

# Questions answered

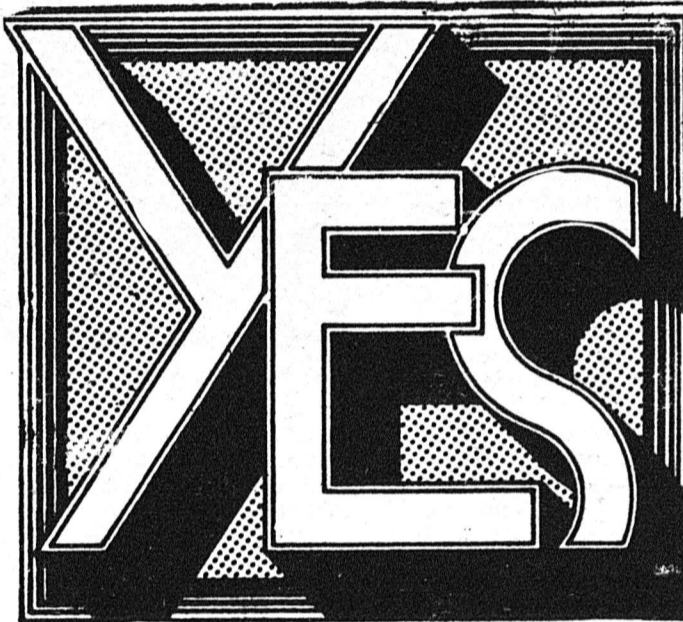
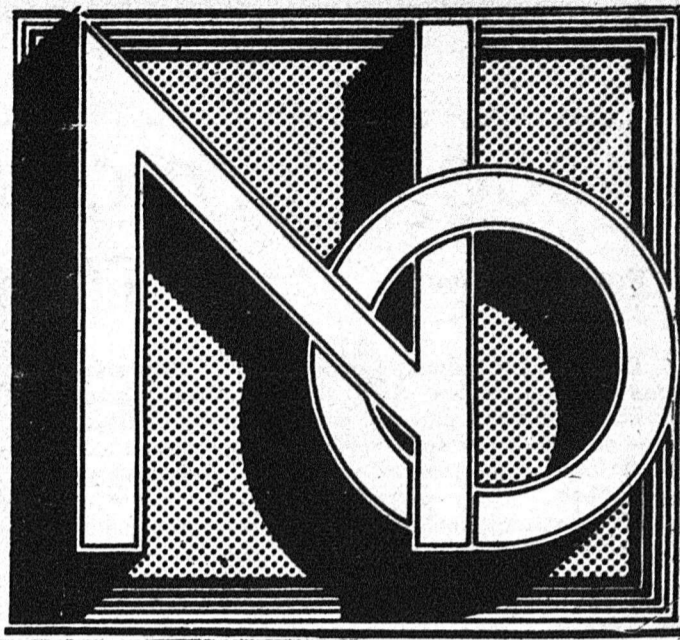
from the first moment of conception (Joseph T. Mangan, S.J., Nov. 1971). I truly believe that God would have a much deeper understanding of the individuality of each person and the sacredness of life itself if He had specifically formed you in the womb under the circumstances of conception, including the possibility of irresponsibility, does not mean that human life has been devalued. The Church teaches that a woman should have the right to her own body. I too respect a woman's rights. A woman has a perfect freedom to accept or refuse intercourse. In our modern society, where there is an emphasis on pleasure, people have become unwilling to accept the responsibility that comes with sex, and the potentiality of parenthood. I believe sex should be used to deepen the relationship between a man and a woman committed to marriage and who have agreed to accept the responsibility of parenthood. A couple do not have the right to abort a child conceived for it is their act

of intercourse in mutual love and commitment to each other which brings that life into being.

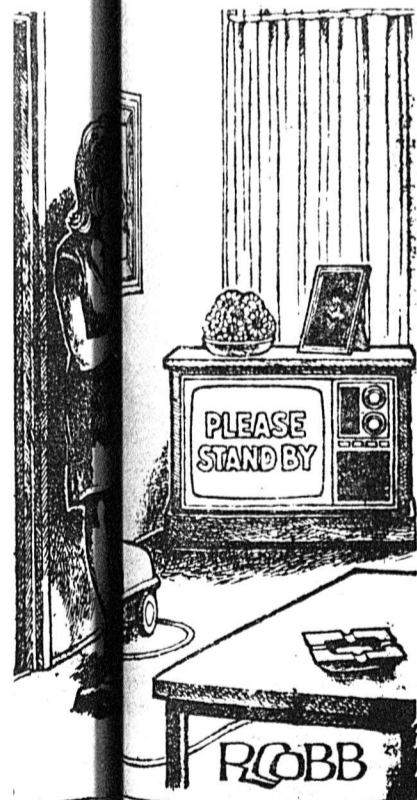
When a woman is making a decision about abortion, she is not making a decision about her own life but a life within her who is dependent upon her for nutrients and protection at this time. Do we kill babies because they depend on us to get up and feed them at 2 am? The child in the womb has its own circulatory, digestive, and nervous system. It is not another growth in the body like a cancerous tumor or for that matter tonsils or an appendix.

