

## Abortion: We Dare Not Remain Silent!

Abortion is a greater moral and pressing issue than any other which Canadian society is currently facing. The loss of literally hundreds of thousands of infants through human-induced miscarriages (or worse) is tragic and shameful. But abortion does not only terminate human life, it also influences related life-and-death issues such as euthanasia, assisted suicide, cloning, and stem and fetal tissue research. The legalization of abortion also reflects the profoundly self-centered and self-absorbed world view so many people appear to hold. The urge for self-preservation, self-determination, the right to decide what to do with one's own body, and "moral relativism" are now "absolute" norms.

One of Canada's most astute observers of Canada's moral decline and a vehement opponent of abortion was George Parkin Grant (1918-1988). He was a rare specimen in the academic world. He was a Christian philosopher of stature: a Christian who thought, acted, spoke, and wrote like one. On the basis of his first-hand observation of students, Grant noted that many young people came from well-defined moral backgrounds but at secular universities were taught that a person – wise in natural or social science – is educated when he is a skeptic about moral questions. He commented that from our earliest youth we were told by psychiatrists and their publicists that belief in absolute standards is positively unhealthy. He traced the gradual destruction of Canada's moral consensus to liberalism. He wrote that liberalism believes what matters is that people will be able to do what they want, when they want. Liberalism says, "The human good is what we choose for our good ... Tastes are different, and we should have a society that caters to the plurality of tastes." Accordingly, liberalism implies that moral standards cannot be imposed on others.

Grant didn't get actively involved in the abortion debate until 1973, after the decision of the American Supreme Court in *Roe vs. Wade* had effectively repealed all existing legislation prohibiting abortion. Grant's wife, Sheila, was appalled and, fearful of similar developments in Canada, began to participate in the Right to Life movement. His wife helped him "to see that the abortion issue was very fundamental." He argued that human beings are equal as souls before God, and the fetus too is a human being: "Pregnant women do not give birth to cats." In *Technology and Justice* (1986) Grant wrote, "Obviously the justice of a society is well defined in terms of how it treats the weak. And there is nothing human which is weaker than the fetus." The 1988 Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion filled him with anger. He denounced the decision on the CBC. "It fills me," he said, "with sadness at what lies ahead for our country – an increase in the mass killing of the weakest members of our species."

In the beginning of his career Grant was the "darling of the New Left," although they deplored his Christianity. This mood changed when he began publicly supporting the pro-life movement. He declared that the New Democratic Party was absolutely out for him because of their stance on abortion and his dislike of their "utopian politics." He believed the core issue is the fact that most abortions are sought by women, not

because their lives are in jeopardy, but because it is inconvenient to carry the pregnancy to term. He was convinced that the legalization of abortion with all its catastrophic consequences will eventually lead to tyranny: "If tyranny is to come in North America, it will come cozily and on cat's feet. It will come with the denial of the rights of the unborn and of the aged, the denial of the rights of the mentally retarded, the insane and the economically less privileged. In fact, it will come with the denial of rights to all those who cannot defend themselves. It will come in the name of the cost-benefit analysis of human life." Grant's analysis of the abortion issue and his warnings should encourage us to be politically active and to support the pro-life movement. We dare not remain silent.

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