

Insight into Solving the Problem of Overpopulation - -
the Overwhelming Issue of Our Time . . .
. . . Vital to the Security of Communities and Nations

from: The Center for Research on Population and Security

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VATICAN INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY

A symposium by the members of:

The Rationalist Society of St. Louis

Missouri National Abortion Rights Action League

Greater St. Louis National Organization for Women (NOW)

Center for Research on Population and Security

St. Louis, Missouri
January 27, 1999

The antiabortion movement in the United States was created in response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, which legalized abortion. However, it really owes its origin to a group of men in Rome 103 years earlier. This was

1870, the year of Vatican Council I, a conclave of great importance in recent church history. Why is this so?

Hans Kung, the renowned Swiss Catholic theologian, best summed up the problem accounting for its creation when he said, "It is not possible to solve the problem of contraception until we solve the problem of infallibility."⁽¹⁾ In his book, *How the Pope Became Infallible*, Catholic historian Bernhard Hasler describes in great detail what Hans Kung meant by this. For a period of five years, Hasler had enjoyed unlimited access to all Vatican Council I documentation in the Vatican archives. Hasler's book has enormous implications for understanding the origins of the antiabortion movement. Hasler wrote that, for more than a millennium, the Vatican had possessed temporal power which ensured its survival. With the loss of the Papal States in 1870, it appeared all but certain that a strong Papacy would simply disappear. The Vatican urgently needed a new source of power.

A group of conservative and influential leaders, including Pope Pius IX, came up with a brilliant idea for a new source; an infallible pope. What is infallibility? According to Catholic dogma, the pope is God's representative on earth and God guides him as he cares for his flock. When the pope formulates a doctrine, he is simply transmitting this dogma on God's behalf. Therefore, the teaching cannot possibly be in error. Thus, the pope's teachings are infallible.

Roman Catholics could be certain that the teachings of the pope and of God were one and the same, and if strictly followed, one's entrance into heaven was guaranteed. Communicants found this concept very attractive and were eager to behave in any manner required of them. Such an arrangement placed enormous control of individuals into the hands of the Vatican, extending across national borders and even to the other side of the world. Since it could never be in the wrong, the Vatican had its urgently needed new source of power. It could no longer control the laity by means of its governance, as it had in the Papal States which would later become Italy. But the Holy See could exercise control directly by adopting a policy of psychological coercion founded on a new doctrine—that of papal infallibility.

PRINCIPLE OF PAPAL INFALLIBILITY MUST BE

PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS

This was a brilliant concept—and it worked—for a century. But at its introduction in 1870, the Catholic intelligentsia, among them theologians, historians and bishops, recognized that at some point in the future, this principle would lead to self-destruction of the institution. Times were certain to change and in unpredictable ways.

This decision would lock the Church into an inexorable course—teachings that could not be changed without destroying the principle of infallibility itself. Thoughtful Catholics foresaw that this would immediately become the fundamental principle of the Church, upon which all other Catholic dogma would rest—its very foundation. They understood that if this principle were undermined and destroyed at some future date, all Church teachings would collapse around the eroded foundation and the institution itself would be devastated. They were convinced that one day, encumbered by her unchangeable teachings, the Church would find itself down a blind alley from which there would be no escape and faced with inevitable self-destruction as a result of a grave loss of credibility. These distinguished scholars were strongly opposed to this principle and, as a consequence, many of them left the Church. The blind alley turned out to be the issue of birth control—contraception and abortion.

Since the 1968 adoption of the papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, there has been a hemorrhage in the Church's credibility. *Humanae Vitae* ruled out any change of the Church's position on birth control for all time.

The proponents of papal infallibility could not imagine the population explosion of the last half of this century. We find it hard to believe in those who claim moral leadership, while implacably resisting any serious solutions to the population problem worldwide. Just as its critics had predicted, institutional self-destruction is now well under way. But, as it stands now, the Church cannot change its position on birth control without undermining all of its dogma. The Vatican is now obliged to protect the fundamental doctrine of papal infallibility at all costs.

The following are only three among scores of findings to indicate how the Vatican is destroying itself:

- 1). In 1965 there were 42,000 young men

in American seminaries studying for the priesthood. Today there are fewer than 6,000 even though the number of Catholics in this country has nearly doubled.

2). The average age of nuns in the United States is 65 years. Only 3% are under age 40, while 35% are older than 70.

3). One-half of all American priests quit the priesthood before reaching retirement age.

