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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC  
ASSOCIATION OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS**

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Physicians should provide moral leadership to their communities

Presidential address

**R. Don Gambrell, Jr, MD**

*Augusta, Georgia*

It is with pride, great honor, much humility, and considerable trepidation that I present this address. You have elected me to join the ranks of a distinguished group of past presidents, and for that, I am grateful. I have grave concerns for our country because of declining moral values, with which I am sure you will agree. In a *Wall Street Journal/NBC News* poll reported in the *Wall Street Journal* in September 1999, 75% of those polled responded that moral decline was a greater threat to US power status than economic weakness, which was the answer of 20% of those polled.<sup>1</sup> School violence, crime in the streets, disrespect for others, state lotteries that make the poor more destitute, pornography, promiscuity, divorce, teenage sexuality and pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, assisted suicide, euthanasia, rap music, rape, child abuse, and racial intolerance are increasing. Fortunately, abortions are declining. Breakdown of the family and decline in traditional values are intricately involved if not the cause of

most of these concerns. During the past year, it was my privilege to attend meetings in two of America's most historic cities, Williamsburg, Virginia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While helping my 9-year-old grandson learn about the founding fathers, my own sense of history was revitalized. These great men of vision, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and many others, established freedom of speech and freedom of religion, frequently calling on God for help and on Judeo-Christian values. During the subsequent centuries, our culture has been enriched by immigration, with the addition of Islamic faith and the Eastern religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, and Taoism. George Washington said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."<sup>2</sup> Washington knew well that a nation's laws spring from its morals and that morals spring from its religion. The religion of which Washington spoke was clear to all who knew him: "It is impossible to govern rightly without God and the Bible." In his farewell address on September 17, 1796, Washington said that the survival of freedom depended on the character of its people.

In Ralph Jennings' 1997 presidential address, one of his focuses was on domestic violence.<sup>3</sup> This includes the victimization of an individual with whom the abuser has or has had an intimate or romantic relationship. That includes emotional and psychologic, as well as physical, abuse. Dr Jennings said we should not ignore this prob-

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lem nor deny its existence but be sensitive enough to identify it in our practices. He advocated that we "...beneficially affect victims by presenting opportunities to discuss problems, by giving referrals to social agencies, by offering psychologic support, or, if necessary, by giving referrals to shelters for those women who are victims of domestic violence." If given the opportunity, some women will open up and indicate there are problems in their relationship. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has been very interested in domestic violence and provides for our offices handouts, such as *The Abused Woman*. ACOG also has a slide lecture program, *Domestic Violence: The Role of the Physician in Identification, Intervention, and Prevention*, to educate students and residents, in addition to information for battered women on how to escape an abusive relationship. They also provide a video, *Clinical Aspects of Domestic Violence for the Obstetrician-Gynecologist*.

Very few of us are trained in marriage counseling, but we should provide a sympathetic ear and know the resources where professional help can be obtained. We should be advocates for strong family units. Dr Joseph R. Zanga<sup>4</sup> stated in his 1998 presidential address to the American Academy of Pediatrics:

Here we are in the richest nation in the World, a nation where sports figures are paid more than an army of teachers, where more money is spent on prisons than child-care centers, where the elderly have financial access to health care but where millions of children lack the same access. How do we ensure that children are valued, loved, and provided the resources to grow? The answer lies in the family. This is not a battle our children can win, and so we have to step in and negotiate a peace on behalf of the children we serve. Children in intact families do better, even when the battles rage. Children with fathers in the home are less involved with guns, less involved with crime, less often substance abusers, and do far better in school than children whose fathers are not in the home. And even the latest study of out-of-home child care made it clear that children in even the best child care are still dependent on parental, particularly maternal, involvement in their lives if they are to achieve their full potential. Sometimes being an advocate is hard, sometimes it means putting aside our personal biases, saying loudly for all the world to hear, that no matter how difficult, our children deserve the best, and the best is what we must provide for them.

Dr Jennings also advocated in his address a focus on teenage sexuality and sex education: "But I would argue that sex education can be taught without advocating sexual relations or sexual experimentation. It can be taught within the context of promoting abstinence and birth control can be taught within the framework of future marriage and family planning."<sup>3</sup> In the report of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health,<sup>5</sup> parent-

family connectiveness and perceived school connectiveness were protective against every health risk behavior measure except history of pregnancy. Significant family factors associated with delaying sexual debut included high levels of parent-family connectedness (relative risk, 0.85; 95% confidence interval, 0.81-0.88), parental disapproval of their adolescent being sexually active (relative risk, 0.79; 95% confidence interval, 0.78-0.83), and parental disapproval of their adolescent's use of contraception (relative risk, 0.75; 95% confidence interval, 0.71-0.79). Recent family suicide attempt or completion was associated with a slightly increased risk of early sexual debut (relative risk, 1.07; 95% confidence interval, 1.03-1.12). Adolescents who reported taking a pledge to remain a virgin were at significantly lower risk of early age of sexual debut (relative risk, 0.25; 95% confidence interval, 0.19-0.33).

