



Motivated by our different religious traditions, we believe that attitudes, priorities, and institutions can be changed to reflect a just and democratic use of the universe's bounty; we believe in the value of work that contributes to the common good; and in the healing influence of respect for the differences as well as the commonness of human experience.

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Religious Socialism

THE JOURNAL FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH AND SOCIALISM

ABORTION: IS THERE A MIDDLE GROUND? *A Layman's View of Roe v. Wade*

JOHN C. CORT

Question, borrowing a metaphor from Masefield: Is its stand on abortion a dead albatross around the neck of the Democratic Party, causing more and more Catholics, and other assorted Americans, to abandon that party and, swallowing hard, vote for Republicans?

In an effort to answer this question and perhaps find some sort of reasonable compromise within the framework of *Roe v. Wade*, I decided to read that decision and also the 59-page decision of Federal Judge Richard C. Casey of New York, one of the three federal judges who have now declared the new ban on partial-birth abortion, more precisely known as dilation-and-extraction (D&X), to be unconstitutional.

What is currently considered to be constitutional, or unconstitutional is, of course, determined by *Roe v. Wade*, a 7-2 decision of the Supreme Court written by Justice Harry Blackmun, a Nixon appointee, in 1973.

Judge Casey's decision is relevant because he four times expresses his own personal revulsion about the procedure, which he describes twice as "a brutal procedure that coarsens society to humanity" (pp. 4 and 57 of my copy), once as "gruesome, inhumane, brutal, and barbaric" (p.7) and once as "gruesome, brutal, barbaric and uncivilized" (p.46).

He supports these adjectives with clinical detail supplied by medical witnesses pro and con. They testify that a fetus feels pain at approximately 21 weeks and becomes viable at about 23 or 24 weeks, that the D&X procedure is "used for late second trimester abortions after about 22 weeks of gestation," that it involves removing the fetus "intact or nearly intact from the uterus" and "with the fetus's head lodged in the cervix, the physician punctures the skull with scissors or crushes the head with forceps...The fetus dies when its brain is either drained or sucked from the skull" (p.33).

Despite his own feelings, Judge Casey was forced to declare the ban unconstitutional because *Roe v. Wade* clearly states that any such ban must not only allow an excep-

cont'd on page 9

co-editor's notes

It's All About Values

JOHN C. CORT

This is a very serious issue of *Religious Socialism*. I don't think there's a chuckle in it, not to mention a boffo laugh. Our symposium misses Rabbi Wolf, who could always find something funny in the worst of times. We need that.

But we do face the worst of times: four more years of George W. and his merry band of warmongers and anti-poor, anti-union, pro-rich cutthroats. And a Democratic Party that is suffering from, and losing because of, a chronic tendency to move to the center.

Jim Hightower likes to remind us that "there's nothing in the middle of the road but yellow stripes and dead armadillos." Accent there on "yellow" and "dead." If you are too yellow to stand up and fight for the things you know are right, then you may soon be dead.

In the post-election issue of *The Hightower Lowdown* (\$15 from P.O. Box 20596, N.Y., N.Y. 10011), the feisty Texan's newsletter, he strikes a chord that is mellow music to our religious socialist ears. He notes that growing up, like George W., in a Methodist church in Texas, the sermons he heard quoted Scripture to castigate the rich, defend the poor, and rejoice with the Virgin Mary that "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree; he hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away."

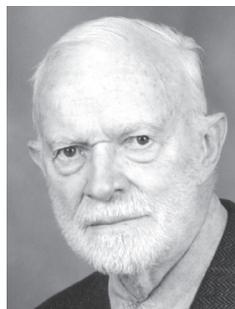
During John Kerry's anemic campaign, I got sick of hearing about how the middle class is being squeezed, even though everyone in my own extended family is a bona fide member of that class. I ached to hear about those who are really suffering: the poor, the unemployed, the sick not covered by health insurance, the children left behind, the hungry and homeless.

Even if too many of them don't vote, some of us middle-class Democrats would vote and work for our candidates with more energy and enthusiasm if we knew that those candidates really cared about the poor. John Edwards started out as if he really cared, but the care seemed to diminish once the campaign went on, as though the top command were putting the lid on all that "class war" talk. When will we learn that the real class war is the war the rich have been waging—lo, these many years—against the poor and the workers who have made them rich?

We're talking moral values here. In a post-election cartoon by Dan Wasserman in the *Boston Globe*, the Democratic donkey is protesting "Bush told lies . . . He rushed into war . . . He rewarded the rich . . . he punished the poor." A figure marked "Voters" responds "Yeah, but I like his values." That puts it in a brilliant nutshell. And as with Wasserman and Hightower, it is moral values that concern our editors, officers, and contributing editors, whom we asked to comment briefly on Lenin's famous question, "What is to be done?"

There is one moral value about which there is an honest difference of opinion on the left, especially on the religious left, and that is the issue of abortion. (There's also the issue of gay marriage, and we will deal with that in the next *RS*.)

Bebe J. Anderson, an attorney specializing in reproductive rights, responds to the critique of *Roe v. Wade* made by a hopeless reactionary named Cort. I could use this space to respond to the response, but I trust our readers to read *Roe v. Wade* and make up their own minds.



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After the Fall

After the Fall

Watch Bush on Health Care



JACK CLARK

For all the misery of this electoral defeat, our socialist politics still has relevance as we help to rebuild a broader and successful left. Let me illustrate that point with reference to a major domestic problem addressed in the campaign.

According to President Bush, the major problem with the American health care system is that consumers pay too little money out of pocket. He said that pretty directly in response to a question in the domestic policy debate.

He stated clearly and repeatedly during the campaign that his administration stood ready to fix that problem. He proposed a restructuring of the health insurance market that would shift greater risk on to individual consumers. Through a generous tax-deductible Health Savings Account (H.S.A.), affluent taxpayers could accumulate funds for big medical bills. Because the savings could pay moderate to big bills, these consumers would shift to health insurance policies that required larger out-of-pocket payments.

Bush proposed a radical shift in health care, and, incredibly, his proposals never became a major campaign issue. In fact, this writer would give long odds that a large proportion of those reading this article did not know that the president proposed restructuring the health care system.

What everyone “knew” during the campaign was that John Kerry proposed a Big Government program to shift health care costs from the private sector on to the taxpayers.