Self-destruction as a result of loss of credibility is underway but progressing slowly. The Pope remains hopeful that he can turn this around. He is convinced that if he changes the Church's position on birth control and destroys the principle of infallibility, self-destruction will be very swift. We know that this matter was the focus of his attention for several years in the 1960s.

THE PAPACY IS THREATENED BY LEGALIZED BIRTH CONTROL AND ABORTION

In 1964, Pope Paul VI created the Papal Commission on Population and Birth Control. It was a two-part commission, and met from 1964 to 1966. One consisted of 64 lay persons, the other, of 15 clerics, including Pope John Paul II, then a Polish cardinal. Pope Paul gave the Commission only one mission—to determine how the Church could change its position on birth control without undermining papal authority. After two years of study, the Commission concluded that it was not possible to make this change without undermining papal authority but that the Church should make the change anyway because it was the right thing to do! The lay members voted 60 to 4 for change, and the clerics, 9 to 6 for change. (2) We know this because one or more members released the details without permission to an Italian and a French newspaper. Pope Paul did not act immediately. A minority report was prepared, co-authored by the man who is now Pope John Paul II. In this report he stated:

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If it should be declared that contraception is not evil in itself, then we should have to concede frankly that the Holy Spirit had been on the side of the Protestant churches in 1930 (when the encyclical Casti Connubii was promulgated), in 1951 (Pius XII's address to the midwives), and in 1958 (the address delivered before the Society of Hematologists in the year the pope died). It should likewise have to be admitted that for a half century the Spirit failed to protect Pius XI, Pius XII, and a large part of the Catholic hierarchy from a very serious error.

This would mean that the leaders of the Church, acting with extreme imprudence, had condemned thousands of innocent human acts, forbidding, under pain of eternal damnation, a practice which would now be sanctioned. The fact can neither be denied nor ignored that these same acts would now be declared licit on the grounds of principles cited by the Protestants, which popes and bishops have either condemned or at least not approved. (3)

In 1980, years after he became pope, John Paul wrote to the German bishops:

I am convinced that the doctrine of infallibility is in a certain sense the key to the certainty with which the faith is confessed and proclaimed, as well as to the life and conduct of the faithful. For once this essential foundation is shaken or destroyed, the most basic truths of our faith likewise begin to break down. (4)

In these two texts, the pope took the position that a change on the birth control issue would destroy the principle of papal infallibility and that infallibility was the fundamental principle of

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the Church upon which all else rests and, thus, must be protected at all costs. A change on matters of birth control would immediately raise questions about other possible errors popes have made in matters of divorce, homosexuality, confession, parochial schooling, etc. that are fundamental to Roman Catholicism? So we have these admissions in the pope's own words.

The security-survival of the papacy itself is on the line. The Church insists on being the sole arbiter of what is moral. Civil law legalizes contraception and abortion. Governments are thereby challenging the prerogative of the pope to be the ultimate authority on matters of morality. Most Americans look to democratic process to determine morality. In the simplest analysis, the Church cannot coexist with such an arrangement, which in its view, threatens its very survival as a world political power.

For this reason, the Vatican was forced to interfere in the democratic process in the United States by lobbying for the passage of numerous antiabortion laws designed to protect its interests. There is a plethora of documentation to support these findings, relating mainly to Vatican and U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops' sources, some of which I will discuss later.

Only *legal* abortion and *legal* family planning threaten the Church. It has shown very little interest in illegal abortion. For example, in Latin America, where abortion is illegal, abortion rates are two or three times as high as those seen in the United States. However, abortion is essentially ignored by the bishops there. Illegal abortion poses no threat to papal authority.

VATICAN COMMITS TO POLITICAL ACTION TO BLOCK LEGAL ABORTION

Even before the work of the Papal Commission on Population and Birth Control was completed in 1966, it was widely recognized in the Vatican that the Church faced a grave problem regarding birth control, including abortion. Vatican Council II, which ended in 1966, set the stage for the bishops to address this problem. One of the outcomes of this Council was the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Part 2 of the Constitution was titled, "Some Problems of Special

Urgency." In his book, *Catholic Bishops in American Politics*, published by the Princeton University Press in 1991, TA Byrnes observes, "This list of problems to which the Church was to turn its attention reads like a blueprint of the American hierarchy's political agenda in the 1970s and 1980s."(5) The first was abortion:

God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life—a ministry which must be fulfilled in a manner which is worthy of man. Therefore, from the moment of conception life must be guarded with the greatest of care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes. (6)

