Value Of Human Life Essay, Research Paper

The beliefs and views of modern society are hypocritical and unjust. By the time an individual matures from a young child to an adult, they have been taught an uncountable number of life lessons. One of the outstanding lessons that each and every person has learned is that killing another human being is wrong. This is perhaps the first recognizable lesson on the value of human life. Most children know that killing is against the law and learn religiously that it goes against all religious morals and beliefs, yet society is bombarded by violence everyday in the media and in real life. Today, the value of human life can be questioned, especially that of the young. Through numerous examples of child murder and abortion it is rather obvious that the lives of the unborn or newly born are not valued to the degree that they should be. In most cases, the young are not recognized as "people" and are robbed of their human rights and freedoms. Young lives, both born and unborn, are seen as more of a commodity these days, than as precious, magical miracles.

In the media today there are ridiculous numbers of reports pertaining to accidents, shootings and robberies-these are just a few examples of unjust acts that are occurring everyday. There is also a shocking amount of coverage about parents accidentally, or on the other hand, brutally murdering their kids. Parents are supposed to be loving and supporting caregivers, they have a great influence over everything a child can possibly say or do. It is hard to believe that some parents would actually take their children?s lives into their hands. Recently in the news there have been accounts of a mother poisoning her son to a father taking a knife and slashing his son?s throat. These are all cases where the parent in charge has taken advantage of their control. Each helpless child is defenseless in these situations. In many cases, children have become victims of a parent?s mental instability. In one case a mother claims to have been "suffering form delusions about hell when she took the life of her twenty month old child." In the end this woman was found not criminally responsible because "she had apparently been suffering from psychosis the day of the drowning." She was then committed to a psychiatric hospital. This seems to be common place today, and there is no justice done for the young slain victims. Another account of a mother murdering her children is that of Diana Yano who "has only a patchy memory of the afternoon she ran the bath water and drowned her two children" to "send them to a watery grave". She too was found "not criminally responsible?because of a mental illness-triggered by a serious bout with breast cancer-that made hr believe her children were better off dead". The father that slit his son?s throat suffered from a "manic depressive illness?Mr. Meehan was legally insane". He also had four breakdowns which his ex-wife was aware of before she left her children with him that horrible night. She also recalls "?the evil look that came into his eyes when he went off his medication". Were any of the relatives of the deceased; that knew of these mental states, at all concerned with the safety of these children? This could be thought of as a disregard for the children and their well being or as just a lack of respect. Any individual old enough to have a kid understands that babies are helpless, totally without control of their surroundings because they do not have the mental capability or life experience to understand most things.

In a different situation, a single, young mother; still attending high school is charged with manslaughter and criminal negligence after her ten month old son died of a drug overdose. An autopsy revealed that " the codeine level was sufficient to kill?morphine was also in the baby?s blood, but the amount fell within therapeutic range". There had been testifies stating that the mother " was prescribed a bottle of liquid codeine weeks before her son?s death". Her charges were dropped from second-degree murder because she had taken good care of her son, he was well-groomed and well-nourished before his death. Does this justify her reasoning for having her son ingest her prescribed medication? If she had taken such good care of her son before his death and she accidentally had given him her medication she would have taken him to the hospital or called a doctor had she been concerned with his health. She willingly gave enough codeine to her son to kill him and for some reason, given him morphine too. The life of this baby was cut short, knowingly by his own mother. This does not display value of young human life.

Along with cases of young children, there have also been those involving disabled children who are not valued as people. A mother in Kitchener, Ontario was "charged with stabbing to death her mentally handicapped daughter". In this case, the parent has no ?excuses? to help bail her out of the consequences. Rather disturbing was the headline that accompanied this article; "Mother accused of killing child called a great parent" because she was "supportive, actively involved in the school". The principle of the small school that eleven year old Ashley attended was quoted as saying "Ashley was tremendously well-liked. Everyone wanted to be Ashley?s buddy, they gravitated toward her." Why couldn?t her mother have given her that same attention? Ashley had down syndrome, an inherited genetic condition that can produce mental handicaps along with facial, speech and other defects. At the time of this article, investigation was still taking place "to figure out a motive". Ashley, despite her age and handicap, was still a person. An article of different nature clarified.

This article dealt with the way children are treated. "Children in Canada with disabilities are not guaranteed basic educational and social services". This article also stated that "Canadian legislation does not specifically recognize the rights of children. Sadly, this means "adults can place arbitrary limits of children?s fundamental freedoms". Children are not seen as equal individuals. Senator Landon Pearson, founding chairwoman of the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) does not agree with these views. She thinks that "putting children in legislation matters because it makes people understand that were talking about human beings with rights". If children aren?t seen by law as human beings with rights, how can they be treated otherwise. If children are murdered, they don?t really matter because they are not seen as real people. The article brings up interesting information regarding the repeal of Section 43 of the criminal code which actually "allows ?reasonable force? to be used by parents and teachers meting out discipline". It turns out this provision has been used to justify a child being punched in the face or pushed down the stairs. One fact that this article admits is "in Canada, children are the only category of persons who can be subject to physical assault without due process". This does not signify a land of the free, these issues are serious and require immediate attention. In the future there hopes to be human rights for children, but for so many children it is already too late.

Abortion is another serious matter that deals with the rights of children. It has become a question not only of ethics, but morals. The courts have ruled that a woman has the right to terminate a pregnancy by abortion in the first trimester. Over years, there have been numerous restrictions on abortions. As a society it was thought that Canadian?s were well informed about abortion. The booklet " Abortion in Canada" notes that many people thought that if abortion was offered there would be better sexual morality, "but instead we have tremendous numbers of teenage pregnancies". There have also been sexual education courses that "deny a moral code and encourage a hedonistic lifestyle". Abortion is presented as " a back-up to contraceptive failure in this ?do your own thing? lifestyle". It was thought that legal abortions would do away with illegal dangerous ones but, it turns out that they have increased rather than decreased. Throughout this booklet, it is displayed that abortion has brought about a "cheapening of human life". This disrespect for the unborn has brought about two other impacts on society.