Parents and family consistency were one of the major factors in shaping the health of adolescents. Perceived parental expectations were a major factor of school attainment and healthy behavior. Although the physical presence of a parent in a home at key times reduces risk, especially substance use, it was less consistent than parental connectedness, such as feelings of warmth, love, and caring. The home environment also played a role in shaping negative health outcomes. In homes where adolescents have easy access to guns, alcohol, tobacco, and illicit substances, adolescents were more likely to have an increased risk of suicide, involvement in interpersonal violence, and substance use. Those who grow up where alcohol is easily accessible may be more likely to drink as teens.

Without question, Hollywood, television, and rap music are increasingly responsible for declining morality. In a recent editorial in the *Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, Dr Michael H. Allen<sup>6</sup> wrote: "...but we are so tolerant of violence in our culture that it takes not one or two, but six mass homicides in our schools to get our attention.... At the root of this propensity for lethal violence...must be some combination of inclination and opportunity.... Inclination has contributions from 'nature' and 'nurture.' Factors related to nurture or environment might include a decrease in adult supervision; the incessant repetition of violence in video games, cartoons, and movies; and a less authoritarian approach to ethical problems." Dr Allen goes on to say how dramatically wrong was his 6-year-old son's interpretation of a relatively benign movie. "What he 'gets' is not the sweet verbal message delivered quietly at the end, but the repeat visceral message that even the good guys spend most of their time tricking, pushing, hitting, shooting, crashing, burning, and exploding other people."<sup>6</sup> That is a child's interpretation of a benign movie. What messages are our teenagers getting when the bad guys win?

In an address at the Harvard Law School Forum in February 1999, Charlton Heston<sup>7</sup> reported his reaction and

action when he heard about a rapper named Ice-T who was selling a compact disk called *Cop Killer*, which celebrated ambushing and murdering police officers. It was being marketed by Time Warner, and Mr Heston was a stockholder. He attended the next stockholders' meeting against the advice of his family and colleagues.

I asked for the floor. To a hushed room of a thousand average American stockholders, I simply read the full lyrics of *Cop Killer*—every vicious, vulgar, instructional word.

*I got my 12-gauge sawed off  
I got my headlights turned off  
I'm about to bust some shots off  
I'm about to dust some cops off*

It got worse, a lot worse. I won't read the rest of it to you. But trust me, the room was a sea of shocked, frozen, blanched faces. The Time Warner executives squirmed in their chairs and stared at their shoes. They hated me for that. Then I delivered another volley of sick lyrics brimming with racist filth, where Ice-T fantasizes about sodomizing two 12-year-old nieces of Al and Tipper Gore. I left the room in echoing silence. When I read the lyrics to the waiting press corps one of them said, 'We can't print that.' 'I know,' I replied, 'but Time Warner is selling it.' Two months later, Time Warner terminated Ice-T's contract. I'll never be offered another film by Warner or get a good review from *Time* magazine. But disobedience means you must be willing to act, not just talk.

Modern technology has provided the Internet as a source of unlimited and quickly obtained information. However, it is also a ready source of pornography, chat rooms that break up families, and sex predators that may entice young girls, even boys, to a terrible fate that may even include death.

How did we get where we are? Was it the playboy philosophy that was promulgated by Hugh Hefner after World War II that led to the moral decline? Some people attribute the student frenzy, civil disobedience, and violence of the 1960s to the war in Vietnam. Judge Robert H. Bork, in his book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*,<sup>8</sup> writes that, "Every new generation constitutes a wave of savages who must be civilized by their families, schools, and churches. An exceptionally large generation can swamp the institutions responsible for teaching traditions and standards." He called this the vertical invasion of the barbarians.

The baby boomers were a generation so large that they formed their own culture rather than being assimilated into the existing one. The so-called silent generation, born between 1922 and 1947, numbered 43.6 million. The boomers by contrast, born between 1946 and 1964, had 79 million persons still living in 1974. The 'baby bust' generation, born between 1965 and 1983, had 67.9 million births. The culture the boomers formed was, as is natural for adolescents, opposed to that of their parents.

Judge Bork states that the 1960s were born at a particular time and place in June 1962 at Port Huron, Michigan. Although most of us have never heard of Port Huron, this is crucial, for the authentic spirit of 1960s radicalism started there. Port Huron was a convention of the Students for a Democratic Society. They were against anticommunism, against American culture, against sell-out unions, and against the Cold War as a Soviet plot. They rejected America. Although the Students for a Democratic Society and the Port Huron statement did not create the temper of the 1960s, it did coalesce the restless discontents of their generation and was widely circulated by the New Left. It viewed human nature as infinitely malleable so that perhaps a new, better, and perfect nature can be produced by rearrangement of social institutions. Because humans resist attempts to remake their nature, coercion and ultimately violence will be required.

The 1960s radicals prized individualism so greatly that they became egalitarian conformists and they rejected American culture and morals. They engaged in use of foul language, sexual promiscuity, use of marijuana and hard drugs, and disdain for the military and conventional success. They thought that America was corrupt from top to bottom. Sweeping change was required with American foreign policy, corporations, labor unions, old-style liberalism, universities, economics, the military, government, political parties, desire for material goods, and society in general and its institutions. The revolt was against the entire American culture. They thought the United States itself was deeply immoral, racist, sexist, authoritarian, and imperialistic. Destruction was the only response.