In fact, Kerry outlined significant reforms of the current employer-based system to extend coverage to more of the unemployed and to lower overall costs. The most expensive of the Kerry proposals, a reinsurance program to cover catastrophic health care costs, was originally proposed by Richard Nixon in his first term.

Bush confidently packaged his program as part of an “ownership society.” On the stump, he drew applause when he spoke of health insurance policies you carry with you when you change jobs. He neglected to mention that you would also

carry the bill for the health insurance policy yourself.

Kerry had a superior set of policies. When he spoke of health care, he was outlining a fairly complex plan.

Why is this relevant now that the campaign is over? Let me suggest several points:

Despite his claim of a mandate from this election, Bush proposed and will try to carry out profoundly unpopular policies. By fighting him, we build for the future. Health care will be a major arena in that struggle.

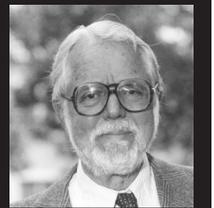
The Bush campaign reacted as though Kerry had proposed a National Health Service. Perhaps he should have, but he did not. As always, the function of anti-socialism in America is to defeat modest reforms.

Bush was able to wrap his proposals in a slogan (“ownership society”) that appeals broadly. Kerry got lost in technocratic detail that was very convincing to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* editorial boards but did not move voters. Kerry, the Democratic Party, and even the unions seemed unwilling to challenge the deification of the market implied by Bush’s “ownership society” proposals. Americans generally believe in markets, but we also have other values. We believe in some level of basic human solidarity. We know from long experience that improved health is a social as well as an individual good. The broad liberal-left needs to reclaim a sense of vision and possibility. A lot of that sense of vision and possibility draws on a socialist critique of the current system and a radical vision of how to repair it.

Jack Clark, the first national director of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (a predecessor organization of DSA), works for the Community Transportation Development Center in Washington, D.C.

After the Fall

Economic Man



HARVEY COX

We lost. We can’t blame it on Ralph Nader or on the Supreme Court. The other side got more votes. It happens sometimes.

It is now time to re-examine one of the fundamental premises of economic and political liberalism. It is one that has shaped left politics for decades. It says that people should vote their economic interests, and if they do not they are either stupid or

brain-washed. But as Christian and religious socialists, we know that human beings are far more complex. Not just *homo economicus*, we are also *homo symbolicus*, and *homo communitas*. We simply cannot allow the far right to steal that insight. I think we have much to learn from the nineteenth-century British Christian Socialists, though they made a lot of tactical errors as John Cort shows in his book *Christian Socialism*.

Also, we lost, I think, not because of a value deficit on the left but because we were told (by both sides) day after day and night after night that we are IN A WAR. It is, as Bush slipped and said, one that cannot really be won, or as Cheney said, one that could last for “a generation.”

We now need to question the whole metaphor—for that is what it is—of a “war” on “terror.” Terrorism is a tactic, not a movement. It is typically used by the weaker, often stateless party, as it was by the pre-state Zionists who blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. And a war is simply not the answer. Wars create more “terrorists.”

But what are the political objectives of those who currently employ terrorist tactics? We cannot allow the administration to tell us they simply hate us. That won't do. Nor can we possibly hope to preempt every conceivable use of terrorism in every corner of the globe. That is impossible.

A vital step now is a real dialogue of cultures between Americans of faith and Muslims (of which there are one billion in the world). I am off to Morocco (a Muslim country trying to build a democracy) thus aspiring to do a little of that.

Harvey Cox, a contributing editor, is a prolific author and professor at Harvard Divinity School.

After the Fall

Not Quite Armageddon



JUDY DEUTSCH

I'm writing this the day after the election because I shall be leaving the country tomorrow. I'm not fleeing because of Bush's apparent victory.

If Bush has won, as seems the case, I don't think Armageddon will arrive during his second term. I do, however, believe the following: our nation's income-and-wealth gap and our nation's debt will become even greater; the quality of education will be further reduced; more of our natural resources will be destroyed; our Social Security system will be undermined; more havoc will be wreaked upon our nation's health care and judicial systems; and more riches will be bestowed upon Bush's

oil-connected cronies.

Furthermore, I believe that Bush's second term may witness at least one more fruitless and senseless war, and that his perception of how to make this nation safe will lead to further erosion of our liberties and make us more insecure, more open to terrorism, and more hated by the rest of the world.

The non-wealthy people who voted for Bush and Cheney have not been influenced by reason. They have been emotionally grabbed by Bush's “charm” and the illusion he established of taking care of us. It makes me think of what happened in and to a certain European country in the 1930s!

Rev. Judy Deutsch is a Unitarian Universalist minister and member of the R&S executive committee.

After the Fall

Define Moral Values and Mobilize



NORM FARAMELLI

In light of the election outcome, I see two major tasks facing religious progressives: (1) a broadening of the definition of moral values and (2) the need for extensive political mobilization.

(1) It is imperative that we not concede our biblical and religious traditions to the Christian Right. In the past election “moral values” was a code for abortion and gay marriage. What about the care for children after birth, the care for the natural environment, racial and economic justice, peacemaking, or the problems with affluence and greed, etc.? The biblical/religious tradition says much more about these issues than it does about the contents in the code words. To allow moral discourse to be limited to two issues displays a massive failure of our religious and academic institutions as well as our progressive politicians. As religious socialists, we need to proclaim the religious values of compassion, peace, and justice without apology or embarrassment.

(2) In a time when political depression and paralysis can be impediments, we will need to move toward a new kind of intensive political mobilization. The 56 million votes that Bush did not get represent a good starting place for finding allies. Most important, whenever we are tempted to despair, we should recall that we live by faith and hope in God and in new creative possibilities. That is quite different from naive optimism.

Rev. Norm Faramelli is an Episcopal minister and an RS contributing editor.

After the Fall**Don't Give Up on Democrats**

MARK FINKEL

I was an early supporter of John Edwards and ran as a delegate in the 4th Congressional District of New York. I lost my delegate status by 70 votes, so I have as good a reason to be discouraged as anybody, but I'm not.

I see two lessons from this election:

(1) When John Kerry talked as a progressive populist, talked to people's needs, talked to people's ethical concerns, and skipped the opportunistic positions that he too often assumed, he appeared more human and met with an excellent response. Future Democratic candidates should take note of this.

