

*Aurem Cordis™*

“By Your Word Give Me Life”:  
Abortion and the Black Community

Irvington Covenant Church Worship Center

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In the Book of Genesis, God said, "'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' . . . So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."<sup>1</sup> Throughout history human sin has been and continues to be a major obstacle to achieving true human freedom lived in God's image and likeness. The effect of sin through time is revealed in the experiences and attitudes of a so-called "enlightened" culture, which manipulates truth and misuses freedom to such an extent that objective truth has now become subjective and authentic freedom relative, both looking inward toward the self and away from the Creator. When juxtaposed with the culture's arrogant dismissal of God's law that is written on our hearts, the cumulative effect of sin obscures the vision of God in each other. As a consequence, some of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God has disappeared. "So often we try to deny this fact. . . . 'We are like sheep that have gone astray'"<sup>2</sup>

Never was this truer in American history than during the turbulent civil war era. In 1857, the Supreme Court, in the case of *Dred Scott vs. John F. Sanford*, ruled that black people were property and not human beings. Chief Justice Taney, in his majority opinion, wrote: "[Slaves] had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political

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<sup>1</sup>Genesis 1:26-27.

<sup>2</sup>Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Measure of a Man* (Philadelphia: The Christian Education Press, 1959), 10, 12.

relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights that the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit." He continues, "A perpetual and impassable barrier was intended to be erected between the white race and the one which they had reduced to slavery . . . and which they then looked upon as so far below them in the scale of created beings, that intermarriages between white persons and Negroes were regarded as unnatural and immoral, and punished as crimes." After citing the section of the Declaration of Independence that says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights . . .", Chief Justice Taney adds insult to injury by stating: "It is too clear for dispute that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included . . . The unhappy black race were separated from the white by indelible marks . . . and were never thought of or spoken of except as property."<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, racism and prejudice did not end with the Civil War. "Many Americans – black and white – are unaware of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger's Negro Project. Sanger created this program in 1939, with the aim to restrict – many believe exterminate – the black population.

"Eugenicists strongly espoused racial supremacy and 'purity,' particularly of the 'Aryan' race. Eugenicists hoped to purify the bloodlines

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<sup>3</sup>All excerpts from "Dred Scott Case, The Opinion of the Court: Mr. Chief Justice Taney". Internet, "From the Revolution to Reconstruction" website, <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1851-1875/dredscott/dred3.htm>. Accessed 7 July 2003.

and improve the race by encouraging the 'fit' to reproduce and the 'unfit' to restrict their reproduction. They sought to contain the 'inferior' races through segregation, sterilization, birth control and abortion. Sanger suggested the answer to poverty and degradation lay in smaller numbers of blacks. [Sanger] built the work of Planned Parenthood on the ideas and resources of the eugenics movement under the pretense of 'better health' and 'family planning'.

"Sanger charmed the black community's most distinguished [civil and religious] leaders into accepting her plan, which was designed to their own detriment. No one could deny the benefits of better health, being financially ready to raise children, or spacing one's children. However, the solution to the real issues affecting blacks did not lay in reducing their numbers [but] in attacking the forces in society that hindered their progress.

"Sanger knew blacks were a religious people – and how useful ministers would be to her project. She wrote in [a letter regarding the Negro Project that], 'the minister's work is also important and he should be trained . . . as to our ideals and the goal that we hope to reach. **We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population,** and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.'"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> All excerpts from Tanya L. Green, "The Negro Project: Margaret Sanger's Eugenic Plan for Black Americans". Internet. <http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=1466&department=cwa&categoryid=life>. Accessed 1 May 2007.

