all religions, not just Catholics, and my vote must reflect all their views." The Church will not accept such reasoning, but it is consistent with the oath legislators take to uphold our Constitution.

Catholic bishops declared that "Politicians who act 'consistently to support abortion on demand' risk 'cooperating in evil and sinning against the common good.'"¹⁹ That places a heavy burden on a public servant who has pledged to uphold the Constitution, which forbids establishing his or her religion, resulting in being denied the Eucharist, which is a vital ritual in their religion. Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, a Roman Catholic candidate for the presidency on the

Democratic ticket in 2004, fell into that dilemma and chose to uphold the Constitution—and may have lost the election over it.

Los Angeles Roger Cardinal Mahoney took a moderate position:

“The Holy Father has continued to challenge our Catholic public officials to take into account the moral teachings of the Church . . . before taking public positions on issues. All of our clergy need to articulate these teachings clearly . . . without presuming to instruct public officials how specifically to do their job of promoting and defending the many aspects of the common good.”²⁰

He should be commended for honoring the conscience and not denying communion for “wrong” voting on the abortion issue.

The current pope, Benedict XVI, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, at the time of his service as Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly known as The Congregation of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, endorsed the statement of American bishops in denying communion to Catholic politicians who support legalized abortion. He wrote, “The statement is very much in harmony with the general principles ‘Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion.’”

St. Louis Congressman William Lacy Clay, a Roman Catholic and a pro-choice voter, said his bishop, Raymond Burke, has “gone too far”: “He suggested that the Catholic Church ought to have its tax-free status revoked for engaging in political activity.”²¹ Clay’s reference has to do with the U.S. government legal code of requirements for securing and retaining a tax-exempt status. Bishop Burke went beyond denying politicians communion if they supported legalized abortion—he extended the ban to members of his parish who vote for such politicians. Pete Vere, Roman Catholic canon lawyer, said: “Prelates should let it be known that if you prostitute for votes by supporting abortion, then no, you are not welcome to receive Communion—for the sake of your own soul.” He also stated that such politicians should no longer receive Communion unless and until they repent.²² Those who do not take Holy Communion will be lost eternally, according to Catholic teachings.

Earlier, Pope John Paul II addressed President George W. Bush on his initial visit to the Holy See following his first election. He said, in part:

“A free and virtuous society, which America aspires to be, must reject practices that devalue and violate human life at any stage from conception until natural death. In defending the right to life, in law and through a vibrant culture of life, America can show the world a path to a truly humane future in which man remains the master, not the product, of his technology.”²³

It is common knowledge that the Roman Catholic hierarchy has opposed all stem-cell research. President George W. Bush exercised his first veto ever on legislation passed by both houses of Congress to expand government funding for stem-cell research using human embryos. Why? The President said, “It crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect.”²⁴ Such research could help tens of millions of people in our country with many diseases,

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including Alzheimer's, diabetes, and Parkinson's disease—ironically, the very disease that took the life of Pope John Paul II. President Bush used his personal religious convictions to block a procedure that over 70 percent of the nation supports. This is a violation of his oath to uphold the Constitution.

“So why is there a nasty political fight over the potentially remarkable scientific advance? It's because the cells are extracted by destroying a fertilized egg that's only a few days old. These microscopic clusters of cells aren't life as most people think of it. They have the potential to become human only if they are successfully implanted in a woman's uterus. Yet Bush believes the practice amounts to destroying human life and crosses an ethical boundary.”²⁵

Fertility clinics have more than 400,000 frozen embryos left over from in vitro treatments. Many are discarded every year, thrown away, instead of aiding research that could help millions of Americans.²⁶ And all of this is being lost because of the religious lobby that is called pro-life. How can their position and the president's veto be pro-life? At the rate we are going, it will not be long before in vitro treatment will become illegal, for that is the official position of the Roman Catholic Church and its Evangelical allies.

Recent experimentation has brought closer a solution that most people will find acceptable. An article in *TIME* magazine states:

“The stem-cell breakthrough doesn't make up for six years of hypocrisy and lost research. . . . Scientists in Japan and Wisconsin have independently figured out how to turn ordinary human-skin cells into something like pluripotent stem cells . . . they are like a biological gift certificate that can be turned into other kinds of cells as needed.”

