

A Civilization Dying

By Ronald L. Dart

Is it morally permissible to kill an infant during, say, the first 48 hours after it is born? For most people, the answer comes quickly—no, absolutely not. But if you were to ask this question of someone who believes in abortion rights, you may get a surprise. They may not say yes, but may avoid the question.

Peter Singer, a Professor of Bioethics at Princeton, seems to say that it is quite permissible in certain circumstances. On his own *Frequently Asked Questions* web site, the question was put straight to him: “You have been quoted as saying: ‘Killing a defective infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Sometimes it is not wrong at all.’ Is that quote accurate?”

His answer: “It is accurate, but can be misleading if read without an understanding of what I mean by the term person (which is discussed in *Practical Ethics*, from which that quotation is taken). I use the term ‘person’ to refer to a being who is capable of anticipating the future, of having wants and desires for the future.”

Defining a Person

This answer serves as a useful illustration of a common fallacy.

Singer builds his entire argument on a special definition of the word “person.” Keep this in mind as you read, because it underpins the whole debate.

“As I have said in answer to the previous question, I think that it is generally a greater wrong to kill such a being [a person] than it is to kill a being that has no sense of existing over time. Newborn human babies have no sense of their own existence over time. So killing a newborn baby is never equivalent to killing a person, that is, a being who wants to go on living. That doesn’t mean that it is not almost always a terrible thing to do. It is, but that is because most infants are loved and cherished by their parents, and to kill an infant is

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A Civilization Dying	1
Double or Triple Your Donations	1
With Gratitude	2
Broken Vessels of Clay	2
Solomon and Harry Markowitz	2

usually to do a great wrong to its parents” [emphasis mine].

It is easy to miss the implications of this statement. The word “usually” is obvious, but he speaks of doing great wrong, not to the infant, but to the parents. He has defined the infant as a nonperson and therefore it cannot be wronged. The argument turns the infant into an object that, if inconvenient, we can dispose of. As for his idea that “newborn human babies have no sense of their own existence over time,” newborns, and babies in the

continued on page 3. . .

Double or Triple Your Donations. . .

Many employers offer matching gift programs. These programs match any charitable contributions made by their employees and sometimes, even gifts made by retirees and/or spouses. All you have to do is to check with the company for which you work to see if it is eligible and what it affords you. If the company for which you work is eligible, request a matching gift form, complete and sign it, and include it with your gifts. What this could mean is doubling or possibly tripling your gifts to *Born to Win* and CEM.

With Gratitude

By Janee Zaydon

The contagious smiles of the 2008 Feast ushers welcomed everyone to the morning worship service. We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to each of them. Their warmth and friendliness added so much to the joyous atmosphere of the Feast. We would also like to give special thanks to the younger ushers, who pitched in and helped collect and organize the hymnals. Their enthusiasm to serve was inspiring to all.



Ushering Team: Debbie Clark, Ralph Collins, Jenee Zaydon, Richard Masek, Kristy Holmes, Josh Mitchell, Kelly Ivie, Heather Holmes, Glenn Holladay, Jim Cookman, James Truan (not pictured)

Broken Vessels of Clay

By Lenny Cacchio

Jimmy paid me an unexpected visit one day. Inviting himself into my office, he sat down and we began to talk. I had been going through one of my periodic episodes of frustration with clients and the job in general, and he sensed it.

He gave me this advice: When someone calls you, treat them as if God told them to call.

His point: God has placed you in a position of trust. If someone calls you, it's because God knows you can help that person. You should be honored by that. God trusts you enough to send someone to you that you can help.

I confess to not ever considering that possibility. God sends us on divine appointments. Although it's true that he could solve every irritation and irrationality in the world simply by pushing magic

continued on page 4. . .