(2) We should not give up on working within the Democratic Party and mainstream politics. An exciting future lies before us because we can be the building blocks of a social democratic movement in this country, a reverse image of the post-Goldwater period in the Republican Party—IF we have the intestinal fortitude to stay with it.

We can provide the intellectual content and the ground troops of the political and social groundswell that can transform and realign the Democratic Party, making it not only stronger and more successful, but a party that will serve the true interests and needs of the people, both here and around the world.

Mark Finkel is a member of the R&S executive committee and a Democratic activist throughout the length and breadth of Long Island, New York.

After the Fall**Get Serious about Work in the DP**

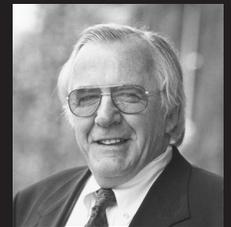
ANDREW HAMMER

Without the Democratic Party's and the media's willingness to question the possible manipulation of the result, we are the ones left with a question: Did we really lose in November or did we defeat ourselves in the aftermath? We should have had the good sense, the self-esteem to do what the people of Kiev

did. Maybe if their election had come a few weeks earlier, we would have. But our candidate didn't; so we didn't; and American politics, desperately seeking its safe, uncontroversial equilibrium, has supposedly gone right back to normal.

The only option that makes sense to me is full participation as a socialist in the fight to make the Democratic Party a consistently progressive force in American politics. That's a daunting task, but to refuse to take it up is to simply give away even that admittedly tepid institution to those neoliberal interests that seek total control of it. We now need to build an ongoing progressive opposition movement in that party that behaves like a proper opposition to the Republicans. We should not waste time trying to build such a movement as squatters on the edges of the property, but as workers in the boiler room of the mansion. In a formal sense, I'm afraid that involves becoming Democrats informed by our socialism, not socialists trying to inform Democrats.

Andrew Hammer is a co-editor of Religious Socialism and secretary general of the International League of Religious Socialists.

After the Fall**Maybe a Moment of Light**

DAVID O'BRIEN

For post-election publication, written pre-election, with outcome uncertain: At long last there may be a moment of light: political outcomes depend upon political inputs. Reasonable foreign and security policies are available only as reasonable people come up with reasonable proposals and seek support for them among strategic constituencies.

There are few powerful groups in the United States for whom international policies are matters of self-interest, so work must be done to rekindle a sense of the public interest and a global common good.

Similarly for domestic policy. Those who still await the emergence of powerful groups whose self-interest corresponds to the public interest will continue to find excuses for their powerlessness.

In both cases the temptation, whoever is elected, is to blame the people and the politicians they elect. But the motes and planks are in eyes like ours. The only option is to trust the people enough to consider with them the responsibilities of citizenship, speak the truth as best we can, look around for better policies, and invite one another to social and political action.

Our democratic instinct remains correct: to push popular participation and speak without embarrassment of liberty and equality and solidarity. That may require resistance in the next few years. It surely will require imagination, faith, and hope. That is to say, religion and social democracy can both help.

David O'Brien is Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies at Holy Cross College.

After the Fall

Only Connect



MAXINE PHILLIPS

In the months leading to Election Day, I forced myself to stay upbeat. "I haven't felt this much energy since the McGovern campaign," I told all my friends, quickly adding, "But of course, the ending will be different." The first part was true, and the second part could still be. A miss is as good as a mile, so the fact that John Kerry's loss wasn't as overwhelming as George McGovern's doesn't mean anything on Inauguration Day. But how the party responds to the loss will have a major impact on future elections. After McGovern's defeat, the fear of being "too left wing" caused the party to move ever rightward. After Kerry's, can we harness a fear of being "too wishy washy" and use it to bring the party back to its roots? Can Democrats, as many others in this symposium urge, stand up for truth and justice without taking an opinion poll first? And can we stay connected to the millions of new voters and volunteers who may have come to the campaign because of a fear of a second Bush administration but who could stay if the party gave them reasons?

Maxine Phillips is a co-editor of Religious Socialism.

After the Fall

A Time to Wander in the Wilderness



THAREN AND GEORGE ROBSON

Perhaps "wandering forty years in the wilderness" speaks to those of us who call ourselves the left. We do believe the apostle Paul had it right when he said, "All things work together for good" for people of faith.

We are reminded of those days when we gritted our teeth and took the castor oil, knowing that something good must come of this terrible stuff.

Certainly the challenge of finding a way out of the international mess created by the current administration now rests clearly on Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress. Perhaps the general electorate will wake up before too much of the progress toward a humane society is dismantled. At the same time, dare we hope that the Democratic Party will re-discover core progressive values!

In the meantime we are given the time to sort through our values, clarify our vision, set some priorities, educate the public, and build a coalition that can bring victory. Our faith traditions surely have more to offer than restrictions on personal life. What about social/economic issues and peace? Without being sectarian, we must learn to cast these values in religious terms if we are going to regain the South. Perhaps that is the role of *Religious Socialism*.

Yes, wandering may be the thing we need. Let's hope it isn't for forty years.

Tharen Robson is a member of the Religion and Socialism Executive Committee. George Robson is a retired United Methodist pastor working part time as a visitation pastor. Both are social activists.

After the Fall

Reframe the Moral Discourse



ROD RYON

We ought to choose, and in some cases re-think, our arena of activity. For many of us, the arena should be our religious, denominational, or ecumenical organizations more than secular leftist ones.

There, our task ought to be to get the moral discourse re-framed. I do not suggest compromising our positions on reproductive and sexual freedoms; instead, we should aim to make the discourse more inclusive and better prioritized.

Our goal is to get the buzz word "values" to stand for a fair distribution of wealth, care of God's creation, and opposition to militarism, etc. I am aware of how isolated we religious socialists are from the religious right—different parts of the country, different denominations (usually), and different theologies (sometimes). But we still have some trans-regional, broadly inclusive organizations.

One example: in 2004 much of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was able to present the laity with an agenda of election issues that virtually excluded those mentioned above. I could have wished that a religious left within the church had raised holy hell at what the hierarchy omitted. Maybe we need more and better organization within our sects and denominations, guaranteeing at least dissent when they define an agenda too narrowly.

On our side, of course, is the fact that these same religious organizations sometimes clearly endorse the very progressive issues we espouse.

Rod Ryon is co-chair of the Religion and Socialism Commission.

