
Social Justice and “Wantedness”

**Remarks by Wanda Franz, Ph.D.
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**National Right to Life Committee
at the
Catholic Press Association Convention
Baltimore, MD, May 26,2000**

It is a pleasure to be with you. My remarks will be brief, but I hope that you will find them useful in your reporting about the fundamental moral problem of our time: the denial of the right to life.

In 1920, two German professors published a small book advocating the killing of people whose lives were “devoid of value.” Nineteen years later, the professors’ proposal became reality when Nazi Germany established a euthanasia program targeting physically and mentally disabled children, elderly patients in long-term care, and invalids from World War I.

Various estimates place the total number killed in this manner at 275,000 or more. In contrast to the killings in the concentration camps—which were motivated by openly-acknowledged racial, ethnic, and political hatred and prejudice—the euthanasia program was justified as being *beneficial to the victims*. Killing them would release them from an unbearable life. In fact, in the German province of Brandenburg, Jewish patients were initially excluded from the euthanasia program because the local Nazis did not want to provide such a “benefit” to Jews. Killing as a *benefit* to the victim was, however, not the only justification advanced in defense of euthanasia. It was also justified as a cost-effective way to deal with the imperfect and disabled because they were a drain on the nation’s resources and posed a burden to their families.

I gave you this bit of history in order to provide perspective for what is going on in our country today.

Our country, too, has legal killings of the innocent in horrific numbers. Here, too, such killings are justified as a benefit to the victims. Here, too, financial considerations and the burdens faced by the relatives of the victims are considered sufficient excuse for killing.

Currently, there are about 1.3 million abortions a year. The abortion industry defends these abortions as serving a high moral purpose: “Every child, a wanted child,” goes the Planned Parenthood slogan. In other words, the “unwanted” child is better off being dead: we are doing the child a favor. And a Planned Parenthood advertisement from 1985 proclaims: “The right to choose makes all other rights possible.” Since I am speaking to the Catholic Press Association, it is appropriate to

present the counter view as expressed by Pope John Paul II. He declared “the right to life” to be “the most basic and fundamental right and the condition of all other personal rights.”

Planned Parenthood is, of course, not above appealing to baser motivations. An advertisement from its Minnesota affiliate blares: “Babies are loud, smelly and expensive. Unless you want one.” In fact, according to Planned Parenthood’s own figures, only 3% of abortions are done for the sake of the mother’s health; another 3% are done because of health problems of the baby; and 1% are reported for rape or incest. The vast majority of abortions, or 93%, are done for social reasons, because “babies are loud, smelly and expensive” and inconvenient. What we have then is killing on a massive scale as a form of birth control.

Legalized abortion on demand places the unborn child in America today as much in jeopardy as a disabled person in Nazi Germany—except that abortion does not even involve the pro-forma review by a panel of experts which the Nazi program required. Indeed, the unborn child has no rights whatsoever. There is no provision for defense on behalf of the victim, and there is no presumption of innocence until proven guilty; in fact, the victim’s innocence is completely immaterial. The only thing that matters is “wantedness.”

The plain fact is that social justice is impossible if our right to life and our personhood are contingent upon somebody else wanting us to exist. “Every child, a wanted child” ultimately implies “every person, a wanted person,” and that implies the end of liberty and a state of injustice.

The social *injustice* generated by abortion is also evident when you look at who gets aborted. A survey for the years 1994 and 1995 in the July/August 1996 issue of the journal *Family Planning Perspectives* reveals a heavy racial and ethnic bias.

While black women made up only 14% of women of child-bearing age, they accounted for 31.1% of all abortions. Hispanic women constituted only 10.6% of that age group, but accounted for 20.2% of all abortions. In other words, these two *minority* groups alone suffered over 51% of all abortions although these minorities together amounted to less than 25% of women of child-bearing age.