The first is infanticide, "the killing of a newborn by active or passive means because he is considered to have a life not worth living". What started out as a woman?s right became a selfish, yet legal, right to a dead baby. As much as a woman has the right to a dead baby, does she not have the right to a dead baby outside the womb as well as inside the womb? Apparently she does. This does not show any regard for human life. Medical journals published in the United States carry clear indications that "doctors are practicing infanticide, and yet the law has?turned it?s back. Infanticide in reality is homicide". Infanticide is the killing of innocent human beings. The second effect is the practice of euthanasia or so-called ?mercy killing?. This is the "termination of a life of a dependent individual allegedly for his own benefit". Clearly, the old, sick and dying, that have no use in society, do not have any human rights either.

When doctors are willing to become social executioners for millions of babies, someone must examine the mother?s motives used for justifying her actions. Reasons given include: preserving the life of the mother (neglect for right to life of an unborn child), expectation of a ?defective child? (disrespect for natural selection, or playing God), rape and incest. "Even if these were valid reasons, they would account for only 3% of all abortions". Abortion mainly occurs for matters of "convenience and economy". Having a child is a huge responsibility and if individuals cannot handle sex and it?s aftereffects responsibly and with a mature attitude they should not being ?doing it?. This particularly takes on a strictly Catholic view.

The Pope?s (Paul II) argument against abortion is extremely religious. He uses exerts from the Bible, other religious documents and he quotes many clergymen and priests to help defend his position. He explains how society must follow the ten commandments to live a good life and have eternal life. "Jesus replied, ?If you would enter life, keep the commandments?" (Matthew 19:17). The first of these ten commandments is "You shall not kill". On the contrary, individuals should love respect and promote life as stated in "The Gospel of Life" by Paul II. In order to do this, one must carry out God?s plan of procreation with love and intentions to multiply. By having an abortion or murdering the young, one is doing the exact opposite. Not only are they killing an innocent human being, but they are killing a child of God. Also, man is not the final judge in matters such as life and death, he is only a ?minister of God?s plan? as explained in Humanae Vitae by Paul VI. Paul II goes on to explain how human life is "sacred and inviolable". Life is sacred because it is a gift from God and man was created in the image of God. God overlooks our lives from birth to death, and no one else has the right to destroy an innocent human being, especially one as innocent as an unborn child. Man is suppose to be the defender of the innocent, not the destroyer. He explains how the man who kills the innocent is one who has been deceived by the Devil, because only

Satan delights in the death of the living. "You shall not kill" represents the extreme limit which cannot be exceeded. It is meant to encourage man to see

life with respect and lead to the promotion of life with love. Along with the

teaching that one shall not kill another, is this, as stated in the Didache, the

most ancient non-biblical Christian writing: "you shall not put a child to death

by abortion nor kill it once it is born … The way of death is this: … they kill

their children and by abortion cause God?s creatures to parish … they are

filled with sin." As time goes on, the Church will continue to teach the

undeniable value on the first commandment. Even in the first centuries, murder was considered one of the three most serious sins. This should not come as a surprise. To kill something that was created by, and in the image of, God should be considered a serious sin. The most important case involving the first commandment of ?You shall not kill? is when it refers to innocent human beings. This is especially so when it refers to defenseless, weak, human beings such as an unborn child or infant. The taking of an innocent life, especially at it?s beginning or end, is gravely immoral. This direct and voluntary action will always be regarded as morally evil and can never be considered as necessary, either as an end, or as means to a good end.

Nothing and no none can in any way permit the killing of an

innocent human being, whether a fetus or an embryo, and

infant of an adult … no one is permitted to ask for this act

of killing, either for him/herself or for another person

entrusted to his or her care … Nor can any authority

legitimately recommend or permit such an action"

(Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith).

Every innocent human being has a right to life. Every man, woman and child is a person worth protecting, not just an object to be used. Of all crimes possible, abortion and infanticide are defined as "unspeakable crimes" by the Second Vatican Council. When such crimes are accepted by much of the population and permitted by lawmaking bodies, it is a dangerous sign that the moral line between good and evil is getting obscured. This is especially dangerous because the right to life is at stake. The decision to have an abortion is often painful and tragic to the mother. Not only is she ridding herself of the fruit of life, but a part of herself, too. Much like the reasons mentioned before, Paul II restates in "The Gospel of Life" that "reasons ? however serious and tragic, can never justify the deliberate killing of an innocent human being". This decision is, in the end, completely up to the mother. But she may be influenced by many others on the way. The father of the child, either by coercing her or by leaving her alone, can lead her to such a decision. There are rare cases where the male would like to be put in charge and offers to take complete responsibility for the child. The family and friends of the mother may also have a grave influence upon her decision. These people are not the only ones to blame, legislation allows abortion, foundations encourage the legalization of abortion, and those who promote sexual behaviors in those who cannot care for a child can all be held responsible. Paul II has different thoughts, "No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the Law of God which is written in every heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church".

No simple act of man can repeal the fact that only God endows life, by giving the fully formed body and breath, and only God should be able to take

life away. People today, despite freedom of speech cannot think or talk for themselves. Our country, which has prided itself on it?s lack of discrimination on any grounds has succumbed to discrimination against the unborn because they cannot speak for themselves, against the newly born because they are not seen as individuals with rights. They are people too. Abortion and murder take away the potential for life and they show the ignorance of society today, they show that murder is acceptable to rid the world of so-called ?unvaluable? lives.