After the Fall

STOP THE BLAME GAME



JUANITA WEBSTER

Progressives should stop agonizing over our defeat and stop the blame game.

Historically, the country has always been in partisan conflict around the primary issues of religion, race, and sex in one form or another. The tragic events of September 11 have changed the political landscape in the United States. The 2004 election has left the nation more deeply divided than before.

The bad news is that George W. Bush won. The good news is "the election marked the greatest mobilization of progressive political activism in our nation's history," as Mark Solomon of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism wrote. He noted the vast constellation of new Internet groups; the reenergized labor and civil rights organizations; the hundreds of anti-war groups; and the women's; gay; veterans'; youth; and student groups, as well as scores of single-issue organizations.

I hope and pray this "mother of all coalitions" will continue to build, coming to fruition in 2006 and 2008.

Working people are complaining of working harder and harder just to keep pace. Neither party is addressing the real needs of the American people, such as a universal health care system, funding universal education for all children, childcare for working families, saving American jobs, etc.

Progressives need to reconnect with the root experience of the civil rights religious activism of the 1960s. Martin Luther King's and Fannie Lou Hamer's religious experiences and values were nurtured in the black church.

Progressives can also return to liberation theology and its emphasis on the concerns of the poor and oppressed. Liberation theology cannot be detached from social involvement or political action.

I hope the call for unity and healing is one of tolerance and understanding of honest differences and not a call for capitulation to the extreme religious right wing's agenda.

In this polarizing climate, progressives need to determine how to respond to Christians, secularists, and practitioners of other religions. We must seek to build coalitions around issues of concern with activists of any diverse group regardless of the group's religious belief system. Progressives should become pro-active in discovering religious or spiritual commonalities: set up meetings, hold discussions in communicating differing values and visions, and hold forums on how the role of religious and faith can shape and influence political activists in a positive way.

Progressives must engage religious activists who are pro-life and discuss moral values with them. We must continue to organize, moralize, and proselytize against homophobia, racism, and religious bigotry. Our goal is to build a progressive infrastructure.

Juanita Webster is co-chair of the Religion & Socialism Commission, a member of Democratic Socialists of America, and a member of the Black Radical Congress.

After the Fall

Making Democracy a Vulgar Cliché



CORNEL WEST

The fundamental problem we face today is neither our deep divisions between red and blue states nor our disagreements over so-called "moral values." Rather, it is the troubling decline of genuine democratic ideals and practices in America. Ironically, we are losing sight of the very meaning of democracy, even as we hold elections and occupy countries in order to make the world safe for democracy.

In our market-driven empire, clever elite salesmanship that appeals to the fears of a frightened and often ill-informed voting populace constitutes our impoverished electoral politics. And seductive rhetoric about democracy and freedom hides an imperial foreign policy of geopolitical concerns and corporate interests.

The long-term result may be the vulgar reduction of the precious and great word "democracy" to a mere cliché—uttered by all but devoid of content and substance. The irony of American history is that we can lose our democracy owing to our allegiance to an emaciated conception of democracy.

This was so in the 1860s, when the deep divisions of the country, which looked much like our present red/blue states divide, led to civil war over race. After a weak effort of reconstruction, we fell back into a narrow democratic project that made peoples of color scapegoats and ignored the needs of working and poor people.

In our present day, black people are more estranged than ever from the dominant drift of the electorate and are our most vulnerable citizens, low on the agenda of our power players. And as in that historical moment, we now see fearful religious conservatives, especially Constantinian Christians who put the flag above the cross, play the role of foot soldiers of mean-spirited politics and cold-hearted policies. These fellow citizens are not simply stupid or ignorant. Rather, they are frightened, hence easy prey to illusions of security and safety.

A Battle for the Soul

The battle for the soul of American democracy has always been, in large part, a battle for the soul of American Christianity, because Constantinian Christianity is a threat to the tolerance and openness necessary for sustaining and deepening any democracy, just as prophetic Christianity—from the social gospel

of Walter Rauschenbush and Martin Luther King, Jr. to the courageous witness of Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Dorothy Day—has been an indispensable force for democratic good in our history.

The personal piety and individual charity of Constantinian Christians that support xenophobic attitudes and obscene wealth inequalities are idolatrous. They constitute a worship of power and wealth—the golden calves of all empires—in the name of an Americanized Jesus stripped of his opposition to and condemnation by the Roman Empire. I speak as a Christian—and to see the gospel of Jesus Christ bastardized by imperial Christians, pulverized by Constantinian believers, and than exploited by nihilistic elites of the American Empire, makes my blood boil.

The meaning of American democracy lies in the courage of citizens to think critically, care compassionately, and hope maturely for robust enactment of the public interest and the common good. The aim of prophetic Christians is to muster the courage to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly in the name of that Jew named Jesus, who was unjustly murdered by Roman imperial elites. American democracy cannot survive or thrive without the power and potency of prophetic Christian witness—even as that witness discloses the shameful complicity of Constantinian Christians with the idols of our day.

Cornel West, author of numerous books, is a member of the RS editorial advisory committee and professor of religion at Princeton University.



The Democratic Socialists of America is the largest socialist organization in the United States, with John Sweeney, Dolores Huerta and Cornel West among its members.

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Argument on Abortion/*continued from page 1*

tion to save the life of the mother, as this one does, but also an exception to “preserve” and/or “protect” the health of the mother, which this ban does not.

This was also the basis on which President Bill Clinton twice vetoed similar bans in the nineties, bans that were overwhelmingly passed by Congress. In one of these votes I recall that 77 Democrats in the House defied their party and voted in favor of the ban.

What Did They Mean by “Health”?

So you turn to *Roe v. Wade* to learn what those seven justices meant by the health of the mother. It becomes clear that health not only includes physical health but also mental health, an even more problematic category. The following in Section VIII spells it out:

Maternity, or additional offspring, may force upon the woman a distressful life and future. Psychological harm may be imminent. Mental and physical health may be taxed by child care. There is also the distress, for all concerned, associated with the unwanted child, and there is the problem of bringing a child into a family already unable, psychologically and otherwise, to care for it. In other cases, as in this one, the additional difficulties and continuing stigma of unwed motherhood may be involved. All these are factors the woman and her responsible physician necessarily will consider in consultation (p. 15)

In the next paragraph Blackmun writes

On the basis of the elements such as these, appellant and some amici argue that the woman’s right is absolute and that she is entitled to terminate her pregnancy at whatever time, in whatever way, and for whatever reason she alone chooses.