Solomon and Harry Markowitz

By Lennie Cacchio

One day in 1952, a guy named Harry Markowitz had a flash of brilliance. Markowitz was an economist who noticed that not all investments move in the same direction at the same time. For example, stocks, bonds, real estate, commodities, money markets, and foreign investments all tend to have their own risk/return characteristics and don't always move up and down in tandem.

By applying statistical measures to each investment's risk/return characteristics, Markowitz was

able to determine correlation or lack thereof of various classes of assets. Because some types of investments zig while others zag (that is, they have low or negative correlation), mixing together a broadly diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, commodities, real estate, and other asset classes can reduce the volatility of a portfolio without impeding returns.

Markowitz's work earned him a Nobel Prize in economics in 1970. His studies underlie Modern Portfolio Theory, which is the basis

for most investing going on today.

So why are we addressing Harry Markowitz and Modern Portfolio Theory in a column dedicated to matters of faith?

First, anyone who invests today is doing so as a matter of faith. No one knows what will happen tomorrow, but by investing in stocks or whatever, you are showing faith that the value of that asset will go up. If you invest according to Modern Portfolio Theory, you have faith that it will

continued on page 4. . .

*A Civilization Dying
continued from page 1 . . .*

womb, know if they are falling and that falling is not a good thing. They arch their backs and thrust out their arms. They learn fairly quickly to trust their parents, and the behavior changes.

Professor Singer does not recommend terminating a normal baby. He is assuming that the baby has a serious disability, and that the parents think that their newborn infant should die. “Many doctors will accept their wishes, to the extent of not giving the baby life-supporting medical treatment. That will often ensure that the baby dies.”

I’ll have to confess that I did not realize that this was an accepted practice in some places. The issue came to the fore during the 2008 presidential campaign when it was said that then Senator Obama was opposed to a law in Illinois that would stop the practice. In the case of an infant that survived a late term abortion, should the baby be allowed to die, or should it receive all reasonable medical care?

Professor Singer went on to say, “My view is different from this, only to the extent that if a decision is taken, by the parents and doctors, that it is better that a baby should die. I believe it should be possible to carry out that decision, not only by withholding or withdrawing life-support—which can lead to the baby dying slowly from dehydration or from an infection—but also by taking active steps to end the baby’s life swiftly and humanely.”

Which is, of course, euthanasia. He would put the baby down like you might an old and faithful dog. In fairness to Peter Singer, I think he is talking about babies so severely handicapped that they are unlikely to survive in any case. But many have taken this to include Down syndrome and a host of other deformities such as cleft palette.

What you need to know about Singer is that he is a philosopher and, thus, can be safely ignored. This is true of most high ranking types in academe. Their jobs do not seem very connected to the real world. Nothing at all lies behind their opinions except a line of reasoning. One critic complained that these folks make it up as they go along, but that is not entirely fair. They think it through as they go along, and sometimes the error in a line of thought does not become apparent to them until much later.

Singer, for example, has changed his mind on some issues he has raised. The problem is that, once a book is in print, it can go on misleading people indefinitely. Philosophers may not concern us, but those who attempt to apply those ideas in politics, law, and real life should concern us. Because, in fact, very few of those have ever seriously considered the impact of these ideas on real people. There is a superficial appearance of common sense connected to the arguments, and I can see this or that senator buying into the theory.

Do Babies Have Wants and Desires?

What if Peter Singer is wrong when he says: “I use the term ‘person’ to refer to a being who is capable of anticipating the future, of having

wants and desires for the future.” How do we know that an infant, at some level, has no wants and desires for the future? Does the little fellow want to be fed? Does he want to be warm? Does he want to be free of pain and discomfort? Does he fear falling? The fetus can feel pain and respond to it in the womb.

What if our definition of “person” changes to one who is capable of coming to anticipate the future? What if our definition says that a person is one who is alive, carries human DNA, and has an identity. For we know that is true—a fetus has a human identity from the time it is an embryo. Everything that will make him who he is encoded in every cell of his body.