The *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church*, another Vatican Council II document, created the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) which was organized according to universal church law. It was created to serve as a political instrument of the Vatican. (7) During a meeting of the American hierarchy in November 1966, the bishops formally established the NCCB as their official collective body and established the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) as their administrative arm and secretariat.(8)

The Jesuit weekly, *America*, editorialized that the national conference had been "converted from a confraternity into a government." (9) The Catholic lay newspaper, *Commonweal*, called the new organization, "a viable instrument with power adequate to national problems." (10)

The Vatican had determined that legalization of abortion was about to become such a national problem. From the very beginning, there has been a common and correct perception that the Catholic hierarchy was primarily an antiabortion political lobby. Byrnes summarizes his study of the history of Catholic bishops in American politics by saying:

Before I end, I want to address one final matter, namely the unique position that abortion occupies on the Catholic hierarchy's public policy agenda. Abortion is not simply one issue among many for the bishops. It is rather the bedrock, non-negotiable starting point from which the rest of their agenda has developed. The bishops' positions on other issues have led to political action and political controversy but abortion, throughout the period I have examined, has

been a consistently central feature of the Catholic hierarchy's participation in American politics. (11)

On January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court passed down its decision on Roe v. Wade which legalized abortion for Americans. According to Bishop James McHugh, "within twenty-four hours" of the court's action, the bishops knew they would need to mount a political campaign in favor of a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion. (12) "Indeed," Byrnes observed, "by November 1973 the bishops had explicitly declared that they wished 'to make it clear beyond a doubt to our fellow citizens that we consider the passage of a pro-life constitutional amendment a priority of the highest order.'" (13)

The Vatican wasted no time in responding. In 1974, the stage was further set to create a political machine to end legal abortion in the United States when Rome issued a document titled, *Vatican Declaration on Abortion*, which states:

A Christian can never conform to a law which is in itself immoral, and such is the case of a law which would admit in principle the licitness of abortion. Nor can a Christian take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law, or vote for it. Moreover, he may not collaborate in its application. (14)

This statement is an unequivocal rejection of the legitimacy of our democratically elected government to pass laws legalizing abortion. Obviously, no American Catholic who chose to follow this Vatican declaration could pay taxes to a government that would use tax money to perform abortions, counsel on abortion, educate on abortion, or to undertake any of the other numerous abortion-related activities in which the government would be involved in order to deliver abortion services.

The Papacy had placed its authority on the line, pitting itself against our government. If the Vatican were to avoid the looming destruction of papal authority, it must minimize the number of abortions legally performed and ultimately succeed in reversing the effects of Roe v. Wade.

This is by no means a new rejection of the principles of American Democracy. The Papacy is unalterably opposed to separation of church and state, the freedoms of speech, press, worship and assembly, and legislative authority vested solely

with democratically elected representatives of the people. Today all Catholic priests must take a solemn oath to uphold and promote these views. From the Catholic almanac:

The Catholic citizen is conscience bound to respect and obey the duly constituted authority provided faith and morals are thereby not endangered. Under no circumstances may the Church be subjugated by the State. Whatever their form may be, states are not conceded the right to force the observance of immoral or irreligious laws upon a people. (15)

The 1974 *Vatican Declaration on Abortion* follows the instructions set forth by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical on the *Chief Duties of Christian Citizens*:

If the laws of the state are manifestly at variance with the divine law, containing enactments hurtful to the Church or conveying injunctions adverse to the duty imposed by religion, or if they violate in the person of the Supreme Pontiff the authority of Jesus Christ, then truly, to resist becomes a positive duty, to obey, a crime. (16)

The current abortion law in the United States is unquestionably "hurtful to the Church." Minimizing the number of abortions done in the United States is obviously helpful to the Church.

THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL PLAN FOR PROLIFE ACTIVITIES

The stage was set. On November 20, 1975, at their annual meeting, the American Catholic bishops issued their *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities*. It is a frank and superbly detailed blueprint of the bishops' strategy for infiltrating and manipulating the American democratic process at national, state and local levels. It maps out the creation of a national political machine controlled by the Vatican through the bishops. The plan is directed toward creating a highly sophisticated, meticulously organized and well-financed local, state and national political machine. The plan candidly states that the Church will undertake activities to elect officials from local to national levels who will adhere to Vatican-ordained positions; that it will seek to influence policy in ways that will eliminate the

threat to the Church; and that it will encourage the Executive Branch to deal "administratively" with matters that are unfavorable to the Church.