Blackmun rejects this argument, but if “appellant and some amici” were to substitute “she and her doctor” for “she alone,” they would be pretty close to the painful truth.

Let us now suppose that said mother, having legally aborted a viable fetus, becomes pregnant again and actually gives birth this time. She kills the baby, and when hauled into court, through her lawyer, builds her defense on the “elements” stated above in *Roe v. Wade*. Would she not be laughed out of court and into jail, assuming she could avoid an even more painful sentence? I think so.

But what is the difference really between the viable fetus and the newborn child? The *Roe v. Wade* majority were not so careless as to fail to address this essential question. First, they deny that the fetus is “a person” within the meaning of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution. These amendments provide that “no person shall be...deprived of life” by either the federal government (5th) or any state (14th).

Some Extraordinary Reasoning

The first definition of “person” in my dictionary (*American Heritage*) defines it as “a living human being, especially as distinguished from an animal or thing.” *Roe v. Wade* gets

around this by questioning the word “living” as applied to the fetus. Here we get into some extraordinary reasoning by Justice Blackmun and the six other Justices who signed *Roe v. Wade*.

After some curious references to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, Blackmun makes this pathetic confession of intellectual paralysis on the part of the judiciary:

We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary at this point in the development of man’s [sic] knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer.

But Blackmun concludes with confidence, “...The fetus, at most, represents only the potentiality of life” (pp. 17-18)

I imagine there are still philosophers and theologians who are confused about the beginning of life, but I have yet to hear of anyone “trained in the disciplines of medicine” who shares such confusion. Even John Kerry, much to the horror of the more extreme pro-choicers, has agreed that life begins at conception.

After I read in the newspaper what Judge Casey had written about the D&X procedure, I wrote to him and asked if I had read his mind correctly when I concluded that he favored the ban, but could not legally defend it. He did not reply, but I think he could not deny such a reading.

What Is to be Done?

So what is to be done? No reasonable compromise is possible within the framework of *Roe v. Wade*, as I had once hoped. I think, however, that a substantial majority of Americans would support a compromise that allows abortion (generally by the induction procedure, i.e., a medically-induced miscarriage) before viability, but preferably before the 21st week, or when there is agreement that the fetus feels pain and thereafter no legal abortion except to save the life of the mother or, as some pro-lifers have proposed, to avoid “serious risk of substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function.”

This compromise will not be acceptable to the Catholic bishops and many other pro-lifers. They believe, as I do, that all abortions are immoral, whether early or late, with late-term abortions being even more immoral because they inflict pain.

But this is where the pro-life politicians, and I, must part company with the bishops. We must get the best, most moral deal that we can, the best, most moral deal that is enforceable. Certainly there is no question that a total ban on abortions is simply not enforceable in this country, nor would it be supported by a majority of our people. So we think in terms of a viable supportable compromise.

And how do you get such a compromise, such a revision of *Roe v. Wade*, out of the Supreme Court without the appoint-

ment of hopeless reactionaries? A good question. Perhaps only by prayer and fasting.

The Nebraska ban was stricken by a 5-4 vote of the current court, with three appointees of Republican presidents—Stevens (Ford), O'Connor (Reagan) and Souter (Bush I)—voting with the majority. Change one mind of the five-justice majority, and you have the making of a decent decision. Perhaps the reading of Judge Casey's decision might do it. The reading of Judge Casey's decision, and *Roe v. Wade* itself, by more of those who have been pontificating on both sides, should certainly change the general perception of this problem.

It certainly changed mine, and convinced me again that a civilized society should be able, at minimum, to outlaw procedures that are "gruesome, inhumane, brutal, barbaric...and uncivilized."

With this disastrously divisive issue on the shelf, the Democratic Party could start winning elections again and resume its historic role as the champion of the poor and the powerless. And there's an even worthier object of prayer and fasting.

John Cort is the author of Christian Socialism and Dreadful Conversions: The Making of a Catholic Socialist.

Don't Sacrifice Women's Health: A Response to "A Layman's View of *Roe v. Wade*"

BEBE J. ANDERSON

The Democratic Party cannot remain true to its principles by sacrificing the health of women. Yet the "compromise" suggested by John Cort would do just that.

A moral approach to abortion must consider the women seeking abortions, must not imperil women's health by dictating to doctors how medical procedures may be performed, and must not equate the rights of fetuses with those of newborns and women. Banning some procedures and ignoring the mental health risks some women face if they continue a pregnancy, as Cort suggests, will imperil women's health.

The decision by Judge Richard Casey was one of three federal district court rulings on the constitutionality of the federal "Partial Birth Abortion Act of 2003." All three judges found the federal abortion ban unconstitutional, recognizing the law as a threat to women's health. The two other judges concluded that the law does not simply ban *one* method of performing an abortion, but rather it bans some of the safest and most common procedures used to perform abortions as early as twelve to fifteen weeks, long before the fetus is viable. (Judge Casey did not address the issue of the breadth of the law's ban.)

All three judges concluded that, even if the law banned only the dilation and extraction method of performing an abortion, it is unconstitutional because that method is sometimes the safest way to perform an abortion for a particular woman. As Judge Richard Kopf of Nebraska stated, "the overwhelming weight of the trial evidence proves that the banned procedure is safe and medically necessary in order to preserve the health



of women under certain circumstances." *Carhart v. Ashcroft*, 331 F. Supp. 2d 805, 1017 (D. Neb. 2004). Judge Phyllis Hamilton of California agreed, finding that the law could "force pregnant women to undergo a procedure that is less safe under their particular circumstances." *Planned Parenthood v. Ashcroft*, 320 F. Supp. 2d 957, 1029 (N.D. Cal. 2004). Permitting abortions to be performed only by other procedures, as Cort suggests, will expose some women to greater risks of blood loss, infection, damage to the uterus and cervix, and other complications.

The Supreme Court requires a health exception so that the government will not endanger women's health by regulating how abortions may be performed. Such danger can come from mental health risks as well. In particular, some women risk serious mental health problems if required to carry to term a fetus with a severe fetal anomaly, such as anencephaly (in which the fetus lacks a brain, entirely or in significant part).