The so-called “education” mission of Planned Parenthood extended to all areas of black life and culture. One of Sanger’s supporters, Dr. Dorothy Ferebee, gave a talk in which she said, “‘The future program [of Planned Parenthood] should center around more education in the field through the work of a professional Negro worker, **because those of us who believe that the benefits of Planned Parenthood as a vital key to the elimination of human waste must reach the entire population.**’ She peppered her speech with the importance of ‘Negro professionals, fully integrated into the [Planned Parenthood] staff, ... who could interpret the program and objectives to [other blacks] in the normal course of day-to-day contacts; could break down fallacious attitudes and beliefs and elements of distrust; could inspire the confidence of the group; **and would not be suspect of the intent to eliminate the race.**’

“It is impossible to sever Planned Parenthood's past from its present. Its legacy of lies and propoganda continues to infiltrate the black community.” Their operations are a nothing more than a “calculated, pernicious effort to destroy the very fabric of family life [between] black parents and their children. Having sprung from the racist dreams of a woman determined to apply abortion and contraception to eugenics and ethnic cleansing, Planned Parenthood remains true to the same strategy today.”<sup>5</sup>

Planned Parenthood promotes a culture where children are viewed as and treated like diseases that need to be eliminated. If you think this is

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<sup>5</sup>ibid.

an exaggeration, consider the views of Princeton University professor and modern day eugenicist Peter Singer, who New Yorker magazine calls the "most influential" philosopher alive.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Singer states that it would be ethically OK to kill one-year old children with physical or mental disabilities, although ideally the question of killing these children would be raised as soon as possible after birth.<sup>7</sup> This from a man who, according to the New England Journal of Medicine, has had more success in effecting changes in acceptable behavior than any philosopher in the last century.<sup>8</sup> "Singer's arguments have resurrected the troubling tradition of support for eugenic programs, the tradition of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger. This tradition is an attempt to . . . create an 'improved', 'healthy' race, cleansed of **deficiencies and deformities**"<sup>9</sup> in which they include African Americans.

"No human being has the right to decide who shall live and who shall die. The right to life is not something that is given to human beings by a government, judicial body, parent, or institution of any kind. The right to life is the most basic and fundamental right that exists by the very nature of a human person's being. We must not weigh human suffering on the one hand with the value of human life on the other, and determine that some

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<sup>6</sup>Marvin Olasky, "The Most Influential Philosopher Alive," Internet. [www.townhall.com/columnists/marvinolasky/printmo20041202.shtml](http://www.townhall.com/columnists/marvinolasky/printmo20041202.shtml). Accessed 18 December 2004.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Institute for Social Ecology, "Peter Singer and Eugenics." Internet. <http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031202122825648>. Accessed 10 May 2007.

shall live and some shall die because of the amount of suffering we perceive they might endure or that they may inflict on others. We exist not to avoid suffering, but to find meaning in the suffering that is unavoidable. Killing human beings can never be an answer to suffering, no matter how great that suffering may be. A truly compassionate response to a woman who has found out that she is pregnant is not to kill the baby growing inside of her, but to create a society that welcomes and cares for both mother and child. We must strive for a society that values all human life, and does not seek the easy way out through the destruction of [innocent] life."<sup>10</sup>

The freedom to love is not rooted in "choice," but in the obedience of faith: it is listening to the voice of God and allowing that voice to change our lives. The gift of ourselves in complete love to the Father--the gift of our hearts, minds and bodies, our hopes and fears, our desires and dreams, means that we must trust God; that we must allow ourselves to become vulnerable before the God who made us. No matter who we are "we must commit ourselves to do something to champion the rights of the common good and the dignity of all persons within our culture."<sup>11</sup>

In the black community, the challenges are two-fold: material (substance abuse, violent crime, absent fathers and the disintegration of family life) and spiritual (moral relativism, sexual promiscuity, and

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<sup>10</sup>Natalie Hudson, excerpt from a debate with Joyce Arthur on the issue of "Genetic Terminations" in the Center for Life Principles' *Life Compass*, March/April 2003, p.4.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., in the Center for Life Principles' *Life Compass*, March/April 2003, p.3.

subjective truth). Both the material and spiritual influences represent serious affronts to the convictions of people of faith.

In the face of these challenges, combating the tangled web of systemic racism cannot be the sole response since racism cannot answer the deeper, more serious questions that African Americans need to ask: Where are our husbands and fathers? Are we so preoccupied with getting drunk or high, or so obsessed with material wealth that we cannot notice what is happening to our children, to our future? Why have street gangs replaced families? Are we as so busy watching pornography or sleeping around that we have become completely oblivious to the fact we are treating each other as "things" and objects, and not as equal persons made in the image and likeness of God? Do we even care? To answer these questions we must not simply look outward at the culture in order to accuse and blame. We must also take a serious look *inward*: we must examine ourselves, rediscover the beauty and truth of our heritage, and renew our commitment to live our faith in God with courage, fidelity and enthusiasm!