After World War II, there were 1,675,000 students in the universities and 165,000 full-time faculty. But by 1970, there were 7,000,000 students and more than 500,000 full-time faculty. The students after World War II were affluent. Because their parents had known the hardships of the Depression and the war, they were determined to give their children every comfort they could. Thinking they would always have money, the 1960s generation did not worry that either lack of study or unacceptable behavior would jeopardize their futures. This freed them for political action. Boredom led them to rock music and anti-social actions—alcohol, narcotics, cruelty, pornography, violence, and zealotry in a political cause.

The campus madness may have begun at Berkeley, California, but it was the Ivy League that set the pace for the retreat of reason. Judge Bork writes:

Yale had for years been politically liberal, no department more so than the law school.... But liberal as it was, Yale was unprepared for the shock when radical students first appeared in our midst. We knew of the riots at places like Berkeley and Columbia, but that was not the same as seeing irrational fury face to face.... These students were angry, intolerant, highly vocal, and case-hardened against logical argument....<sup>8</sup>

Turmoil was the order of the day: student strikes, arson in university buildings, angry demonstrations, classroom destructions, rejection of rationality as reactionary, obscenities shouted at faculty members, and the usual assortment of barbarities. The great majority of the 1960s generation were not radical or hippie. The activists were organized, outspoken, and intimidating. The moderate students kept quiet and just wanted to get on with their studies with as little discomfort as possible. They watched the faculty waver and appease and the president of the university capitulate.

Nihilism was the order of the decade. They rejected middle-class morality for an unprecedented permissiveness: "If it feels good, do it," "Do your own thing," and "It is forbidden to forbid." This was the authentic voice of the adolescent 1960s radicalism— impatient, destructive, and nihilistic. Modern liberalism is its mature stage. The turmoil of the 1960s temper quieted as the radicals graduated from the universities and became invisible until they reached positions of power and influence. Throughout the culture there is no longer a need for violence or confrontation because the radicals control many of the institutions they formerly attacked.

Dr William T. Mixon,<sup>9</sup> in his 1985 presidential address, stated the following:

Although I am opposed to abortion, I would not favor a change to make it illegal. Our responsibility is to reduce abortions to the lowest possible number by preventing unwanted pregnancies. This is a major challenge. The technology is available, with a wide range of acceptable methods of contraception, and safe and easy methods of sterilization. An expanded effort at education is necessary. We need to deal with the myths and exaggerations about the danger of oral contraceptives.

Dr J. Richard Sosnowski,<sup>10</sup> in his 1984 address, wrote the following:

I do not deem it excellent to play semantic gymnastics in a profession. I find such terms as 'menstrual extraction' and 'menstrual regulation' unacceptable, as well as the whole idea behind their usage, that is, avoid anybody's having to recognize the fact that they may have been aborted. To me, this is representative of today's permissive society, which almost never teaches the individual to be responsible for his or her conduct.

It is equally troublesome to me that, with no scientific evidence to validate the change, the definition of conception as the successful spermatic penetration of an ovum was redefined as the implantation of a fertilized ovum. It appears to me that the only reason for this was the dilemma produced by the possibility that the intrauterine contraceptive device might function as an abortifacient. Now that the intrauterine contraceptive device has lost popularity and in vitro fertilization has become the focus of our attention, will we change the definition again?

Recognizing all the arguments that have been promoted

and empathizing with most of them, I nevertheless personally find no excellence in managing the problems of unplanned pregnancies by destroying them. Surely, the key lies in intensified efforts toward prevention. We will not have achieved excellence in contraception until we have methods equally available and equally acceptable for both males and females, characterized by maximal effectiveness and minimal motivation. I think also that excellence in pregnancy prevention will be reached only when education focuses not only on various methods of and devices for contraception, but when it also emphasizes the respect one person should have for another and the responsibility each should bear for the outcome of interpersonal relationships, and when you and I have the courage to take the risk of being thought outdated, old-fashioned, even puritanical, in advising young people who come under our care that an acceptable option is to say 'no.'

The Hippocratic Oath of antiquity that so many of us took 35 to 40 years ago has been modified to fit the new morality. Quoting from the old oath, "I will follow the regimen which according to my ability and judgment I consider for the benefit of my patients and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will not aid in the production of abortion unless it be to preserve maternal life, nor suggest any such counsel." The modernized oath states "That I will exercise my art, solely for the care of my patients and the prevention of disease and will give no drugs and perform no operation for a criminal purpose and far less suggest such a thing." Because abortion is not a crime, the modernized Hippocratic Oath no longer has physicians swearing not to perform them.