Most abortions in the United States take place within the first trimester. Contrary to the impression Cort creates, most states impose very strict limits on the circumstances under which an abortion may be performed after a fetus is viable, as allowed by the decision in *Roe v. Wade*. And very few abortions are performed late in pregnancy: approximately 1.4% of abortions in the United States take place at 21 weeks or more of pregnancy, and even fewer take place after the fetus is viable, at around 24 to 28 weeks. But many of the restrictions states impose on women's access to abortion force women to obtain abortions later than they would otherwise. Any compromise aimed at reducing the number of abortions late in pregnancy should respect women's decision-making and health needs by eliminating restrictions such as mandatory delay laws and the ban on Medicaid funding for medically necessary abortions.

As Justices O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter wrote in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, "[m]en and women of good conscience can disagree . . . about the profound moral and spiritual implications of terminating a pregnancy." 505 U.S. 833, 850 (1992). What people of good conscience must avoid is imposing their

individual views of morality and spirituality upon others in a way that diminishes their value and endangers their health.

Bebe J. Anderson is a member of Judson Memorial Church in New York City and an attorney specializing in reproductive rights. The opinions expressed in this article are hers.

Pro-Life? Look at the Fruits

GLEN HAROLD STASSEN

Co-Editor's Note: *As this issue was going to press, we became aware of the column reprinted below. An earlier version appeared in an op/ed piece circulated in several news outlets in the fall of 2004. It has been widely excerpted and reprinted and attacked by some in the pro-life movement. The column below has been updated to take into account criticisms of some of the data and to include new data. We are grateful to Dr. Stassen for allowing us to print it. For more information, see "Consistently and Effectively Pro-life," by Dr. Stassen in the January 18, 2005, issue of Christian Century. As he states in that piece, the United States needs "a 'Motherhood Mandate': economic support for mothers, parents and babies; help with better schools, including schools for pregnant teenagers. . . help with health insurance for all mothers and babies; a minimum wage indexed for inflation and tax credits for the working poor. . . [and] partially paid leave from work for one parent during a baby's first year. . . . Every European nation gives new mothers paid leave, and their abortion rates are far lower than ours. We are so much richer; we can afford it, if we know what biblical justice means."*



I am a Christian ethicist, and trained in statistical analysis. I am consistently pro-life. My son David is one witness. For my family, "pro-life" is personal. My wife caught rubella in the eighth week of her pregnancy. We decided not to terminate, to love and raise our baby. David is legally blind and severely handicapped; he also is a blessing to us and to the world.

I look at the fruits of political policies more than words. I analyzed the data on abortion during the George W. Bush presidency. There is no single source for this information — federal reports go only to 2000, and many states do not report — but I found enough data to identify trends. My findings are counterintuitive and disturbing.

Abortion was decreasing. When President George W. Bush took office, the nation's abortion rates were at a 24-year low, after a 17.4% decline during the 1990s. This was an average decrease of 1.7% per year, mostly during the latter part of the decade. (The data come from Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life using the Guttmacher Institute's studies.)

Enter George W. Bush in 2001. One would expect the abortion rate to continue its consistent course downward, if not plunge. Instead, the opposite happened.

I found sixteen states that have posted statistics for 2001 and 2002. The number of abortions in those states increased in that one year by a total of 5,855. The ten states for which I have data for 2000 and 2001 had an increase of 4,067 in 2001, and the five states for which I have data in 2003 had an increase of 5,651 by comparison with 2000. Since these are actual reports and not merely polls of states with about thirty million women, the Z-test of statistical significance shows these increases were significant beyond 99.99% as representative of the U.S. It extrapolates to an increase of about 20,000 per year in the fifty states, instead of the expected decline of 28,000. That means 48,000 more abortions occurred in the United States in 2002 than would have been expected before this change of direction.

How could this be? I see three contributing factors:

First, two-thirds of women who abort say they cannot afford a child (Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life website). In the past three years, unemployment rates increased half again. Not since Hoover had there been a net loss of jobs during a presidency until the current administration. Average real incomes decreased, and for seven years the minimum wage has not been raised to match inflation. With less income, many prospective mothers fear another mouth to feed.

Second, half of all women who abort say they do not have a reliable mate (Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life). Men who are jobless usually do not marry. Only three of the sixteen states had more marriages in 2002 than in 2001, and in those states abortion rates decreased. In the sixteen states overall, there were 16,392 fewer marriages than the year before, and 6,207 more abortions. As male unemployment increases, marriages fall and abortion rises.

Third, women worry about health care for themselves and their children. Since 5.2 million more people have no health insurance now than before this presidency — with women of child-bearing age overrepresented in those 5.2 million — abortion increases.

This now receives additional confirmation from the fact that the infant mortality rate actually increased in 2002 for the first time in decades (National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control, NVSR Volume 53, Number 10).

cont'd on page 15

Confessing Christ in a World of Violence

Co-editor's Note: The following statement was initiated by Jim Wallis of the Sojourners Community in the fall of 2004 and has been signed by more than 200 theologians and ethicists, many from theologically conservative seminaries and Christian colleges.

... Where is the serious debate about what it means to confess Christ in a world of violence? Does Christian "realism" mean resigning ourselves to an endless future of "pre-emptive wars"? Does it mean turning a blind eye to torture and massive civilian casualties? Does it mean acting out of fear and resentment rather than intelligence and restraint?

Faithfully confessing Christ is the church's task, and never more so than when its confession is co-opted by militarism and nationalism.

- A "theology of war," emanating from the highest circles of American government, is seeping into our churches as well.
- The language of "righteous empire" is employed with growing frequency.
- The roles of God, church, and nation are confused by talk of an American "mission" and "divine appointment" to "rid the world of evil."

The security issues before our nation allow no easy solutions. No one has a monopoly on the truth. But a policy that rejects the wisdom of international consultation should not be baptized by religiosity. The danger today is political idolatry exacerbated by the politics of fear.

In this time of crisis, we need a new confession of Christ.

1. Jesus Christ, as attested in Holy Scripture, knows no national boundaries. Those who confess his name are found throughout the earth. Our allegiance to Christ takes priority over national identity. Whenever Christianity compromises with empire, the gospel of Christ is discredited.

We reject the false teaching that any nation-state can ever be described with the words, "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." These words, used in scripture, apply only to Christ. No political or religious leader has the right to twist them in the service of war.

