

Contradictions arise

Many comments of one sort or another have appeared in the Canadian news media concerning Dr. Henry Morgentaler. A large amount of nonsense as well as a large amount of sincere expression of deeply-held convictions can be found in this blizzard of words.

I have no doubt that Dr. Morgentaler is an honest and sincere man, of deep personal convictions. All Canadians should be shocked at the scurrilous attacks made on his sincerity, such as 'the money was probably the big reason he did it,' and the even baser attacks based upon racism.

I also have no hesitation about calling Dr. Morgentaler a murderer: my definition of a murderer being a person who takes the life of another human being without an even remotely adequate reason.

One woman wrote Chatelaine, saying that Dr. Morgentaler could hardly be a 'baby-butcher' because of his heroic efforts to save the life of her unborn child.

Yes, he did struggle for her unborn child's sake, but why? Was it because he valued the life of the unborn child, himself or herself? Then, how could he take the lives of so many others just like him or her, at the parent's whim, without qualms? Obviously, then, he did so only for the sake of what its death would mean to its mother, for he could not possibly attach much value to the life of an unborn child in itself.

Dr. Morgentaler is sometimes defended by a citation of the many abortions he performed for very good reasons: an 11-year old rape victim, who was a black girl from New York where abortions are legal, but she, being poor, couldn't get one, or an older woman who could not have a baby and live, but who could not get an abortion in her largely Catholic area.

But no amount of good deeds can give one license to kill the innocent repeatedly, with impunity, and it cannot be denied that many, if not most, of the abortions performed, including the one televised on W5, which resulted in his arrest, were done for the most trivial of reasons.

He is a criminal. That he is now (at the time this was written) in jail should come as no surprise to anyone. But, he did not know what he was doing: thus, we should forgive him in our hearts.

Furthermore, the ends of justice would have been fully and adequately served by a suspended sentence. But he was guilty, and for him to have been found innocent would have been a gross miscarriage of justice.

Why do I mention that women who are pregnant should be forced to remain pregnant? As a man, I need never fear pregnancy: what right have I, therefore, to ask that my government impose it on women?

The arguments of those who advocate legalizing abortion often run along these lines. Why can those who oppose abortion simply refuse to engage in it themselves, rather than seeking governmental edict to impose their personal convictions on others?

Why? Because that embryo who is terminated because he isn't going to be able to walk, or hold things, and will therefore cost a lot of money to support, that foetus whose mother doesn't want to have children at this particular stage in her life, the blastocyst sucked out of her mother's womb because she wishes to avoid the shame of an indiscretion she later regretted, the zygote scraped from the lining of his mother's womb as a routine procedure in cases of rape, all these, and many more, are my brothers and my sisters: just like, for example, the political prisoners in the Ukraine, Russia, China, Chile, South Africa, etc., etc., etc. Regardless of their youth, the world's unborn children are my brothers and my sisters just as are all the others who suffer and whose lives are endangered.

The fact that women are free not to have abortions does not give unborn children the freedom to live any more than the fact that, before the Civil War,

white people were free not to own slaves meant that black people were free not to be slaves.

A severely mentally-retarded individual, a newborn infant, and someone in a deep coma are all acknowledged to be human, even though they may not exhibit all the traits normally associated with being human. Their lives are still protected by the law.

An egg cell and a sperm cell constitute a potential human being. To keep them separate can no more be considered murder than remaining celibate; and, wee that a sin, you-know-who (His Holiness, the Supreme Pontiff) would be one of the biggest sinners around.

Some people have argued that birth control is wrong because life is not spontaneously created at conception, but rather is present in both the egg and sperm cells that have come from the mother and the father.

But of millions upon millions of sperm cells, and dozens of egg cells, only a few participate in the creation of a new human life. Left alone, the egg and sperm-cells die in from a few weeks to a few hours, and are no more human beings than the living cells in our skin, our blood, or the rest of our bodies; they are just living cells, part of the parent from which they came.

But once they unite, there exists a living organism which, when provided with food, and appropriate environmental conditions, will develop into an adult human being.

Therefore, what we have is an immature human being, not a potential human being: not the blueprints for a person, but a person who is very young.

This is why, although the living cells uniting in conception are no more important than any other body cells, contraception is in no way wrong (the Roman Catholic position is the result of strange ideas about the purpose of sex, not anything to do with the life of the unconceived, and therefore nonexistent, child.) And, although the fertilized egg cell is, immediately after conception, not discernibly more complex than the living matter from which it came, it still is now murder to destroy this new cell: because it really is an early stage in the development of a real human being.

And the unborn child does develop awareness, bodily functions, and human appearance at remarkably early stages of development and growth: after all, why is it only the right-to-life pamphlets that have pictures of fetuses and embryos, as well as descriptions of pre-natal development?