We have no right to classify humans into categories which can and cannot live. Is that not what Hitler did with the Jews during World War II? If we say that it is all right to kill innocent unborns, what is to stop us from taking the next step and saying let's kill everyone who is inconvenient to us, the retarded, the handicapped, the aged, or the poor?

The value of an individual life is not primarily functional, that is, it does not depend on its fitness or its usefulness for, but rather on the fact that it is there and there is potential. Consequently, my responsible decisions and actions towards the potential should be to develop and not destroy it.



# Something in a name



fourth- and fifth-graders in the study. A month later, the students named three people they liked in their group and three they didn't like. The boys and girls with names that were very popular on the list of 75 names turned up again and again among the most popular children on the second list. Those with unpopular names were often among the unpopular children. Since not all the children knew each other, McDavid and Harari were able to separate the views of children who knew a child with a particular name from those of children who did not. The relationship between ratings and popularity stayed strong, indicating that a person's name alone is a powerful influence on his popularity.

**Intellectual bloomers.** Stereotypes also affect school achievement. The characteristics we attach to a stereotype describe the way we expect others to behave. Psychologists have found that expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies, and that people often do behave as we expect them to. Harvard psychologist Robert Rosenthal calls this the Pygmalion effect. In his now classic study, Rosenthal randomly selected 20 per cent of the children in 18 elementary-school classrooms and labeled them "intellectual bloomers." He told their teachers that these children would show gains in intellectual achievement during the upcoming year. At the end of the year, these children did, in fact, show gains as compared with the children who were not labeled "bloomers."

Harari and McDavid tried to find out if the Pygmalion effect would also work with name preferences. The researchers had a group of teachers grade essays written by fifth-grade students. The names used to identify the authors of the essays were either desirable or undesirable. The desirable names were Karen, Lisa, David, and Michael. The undesirable names were Elmer, Adelle, Bertha, and Hubert.

Surprisingly, essays supposedly written by students named Adelle received the highest grades, with those written by Lisas and Davids close behind. As expected, the essays labeled with unpopular names generally did receive the lowest grades. Harari and McDavid explain the triumph of the unpopular Adelle by speculating that teachers consider the name to be more "scholarly," and awarded grades accordingly.

A recent study by S. Gray Garwood of Tulane also shows the impact of expectations on behavior. Garwood compared sixth-grade children with desirable names (Jonathan, James, John, Patrick, Craig, Thomas, Gregory, Richard and Jeffery) with children with undesirable names (Bernard, Curtis, Darrell, Donald, Gerald, Horace, Maurice, Jerome, Roderick, and

Samuel). He found that the children who had names that teachers liked were better adjusted, had higher expectations for academic success, and scored higher on achievement tests than children with names that teachers disliked.

Teachers probably convey their expectations by tone of voice, smiling, creating a warmer learning environment, by giving students information about their performance, or by actually devoting more teaching time to the students he or she prefers. Providing more information and teaching time can lead to the differences in academic achievement that Garwood found. The quality of the learning environment can lead students to believe in the teacher's expectations and lower or raise their own expectations for success.

**Wednesday's child.** This cycle of self-fulfilling prophecies is not limited to the classroom. The Ashanti of Ghana name their children in accordance with the day of the week on which the child is born. Monday's child is given the name Kwadwo, and is thought to be quiet, peaceful and retiring. Wednesday's child, Kwaku, is believed to be quick-tempered and aggressive. In 1954, psychologist Gustav Jahoda read juvenile-court records to verify a rumor that a majority of crimes were committed by children named Kwaku. The records showed that a significantly greater number of crimes against persons were committed by people named Kwaku than those named Kwadwo. It's unlikely that children are born with dramatically different temperaments, so the difference in the crime rate is probably due to different upbringing based on these expectations.

All of the studies mentioned above stress the disadvantages of uncommon names. However, all is not lost for people with unusual names. An uncommon name may actually be an advantage in particular occupations. An informal study by William Gaffney of names and jobs revealed that Army officers from West Point tend to have unusual names, as do college professors. Edwin Newman notes in his book, *Strictly Speaking*, that college presidents and heads of foundations have more than their share of uncommon names, and that many have first names which could easily be last names. Examples: Kingman Brewster, President of Yale University and McGeorge Bundy, President of the Ford Foundation. Sam Goldwyn probably had an inkling about the advantage of an uncommon name. In one of his classic malapropisms, Goldwyn chastised an acquaintance for the name he gave his son. "How why did you name him John? Every Tom, Dick, and Harry is named John."

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