How did we get to where we are? Abortions were being performed before *Roe v Wade* in 1973. Most were illegal, but abortions were being done by physicians in hospitals. As a resident from 1961-1964, I took care of several illegal abortions. Infections were a problem, but with the antibiotics we had, there were no deaths from abortion during those 3 years. I performed two abortions for medical reasons in a US Air Force Hospital in Germany in 1968, one for rubella in the mother between 8 and 12 weeks' gestation and the other for malignant melanoma where the mother was in a terminal condition. It was claimed that there were 10,000 women dying every year from infected abortions, but this was a greatly inflated figure.

Judge Robert Bork,<sup>8</sup> a respected student and interpreter of the Constitution, wrote that *Roe v Wade* came about in the following manner:

Radical individualism is the only explanation for the Supreme Court's creation, out of thin air, of a general and undefined right to privacy. The Court used the invented right, allegedly to protect the sanctity of the marital bedroom to strike down a dormant Connecticut statute prohibiting the use of contraceptives (1965). But marital privacy was shortly transformed into individual autonomy when the Court invalidated a Massachusetts law restricting access to contraceptives by single persons (1972).

That in turn led to *Roe v Wade* (1973) and the right to abortion. Whatever one's feeling about abortion, the decision has no constitutional foundation, and the Court offered no constitutional reasoning. *Roe* is nothing more than the decision of a Court majority to enlist on one side of the culture war.

The extra-constitutional individualism that undergirds the 'constitutional' right to abortion was made clearest in the joint opinion of three Justices in *Planned Parenthood v Casey* (1992). These Justices, whose votes created a majority to sustain most of *Roe*, invented a heretofore unheard of constitutional right to 'personal dignity and autonomy.' They attempted to explain this previously unsuspected right by saying, 'At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.' Beliefs about such matters were said to be 'personhood,' which is to be protected from state compulsion. It is not recorded that any American government, from the founding on, has ever thought it worthwhile to compel anyone's concept of meaning or of the mystery of human life. What this judicial grandiloquence means, aside from a right to have an abortion, nobody knows. But these hymns to radical individualism are necessarily murky and obscure. This particular one is known in the trade as 'the mystery passage.'

Judge Bork goes on to write in his book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*,<sup>8</sup> that Americans do not view human life as sacrosanct. The deliberate taking of a life of an individual has never been regarded as a matter of moral indifference. The death penalty is debated endlessly. It seems an anomaly that we have accepted so easily the deliberate taking of an individual life. Abortion has been turned into a constitutional right; one state has made assisted suicide a statutory right, and two federal circuit courts have made it a constitutional right; campaigns are underway to legalize euthanasia.

Twenty years ago, Dr C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General under President Reagan, warned that a nation that would accept abortion would sooner or later accept euthanasia. In 1996, during the debate on partial birth abortion that followed President Clinton's veto of the ban passed by Congress, Dr Koop, who is a pediatric surgeon, was asked whether he had ever operated on children who had any of the disabilities described in this debate.<sup>11</sup> Indeed he had. One of his patients, with a huge omphalocele much bigger than her head, went on to become the head nurse in his intensive care unit many years later. Dr Koop's reaction to the President's veto: "I believe that Mr Clinton was misled by his medical advisors on what is fact and what is fiction." Such a procedure, he added, cannot truthfully be called medically necessary for either the mother or—he scarcely needed point out—the baby.

During the debate in Congress of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 1997 (HR1122), there was disagreement between the American Medical Association and

ACOG, who called this abortion procedure "intact dilation and extraction" (intact D&X).<sup>12</sup> ACOG opposed HR1122, considering it an "inappropriate, ill advised and dangerous" intervention into medical decision making. Because of the vagueness of the bill, ACOG believed it had the potential to restrict other obstetric and gynecologic techniques. The American Medical Association supported HR1122 as amended. ACOG believed that the American Medical Association improved the bill by making clear that physicians who, at the outset, are intending to deliver an infant but end up performing the partial birth abortion procedure are not covered by the legislation. ACOG remained concerned that the legislation was still vague or may have been interpreted to limit other abortion techniques or that doctors will fear using abortion techniques other than this procedure because of the threat of prosecution. ACOG and the American Medical Association disagreed about the partial birth abortion procedure ethically being different from other abortion procedures. ACOG believed that partial birth abortion may be a medically appropriate procedure in certain circumstances.

The partial birth abortion debate has raised the level of consciousness of the nation where many who were neutral, both physicians and laity, are becoming increasingly opposed to abortion. The number of abortion facilities in the United States has declined from 2908 in 1982 to 2042 in 1996 (a 29.8% decrease). A majority of obstetrics and gynecology residents have no intention of ever performing abortions, with only 5% saying they would do abortions. A *USA Today/CNN/Gallup* poll in April 1999 shows that people who consider themselves "pro-choice" have decreased from 56% in 1996 to 48% in 1999.<sup>13</sup> Only 27% say that abortion should be legal under any circumstance.