2. Christ commits Christians to a strong presumption against war. The wanton destructiveness of modern warfare strengthens this obligation. Standing in the shadow of the Cross, Christians have a responsibility to count the cost, speak out for the victims, and explore every alternative before a nation goes to war. We are committed to international cooperation rather than unilateral policies.

We reject the false teaching that a war on terrorism takes pre-

cedence over ethical and legal norms. Some things ought never be done - torture, the deliberate bombing of civilians, the use of indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction - regardless of the consequences.

3. Christ commands us to see not only the splinter in our adversary's eye, but also the beam in our own. The distinction between good and evil does not run between one nation and another, or one group and another. It runs straight through every human heart.

We reject the false teaching that America is a "Christian nation," representing only virtue, while its adversaries are nothing but vicious. We reject the belief that America has nothing to repent of, even as we reject that it represents most of the world's evil. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).

4. Christ shows us that enemy-love is the heart of the gospel. While we were yet enemies, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8, 10). We are to show love to our enemies even as we believe God in Christ has shown love to us and the whole world. Enemy-love does not mean capitulating to hostile agendas or domination. It does mean refusing to demonize any human being created in God's image.

We reject the false teaching that any human being can be defined as outside the law's protection. We reject the demonization of perceived enemies, which only paves the way to abuse; and we reject the mistreatment of prisoners, regardless of supposed benefits to their captors.

5. Christ teaches us that humility is the virtue befitting forgiven sinners. It tempers all political disagreements, and it allows that our own political perceptions, in a complex world, may be wrong.

We reject the false teaching that those who are not for the United States politically are against it or that those who fundamentally question American policies must be with the "evildoers." Such crude distinctions, especially when used by Christians, are expressions of the Manichaean heresy, in which the world is divided into forces of absolute good and absolute evil.

The Lord Jesus Christ is either authoritative for Christians, or he is not. His Lordship cannot be set aside by any earthly power. His words may not be distorted for propagandistic purposes. No nation-state may usurp the place of God.

We believe that acknowledging these truths is indispensable for followers of Christ. We urge them to remember these principles in making their decisions as citizens. Peacemaking is central to our vocation in a troubled world where Christ is Lord.

A Social Gospel Pioneer



The Kingdom Is Always But Becoming A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch

by Christopher Evans

Eerdmans Publishing Co. (Grand Rapids, MI, 2004) 348 pp. \$25

WILLIAM DROEL

Upstate New York is an honorable place in the history of this country's social change movements, notably in the women's rights movement (think Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton), but also including civil rights, peace, labor, and others. Among the notables from upstate New York is Rev. Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) of Rochester Theological Seminary, now known as Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.



In spearheading the social gospel movement, Rauschenbusch challenged the evangelical fervor of the late 1800s and early 1900s, which put its emphasis on winning individual souls for Christ. Both then and now, spirituality for evangelicals (including fundamentalists) usually has meant interior conversion and individual witness to Jesus' saving touch.

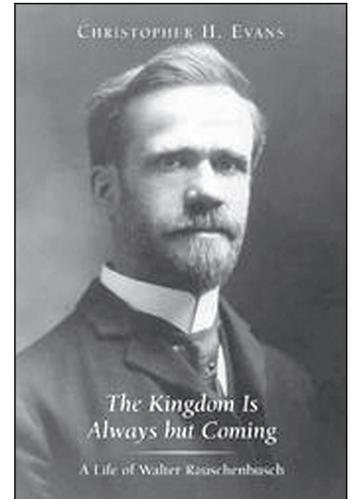
True, evangelical Christianity has a good track record in helping individuals recover from their addictions and other personal problems. But with the exception of those influenced by Rauschenbusch and his social gospel movement, evangelical spirituality is largely divorced from the causes of family difficulties, urban problems, worker exploitation, and other social issues. Rauschenbusch, Evans explains, believed that "an individual's spirituality was inconse-

ERRATUM

We regret that a copyediting error misidentified the site of Michael Walzer's speech on the meaning of life printed in the Summer 2004 issue. The article was adapted from a speech given at the University of Central Oklahoma.

quential unless it was spoken of as part of the larger society."

Rauschenbusch, an avowed non-party socialist, developed his platform by focusing on the social implications of Jesus' parables about the kingdom. Our world is never synonymous with God's Kingdom, he admits. The kingdom, as in the title of Evans's book, is "always but becoming." On the other hand, Rauschenbusch believed that the kingdom should constantly be coming "on earth as it is in heaven."



By recovering Jesus' kingdom parables, says Evans, Rauschenbusch may have done as much for Protestantism as did the early Reformers who recovered St. Paul's doctrine of justification.

In the foreword to this book, historian Mark Noll rightly draws a parallel between the social gospel movement and Rauschenbusch's Catholic contemporaries, who, with their support of labor unions in the 1890s, laid the groundwork for the Catholic presence in the modern world. Unfortunately, there was little dialogue between the two progressive Christian traditions back in those days. In fact, as Evans underscores, Rauschenbusch, like many evangelicals, had a "deep-seated and lifelong suspicion of all things Catholic."

Society today is awash in individualism, both in social policy and in religious expression. A dose of Walter Rauschenbusch and the Catholic social imagination would be helpful antidotes to our *me-first* culture and our privatized religion. Maybe through the efforts of Evans, a professor at Colgate Divinity School, and others the quest for a social spirituality can gain some steam in upstate New York and then as in days past social change, following the Erie Canal, can spread east and west throughout this country and beyond.

William Droel is an instructor at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, IL. He serves on the board of the National Center for the Laity

APPEAL FOR HELP

Renewal notices are going out, but even a great response on renewals alone would not be enough to keep us going. We also need R&S Commission dues (\$5) and generous contributions.

If any holiday spirit remains, along with the cash to back it up, we will certainly invoke God's blessing, not to mention a Happy New Year, on one and all!!!!



LETTERS

A Rationalist Renewed

To the Editors:

Every time I am asked to renew my subscription to *Religious Socialism* I am faced with a moral dilemma. I'm not a religious person, but see myself as essentially a rationalist all too aware of the evils that have flowed from religious zealotry and dogmatism.

While many admirable acts may have been done in the name of religion, all too often it has been the means of setting one group of human beings against another in a most brutal and irrational way.