These results are achieved without destroying a single embryo. The news was welcomed by Republican Congressmen hoping the issue would go away and would eliminate the president's opposition, who banned almost all federally financing in 2001. Research has been limited to stem cells that would otherwise be discarded.²⁷ The question remains: Will the pope support this type of research? Based on previous pronouncements, it is not likely. Is the stem-cell issue going away? Afraid not.

All of America was interested in the views of Roman Catholic President John Kennedy, who was elected in the fall of 1960.

“In his address on church and state before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on September 12, 1960, candidate Kennedy adopted a strongly separationist position. ‘I believe in an America,’ he said, ‘where the separation of church and state is absolute. . . . I believe in a President,’ he continued, ‘whose views on religion are his own private affair . . .’”²⁸

The year 1960 was a long time ago, and the climate was considerably different. Kennedy spoke to a gathering of Protestant ministers who were opposed to mixing religion and politics. If a meeting of the same ministerial organization were held today, Kennedy's speech would have been received with considerable opposition, so much has the attitude changed. The 1960 ministers wanted assurance that Kennedy would not foist Catholicism on them. Besides, the feelings between Evangelicals and Catholics weren't exactly cordial. This was prior to the rise of the religio-political conservative movement of

Evangelicals, fundamentalists, and Catholics. Few people in those days had any quarrel with the religion clauses in the Constitution that mandated non-establishment and the free exercise of religion. That is no longer true.

Theodore C. Sorensen, President Kennedy's speechwriter, commented during the 1964 presidential campaign, "How ironic that the same pious preachers who extracted these pledges from John F. Kennedy now embrace Ronald Reagan for violating every one of them."²⁹

Nearly twenty-five years after President Kennedy spoke on the propriety of politicians holding private views on the subject of religion and consciously avoiding the promotion or imposition of those views on the nation, New York Governor Mario Cuomo came on the scene with a different view. Speaking at Notre Dame University, he allowed for religion to become a basis for law, but he sounded a clarion warning:

"Way down deep, the American people are afraid of an entangling relationship between formal religions, or whole bodies of religious belief, and government. Apart from constitutional law and religious doctrine, there is a sense that tells us it is wrong to presume to speak for God or to claim God's sanction of our particular legislation and His rejection of all other positions."³⁰

As the battle for control of public policy on abortion rights progressed, the Catholic bishops concluded that, while they were gaining in the court of public opinion, a change was needed in their strategy. A decade after the first *Pastoral Plan* was announced and implemented, a revised one was introduced in 1985. It called for action in three areas: 1) a public educational effort, 2) a pastoral effort addressed to deal with women who have had abortion, to accept responsibility for their power to generate human life, and 3) "A public policy effort directed to ensuring effective legal protection for the right to the life of the unborn."³¹

But it was their strategy for the Public Policy Program that would enable them to make giant steps toward their goal. The emphasis on law being based on religion was to be their strategy:

"We hold that all human laws must ultimately be measured against the natural law engraved in our hearts by the Creator. A human law or policy contrary to this higher law, especially one which ignores or violates fundamental human rights, surrenders its claim to the respect and obedience of citizens while in no way lessening their obligation to uphold the moral law."³²

The basic premise of this argument is that they are qualified to interpret and dictate what is "natural law" and what is not. And obviously, anyone who differs with them is incorrect.

They took recognition that dialogue with churches and religious groups was essential and that it had already proved successful. Some denominations during that decade reversed their support for a woman's right to abortion. Whereas the bishops' primary effort on the first *Pastoral Plan* started with known support from Evangelicals and fundamentalists, the thrust of the new *Pastoral Plan* was to reach more broadly into religious bodies still supportive of women's rights,³³ a major change.

It is vital for people to recognize this emphasis as a major attack on the American Constitution, which states clearly that "Congress shall make no law

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respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Secular law is not to be based on religious dogma. If the anti-abortion movement succeeds in writing into the Constitution or in statutory law prohibitions against abortion, making their religious dogma the law of the land, we will be turning the clock back to Colonial America. And our Constitution will become not only impotent but also literally worthless to protect minorities. This rises from a powerful religious coalition ostensibly promoting rights and freedom for the weakest and most vulnerable in our society. Incredible! Colonies had laws that prohibited people from running for public office if they did not belong to the established religion, their voting rights were forfeited, and numerous laws carried death penalties if they were violated. One example was blasphemy. Others were the denial of the Trinity or the divinity of Christ.³⁴

Most people became second-class citizens. When the Revolutionary War concluded, the Founders of this nation brought freedom from religious intolerance, which seems to be rearing its troublesome head once again.