Sarah Palin’s Down Syndrome Baby

I can’t help wondering if some of the vitriol aimed at Governor Sarah Palin grew out of fear and loathing of a woman who would knowingly bring a Down syndrome child into the world.

Space doesn’t permit the full development of the theme, but I have in a new program titled, *A Civilization Dying*. In the process of terminating some 45 million babies, we may have started the process of killing our own civilization. I would like to send you a *FREE* CD of this program right away, because it may not air for some weeks. Just check the box on the enclosed card and send it back to us. We have enclosed an envelope for your convenience.

Keep in touch, because we live in perilous times and God only knows how all this will play out.

*Solomon and Harry Markowitz
continued from page 2 . . .*

reduce the risk on your investments without jeopardizing returns. If you think about it, money itself is based on faith. Your dollar is backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government. (This is not meant to scare you.) You have faith that the clerk at the grocery store will accept your dollars for milk and eggs. Simply put, much of the financial system is built on your faith in the willingness and ability of others to honor obligations.

The slogan “In God We Trust” on our currency and coinage is a nice sentiment, but if we were being honest, it would instead read “In THIS God We Trust.” Money does seem to be what many people look to for their security and support, and the things money can buy are too often the source for status and identity. It is in money that people often place their faith. Surely our consumer-driven culture has misplaced its faith, for God should be the source of our security, support, status, and identity. Misplaced faith crashes and burns in the end, and wealth surely won’t transfer to eternity.

Having said this, money in itself is not a bad thing. It’s a wonderful tool to facilitate the flow of goods and services. It can do much good, or it can do much evil, depending on how it is used. That’s why the Bible is loaded with financial advice, including advice on investing.

There is this verse from Ecclesiastes: “Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for

you do not know what disaster may come upon the land” (11:1-2 NIV). Markowitz would agree with Solomon. Divide your portion among seven or eight different asset types because you don’t know what disaster awaits the world of investments.

During times of financial turmoil (and many would agree that we’re there right now), it’s easy to wrap the world in a neat prophetic end-time package. Just in my lifetime, there have been a half dozen market crashes, a Cuban Missile Crisis, endless Middle East wars, three energy crises—two of which sported gas lines stretching around the block, the destruction of the Twin Towers, 19.5% mortgages, double digit inflation and unemployment, political assassinations, race riots in our cities’ streets, presidential impeachments, and a dozen other end-time tumults that I can’t even remember. Each one of these had its accompanying prophets of doom proclaiming the riding of the Four Horsemen. But we’re still here and still patiently awaiting the return of our Savior, and I think he would have us at our posts doing our jobs instead of retreating into a spiritual cocoon at the first sign of discomfort. Even he doesn’t know when he’ll return, but the Father only.

Which brings us back to Ecclesiastes and Harry Markowitz. Ecclesiastes 11:4-6: “Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the path of the wind or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. Sow

your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well” (NIV).

Things might be a bit unsettled now, and maybe this time is The Time. But we have no way of knowing for sure. I would rather be planting, sowing, and taking care of responsibilities than be paralyzed by fear for the umpteenth time in 50 years. I want the Lord to find me “so doing.” If I’m wrong, it won’t matter. If I’m right, it will matter a lot.

*Broken Vessels of Clay
continued from page 2 . . .*

buttons near his heavenly throne, instead he’ll often work through his broken vessels of clay.

The fact is, much of the work that God does he does through such broken vessels. He wants us to get in the game and not in the bleacher seats. We are to preach the Gospel to all the world. We’re to be lights and salt. We’re to love our neighbors and do good to our enemies.

I have come to believe down to my toes that God really does intersect our lives every day and sends us people he wants us to help.

*Christian Educational
Ministries*

PO Box 560
Whitehouse, Texas 75791
phone: 1.888.BIBLE.44
fax: 903.839.9311
email: adm@borntowin.net
website: www.borntowin.net

*That the man of God may be proficient
and equipped for every good work.*