Amy Grossberg and Brian Peterson were sentenced to jail in Delaware in 1997 for killing their newborn baby boy. According to columnist Cal Thomas,<sup>14</sup> during the sentencing, Judge Henry duPont Ridgley spoke of "the intrinsic value of life of the child." Thomas went on, "The judge is behind the times. A child's 'intrinsic value' was voided 25 years ago by the Supreme Court. Today's children, unborn and increasingly born, have only that value which society and the courts assign them." If some time before the birth of the baby boy Anderson and Grossberg had gotten an abortion, we wouldn't even know their names. While at the senior prom, 18-year-old Melissa Drexler gave birth to a 6-lb 6-oz baby boy in the restroom and then tossed him into a trash bin before she went back to dancing. What was her crime? Maybe murder, maybe endangering a child, or maybe conducting a partial birth abortion at the prom without a license. Among the moral tutors who prepared Ms Drexler to act as she did is the Supreme Court. By pretending in *Roe v Wade* not to know when life begins, the Court encouraged looking away at the fact that abortion kills someone. Ignoring elementary science, the Court wrote, preposterously, that the fetus is

a “potential life.” “Why be shocked when a young woman leaves her school prom to deliver a baby in the restroom, sees it drown in the toilet and returns for the next dance as if emptying her womb and emptying her bladder are morally equivalent?”<sup>14</sup> A Phoenix abortionist, attempting an abortion on what he thought was a 23-week-old fetus, delivered a term baby. The 6-lb 2-oz girl had a fractured skull and cuts on her face but later was adopted as a wanted child.

These three cases illustrate the declining morals of our times, but the future may be even worse. Dr Peter Singer is Princeton’s new professor of bioethics at the University Center for Human Values.<sup>14</sup> Singer favors killing disabled babies because he thinks they have no right to live. Even healthy babies would not be granted protection until 1 month after birth. Singer believes in ending anyone’s life when it is not worth living and in the involuntary killing of anyone who has become a burden to their families, the health care system, or the state.

Has ACOG’s support of abortion rights made it easier for Dr Jack Kevorkian to pursue his assisted suicide agenda? ACOG maintained that 80% of its fellows approved of abortion on demand. In a national survey mailed to 37,000 obstetrician-gynecologists, of which 9165 (24.8%) responded, 45.6% felt it was appropriate for ACOG to take a neutral stance, 38.8% responded that ACOG should be an advocate for abortion, and 15.7% responded that ACOG should be an antiabortion advocate.<sup>15</sup> Therefore 61.3% of obstetrician-gynecologists favor a neutral or antiabortion position, and 59.2% oppose mandatory abortion training for residents in obstetrics and gynecology. This survey was sponsored by the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which was organized in 1973 as a special interest group within ACOG to offer a society for obstetrician-gynecologists who were opposed to ACOG’s proabortion policies. In his address to this Society in 1999, Dr Denis Cavanagh,<sup>16</sup> Director of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology at the University of South Florida College of Medicine, stated that he had been taking care of gynecologic cancer patients for more than 35 years and had seen a great many women die of this disease. He felt that, with the range of medical interventions available today, there were no good health care reasons to legalize euthanasia or even physician-assisted suicide.

The Euthanasia Lobby is claiming that millions of people in America are suffering unbearable pain because of terminal illness and so ought to have the right to end their pain with physician-assisted suicide. The fact is that there are now all sorts of methods of pain control available, if only the doctors will use them.<sup>16</sup>

Dr Cavanagh went on to state the following:

In the campaign for assisted suicide the strategy is following the same pattern as that used to legalize abortion. The social liberals identify an appealing reason for

changing the law. Some of you may remember that in the justification of elective abortion, it was widely claimed that 10,000 women were dying every year in America because of illegal abortions, so this was presented as a serious public health problem which had to be solved by legalizing abortions. After the law was passed, it was admitted that a more accurate figure was nearer 100/year for the entire country.<sup>16</sup>

Mona Charen<sup>17</sup> wrote:

Many support Kevorkian out of the mistaken belief that this is the only answer to machine-prolonged, painful deaths with tubes and wires doing the work of our hearts, lungs, and kidneys for weeks or even months. There are two answers to this. The first is that the more widespread use of living wills—in which a healthy person specifies ahead of time in a legally binding document what extraordinary measures he desires or rejects if he becomes incapacitated—has reduced the numbers of people subjected to such suffering. The second is the alternative of hospice care. In the face of terminal illness, millions of Americans choose hospice, or palliative care, over traditional therapy. The purpose of a hospice is to make the patient as comfortable as possible—physically, psychically, and spiritually—at the end of life. That is the humane answer to suffering, not a shove into the grave. Dr Kathleen Foley, a pain specialist at Sloan Kettering Medical Center in New York, has noted that once patients’ pain is under control, requests for death diminish drastically.

My own father chose hospice care for his terminal prostate cancer. I know that hospice works because dad was kept comfortable, and I was with him in his home at the end.

Cal Thomas<sup>18</sup> wrote:

They began with abortion. They continue with infanticide (partial birth abortion), and now they wish to complete their task with euthanasia. We are truly frogs in a kettle. The heat is being turned up very slowly and we don’t realize that we are boiling to death. The language is being rewritten to lull us into complacency. The rush to kiss the death angel began with ‘living wills.’ When attempts were made to allow doctors to kill ‘terminal’ patients, they failed because the public found that too repugnant. The approach was switched to ‘assisted suicide’ because this strategy would focus attention on the suffering patient and make the doctor a compassionate dispenser of help and comfort.