Archbishop Joseph Bernardin told the bishops that "the will of God and the law of reason" demand an unrelenting fight against abortion. This justified, in the Church's eyes, the implementation of the Pastoral Plan and what the influential *National Catholic Reporter*, a lay-edited weekly, referred to as the creation of a new political party, an American Catholic Party. (17)

The Plan, in part, reads:

The abortion decisions of the United States Supreme Court (January 22, 1973) violate the moral order, and have disrupted the legal process which previously attempted to safeguard the rights of unborn children. A comprehensive pro-life legislative program must therefore include the following elements:

a) Passage of a constitutional amendment providing protection for the unborn child to the maximum degree possible.

b) Passage of federal and state laws and adoption of administrative policies that will restrict the practice of abortion as much as possible.

According to the Pastoral Plan, there is to be in each state a State Coordinating Committee, functioning under the State Conference or its equivalent, which will include bishops' representatives from each diocese in the state and will function: to monitor political trends in the state and their implications for the abortion effort; to coordinate the efforts of the various dioceses and evaluate progress in the dioceses and congressional districts; and to provide counsel regarding specific political relationships within the various parties at the state level. Diocesan Pro-Life Committees are to coordinate groups and activities within the diocese, particularly efforts to effect passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the unborn child. The diocesan committee is to rely for the information and direction on the Bishops' Pro-Life Office and on the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment. The objective of the diocesan committee is: to provide direction and coordination of diocesan and parish education/information

efforts and maintain working relationships with all groups involved in congressional district activity; to encourage the development of "grass-roots" political action organizations; to maintain communication with the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment in regard to federal activity, so as to provide instantaneous information concerning local senators and representatives; to maintain a local public information effort directed to the media, including seeking equal time, etc.; and to develop close relationships with each senator or representative.

Noting that well-planned and coordinated political action at national, state and local levels would be required, the pamphlet states that the activity is not simply the responsibility of Catholics and should not be limited to Catholic Groups or agencies. This instruction was a clarion call by the bishops for the creation of the New Right Movement. Indeed, during the period 1976-1980, all of the organizations that became known as the "New Right Movement" were created, with one exception: The Christian Coalition was created later to replace the Moral Majority which had fallen into public disrepute. Catholics were key players in the creation of all these organizations and influential in their leadership. This assessment of the creation of this movement and the influence in it of the bishops is well documented. [\(18,19,20\)](#)

In 1980, Federal Judge John Dooling, ruled on *McRae v. HEW*, a challenge to the Hyde Amendment, which prevented Medicaid payment for abortion. The Judge had spent a year studying the anti-abortion movement in great detail, including the bishops' *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities*. His findings showed that the anti-abortion movement was essentially Roman Catholic with a little non-Catholic window dressing. [\(21\)](#) The purpose of the amendment, says Dooling bluntly, was quite simply to circumvent the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling and prevent as many abortions as possible. The Hyde Amendment is one of the Pastoral Plan's most important successes.

Dooling, a practicing Catholic, makes short work of the anti-abortionists' pretensions to be a spontaneous grass-roots movement that owes its political victories to sheer moral appeal. He confirms that the right-to-life's main source of energy, organization and direction has been the Catholic Church, and he describes in detail how the movement works to achieve its goals.

What is most significant in Judge Dooling's 328-page ruling is his finding that the anti-abortion movement's main source of energy, organization, and direction has been the Catholic Church. The Protestant face carefully put on the movement, first by the Moral Majority and then by the Christian Coalition, was called for in the Pastoral Plan. Richard A. Viguerie, a Catholic, is the man most responsible for the development and success of the New Right. He was also involved in the original discussions that led to the creation of the Moral Majority and, as its fundraiser, can be credited with its financial success. Paul Weyrich, a Catholic, claims credit for originating the idea for the group and the name itself. In their search for an attractive front man for the organization, they chose Jerry Falwell. (22)

It is inconceivable that these Catholic laymen were not responding to the bishops' Pastoral Plan. Much effort went into avoiding public disclosure of the role of the Catholic Church in the creation of the Moral Majority. Maxine Negri, in "A Well-Planned Conspiracy," (23) exposed involvement of the Catholic hierarchy in the Moral Majority. Then, the June 21, 1982 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* noted:

At the heart of Moral Majority is a direct-mail operation.... Membership claims...put the number of Moral Majority's active supporters at roughly 4 million Roman Catholics, Protestant fundamentalists, and orthodox Jews. The organization says its "hardcore contributors," numbered at more than 400,000, include a cadre of 80,000 priests, ministers and rabbis organized into fifty autonomous chapters. (24)