As an aside, let me note that Catholic women had abortion rates very close to the national average. Non-Hispanic, white Catholic women, however, had a 43% lower abortion rate than the national average. It is the heavy promotion of abortion among Hispanic Catholics that raises the overall “Catholic” rate to the national level. If you look at the history of the eugenics and abortion rights movements in this country you will notice heavy prejudice against minorities and Catholics. Aborting Catholic Hispanics satisfies both prejudices.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the percentage of abortions on Hispanic women nearly doubled from 1990 to 1996. This surely reflects Planned Parenthood’s increasing effort to target this ethnic minority.

These numbers come as no surprise when you remember that abortion advocacy

in this country has its roots in eugenics. Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood remarked that “all our problems are the result of overbreeding among the working class.” While Planned Parenthood does not openly admit to its systemic prejudice against the poor and non-white minorities, it admits that its “core clients” are “young women, low-income women, and women of color.”

Before the Rev. Jesse Jackson became a candidate for the presidential nomination by the Democratic Party, he denounced the preferential abortion of African-Americans as a genocidal practice. As soon as he ran for office he found it more advantageous to promote himself as “pro-choice.” Similar tactics were employed by others pursuing the nomination for president in the Democratic Party. For example, Democratic House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt used to vote pro-life until he concluded that the nomination politics in his party required him to be pro-abortion—oops, I mean “pro-choice.” Similarly, Vice President Al Gore voted mostly pro-life when he was in the House of Representative. Once he reached for national office he became a promoter of abortion rights. Now, of course, he is the presidential candidate endorsed by the abortion lobby.

Your colleague Mary Meehan documented in a three-part series of articles in *Our Sunday Visitor* in 1996, how the American eugenics and birth control movement engaged in a long-term campaign for population control that to this day targets the poor and the members of non-white races here and abroad. For decades, many of America’s super-rich and their foundations have been obsessed with promoting population control in developing countries. Now, however, their private efforts are massively aided by the power and money of the United States government.

After World War II, population control in developing countries was promoted as a means to secure America’s access to raw materials in these countries. Under the Nixon administration, public moneys began to fund population control programs run by the U.N. and private groups. Even though the Helms Amendment of 1973 prohibited the use of U.S. foreign assistance funds to pay for abortions or promote them, organizations performing abortions continued to get as much as 90% of their budget from the U.S. taxpayer.

The policy was changed during the Reagan/Bush administrations. In 1984, President Reagan instituted the “Mexico City Policy” that stopped the flow of funds to organizations performing and promoting abortion as a method of family planning.

One of the first acts of the new Clinton-Gore administration was to rescind the Mexico City Policy in January 1993. Ever since, this administration has actively promoted abortion as a means of family planning and population control in developing countries.

On April 1, 1993, White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers told reporters that abortion was to be “part of the overall approach to population control.” On May 11, 1993, State Department official Timothy Wirth told reporters that the administration was insisting on access to abortion as a reproductive choice and that foreign

governments may not “hide behind the defense of sovereignty.”

In a story dated January 22, 1994—the 21st anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision—Steven Greenhouse reported in the *New York Times* that “Administration officials said that the population strategy was perhaps the most concrete sign of Vice President Al Gore’s influence on foreign policy.”

In fact, Mr. Gore went to great length to attend the U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994. Mr. Gore had ruptured an Achilles tendon and hobbled around on crutches. That, however, did not stop him and the rest of the large American delegation from exerting relentless pressure on representatives from developing countries to accept abortion as family planning even when it was contrary to their laws, customs and religions. The threat to withhold U.S. foreign aid money and funds from international bodies was used as a club.

The Vatican denounced this campaign as a form of “cultural imperialism.” Fortunately, the Vatican and its allies were able to beat back the worst excesses of this “cultural imperialism.” (I speak from experience here; I attended the conference as a representative of the International Right to Life Federation.)

Let me end by quoting from a message Mother Teresa sent to the Cairo conference. She wrote: “When we die, we will come face to face with God, the Author of life. Who will give an account to God for the millions and millions of babies who were not allowed a chance to live, to experience loving and being loved?”

Indeed, what account will each of us give?

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