The most critical issue that blacks face today is also the principal threat to our existence: abortion. "Historically, children were always welcomed in African American families, no matter the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy. Tragically, that tradition is changing before our very eyes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that Black women are about twelve percent of the female population, but

account for thirty-five percent of all abortions."<sup>12</sup> According to census data for the year 2000, abortion has eliminated between fourteen and fifteen million of black Americans since 1973, a total equal to the combined population of eight mid-western states. "Abortion is shrinking our churches, schools, communities and congressional districts, as well as our future."<sup>13</sup>

As a people, African Americans do a great job raising awareness around issues such as poverty, affirmative action, racism and civil rights, but if we continue to kill ourselves through this egregious abuse of our freedom, there will not be enough of us around for anyone to notice. When we allow abortion, we actually assist in and encourage the elimination of our race, something that hate groups could not accomplish for decades in this country.<sup>14</sup> For the African American community, abortion is not about opinion or choice: it's a matter of life and death.

In order to combat the scourge of Planned Parenthood, we must rediscover and build upon the solid foundation of faith; a faith that forms the heart and soul of our spiritual identity as African Americans.

"Inasmuch as all people are called to a life of holiness, we as black . . . must seek to pray and work in the spirit of our ancestors in the Faith."<sup>15</sup> Black men must rise-up -- even in the face of discrimination and rejection -- and

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<sup>12</sup>Michelle Williams, "Abortion and the Black Community."

<sup>13</sup>Gloria Purvis, "What Will It Take to Respect Life in the Black Community?"

<sup>14</sup>cf. Purvis.

<sup>15</sup>NBCC Congress IX, *Spirituality* Principle.

take the lead in meeting these challenges head-on, armed with the sword of genuine love in one hand and the shield of objective truth in the other. We "must rediscover the spirit of family life [rooted in our spiritual and cultural heritage], which refuses to be destroyed in the face of even the most oppressive forces" affecting society.<sup>16</sup> In the face of these challenges, we must protect and defend the dignity of marriage and family life. We must develop a spirituality within marriage that witnesses to the truth that God is love, and that He calls all husbands, wives and children to live in intimate, personal and loving communion with Him. Black men must take a more active role in defending the rights of families and in teaching by example "the obligations and responsibilities [of the family] which lead to the fullness of joy and life."<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The Negro cannot win as long as he is willing to sacrifice the lives of his children for comfort and safety."<sup>18</sup> In our battle to preserve and defend the rights of all human beings to exist, let us arm ourselves with the weapons of strength, love, and wisdom in the Spirit. Our strength, which comes from God, is rooted in love and gives us the faith and courage to bear the hardships of life. None of us enjoys suffering but we cannot sit idly by and do nothing as others suffer and die all around us. In this busy world that numbs us and lulls us into

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<sup>16</sup>Pope John Paul II, *Meeting with the Black Catholics of New Orleans*, no.4

<sup>17</sup>Pope John Paul II, *Meeting with the Black Catholics of New Orleans*, no.4

<sup>18</sup>Dr. Alveda C. King, "How Can the Dream Survive?" Internet.  
<http://www.priestsforlife.org/africanamerican/howcandreamsurvive.htm>. Accessed 10 May 2007.

complacency, it's good for us to be shocked by what we see: to stand still and take a long, hard look at what Planned Parenthood is truly saying to us.

While looking directly into the face of a culture of death, it's not easy stand-up for and respect the gift of life given to us by God. Yet, as people of faith, we must not be afraid to make the truth revealed to us by God known to all in the black community: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you . . . For it was you who created my being, knit me together in my mother's womb . . . Already you knew my soul, my body held no secret from you when I was being fashioned in secret . . . Every one of my days was decreed before one of them came into being."<sup>19</sup> We must not be afraid to speak the truth in love, the most basic of truths being that "human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person--among which is the sacred right of every innocent being to life."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139.

<sup>20</sup>CCC no. 2270.