The Christian Coalition, created to replace the Majority, was from a leadership perspective, a replica of the Moral Majority, with the bishops in full control. The evidence supporting this statement is compelling. (25) For example, Maureen Roselli, Executive Director of the Catholic Alliance, a branch of the Christian Coalition, claims that the Coalition has 250,000 Catholic members. (26) Catholic Georgetown University political science professor Mary Bendyna told the Religious News Service that she was surprised to find, even before the creation of the Catholic Alliance, that all five staffers in the Christian Coalition's Washington, D.C. Office are Catholic. (27)

Claims of autonomy by the Moral Majority and the Christian

Coalition should not be taken seriously. What is described here is exactly the organization contemplated in the Pastoral Plan down to the details.

The Plan details a 3-pronged attack, one devoted to each of the three branches of our federal government: legislative, judicial and administrative. What has been the outcome of the Plan?

OUTCOMES OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' PASTORAL PLAN

Father Vincent Tanzola, S.J., writing for LIFE-PAC in 1980, summarizes some of the successes of the bishops:

For years Catholics have helped to lead the fight against legalized abortion.... For years our efforts have focused on national leaders in national elections and Amendments to the U.S. Constitution...Local and statewide races are our target. Our goals are very simple and very direct. We plan on cutting the pipeline for all state funds being used to buy the death of unborn children. We'll do this by voting abortionist legislators, county officials, and other key elected persons out of our local and state government.... And we've proven we can do it—Life-Pac is the oldest pro-life political action committee, and we have been successful in 82 percent of the races we have worked in....Now we have the chance to duplicate our efforts in about five hundred specifically targeted local and statewide races. We can defeat abortion candidates and elect pro-life representatives...Please help LIFE-PAC do our special work. Please hear the words of our beloved Pope John Paul II...and put an end to abortion by helping to elect pro-life candidates to office. (28)

Thus, it is clear that by the 1980 presidential election, the bishops had had considerable success with their Pastoral Plan. The fact that the bishops reaffirmed their plan at their November 1985 annual meeting suggests that significant progress had been achieved. (29)

What are some of the bishops' successes on the three branches of our federal government? The February 24, 1992 issue of *TIME* magazine showed that with the election of anti-

abortion Ronald Reagan and anti-abortion George Bush in 1980, the views of the Vatican gained substantial influence within the administrative branch of the U.S. government in the area of population and family planning policy. (30) Presidents Reagan and Bush were arguably the most pro-Vatican Presidents in American history.

This article was written by Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Carl Bernstein. He described what he referred to as the "Catholic Team":

The key Administration players were all devout Roman Catholics—CIA chief William Casey, [Richard] Allen [Reagan's first National Security Advisor], [William] Clark [Reagan's second National Security Advisor], [Alexander] Haig [Secretary of State], [Vernon] Walters [Ambassador at Large] and William Wilson, Reagan's first ambassador to the Vatican. They regarded the U.S.-Vatican relationship as a holy alliance: the moral force of the Pope and the teachings of their church combined with...their notion of American Democracy.

In a section of his article headed "The U.S. and the Vatican on Birth Control," Bernstein includes three more revealing paragraphs:

In response to concerns of the Vatican, the Reagan Administration agreed to alter its foreign aid program to comply with the church's teachings on birth control. According to William Wilson, the President's first ambassador to the Vatican, the State Department reluctantly agreed to an outright ban on the use of any U.S. aid funds by either countries or international health organizations for the promotion of...abortions. As a result of this position, announced at the World Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984, the U.S. withdrew funding from, among others, two of the world's largest family planning organizations: the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

'American policy was changed as a result of the Vatican's not agreeing with our policy,' Wilson writes, 'American aid programs around the world did not meet the criteria the Vatican had for family planning.

AID [the Agency for International Development] sent various people from [the Department of] State to Rome, and I'd accompany them to meet the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, and in long discussions they finally got the message. But it was a struggle. They finally selected different programs and abandoned others as a result of this intervention.'

'I might have touched on that in some of my discussions with [CIA director William] Casey,' acknowledges Pio Cardinal Laghi, the former apostolic delegate to Washington. 'Certainly Casey already knew about our positions about that.'

Thus, Bernstein documents at least some of the activities the cadre of devout Catholics in the Reagan Administration undertook to respond to the call of the bishops in their Pastoral Plan as they targeted the administrative branch of our government.