As the *Bishops' Plan* has impacted government and law, but not necessarily society, laws have begun to erode *Roe v. Wade* and its definition of personhood. Pro-lifers sensed new hope for their cause with the emergence of Governor George W. Bush as a candidate for the nomination for president on the Republican ticket. Bush requested a meeting with a Roman Catholic priest to provide assurances that he was supportive of the pro-life cause. Asked about his views, he said he accepted the notion that all lives are to be welcomed—that human life is to be protected by the law from its beginning to its close. As a state governor, Bush had endorsed and supported every pro-life measure. If elected president, he promised to be as faithful as he had been while serving as governor of Texas.³⁵

Following his election, President George W. Bush appeared at Notre Dame University, where he shared his religio-political views. Junior Catherine Totten said, "Overall, Bush's policies are closer to the Church's than Gore's—and as far as abortion, he's definitely closest to the Church's teachings." Princeton Professor Robert George praised Bush, saying, "What Bush is, in effect, saying is that 'I am a John Paul II Republican—pro-life, pro-family, and pro-poor.'³⁶

Years earlier, the observation was made and documented: "It is no coincidence that the Republican platform is consistent with the Vatican agenda."³⁷ With its asserted authority, the Roman Catholic Church has been exercising its sovereignty over the United States in matters of "faith and morals," particularly in activities related to population growth control.³⁸ Not only is this true regarding legislation or a constitutional amendment prohibiting all abortion, but the platform since 1980 has also called for only pro-life federal judges, tax payment for parochial school education, and prayer—an act of worship—in the public schools.

The conservative religio-political alliance is packing every branch of government with people who will ultimately rule against the present constitutional right to an abortion. But the real danger in the fallout is that the United States, having escaped old Colonial America's intolerance and religious persecution, will fall back into that same horrific mold of religious establishment, with its inevitable deterioration of civil and religious freedom into national despotism.

Kate Michelman, head of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), said that Bush was "beholden to conservative Republicans who want abortion outlawed and stands ready to nominate justices who will vote against *Roe*."³⁹ Obviously, if the Supreme Court declares abortion unconstitutional, without the president having to push a political battle, it would be less likely to create problems in the eyes of the electorate, who favor abortion rights.

None other than Roman Catholic Federal Judge John Dooling declared the Hyde Amendment unconstitutional. The amendment prevents tax-funded Medicaid payment for abortion. Judge Dooling had gathered evidence for a year prior to his decision, studying the anti-abortion movement. His finding showed that the anti-abortion movement was essentially a Roman Catholic movement with a little non-Catholic window dressing.⁴⁰

Spokesmen for the Roman Catholic Church complain about criticism of its involvement in anti-abortion political activities, as thinly disguised anti-Catholicism. They have expressed concern that such opposition is seeking to limit the rights of religious institutions to participate fully in the formulation of public policies. The constitution does not prohibit religious organizations, Catholic or non-Catholic, from being involved in political questions, but it does prohibit Congress from making laws that establish any religious morality or the dogma of anyone's religion. It is inconsistent and thoughtless for churches to demand that their dogma be codified into law, knowing at the same time that Congress has constitutional restrictions against doing that.

In a representative form of government, the state has no constitutional or motivating interest in promoting religion. However, if a politician's survival is at stake, then he may be motivated to yield to potential voters and may ignore his oath to uphold the Constitution. There is no problem in religious organizations promoting a purely social morality. That is legislation that deals with people on a horizontal plane, person to person, such as stealing, perjury, killing, etc. But when so-called "social issues"—in reality religious issues based on the vertical man-to-God relationship of religious dogma—make up the sought-after legislation, then they are unconstitutional.

Caring and sensitive religious leaders and laity should see that such an effort is contrary to the foundation of all religion, which is to love one's neighbor as himself—to not use force in matters of religious conscience. So we see the Church seeking to persuade Congress to pass laws the Constitution expressly prohibits. Is it any wonder that citizens who understand the Constitution are alarmed by such religious lobbying? Furthermore, all tax-exempt organizations are prohibited from using a significant amount of their budget for influencing legislation. The acceptable figure runs about 5 percent.

