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August 10, 2007

Hypocrisy or Values?

By Hans Meyer

There is an interesting phenomenon in the anti-abortion arguments: Those who proclaim that they are “pro-life” but are also in favor of the death penalty. Doesn’t pro-life mean pro-life, whether it is a fetus or someone already born?

It interesting to watch as many of the so-called “pro-lifers” spin and spin when asked about their support for the death penalty. All of a sudden there are all sorts of rationalizations which come into play:

- ✓ “The fetus is “innocent,” whereas the murderer deserves to die. “
- ✓ “Society has to protect the fetus and itself by putting to death murderers.”
- ✓ “We value life and the rule of law.”
- ✓ “God tells us (in the Bible) that all human life is sacred, but God also tells us it is okay to kill murderers.”

(This last one is interesting because they talk about killing murderers, of course, but overlook the same “punishment” for adulterers, or for cursing parents! It is also based on the assumption that the Bible says that life begins at conception, when it clearly states that life begins when we take our first breath - Ezekiel 37:5, Genesis, 2:7 and Job 33:4 – not when we’re conceived. But that is another argument.

(It is also interesting in that the anti-abortion/pro-death penalty adherents never address the fundamental problems with the execution of the death penalty: wrongful convictions, inequality in the sentencing of individuals committing similar crimes, the poor receiving death more often than those who can afford high-

powered legal representation, etc. But, again, that is another argument.)

Now, this isn't to say that there are those who are "pro-life," when it relates to abortion and who are also against the death penalty. Catholic teaching comes to mind here. It is difficult to find hypocrisy with those who oppose both. Sister Helen Prejean would be an excellent example of this Catholic teaching.

So, are these so-called "pro-lifers," who support the death penalty, hypocrites?

I would say that they're actually being quite consistent in one regard:

They are pro-punishment.

Have sex and get pregnant? Your punishment is to have the baby.

Kill someone? Your punishment is to have the state kill you.

Now, some might doubt the idea of pregnancy as punishment, but it is there:

From redstate.org, a Republican community weblog:

"I've read some of the most appalling statements here at redstate, always from men, regarding unintended **pregnancy as punishment** for women having sex."

From the website, Physics Forums:

"Plus, I am offended by the underlying '**pregnancy as punishment**' theme that lurks under the surface. When people say 'you had sex, deal with the consequences', I always hear it reducing the fetus to the role of 'Divine retribution'...and if that kid suffers, too bad, it serves him right for being a bastard."

And, from the case, H. L. v. MATHESON, GOVERNOR OF UTAH, ET AL. - APPEAL FROM THE SUPREME COURT OF UTAH:

"... Baird v. Bellotti, 450 F. Supp. 997, 1001 (Mass. 1978) (uncontested evidence some parents "would insist on an undesired marriage, or on continuance

of the **pregnancy as punishment**" or even physically harm the minor)..."

Google "pregnancy as punishment" and you get over 1.3 millions returns.

So, clearly, these so-called "pro-lifers" who are anti-abortion and pro-death penalty do value something, and it is consistent and non-hypocritical:

They value punishment.

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[Back](#)