

On February 25, 1990, Terri (Schindler) Schiavo collapsed and never regained consciousness. In February 2000 her husband, Michael, received permission to remove her feeding tube. Terri's parents and brother sued for guardianship so the feeding tube would not be removed. After years of court cases, Michael retained guardianship, and the tube was removed. Terri died March 31, 2005. Why were there differences in attitudes between the Schindler family and Michael Schiavo?

The Nazi euthanasia program was designed to eliminate "life unworthy of life." It first focused upon newborns and the very young who showed symptoms of mental retardation, physical deformity, or other symptoms considered unacceptable. It was quickly expanded to include older disabled children and adults and eventually those who had been in institutions for at least five years, were criminally insane, or merely because they did not possess German citizenship or German blood. Yet, there were those who risked their own lives to hide people they had not known previously in order to save them from Hitler's purge. Why were there differences in attitudes? Doctors readily put to death those thought "unworthy of life." Yet, other individuals risked their own lives to save them.

Why are there differences in attitudes toward the value of human life? One's background and beliefs will determine one's attitudes toward the value of human life.

The theory of evolution has had a great impact on societies of the world and how they view human life. The theory of evolution proposes that both man and modern apes evolved from an ape like creature that existed millions of years ago. Such a theory promotes the idea that humans are no more than animals. Thus, it is right for them to behave like animals. Charles Darwin himself, the father of modern evolutionary thought, wrote, "My object in this chapter is to shew that there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties" (p. 446). The effect of such thinking is illustrated by the words of Jeffrey Dahmer in a 1994 interview with Stone Phillips. Jeffrey Dahmer was a convicted serial killer, convicted of 15 counts of murder and sentenced to serve more than 900 years in prison. He was accused of dismembering and cannibalizing his victims and practicing homosexual necrophilia. In that interview, he was asked by his father when he first felt everyone is accountable for their actions. Dahmer responded in part, "Well, thanks to you for sending that creation science material. Because I

always believed the lie that evolution is truth, the theory of evolution is truth. That we all just came from the slime, and when we died, you know, that was it. There was nothing. So the whole theory cheapens life . . . and I've since come to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true Creator of the heavens and the earth. It didn't just happen." (2006, p. 18)

Some atheists may say they value life. Such thoughts come from those who have been given instincts by God living in a world created by God. The difference between them and believers is that they have rejected a belief in God. However, they have not rejected the instincts God gave man. There are God given ethical traits that appear to be ingrained in all of society since creation, such as recognizing murder, theft, rape and other actions as immoral. There is no explanation for the existence of these ethical standards without God. Though atheists may claim to value life, there is no logical reason for them to do so if there is no God. They have learned that value from centuries of civilizations that recognized the value of life due to those instincts given the human race by God.

Christianity and faith in the God of the Bible hold views diametrically opposed to the views of atheists and humanists, who hold evolutionary views. The Christian's view of the value of human life has been molded by the teaching of the Bible. According to the Bible, human life is made in the image of God. God said, "Let us make man in our image . . . And God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:26-27). God then "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). Man did not merely live, but "man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Human life is a gift from God and a higher life form than animals. Man has been given many of the attributes of deity. He has emotions, is able to reason, and has a moral conscience knowing right and wrong. These attributes cannot be explained by evolution. The value of human life can be seen in that the human child is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3). Any gift from the Supreme Ruler of all the Universe would have great value. God himself values human life. He gave His only begotten Son to die as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10; Romans 5:8). He places such a high value on human life that he requires the life of one who kills an innocent man, whether beast or man (Genesis 9:5-6). Why does He require such a high standard? It is because man is made in His own image (Genesis 9:6).

It is not surprising, therefore, that the killing of an innocent human life is sinful in the eyes of God (Exodus 20:13; Romans 1:28-29, 32; 1 John 3:15).

With the views of evolutionists, atheists, and humanists being so diametrically opposed to the views of God-fearing people, one can understand the debate that rages in society over many ethical questions.

The Bible sets God forth as the Supreme Ruler. His will is placed above that of man. Man is to respect God and obey Him (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The humanist, on the other hand, places human interests, human values, and human fulfillment above all else. According to humanism, human beings have the right and the responsibility to give meaning to and shape their own lives. One can see the effect of humanism on society in that much of the world has become a "me" oriented society. It has become a selfish, worldly society. This is in contrast to the view of the Bible, which states that one should love others as he loves himself (Matthew 22:39) and one should treat others as he would have others treat him (Matthew 7:12). One is to even consider others as more significant than self, and consider the interest of others as well as one's own (Philippians 2:3-4).