Not only is the Church opposed to abortion, but it is also the main source of energy, organization, and direction for the anti-family-planning movement, as well as the anti-abortion movement. At a public hearing on National Health Insurance, sponsored by Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) Secretary Joseph Califano, Jr., Monsignor Lawrence J. Corcoran of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and lay lobbyist Francis J. Butler, expressed the church's far-reaching

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opposition to issues touching on reproductive choice: "We are opposed to provisions for contraceptive services and sterilization for contraceptive purposes. We are also opposed to the inclusion of abortion services as 'benefits' in any National Health Insurance plan."⁴¹

The Catholic Church is opposed to contraception, sterilization, and to abortion as well—three services forbidden by their doctrine. Their position is a virtual demand that Congress enact into federal law Catholic doctrine on impermissible health care. Not too many years earlier, their influence established a law in the state of Connecticut to outlaw all contraceptives. It was a generous Supreme Court, not a conservative one, which struck down that law as unconstitutional. It gives one an understanding of what could happen to this nation if their influence succeeded beyond killing legislation they did not agree with, to the reality of having federal laws passed that imposed their doctrine on all of society—Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Are we headed toward eliminating sterilization and contraception?

Another example of obstructionism was the Catholic lobbying against the effort of President Jimmy Carter to deal effectively with teen-age pregnancy by establishing programs of education.

How does one "coordinate" something that scarcely exists? The millions of babies born to teenagers who lack education and information on how to avoid pregnancies and thus give birth in their tender years are directly traceable to the ability of the Roman Catholic Church to kill government programs that do not comply with Catholic dogma. Millions of lives have been adversely affected by a religious system that would rather have its doctrines imposed on society than compassionately to help youth confronted with adult activities in their teen years. Rapidly growing population destabilizes the economy, society, government, and threatens constitutional freedoms. This cannot go unnoticed by the Judge of the entire universe.

Many laws require girls under the age of 18 to secure permission from a parent for an abortion.

"Sexually active teen-agers keep such activity from their parent. If they know their parents will be notified they will stop going to the clinics, but not stop their sexual activity. And that could only mean more unwed mothers, abortions, school dropouts, welfare dependence and heartaches," suggested the Planned Parenthood organization in Orange County, California.⁴² Parental notification contributes to the serious medical and social problem, rather than solving it. This highlighted the futility of using force in moral matters instead of education and influencing the conscience.

Although the American Roman Catholic Church claims that one of every four is a constituent of its church, the Church's influence in Congress is significantly higher than its numbers. So powerful is their religious lobby that when a piece of legislation fails to comply with their teachings, practices, or policies—and passage would represent laws in opposition to their teachings—typically, the bill is simply killed. How many people are affected adversely by such tactics will never be known, but multitudes lose benefits that they deserve and that the government should provide. Is it any wonder that a quarter of a century later, a National

Health Insurance plan is still a dream that likely will never be implemented unless, of course, it tracks Roman Catholic dogma?

The Second Vatican Council promoted political activities on the part of the laity, pointing out "... the important responsibility of engaging in the temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will' (*lumen gentium*, n. 31). The lay faithful are called to shape public policy so that it promotes God's plan for marriage and family, which can never include contraception. This also means that we should legislate toward this goal, because laws teach society what is right and wrong. Building the culture of life will simply be impossible without excluding contraception."⁴³

The Church objects strenuously to the law that employers provide medical insurance that includes contraceptive coverage. The writer reveals:

"What most people don't realize is that the Church has a huge amount of political capital; its called Catholic Health and Social Service. We run more than 1000 hospitals and health centers and more than 2000 centers for social services. These serve more than 100 million people." He suggested, "We should shut down our health and social services and see what the government does."⁴⁴

Can you imagine what would happen to hundreds of thousands of people who depend on Catholic government-subsidized hospitals for emergency care, surgery, and other health-related problems, should they close them down as a tactic to sue government in an effort to induce it to cave in to the Church on its health dogma? Life would become a nightmare to many people, simply because a religious body is imposing its religious dogma on society. This is totally contrary to the principles adopted by our Founding Fathers and the Constitution, as it came from their minds and hearts.