Current laws do not at all treat abortion with the same gravity as the taking of an ordinary human life: but they do ask for some reasonable grounds for legal therapeutic abortions. Many hospitals have failed to conscientiously observe these laws, choosing instead to make up excuses, somewhere containing the word 'health,' for abortions for almost any woman who wants one. That Otto Lang, while minister of justice, sought to fight this practice is commendable.

But current law does not even treat infants as fully human. Kill a helpless babe, and you will probably get six months; a wealthy businessman, or a policeman, however, could get you seven years.

The gravity of taking any human life, just because it is human, is therefore not fully recognized by our laws.

Our high infant mortality rate, due mainly to our government's callous treatment of our Native people (for which we, the voters, are ultimately responsible), is another symptom of this attitude, as any health problem that killed adult humans in the prime of life in the same kind of numbers as these infants die would be far more quickly attended to, even if the victims were still the members of a disregarded minority group.

Another question raised is the fact that so many women are endangered by backstreet abortionists as long as abortion remains illegal.

It may be a tragedy that a young boy

turns to making bombs to kill many innocent people; but when the bomb blows up prematurely, and kills him instead, that is not a tragedy, but a wonderful stroke of good fortune, especially for his would-be victims.

Would we, for humanitarian reasons, issue safer guns to our murderers? The more dangerous illegal abortion are, the more lives of innocent unborn children will be saved as a result of all the abortions that this discourages: the total loss of life will be less.

Another argument raised in the defense of the campaign for more liberal abortion laws is that rich women can, by going to foreign countries, get safe, legal abortions whenever they want.

The fact that some people may get away with murder does not mean that any more innocent lives should be permitted to be lost if they can be saved. And, furthermore, there is something our government can do about these rich women. It can be enacted in law that any Canadian who has an abortion outside Canada that would have been illegal within Canada would be fully liable to the penalties that would accrue to someone who had such an abortion in Canada whenever she returns to Canada. The penalty for having, voluntarily, an illegal abortion, and the penalty for performing one should be equal: except, of course, where the performance is of such a quality as to endanger the mother's life, then the penalty for performing it would of course increase.

The case of a woman made pregnant by rape is the most agonizing dilemma: serious physiological danger to the mother's life obviously should permit an abortion: reasons of convenience definitely should not.

And an abortion certainly won't result in an improvement in the health of a defective unborn child. Of course,

perhaps the money spent on such a child could be spent on the lives of several children's lives in World countries. But, such justice could only be used in the most logical society: and it would be a Utopian society to ensure that the money thus saved would reach where it was needed more.

As a woman's right to be pregnant is absolutely unconditional, so her right to be not-pregnant as a result of rape.

Nevertheless, we cannot escape the fact that there is no real necessity for an abortion in such a case: therefore, if we permit such an abortion through our laws, the blood of an innocent unborn child will be on our hands.

The innocent child dies: the mother caught, may get only two or three years and then repeat his crime.

Since the humanity of the child is a fact, and no more human judgement than is the humanity of blacks, Jews, and other victims, the delusions of others that they are human throughout history, we should have an almost-insoluble moral dilemma.

Rape is one of the worst crimes in existence. Even if, as the ancients ignorantly thought, women were animals, there would still be a reason for demanding that it be punished by the death penalty. For, rape often cannot, without the loss of much time, and much cost, be understood, and perhaps psychological help as well, every again towards any man.

But, the reality is that a woman is a person; the full, total, and equal of a man, in rights, dignity, and mind.

While a man can be raped, it is by no means enjoyable, still it is

Alumnie Charlestoc

by Frank Schryver

You'd better stop! — put all your hedonistic ideals aside and think. Think ahead ... Twenty-five years from now you will be stumbling along the dance floor (almost entirely free of your cane) with your familiar spouse in your aged arms, also stumbling. There you will both be, amid the chatter and smell of burnt chili back in ... Lister Hall? Yes. It's the Alumni Homecoming, in the year 2002 AD. Congratulations, Grandma and Grandpa.

But of course, nobody can say for sure that you, Lister Hall, the U of A or even Canada as we know it now will still be around in twenty-five years. No matter what else though as long as this respected campus still exists, there will be an Alumni Association to call back all the ageing grads and all their ancient memories from the good ole days.

The Alumni Assoc. is dedicated to promoting "the welfare of the university through maintaining a close relationship with its graduates." Thus there is Alex Markle, executive secretary of the association for the past 26 years. He tries to maintain contact with all U of A grads and to round up the 'special classes' for a reunion in the fall of each year. (e.g. in 1976 the classes of '16, '26, '36, '51, '56, '66 and '71 were urged to return to their *alma mater*, which, by the way, means "spiritual mother" for those of you who don't look up Latin phrases.)

This reunion party is the climax of each