However, the bishops may have had even greater success in targeting the judicial branch. In the 12 years of the Reagan and Bush Administrations, these two presidents appointed 5 Supreme Court Justices and 70 percent of all sitting judges in the federal court system. All were anti-abortion, another goal of the Plan.

The legislative branch has been more difficult for the bishops, although they did achieve sufficient influence in Congress to the extent that pro-choice Congressmen could not override a presidential veto of family planning bills. As long as the anti-family planning interests controlled the White House, as they did during the Reagan and Bush years, this was sufficient for the bishops' purposes. But this changed in 1994. In a February 1996 fund-raising letter, Catholic presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan states, "On November 8, 1994, we made a tremendous start—electing 5 new pro-life Senators and 44 new pro-life Representatives. Now for the first time in 40 years, both houses of Congress are controlled by the Republican Party—a party solemnly sworn, in its platform, to a 100 percent pro-life position. If we elect a pro-life president in 1996, we can finally move forward to ending abortion in the United States."⁽³¹⁾ The stage would set to achieve the Vatican's goal of a Human Life Amendment in the U.S. Constitution. Buchanan suggests that the Republican Party has become the papal party.

Indeed, one of the more profound accomplishments of this Plan is the capture of the Republican Party by the Vatican. But this accomplishment was vital to the bishops' legislative agenda described in the Plan. In a July 28, 1994 *Los Angeles Times* wire service story, Jack Nelson describes the maneuvers of the Religious Right so that this takeover is all but an accomplished fact. According to Nelson, "GOP moderates have remained passive on the sidelines, unwilling to fight..."(32)

On September 11, 1995, Bill Moyers gives his assessment of the influence of the Religious Right in remarks titled *Echoes of the Crusades: The Radical Religious Right's Holy War on American Freedom*: "They control the Republican party, the House of Representatives and the Senate..."(33)

Outgoing Republican National Committee Chairman Richard Bond told the members of that committee on January 29, 1993 that it was time for the Republican Party to abandon the papal position on abortion. Bond said that the party should not be governed by "zealotry masquerading as principle."(34)

But who is the Religious Right? The Spring 1994 issue of *Conscience*, the journal of Catholics For a Free Choice, exploded the myth that the Religious Right is a Protestant movement. It was designed, created and controlled by Catholics in response to the Pastoral Plan. These Catholics recruited opportunistic Protestants to give the appearance that Protestants were the instigators. The leadership is Catholic but the followers are often Protestant. As mentioned earlier, *The National Catholic Reporter* predicted that the Bishops' Pastoral Plan would lead to the creation of a new political party, an American Catholic Party. (17) But instead, the Vatican simply chose to seize control of the Republican Party.

The outcomes of the Plan have been truly remarkable. And they have implications for all Americans.

THE VATICAN'S BOLD BEHAVIOR

In April 1992 in a rare public admission of this threat, Cardinal John O'Connor of New York, delivering a major address to the Franciscan University of Steubenville, acknowledged:

The fact is that attacks on the Catholic Church's stance

on abortion—unless they are rebutted—effectively erode Church authority on all matters, indeed on the authority of God himself. (35)

The Vatican claims the right to protect itself against "harmful laws"—even when democratically legislated. The central difficulty here, of course, is that what the Vatican considers "harmful" to itself and its authority often is exactly what patriotic American lay Catholic and non-Catholic men and women thoughtfully consider beneficial to themselves and their families. In a letter to American bishops from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—the most powerful Vatican office—Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger reminded the bishops that "The Church has the responsibility to protect herself from the application of harmful laws." (36) Obviously, if an institution has the "responsibility," it also claims the "right." The Vatican exercises its "right" to protect itself from the application of harmful laws in the autocratic way it defines harmful.

The stage was set for the demand for parental notification laws in *The Charter of the Rights of the Family*. This Charter specifically calls for such legislation. It was distributed by the Holy See at the International Conference on Population in Mexico City, August 1984. It was "Presented by the Holy See to All Persons, Institutions, and Authorities Concerned with the Mission of the Family in Today's World." It reads:

[The Charter] aims...at presenting to all contemporaries, be they Christian or not, a formulation—as complete and ordered as possible—of the fundamental rights that are inherent in that natural and universal society which is the family.... The Christian vision is present in this Charter as the light of divine revelation which enlightens the natural reality of the family. These rights arise, in the ultimate analysis, from that law which is inscribed by the Creator in the heart of every human being. Society is called to defend these rights against all violations and to respect and promote them in the entirety of their content.