Religious institutions, particularly health-related ones, take tax dollars, yours and mine, to help in their operating costs; hence, they have responsibilities to the community to provide health care without imposing their religious beliefs and practices on the community. How is it that the church that most frequently quotes the phrase *for the common good* rationalizes the use of force in religious matters? If it were strictly a private institution and did not take public tax funds to run its business, it might have a right to refuse to provide health insurance not in keeping with its dogma, but not when it is in reality a quasi-public institution, by virtue of its public funding. How does it assume that it alone can determine the will of God and what is right and what is wrong—and having made that determination, use the force of law to require others to abide by its positions?

The noted Notre Dame University Law professor, Charles E. Rice, argues against contraception, stating that it will lead to the suicide of the human race. That is most unlikely, as long as people have love for one another, and given the pleasures of intimacy even among those who have no love for one another. Birth control enables parents to provide in a more responsible manner for their children than if they had more children than they could afford. Rice points out that "in 1995 the populations of Europe (including Russia) and Africa were equal. In 2050 Africans are likely to outnumber Europeans by more than 3 to 1. . . . Suffice it to say that the contraceptive ethic is predictably a suicide pact."⁴⁵

On the other hand, the escalating starvation of children in Africa, since the

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heralded Professor Rice championed unfettered births in Africa, is a disaster of gigantic proportions—a blot on the advanced nations—for they are doing little or nothing to help.

The United States was active in United Nations family planning, beginning in 1965, when it gave \$2.1 million and raised that to \$125.6 million as of 1973. But when Ronald Reagan became president, he sought to eliminate abortion in the U.S., as well as throughout the world. In 1984 the U.S. sought to block not only abortion abroad but also birth control. Under the Mexico City Policy, as it is called, the U.S. would assist nations, but none of the funds could go for abortions, not even funds originating in the nation getting U.S. aid. Furthermore, the U.S. demanded that no U.N. funds be used for abortion, or they would not get any money for any family program.⁴⁶ Thus, this is the sad state in which we and impoverished nations find ourselves. We, in spite of claiming to be a Christian nation and trusting in God, show no compassion for parents and their children, blocking contraceptives, all the while poor nations see their population skyrocketing and millions of their young children starving to death.

Even as I write, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice continues to promote enthusiastically the elimination of contraception, while Africans are dying by the hundreds of thousands from a lack of food, shelter, and medical attention. Without contraception and education, most poor Africans can expect to have babies nearly every year. On top of that, the Roman Catholic Church is the prime leader in killing the efforts of the United Nations to make these services available to third-world nations. That religious body bears a major responsibility for the misery and heartache facing many families in the impoverished Third World. Yet it is exerting a powerful political influence, in order to also impose such requirements on the people of the enlightened and prosperous United States.

Something is sinister about an institution of religion that is consistently destructive to vital human rights, when those rights are a threat to its religious teachings, and people are robbed of those precious rights. When religious organizations seek to seize political power, they do so in a manner obviously contrary to the teaching of Scripture, upon which they profess to base their beliefs. They seek to use the power of political force to make society comply with their teachings, both in belief and practice. Those religions that are consistently defending religious freedoms are the ones whose populations are small and lack political clout. Occasionally, a large denomination is a defender of religious freedom.

None other than an illustrious Founder of the United States, James Madison, wrote these words in his *Memorial and Remonstrance* in 1785:

“What influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments had on civil society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny: in no instance have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers, who wished to subvert the public liberty, may have found in established clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just government instituted to secure and perpetuate it needs them not.”⁴⁷

“During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity

been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution."⁴⁸

Simple mathematics will take us back from 1785, almost fifteen centuries, to A.D. 321, the year that Roman Emperor Constantine passed an empire-wide Sunday law forbidding labor, so the day could be kept holy, and in the process established Roman Catholicism as the state religion—the nominal Christianity of his day. Shortly afterward, Constantine declared the bishop of Rome as the head of the church and moved to a new capital named for himself—Constantinople. If James Madison were alive today, there can be no question about his opposition to banning abortion, as it would be a religious establishment and a denial of freedoms for which the Founders fought so valiantly to guarantee to the people of this nation for centuries into the future.

This and countless other pieces of evidence make it most clear that the Roman Catholic Church is the major player in this game of destiny for the total control of America in the sphere of religion, utilizing the government to enforce its religious dogma with civil and criminal penalties—something our Founders never dreamed would transpire. In fact, the Founders bequeathed us with a Constitution that would prevent it. But as with a lot of hard-earned wealth bequeathed to heirs, it too is being squandered.

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