

Abortion and Environmental Health

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” Genesis 1.1. God created this wonderful earth full of beauty and mystery out of his love for us. He entrusted this amazing gift into our hands, but we have not kept proper care of this gift. There is no doubt that humanity across the ages, and more so in our hyper industrialized economically driven societies, have damaged this world of wonder we call earth, our environment, our living planet. Pollution is what we commonly call the contaminant which human produce that deteriorates our environment in either its beauty, quality and capacity as part of our environmental balance for sustaining a healthy ecosystem, a naturally life sustaining mechanism.

Scientists estimate an average of 137 species of life forms become extinct every day due to pollution and lack of clean water ¹. Many of these species are marine creatures which expire from the lack of oxygen in the water. Water pollution does not only kill marine life, it is also a leading cause of death in the world. More than 14,000 people die daily due to water polluted related illnesses ². Water pollution is caused from a mixture of contaminants from human garbage to industrial accidents that release pollutants to water ways, whether by contaminating underground water tables to water conduits which release waste to lakes, streams and oceans that directly affect our sources for wood and other essential natural resources man need for sustenance³.

While humans may have an impact on our environment, some special interest groups have taken a radical position that trumps the value of human life over the environment. These groups argue that in order to save our environment from contaminants, populations must be controlled by the use of birth control and abortion. The debate of whether controlling population through artificial and destructive means such as abortion and birth control is fair, reasonable or safe for the environment is completely sidestepped by these environmental groups. Abortion is a rational obstacle on its own. The thought of killing an innocent child is morally wrong no matter how or when it is done. Whether the child is born or still in the womb it is still wrong to kill a human life.

The question is not simply whether abortion or artificial birth control is wrong; the question should be whether our culture should allow such radical change so easily. The thought that the value of a human life is less than the value of our environment is a big shift in thought. Can we really change our train of

thought so drastically and still call ourselves civilized? I am not saying that environmental responsibility is not important or that environmental problems don't exist because they do matter and exist. We have not been good stewards of God's wonderful gift of nature which sustains us with nourishment. Nevertheless we can never put the earth before the most precious and wonderful gift of life.

Allow us to close with a couple of passages from our Holy Father's last encyclical, CARITAS IN VERITATE, from CHAPTER FOUR, THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE, RIGHTS AND DUTIES, THE ENVIRONMENT, within the first two paragraphs of this you can find these enlightening comments. These are comments that capture the essence of the problem and solution to the debate over pollution being the major cause of pollution and environmental disasters.

44. The notion of rights and duties in development must also take account of the problems associated with population growth. This is a very important aspect of authentic development, since it concerns the inalienable values of life and the family. To consider population increase as the primary cause of underdevelopment is mistaken, even from an economic point of view. Suffice it to consider, on the one hand, the significant reduction in infant mortality and the rise in average life expectancy found in economically developed countries, and on the other hand, the signs of crisis observable in societies that are registering an alarming decline in their birth rate. Due attention must obviously be given to responsible procreation, which among other things has a positive contribution to make to integral human development...

Morally responsible openness to life represents a rich social and economic resource. Populous nations have been able to emerge from poverty thanks not least to the size of their population and the talents of their people. On the other hand, formerly prosperous nations are presently passing through a phase of uncertainty and in some cases decline, precisely because of their falling birth rates; this has become a crucial problem for highly affluent societies. The decline in births, falling at times beneath the so-called "replacement level", also puts a strain on social welfare systems, increases their cost, eats into savings and hence the financial resources needed for investment, reduces the availability of qualified labourers, and narrows the "brain pool" upon which nations can draw for their needs.

1 <http://www.rain-tree.com/facts.htm>

2 <http://www.Wikipedia.org/>

3 <http://ezinearticles.com>