I am not suggesting that the members of the DSA Religion and Socialism Commission are guilty of such attitudes or behavior. On the other hand, I believe that socialism embodies, or implies, an essentially moral belief in justice and tolerance. Such moral principles cannot, in my view, be derived from a purely economic or materialist perspective. Because it is important to keep the socialist vision alive, whether it is rooted in a secular or spiritual perspective, I, with some mixed feelings, am again re-subscribing.

Franz Friedrich
New York, NY

Veteran Lefty Sees Excitement

To the Editors:

I'm not a "hard sell" when it comes to your central commitments: radical Christianity and socialism. I was ordained a Southern Baptist minister in the early sixties and shortly thrown out of my church for getting into civil rights. From there it was into the anti-poverty program, for a while with the old Office of Economic Opportunity and then with a large Head Start program in Mississippi. I've been on the lines from civil rights days and everything that followed, active in the secular and religious lefts. I've fought all the battles and am still trying to shake the bars on the cages, as I know you are.

I've done several of the national organizations starting with the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF) in the sixties, National Council of Churches on the Delta Ministry in Mississippi, then was a co-traveler with New American Movement through affiliation with Arthur Kinoy's various organizations over time. Class struggle in and out of the church, lots of work on South Africa, Latin America, Witness for Peace, and so on.

If the sell isn't hard, it's just that such small national left organizations seem too marginalized to be very effective. Hell, I have

a hard time powering my way through biblical inerrancy, racism, and homophobia in these parts — and the agenda has to be defined to some extent in ways in it can be heard. DSA doesn't seem much different from People for the American Way, the Black Democratic Caucus, and other liberal to left leaning groups. It does not seem to have a great deal of potential to be influential except as a way for some of us diehards to stick together and for me mostly a way of retaining some connection to something with the word "socialist" attached to it.

Your commission is the first real reason for any excitement since I joined DSA and am glad to be in touch with a kindred spirit such as yourselves. I appreciate the work you're doing, and hope to stay in touch.

Don Manning-Miller
Holly Springs, MS

The Perverse Morality of Ayn Rand

To the Editors:

The world's Billionaire Club stands at 450 persons. Together, they hold a fortune greater than the total Gross National Product of those poor countries in which 56 percent of the world's populations currently live. Think of that: 450 people possess more wealth than some three billion of earth's poorest folks are able to produce, or enabled to consume.

Somewhere in the back pages of an Ayn Rand book I got the impression that she was telling her readers that if they were as selfish as possible, they were being the kind of animal they were meant to be; that is, a rational animal doing what is most conducive to the life of humankind.

This was the Good. If you did not act selfishly, that was the Bad, and you were acting immorally. You were not being the kind of animal Nature intended you to be. Rand and her followers, one of whom was Alan Greenspan, gave a whole generation of Americans the idea that they had a moral right to be selfish; to become millionaires and billionaires; to turn a blind eye to world hunger, homelessness, and exploitation. And she urged them to encourage others to be greedy too.

As socialists we reject this philosophy, this perverse morality of selfishness. Let us once and for all put Ayn Rand's crazy ideas where they belong—in the dustbin of history.

Sid Rasmussen
Council Bluffs, IA

For a New Party down the Road

To the Editors:

The progressive forces in America have retreated into backing the Democratic Party. They thought that this was the best way to advance the social democratic reform agenda. But backing the Democrats also means all-out support for American imperialism. John Kerry and his fellow Democrats voted for the Iraq War. Kerry even said that he would continue the occupation until the job was finished—meaning when the oil was flowing

Are we progressives prepared for that? History is clear. The Democrats have started even more imperialist wars than the Republicans. Harry Truman brought us the cold war, McCarthyism, and Korea. John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson brought us the Bay of Pigs and the Vietnam War. Jimmy Carter, Iran, Bill Clinton, Yugoslavia and East Africa. When Howard Dean's peace movement was rising high, the Democratic National Committee moved in with Kerry to cut off Dean and keep up support for the war. Really, is it worth supporting all this horror in the vague hope of getting a few small domestic reforms?

American politics works like this: the Republicans own the upper middle class and the culturally backward. The Democrats have been carefully constructed by the ruling class to co-opt the disadvantaged—labor, ethnic minorities, and women. They are awfully good at that job, awfully rich and strong, and totally incapable of being changed.

What, then, are we progressives supposed to do? We must start again on the laborious task of building an alternative political force—a new party, down the road. Not right away, but when objective conditions (depression or losing war) send the people to the left. That will come, maybe sooner than we think. Meanwhile, let's keep away from the Donkey's hind feet, un-

less we like getting kicked.

Our natural base continues to be workers, women, minorities, and environmentalists. Somehow blending them into a new movement is the only way to go. Forget about the Daley machines, the Zell Millers, the Joe Liebermans, and the John Kerrys. They are the enemy. All the above advice comes from the left. Now let me grasp the third rail of political "correctness" and take note of two things from the right.

We on the left must of course offer gays and lesbians all the benefits that heterosexual couples have in health, welfare, and inheritance. But call it civil union or something, not marriage. On November 2 referendums against gay marriage passed in 11 states by margins ranging from 86% to 14% to 57% to 43%.

Second, face up to the reality of what degradation in the ghettos is doing to race relations. Join with Jesse Jackson, Barack Obama, and Kwame Nfume in urging the black population to pull itself up in the areas of crime, family stability, and education.

I regret that a lot of the above is going to annoy my longtime progressive friends. But let me ask you to assess calmly whether any of it is untrue.

Perry Cartwright
Chicago, IL

Pro-Life? Look at the Fruits/

continued from page 11

The U.S. Catholic bishops warned of this likely outcome if support for families with children was cut back. My wife and I know — as does my son David — that doctors, nurses, hospitals, medical insurance, special schooling, and parental employment are crucial for a special child. David attended the Kentucky School for the Blind, as well as several schools for children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. He was mainstreamed in public schools as well. We have two other sons, and five grandchildren, and we know that every mother, every father, and every child needs public and family support.

What does this tell us? Economic policy and abortion are not separate issues; they form one moral imperative. Rhetoric is hollow, mere tinkling brass, without healthcare, health insurance, jobs, childcare, and a living wage. Pro-life in deed, not merely in word, means we need a president who will do something about jobs and health insurance and support for prospective mothers.

Glen H. Stassen is the Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary and the co-author of Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context, which was named Christianity Today's Book of the Year in theology or ethics.



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