The rights that are proposed...express fundamental postulates and principles for legislation to be implemented and for the development of family policy. In all cases they are a prophetic call in favor of the

family institution, which must be respected and defended against all usurpation.

Article 3 begins:

The spouses have the inalienable right to found a family and to decide on the spacing of births and the number of children to be born, taking into full consideration their duties toward themselves, their children already born, the family, and society, in a just hierarchy of values and in accordance with the objective moral order which excludes recourse to contraception, sterilization, and abortion.

a) The activities of public authorities and private organizations which attempt in any way to limit the freedom of couples in deciding about their children constitute a grave offense against human dignity and justice.

Article 4 begins:

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.

a) Abortion is a direct violation of the fundamental right to life of the human being.

The Vatican's assertions in this Charter are forthright. There is a specific demand for the passage of laws that restrict access to abortion, such as parental notification laws.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II issued his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life). It frankly attacks the principles of liberal democracy and questions the legitimacy of the American government. He instructs Catholics to defy civil laws he deems illegitimate, and to impose papal teachings on all Americans through political commitment, even if it means that they must sacrifice their lives to do so. *Evangelium Vitae* is quite lengthy and contains 105 sections. The following passages, referenced by their section numbers, illustrate the pope's message:

Laws which authorize and promote abortion and euthanasia are therefore radically opposed not only to the good of the individual but also to the common good; as such they are completely lacking in authentic

juridical validity [#72].

Abortion and euthanasia are thus crimes which no human law can claim to legitimize. There is no obligation in conscience to obey such laws; instead there is a grave and clear obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection [#73].

It is precisely from obedience to God—to whom alone is due that for which is acknowledgment of His absolute sovereignty—that the strength and the courage to resist unjust human laws are born. It is the strength and the courage of those prepared even to be imprisoned or put to the sword, in the certainty that this is what makes for the endurance and faith of the saints [#73].

In the case of an intrinsically unjust law, such as a law permitting abortion or euthanasia, it is therefore never licit to obey it, or to take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law or to vote for it [#73].

No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the church [#62].

Christians...are called upon under grave obligation to conscience not to cooperate formally in practices which, even if permitted by civil legislation, are contrary to God's law. Indeed, from the moral standpoint, it is never licit to cooperate formally in evil...This cooperation can never be justified either by invoking respect for the freedom of others or by appealing to the fact that civil law permits it or requires it [#74].

To refuse to take part in committing an injustice is not only a moral duty; it is also a basic human right [#74].

Democracy cannot be idolized to the point of making it a substitute for morality or a panacea for immorality. Fundamentally, democracy is a 'system' and as such is a means and not an end. Its 'moral' value is not automatic but depends on conformity to the moral law

[#70].

By virtue of our sharing in Christ's royal mission, our support and promotion of human life must be accomplished through...political commitment [#87].

In her National Catholic Reporter article, "Defending life even unto death,' Professor Janine Langan, of the University of Toronto, assesses *Evangelium Vitae*: "John Paul leaves no room for ghetto Catholicism. Excusing our silence about matters of truth because 'we should not push on other people our Christian God,' as one of my students put it last year, is not acceptable." Professor Langan does not acknowledge that this encyclical is extremist in nature but she describes it forthrightly, referring to section #73: "In a situation as grave as the present one, Christians are bound to come into conflict.... *Evangelium Vitae* is thus a challenge to defend life even at the cost of martyrdom. But it's also a promise that, with God, everything is possible. Finally, this encyclical does not merely state that being "pro-choice" is not an option, but that every one of us is also morally bound to oppose, at any cost, any public attack on any human person's right to life [#104]." Langan quotes the pope, "life finds its center, its meaning and its fulfillment when it is given up [#51]." In her view, and the pope's, martyrdom is admirable: "Martyrdom is the one witness to the truth about man which every one can hear. No society, however dark, can stifle it."[\(37\)](#)

This chilling view of martyrdom held by the pope and Professor Langan is not shared by most Americans. When fanatical Moslem extremists resort to it, martyrdom is almost universally condemned as religious extremism. Why should it be admirable behavior when exercised by Catholics? Yet, this discussion shows the extent to which the pope is willing to go in order to pass legislation which reduces the number of abortions.

Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, who spoke on October 3, 1995 on "Culture of Life, Culture of Death in the Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*," makes it clear that the Church is at war with democratic America with its civil laws:

The Pope invites us with courage to the boycott of unjust laws which suppress the imperative of natural law carved into consciences by the Creator. And legislators, politicians, physicians, and scientists have

the duty of conscience to be the defenders of life in the war against this culture of death. (38)

This is an aggressive call to Catholics to impose papal law on all Americans through legislation.