In his Presidential Proclamation for the National Sanctity of Human Life Day in 1989, President Ronald Reagan<sup>19</sup> stated the following:

Today our Nation, economically prosperous and at peace, bears a fresh, dark wound upon its conscience, a wound created by a stark deviation from the course of our national journey. Contrary to the purpose of law, to the character of medicine, to the habit of charity, and to the spirit of our founding, abortion has become routinized in America. No one can mistake abortion for a gentle art of healing. Each day in our land the promise of

life is stolen from thousands of the unborn, the first flower of this unique existence crushed forever. But, as many philosophers have pointed out, the effects of such acts of violence are just as profound on those who perform them as on those who undergo them.

Americans are a generous and kindhearted people, a people who strive to strengthen and preserve those delicate bonds of affection that unite the human family and give safe harbor to all its members. We often fail in our tenderness and mercy; but it is not in our nature to choose failure. Rather, we are a people who thirst after justice and will give our all to achieve it and defend it. Most particularly, we are a people who will not settle for a national policy that each year condemns 1.5 million unborn children to an early death and consigns their mothers to exploitation and emptiness. We must and will answer abortion with loving alternatives like adoption, and we will ensure that our laws preserve and protect the innocent unborn from destruction.<sup>19</sup>

Like many if not most of you, hardly a month goes by that I do not get a letter with a color photograph and résumé from an infertile couple seeking adoption. These are sent at great expense, sometimes to every obstetrician-gynecologist in the nation. Crisis pregnancy centers (care pregnancy centers) offer counseling services regarding adoption as an alternative to abortion and provide referrals to maternity homes and adoption agencies.

At a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington in February 1994, Cal Thomas<sup>20</sup> reported that Mother Teresa of Calcutta delivered the most startling and bold proclamation of truth to power that he has ever heard.

Tying abortion to growing violence and murder in the streets, she said, 'If we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill each other?... Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want.... Many people are very, very concerned with children in India; with the children of Africa, where quite a few die of hunger.... Many people are also concerned about all the violence in this great country of the United States. These concerns are very good. But often these same people are not concerned with the millions who are being killed by the deliberate decision of their own mothers. This is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today—abortion, which brings people to such blindness.... I am willing to accept any child who would be aborted and give that child to a married couple who will love the child and be loved by the child.' She said that she has placed over 3,000 children in adoptive homes from her Calcutta headquarters alone. She has answered the question, 'Who will care for all these babies if abortion is again outlawed?' Now the question is whether a woman contemplating abortion wishes to be selfish or selfless to take life or give life.

Perinatal hospice is an idea whose time has come.<sup>21</sup> Many lethal anomalies may now be diagnosed antenatally, including anencephaly, bilateral renal agenesis,

or acardia.<sup>22</sup> Maternal-fetal medicine specialists frequently encounter infants with multiple congenital or chromosomal anomalies. Because of increasing diagnosis of a lethal congenital anomaly, the process of providing care for a grieving family no longer begins at birth but at the time of diagnosis. When a lethal anomaly is diagnosed prenatally, options for the parents include termination of the pregnancy versus the delivery of the fetus. Their decision may be colored by the fear of abandonment of themselves and their unborn child and the pain and suffering both may endure. An emphasis on perinatal hospice support throughout the pregnancy and the infant's life allows the parents full autonomy in coming to the best decision for their family. At least 20% of patients choose to deliver their children with known severe chromosomal or anatomic anomalies.

The effort in perinatal hospice resides in the antepartum counseling and preparation. Patients need to see the baby on ultrasonography and be allowed to grieve. Most birth defects are not as gruesome in appearance at birth as parents imagine. It is essential that various services are involved in the terminal care of the infant, including maternal-fetal medicine specialists, obstetricians, neonatologists, anesthetic services, chaplains-pastors, social workers, labor and delivery nurses, and neonatal intensive care nurses. Patients are given the fetal diagnosis and the expected prognosis during extensive time with maternal-fetal medicine and neonatology staff. Patients are allowed to grieve, explore life issues, and prepare for the precious time they may be allowed to spend with their very special child.

Intrapartum care is conducted as other labors with the exception of fetal heart monitoring in lethal fetal conditions, such as anencephaly or trisomy 13 or 18, where an abnormal fetal heart pattern is expected. Fetuses with conditions not expected to be lethal, such as Down or Turner syndromes, are managed with fetal heart monitoring in the same fashion as other labors. The method of delivery is based on obstetric indications, and the infant is handed to the parents to share the baby's life. Many of these infants are stillborn, but some may live for minutes or days. Dressing the baby is encouraged, as is taking pictures of the baby and holding by all family members, including children if appropriate. Nonanomalous features of the baby are emphasized to the parents, such as cute hands and feet or soft skin. Most parents, when given loving support, freedom from abandonment, and careful counsel as to clinical expectations, will choose perinatal hospice, however brief that time may be. Parental responses are overwhelmingly positive. These parents are allowed the bitter sweetness of their child's birth and too soon departure. Parents rest secure in their knowledge that they shared their baby's life, treating the child with the same dignity as a terminally ill adult, and therefore grief lessens as time passes.