Due to this "me first" attitude that has developed in society, several myths have been propagated in the liberal media. One of the most far reaching myths that has affected many ethical decisions is the myth that the embryo in a woman's womb is not an actual human life. Abortion rights advocates use this myth to the fullest. With such a view, many will say that the embryo has no rights. The view is that it has the potential for human life, but it is not actually a person. Therefore, the rights of the pregnant woman would override any consideration for the embryo. She is the one that has the right to choose regarding her body, her personal health, and her future.

The problem with that argument is that an abortion is not merely the removal of a glob which is called a fetus. It is the taking of an innocent human life. That which is growing in the womb of the pregnant woman is a child, an unborn baby, a human life. As recorded by Moses, the Angel of Jehovah said to Hagar that she was "with child," not a blob, and would bear a son (Genesis 16:11). Luke recorded that Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph, was told by an angel that she would conceive and bear a son (Luke 1:31) and that her cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived a son, not a blob, in her old age (Luke 1:36). Luke went on to record that later, when Mary went to

visit Elizabeth, as she entered the room, the babe in Elizabeth's womb leaped (Luke 1:41). It was not a blob that leaped but a baby. Science confirms the truth of the Bible that what is in the womb is a human life. Life begins at conception. Brad Harrub recorded that geneticists and biologists appearing before a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee hearing on April 23-24, 1981, "conclusively reiterated that life begins at conception."

The fact that life begins at conception destroys other myths. For instance, the argument is made that it is better to legalize abortion under medically controlled conditions rather than risk lives in back-alley abortions. That is like saying we should legalize murder under controlled conditions to protect the murderer from attack by on lookers.

Some proclaim the safety and convenience of birth control methods. The question must be asked, "Safe for whom?" Some birth control methods, such as RU486 and IUDs are post conception methods of birth control. In other words, the child is conceived but is aborted by these methods. If a Christian is using or plans to use birth control drugs or devices, she should check the facts. Will it take the life of a child already conceived in the womb?

Also, because life begins at conception, *In Vitro* fertilization must be questioned. With *In Vitro* fertilization, normally five to twelve eggs are fertilized. Three of those might be implanted into the womb to increase the probability of pregnancy. What about the living, unused embryos? There are hundreds of thousands of living embryos being stored by fertility clinics, left overs from *In Vitro* fertilization procedures. Hundreds of thousands of living souls are in limbo, in most cases frozen in liquid nitrogen. Once a family determines that they no longer have a need for these, what will happen to them? They could be donated to couples unable to conceive. They could be donated for research, which would mean their destruction. They could be thawed and allowed to die. The latter two choices would end human life. Many do not consider the value of human life given by God.

There is, also, the myth that embryonic stem cells are needed for their tremendous potential in treating diseases. The truth is that all stem cells have the potential to develop into different cells that can possibly repair the body and treat diseases. There are four sources from which stem cells can be collected: adult tissue, umbilical cords, aborted fetuses, and leftover embryos

from *In Vitro* fertilization. What has been under reported is that adult stem cells have shown far greater promise than embryonic stem cells. At least sixty-five human diseases have been effectively treated through adult stem cells. On the other hand, no embryonic stem cells have been successfully used to do so. The ethical problem remains. To use embryonic stem cells requires the destruction of human embryos, and thus of human life.

One final myth must be mentioned. There is the myth, called euthanasia, that a way of relief should be provided for those whose quality of life is low. What is meant by a way of relief? What is meant that the quality of life is low? Those who promote such a view are merely promoting the killing of one who, for what ever reason they might conjure up, has a life deemed not worthy of living. Keeping in mind the above Biblical teaching of the value of life, who can say one made in the image of God has reached a point he is not worthy of the life God gave him except God himself? One certainly has the right to refuse extraordinary treatment and resuscitation. Yet, life must be respected. If life can be sustained on its own, no one has the right to end that life based upon a "quality of life" argument.

Medical science is advancing rapidly. Laws and governments are having a hard time keeping up with advancements. Questions of ethics are continually being asked. The Christian should always consider, "Is this in accordance with the principles of God's word?"

Works Consulted

- Darwin, Charles (1871), *The Descent of Man* (New York: Modern Library, reprint)
Harrub, Brad (July 2006), *Think*, "Life Redefined"
Phillips, Stone (1994), Interview with Jeffrey and Lionel Dahmer, [On-line], www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjWubezdddE

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the
29th Annual Mid-West Lectures,
"They Shall Be Turned Unto Fables"

To hear or view the complete lesson go to
www.39thStreetChurchOfChrist.org
or contact the

39th Street Church of Christ
15331 East 39th Street
Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

**"They Shall Be Turned
Unto Fables"**

Made In The Image Of God (Genesis 1:27)

Fables Degrading Human Life

by
Terry L. Mabery

© 2011



*International Bible Studies
Tract Series*