On December 21, 1998, the American Catholic bishops brought this call even closer when it issued its statement, *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics*. As to the role of the Church in the political process, the bishops state:

...at all times and in all places, the Church should have the true freedom to teach the faith, to proclaim its teaching about society, to carry out its task among men without hindrance, and to pass moral judgment even in matters relating to politics...[#18]. In other words, no one should offer resistance as the Church goes about passing laws demanded by the pope, such as parental consent laws.

The American bishops go on to assert:

Democracy is not a substitute for morality, nor a panacea for immorality. Its value stands—or falls—with the values which it embodies and promotes. Only tireless promotion of the truth about the human person can infuse democracy with the right values... American Catholics have long sought to assimilate into U.S. cultural life. But in assimilating, we have too often been digested. We have been changed by our culture too much, and we have changed it not enough. [#25]

Here the bishops demand change to Catholic moral law.

They continue:

[Scripture] demands moral leadership. Each and every person baptized in the truth of the Catholic faith is a member of the 'people of life' sent by God to evangelize the world. [#26]

If you were born Catholic you are obligated to be part of the team that will impose Catholic law on all Americans.

The bishops continue:

As bishops, we have the responsibility to call

Americans to conversion, including political leaders, and especially those publicly identified as Catholic. As the Holy Father reminds us in The Splendor of the Truth (Veritatis Splendor): it is part of our pastoral ministry to see to it that [the Church's] moral teaching is faithfully handed down, and to have recourse to appropriate measures to ensure that the faithful are guarded from every doctrine and theory contrary to it. [#29]

The bishops have concluded that it is their job to pass civil laws that will protect the Catholic faithful from abortions that they would otherwise procure.

The allegiance demanded by the American bishops in December 1998 is clear:

Catholics who are privileged to serve in public leadership positions have an obligation to place their faith at the heart of their public service, particularly on issues regarding the sanctity and dignity of human life. Thomas More, the former chancellor of England who preferred to give his life rather than betray his Catholic convictions, went to his execution with the words, 'I die the King's good servant, but God's first.' [#31]

No public official, especially one claiming to be a faithful and serious Catholic, can responsibly advocate for or actively support direct attacks on innocent human life...Those who justify their inaction on the grounds that abortion is the law of the land need to recognize that there is a higher law, the law of God. [#32] The arena for moral responsibility includes not only the halls of government, but the voting booth as well. Laws that permit abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide are profoundly unjust, and we should work peacefully and tirelessly to oppose and change them. Because they are unjust they cannot bind citizens in conscience, be supported, acquiesced in, or recognized as valid. [#33]"

In the teachings cited above, the Vatican has made numerous assertions, proclamations, declarations and decrees. They serve, above all, to exemplify its intense desperation on the matter of legal abortion and family planning. Its very survival

depends on halting all legal family planning and abortion which are causing a hemorrhage in the credibility of this religious institution. In my opinion, this remarkable dilemma is entirely responsible for the Vatican's behavior. The Church, faced with disaster, is behaving like a wounded animal.

Americans would not benefit from any law now being used to restrict abortion. On the other hand, as others have documented, young women will be irreparably harmed. Some will die. Some will commit suicide rather than tell their parents. Many will suffer adverse consequences from which they will never recover. The question is: should this human sacrifice of young American women who are not even Catholic be permitted so that men in Rome will be able to "infuse democracy with the right values" in order to try to save a Church which finds itself down a blind alley just as predicted by the Church intelligentsia in 1870?

The political machine created by the Pastoral Plan has had far-reaching consequences for all Americans. At this moment, the impeachment of President Clinton, the most pro-choice president in history, would not have been possible without the successful implementation of this plan in the House of Representatives. He has defied the pope, strongly supporting access to abortion. All 13 House prosecutors are anti-abortion Republicans and are led by the most rabid abortion foe in the House, Roman Catholic Henry Hyde. According to the October 1, 1998 issue of the New York Times, Hyde and the lawyer he chose to lead the Republican impeachment team, David Schippers, another Catholic and father of 10, were both knighted by the pope three years ago for their outstanding service to the Catholic Church. (39) Each of these 13 men most certainly benefitted from the existence of the political machine created by the Pastoral Plan. There are many other such examples and they are negatively affecting us all.

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