

Abortion and the Death Penalty

I was listening to a talk radio show recently, when a caller pointed out that the people who are in favor of the death penalty are the same people who oppose abortion. He felt it was hypocrisy, and the host, who was pro-choice and anti-death penalty, angrily agreed.

I thought about it for a moment, and I wondered why these claims are always argued in one direction. True, many people who oppose abortion also favor the death penalty. But there are also many people who favor keeping abortions legal, but are against the death penalty because it takes a human life. Why aren't they considered hypocrites?

A criminal facing the death penalty is certainly a human being. Society chooses to end that life because of the heinous nature of the crime committed. In other words, it was the perpetrator's actions that led to his or her death.

But the pro-life advocates believe that the fetus is also a human being. What heinous crime did that fetus ever commit to have their life ended? Of course, a pro-choice advocate will argue that the fetus is not human life, and that pro-lifers are imposing their concept of when life begins on the woman.

But that brings up another political cliché. Minutes later, on that same talk show another caller chimed in that the people who are against abortion also oppose prenatal care.

I worked for politicians for a number of years, and have also followed politics for decades. Between every politician I knew or whose career I followed, and every member of my extended family, I could not come up with one person who opposed prenatal care for expected mothers.

Now, in a country with over 300 million people there is no question that some hold this view. It is also a fact that roughly ten percent of the public believes that Elvis is still alive – only slightly higher than the percentage of people who believe Mount Rushmore is a natural rock formation.

However, once again, we must ask about hypocrisy in the other direction. Why would anyone who claims that a fetus is non-human life (and in fact, not alive in any way) want prenatal care funding for the fetus? True, they may support it for the sake of the mother, but they always mention the health of the baby in their arguments.

Trying to understand this convoluted logic is a challenge. When the

argument is about prenatal funding, the fetus is not only something special that should be respected, but also a cherished life that deserves medical attention funded with taxpayer money. However, when the argument is about abortion, and the right of the mother to choose, incredibly, the fetus is no longer alive. Instead, it is regarded as a blob of useless, lifeless tissue that can be discarded.

So ask yourself some questions.

Why is the public horrified when an abortion provider, like Philadelphia's Dr. Gosnell, commits atrocities on fetuses? And why shouldn't we allow experimentation on fetuses? After all, abortion-rights supporters claim it is non-human, like an appendix or a gall bladder. Could it be because even they believe that there is something more to a fetus – that it is either some type of life or potential human life that deserves respect?

Why is it considered a double murder when a pregnant woman is murdered?

Why are people so appalled when a newly born fetus is found discarded in a dumpster? Is it simply because they are anti-litter environmentalists, and the fetus was not disposed of properly?

The pro-life, pro-death penalty advocates acknowledge that both the fetus and the death row inmate are human. However, they believe that the death row inmate did something to forfeit his or her life.

The pro-choice, anti-death penalty advocates also believe that the death row inmate is human, but that we do not have the right to end the life of another human being. However, their view of the fetus changes to fit the situation. Sometimes the fetus is a cherished, precious, human life. Other times, it is non-human and can be tossed away.

Incidentally, how do people who claim they are pro-science come to grips with this biological inconsistency? Why are the critical questions of "what is life?" and "when does life begin?" left to each individual to decide, and not the scientific community? Are these decisions based on emotion or are they based on science?

Who is being consistent here? And who is engaging in hypocrisy?

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