In response to the shooting in a Fort Worth church in September 1999, Cal Thomas<sup>23</sup> wrote:

When people learn that life is cheap and 30 million (and counting) abortions prove it; when marriages split up at the first sign of difficulty; when violence oozes from every cultural pore; when younger and younger children regard sex the way another generation thought of recess; when violent video games graphically depict blood and guts; when evolution is taught as fact and humans see themselves as more complex than a cabbage but of no greater moral significance; when any expression of public prayer or faith in God is treated as cursing...surely this explains why America has gone amok.

A President flouts the moral law and is seen getting away with it. He's so cavalier that he pardons members of a Puerto Rican terrorist group, but calls for more gun laws (while his administration fails to enforce most of those now on the books). Anyone who believes an entire generation has not received the message also believes that television commercials don't affect behavior. Texas Governor George W. Bush told the truth when he said in response to the church shootings, 'There seems to be a wave of evil passing through America now.' That's because the moral dam that once held most of it back has been opened and we are drowning in the flash flood. Bush noted that laws can only go so far. People must be held accountable for the decisions they make, he said. But, in our victimized culture, we are told that no one is accountable, because no one is responsible. Bill Clinton is a sexual predator and serial liar because his mother and grandmother argued over him...all evil can now be excused or explained by the late Gilda Radner's comedic expiation, 'Never mind.' Postmodern, aimless man says there is no evil, because there is no God. If there is no God, we may do as we please. If what pleases some people hurts people we don't want to be hurt.... Then government steps in and fills the vacuum God has vacated. Is there a more plausible explanation?"

When our nation rots at the top, we at the grassroots level must help to stop the moral decay and restore values. After the impeached President Clinton was acquitted at his trial in the US Senate, Paul M. Weyrich<sup>24</sup> issued a position paper, "The Moral War Has Begun." It is not just the rule of law and the political process that has been damaged, it is the damage to the culture that will have the most lasting effect. The advocates of morality have lost and lost badly. The advocates of amorality will now begin to work their will. "What this means in plain English is that the efforts to return some semblance of moral order to the nation through the political process have failed...we cannot depend on the political structures to protect us." Because we now live in a hostile culture, we are going to have to examine parallel institutions which can win the culture war. "...The home school movement, now embracing a million students and growing every day, gives us hope. There are some children in America who are being well-educated and educated with the right values. It is upon these young people that the future of the nation must depend."<sup>24</sup>

Judge Bork<sup>8</sup> writes that Alexis de Tocqueville thought in 1834 that America's women were supremely religious because women are the protector of morals. When the law permits Americans to do as they please, religion prevents them from contemplating and forbids them to commit what is rash or unjust. Religion and the voluntary associations inspired by religious life were the source of the ethos of self-control in the family, the schools, the neighborhood, and the workplace. Many of the causes of the day, such as environmentalism and animal rights, are pressed with an enthusiasm—a zealotry—that can only be called religious, and sometimes violence has resulted. Morality may be splintered when religion no longer provides a common set of moral assumptions. Persons without religious belief may display all the virtues associated with religious teaching. Rather than suggesting that religion is unnecessary to morality, it may be that such people are living on the moral capital of prior religious generations. That moral capital will be used up eventually, having nothing to replenish it, and we will see a culture such as the one we are entering.

Judge Bork<sup>8</sup> goes on to write that a religious revival outside any traditional church may be seen in the phenomenon of the men's movement Promise Keepers. This was the idea of University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney. The movement started in 1990 with a meeting of 72 men, and on October 4, 1997, one million men were on their knees on the Washington Mall praying for our country. At the highly emotional and very inspirational meetings, the men vow to be faithful in marriage, to be good family men, and to seek racial unity by working in their local churches. At a different level, Pope John Paul, during his more than 20-year pontificate, has been laying the intellectual foundations for a revitalization of the Church and Catholic life:

Democratic government requires something that democratic government has badly damaged in the past half century and continues to damage today—civil society. By that is meant the institutions that serve public...purposes...that shape and maintain values...but are not government—neighborhoods, families, churches, and voluntary associations.... These are also institutions that assist people who need assistance, giving charity or advice or consolation or companionship.... Churches are among the most important of the intermediate institutions and should lead in the restoration and in value maintenance. The difficulty is that if government were to try to cooperate with or assist churches in their efforts, the courts, which have made a mess of the religion clauses of the Constitution, might well intervene to stop the effort.<sup>8</sup>

There is new hope in 2000 because more than one state is providing publicly funded vouchers for private schools.

