

Pastor's Column: Murder begets Murder

The Reverend Byron Snapp

Rev. Snapp holds a B.A. from King College and a M.Div. from Reformed Theological Seminary. He is assistant pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church and principal of Covenant Christian School in Cedar Bluff, Virginia.

Sometimes God especially allows the news to be providentially interconnected. During the week of January 19 the news media gave birth to the fact that infants between birth and one year of age are in the most rapidly growing group of murder victims. FBI statistics, according to the media, reveal that 131 infants were slain in 1973. Two hundred and sixty-four were slain in 1990. This increase represents slightly more than one hundred percent. No other age group doubled during this time period.

Several things in this report should spark our interest. First, the news was reported during the week when attention is focused on the abortion issues. January 22 has become the day to have pro-life rallies throughout the United States.

Secondly, in God's providence, these statistics began with the base year of 1973. January 22, 1973, was the historic day in which the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision was announced. Thus, the taking of unborn human life became legal in the United States. Since that date, close to 30 million lives have never been allowed, by their mother's wish, to see the light of day. The cynic might reply, in light of these millions, "What is another couple of thousand deaths by murder who are only a few months older than those aborted infants?"

It should come as no surprise that we have seen a rise in the murder rates of infants following the Supreme Court's ruling in Roe vs. Wade. (Murders of children in age groups 1 - 10 dropped when 1973 figures are compared with 1990 statistics.) The Court decision, when viewed in the light of Scripture, shows the cheapness of human life. If a life is cheap before it is born, can we expect it to gain value after birth?

Clearly the Bible teaches that human life exists from the moment of conception. King David was inspired to write that he was conceived in sin. (Psalm. 51:5) From the moment of his conception he was a human and a sinner. We think of John the Baptist who leaped in his mother's womb when pregnant Mary entered the house of his parents. Certainly, John was far more than a mass of tissue or just an appendage of his mother. I also am reminded of the Lord Jesus Christ within Mary. Surely, He was a living Person, taking on flesh during those months, while remaining fully God. Would John leap because a mass of tissue had entered the room? Scarcely! Spirit-filled Elizabeth clearly recognized Mary as "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43) even though Jesus was several months from birth.

The Church needs to speak as clearly as the Bible speaks in regard to human life existing from conception. Passages such as Psalm 139:13-16 and Jeremiah 1:5 also provide additional support for this teaching. Many of today's youth will not get this teaching anywhere else.

Secondly, the Church must also clearly teach that sin has consequences. We are easily deceived into thinking that we can sin in isolation. Sin can exist in one action alone without anything or anyone else being affected. A sin seldom exists by itself. A sinful thought leads often to sinful words and deeds. Sinful deeds often are the forerunner of even greater sinful actions.

Society deceives itself into thinking that legalized abortion will not have any effect on the living. Reports continue to surface on the dire physical consequences that have resulted in many mothers after the abortion of their children. As the recent media report gives evidence, the lives of the newly born are in increasing danger.

While the report does not so state, we can imagine that many of these infants are killed by a parent or a close friend of the parent. Of course, it is the mother (the baby's close relative) who must consent to an abortion if the baby is unwanted.

Naturally "authorities" blame the environment -- single parent homes, the inner city structure, etc. -- for these deaths. Even in this blame we see a consequence of sin. A denial of God means sin does not exist. Yet evil continues. Rather than blame man, the sinner, the blame is wrongfully placed on the impersonal environment. Even the authorities must admit that not every single parent of a newborn kills that baby nor do all inner city infants die. The problem is not one's environment. It is the problem of one's heart. As others have said, "The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart."

Certainly many physicians are not blind to the consequences that flow out of sinful activity. Such sinful actions can have great effects on our bodies, our families, and our society as a whole.

Let us hope and pray that our churches will wake up and point out more often that we do not sin in individual isolation. Our nation sorely needs to hear the connection between consequences and the sin that spawned them.