

*Capital Punishment*

public morality, the victory of greed and self-interest brought on by far too many years of living by the philosophy that individual material success is the goal of human life. The values of the modern marketplace and the goal of the healthy and whole human community cannot be held together. Yet, rather than admit this, there are many among us, including many in this House, who fall for the temptation of looking for scapegoats, of imagining that if we could execute a few murderers, and reduce government spending, of course, all our problems would somehow go away. This is simply not the case.

One is reminded of the moral majority in the United States of America, a movement not without its supporters, I am sure, in the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. There is nothing in the view of the moral majority which demonstrates that they understand that individuals, though they are ultimately responsible for their actions, do not act in isolation, and that what changes are needed, whatever they are, will have to be structural in nature, that is to say, social and economic, and not just, or even legal, in nature.

Therefore, one of the most basic and important insights of the old but ever valid social gospel, that we cannot expect to improve individual morality apart from improving objective conditions and human relationships and that conditions as well as persons can be said to be good, is missing from the analysis of this movement. We are relational beings, not just isolated moral agents.

The outcome of this missing link is a self-righteousness in which we hear no self-criticism, nor any encouragement to collective and social self-criticism by the American or Canadian people. It is all somebody else's fault the way we are, and the role of the state, which otherwise is a sore upon the body politic and should keep off the backs of the people, particularly as it pertains to commercial matters, is to hammer these recalcitrant individuals into shape. There is no sense of community responsibility for the present state of affairs.

It is in this sense that the moral majority is a classic case of false prophecy. It does not call the nation to repentance. It does not criticize the fundamental values of our civilization. It does not see nor even suspect that the current state of affairs is the natural outcome of our values. Instead, they can only see the present as a distortion, an aberration which needs to be forcibly corrected. There is a complete lack of social and economic analysis.

They rail against the disappearance of the family farm, but would not question the freedom of business imperatives to destroy the family farm. They rail against the destruction of the family, but would not consider guaranteeing families enough to live on or paying single parents to look after their children. That would be too liberal. For that they work to defeat you.

They rail against abortion, but would abandon the child to the marketplace the minute it is born. They rail against modern sexuality, but would not counsel the idea of publicly subsidized TV without the blatantly seductive and sexist advertising characteristic of free enterprise. That would be state propaganda. They rail against the lack of sense of community,

and cannot see that 200 years of teaching individual success as the goal of human life is bound to come to evil, once the residual sense of community from days gone by has eroded. They, in effect, lament the total victory of the ideology that they otherwise espouse.

The moral majority is an ideological package, and an incoherent one at that, and the Gerry Falwell's of the world are either charlatans or suckers for their part in taking the legitimate concern of decent, suburban Christian women about the number of abortions, and making them soldiers in a political campaign to restore America's pride and military power for the purposes of holding down the poor of the world and eventually—one can only hope that will not be so—of fighting a so-called limited nuclear war in which the number of deaths and the extent of suffering associated with the problems the moral majority would like to solve through their own kind of moral and intellectual fascism, would seem insignificant.

We are all in need of a conversion to a new appreciation of the value of human life. We all participate in the radical devaluation of human life which is characteristic of the modern world. Life is cheap, and even its basic form, such as the family, is expendable. But this is not the cumulative effect of many individual acts. We do not contend with flesh and blood alone, but with powers and principalities. Persecution of singled-out groups like welfare mothers, prisoners, or even bureaucrats, will not do. Life has always been cheap, but it is only in the last few hundred years that the cheapness of life has been rationalized and sanctified by an economic system that reduces persons to things. Thus if we wish to fight for the sanctity of life, we must fight for it on all fronts, by fighting it at the root, at the source of all current exemplifications, which is the basic and economic world view of our civilization.

● (2040)

This is the problem, Mr. Speaker. This is what the moral majority cannot do. This is what the loud, strained voices to my right cannot do, because they are not willing to be Jeremiah to their people. Instead, they prefer to play the false prophet Hananiah, assuring the people that God is on their side and that all will be well soon if only these few changes are made. Movements which challenge the basic world view of a society are not likely to be as successful as the moral majority, but they are likely to be more faithful to the truth.

This is why the motion today is worthy of opposition, not because the concern of people about the murder of innocents and the murder of policemen is illegitimate—not at all. This motion is worthy of opposition because the perceptions of those who moved the motion are out of focus, and this is the kindest way of putting it, but I say it in this way because I believe there are people who are supporting this motion who are sincere. But there are others in the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada who could not care less about murder and who simply wish to play upon the fears of the Canadian people. They are the hate mongers who poison and pollute all political debate in this country with their mealy-mouthed, paranoid, self-righteous rhetoric about everything that comes