Much of the general public must be brought back to the virtues we practiced not long ago. Many Americans,

after all, have grown up and lived in a powerfully corrupting culture for 30 years.... The best strategy for those of us who detest modern liberalism and all its works may be simply to seek sanctuary, to attempt to create small islands of decency and civility in the midst of sub-pagan culture. Gated communities and the home-schooling movement are the beginning of such responses—one an attempt to find safety, the other an effort to keep children out of the embrace of a public school system run by modern liberals.... Perhaps the most promising development in our time is the rise of energetic, optimistic, and politically sophisticated religious conservatism.... Because it is a grassroots movement, the new religious conservatism can alter the culture both by electing local officials and school boards (which have greater effects on culture than national politicians), and by setting a moral tone in opposition to today's liberal relativism.<sup>8</sup>

We may be witnessing a religious revival, another awakening. Not only are evangelicals stronger than ever in their various denominations but other organizations are likely to bring fresh spiritual forces to our culture and ultimately to our politics. The Christian Coalition, the Catholic Campaign for America, and the resurgence of interest among the young in Orthodox Judaism are all signs that religion is gaining strength. If so, religious precepts will eventually influence political action.... There is, of course, a secular language of morality but it is self-conscious rather than unaware. While hoping for a religious reawakening, we had best also speak the language of secular morality to a society that has become largely secular. The language of secular morality is spoken increasingly by conservative commentators in the press and on talk radio. That language takes the form of ridiculing the idiocies of modern liberalism and extolling traditional values. Talk radio, in particular, provides a way to reach the public by bypassing the print press and television, which remain overwhelmingly liberal. The effectiveness of talk radio may be gauged by the hysteria it generates in the liberal press and among liberal politicians.<sup>8</sup>

Probably the most shining example of traditional values in talk radio comes from Dr Laura Schlessinger as she daily answers questions about relationships, family values, abortion, promiscuous behavior, and amoral attitudes. This talented psychologist, who sometimes comes down very hard on her callers, is steadfast in her beliefs.

Politics will not change Hollywood, the network evening news, universities, the liberal press, high rates of divorce, illegitimacy, drug abuse, lewdness, cruelty, and senseless violence. Moral failure came because the culture changed. Much of the American public has changed its values over the past 30 years and is no longer concerned with issues of personal morality and responsibility. Judge Bork<sup>8</sup> concludes:

If there are signs that we have become less concerned than we should be with virtue, there are also signs that many Americans are becoming restless under the tyrannies of egalitarianism and sick of the hedonistic individu-

alism that has brought us to the suburbs of Gomorrah. But, for the immediate future, what we probably face is an increasingly vulgar, violent, chaotic, and politicized culture. Our hopes, our struggles, and our optimism must be for the long run. The first requisite is knowing what is happening to us.

I would add to that that we must be very concerned and care about what is happening.

...The second step is resistance to radical individualism and radical egalitarianism in every area of culture.... There is no single grand strategy...it must be counterattacked area by area. Religion must be recaptured church by church; and education university by university, school board by school board. Bureaucracies must be tamed. The judiciary must be criticized severely when it oversteps its legitimate authority, as it now regularly does.<sup>8</sup>

A very interesting article appeared in our newspaper, *The Augusta Chronicle*, last summer.<sup>25</sup> Dr John C. Markham III is leaving medicine after a 26-year career to study for the priesthood. Always interested in religious studies, his interest in bioethics has grown during the past few years. His passion for the priesthood is motivated by the excesses of medicine and lack of morality.

What I've come to realize and the reason I felt such passion for the preservation of Catholic healthcare is society needs to understand that it is only the church that is defending without compromise life at the extremes, meaning from the point of conception to the point of natural death.... It is ironic that you might have a situation in the same medical school library on the same shelf you've got a textbook that talks about all the technological advances and how we can do life-saving procedures on the fetus in utero and right next to it is a volume on how to do partial birth abortions. That's pure infanticide.<sup>25</sup>

Physicians always want to do what is best for their patients, particularly obstetricians, because we care for two lives. We all mean well, but sometimes it is hard to sort through all of the issues.

What can we do? The Fellows of The South Atlantic Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have made major contributions to the health care of women and their babies during the 62 years of our existence. If we will work together, we can support a grassroots movement to restore morality to our nation. Tip O'Neil, beloved Speaker of the House of Representatives in the 1970s and 1980s, once said that "all politics are local." We can be more attentive to what is going on in the public schools, attend parent-teacher association meetings, even run for election to the school board. We must support our children and grandchildren and know what they are being taught. Offer to teach sex education courses in the schools, churches, and community. Dr McIlhaney can supply the slides and resource material needed to promote abstinence programs that our teenagers are crying

for; they want to be able to "just say no" to sex, drugs, and promiscuity. We can recommend adoption over abortion and refer troubled young girls to crisis pregnancy centers.

We can and should support family-oriented organizations, such as the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, The American Family Association, and Steve Allen's Parents Television Council. These latter two organizations issue monthly newsletters pointing out the worst television shows regarding sexual content, nudity, profanity, and making fun of traditional family values. They encourage their supporters to write the chief executive officers of the companies that sponsor such filth. They also alert parents to what their teenagers may be watching both on television and in the movies. If we are stockholders in corporations that produce and distribute moral degeneracy, do as Charlton Heston did, go to the annual meeting and embarrass the executives. You can make a difference<sup>7!</sup>

I have spent most of my time in identifying the problems and only offered a few suggestions for correction. By working together and pooling our thoughts and ideas, we can join the grassroots movement to restore morality to our communities and to America.

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