

TANGENTS...

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Dear Student-Friend,

From Parade's (Magazine) Special Intelligence Report: "MERCY KILLING."

"Several weeks ago Sherri Finkbine of Phoenix, Arizona, had to fly to Sweden for a legal abortion. Her story was emblazoned on the front pages of the nation's press. Scarce mention, however, was made of another thalidomide mother who took a more drastic measure. In Belgium, baby Carine Vandeput was born without arms but with eight tiny fingers growing out of her shoulders. Filled with despair, Carine's mother (who had taken thalidomide during her pregnancy) consulted several plastic surgeons. They said they could do nothing. One night, racked with heartache and hopelessness, Mrs. Vandeput put her infant to sleep with poison provided by the family doctor. Accused of infanticide, Mrs. Vandeput has now become a cause celebre throughout Belgium. The people say she should be acquitted, the police say she should not. Mrs. Vandeput claims she would do the same thing over again rather than let a child of hers crawl through life, a hopeless, helpless freak."

The question seems to be, to paraphrase Hamlet, "To abort or not to abort." I say "seems" because there is a deeper question. However, before we get into that, let's discuss two other viewpoints:

One lengthy report coming to my desk from Germany sums the whole matter up by saying such a deformed child gives a greater opportunity to LOVE and the whole matter should be viewed in that frame of reference. A chal-

lenge to love!

This article from Frankfort, Germany, begins with - "When the nurse told me about our baby, it was like a blow from God."

A doctor, Ekkehard Stoerig, whose own child is a phocomelia (birth deformity) case says, "Your first reaction is panic -- you ask yourself over and over, why us?" Eighteen months after his wife took contergan (containing thalidomide) to counter sleeplessness, she gave birth to a son with clubbed and crippled arms.

"Then comes reconciliation as you learn to know and love the child, and you realize that you and he must make the best of it," continues the doctor.

Another instance, a pretty brown-haired young mother whose deformed baby is only six months old, said, "At first I hoped he would die--He's my first. But now I love him."

The rest of this article tells about the costly therapy and prosthetic artificial limbs that must be gone through. A child in growing up might receive four sets of such limbs which is very costly.

Dr. Stoerig breaks my heart when he says, "The child must have these things. When the time comes for normal children to play patty-cake, these infants must have limbs capable of patty-cake. When they enter school and must learn to write, they must already have mastered a prosthetic arm

capable of holding pencils and writing.

" These children are physically one down from the moment of birth," Stoerig puts it. "They must be made equal or even one up on normal people mentally."

In the development of therapy techniques and prosthetic limbs, we may rejoice in the fact that MIND functions in spite of appearances. This is graphically depicted with a two year old girl building with blocks, wheeling a doll carriage and playing a toy zyllophone - all with artificial arms.

We've all seen the remarkable things that can be done with children that are equipped and trained to use all manner of artificial limbs, braces and other devices.

Surely these are evidences that Mind knows no barriers and is capable of using anything to perform and extend the activities of Mind. Glasses or spectacles are a good example.

Many students of Truth count wearing spectacles a mark of failure in understanding. This may be so; I won't argue the point. But I will argue that while crystal, in itself, no more sees than an eye-ball sees, the use of spectacles does extend Mind's seeing, or with Mind understanding the principle involved, one can see with glasses where one could not see otherwise. Surely this is the Mind seeing!

What is television and radio but Mind seeing, Mind hearing?

As I have said in class many times, when you listen to the radio you're not listening to tubes, transistors or any of the parts. You're listening to the idea. The idea that brought all the various parts together assembling them into "hearing."

When you watch television you are not looking at screens, tubes and all the assembled parts; you are viewing "Mind seeing," an idea.

When you ride in an automobile you're not actually riding in the assembled multi-parts of the car, you're riding in the idea of transportation. In fact, if you had the car without the idea, you wouldn't use it for transportation. You might fill it with dirt, plant flowers in it and have a decorator's item.

When we see prosthetic limbs walking, building with blocks, writing, it is not the leather, metal and plastic that walks, builds and writes. It is Mind using whatever is at hand to walk, build, write and it is Mind that is hearing, seeing, when we use radio and television.

Still many question whether knowingly permitting a deformed child to develop from conception, onward, is a legitimate process, just to show how Mind can and does triumph over all appearances.

An interior decorator in Germany writes, "There is a moment I dread. One day my child will be playing in a sandpile with other children and someone will say, look at that cripple."

I am inspired with this German article when it tells of how love surmounts the appearance of a phocomelia victim. Still I doubt if anyone receiving this letter can have any difficulty understanding this from the standpoint of principle, or as a happening. It is almost certain that the weakest, often the youngest, in any brood gets more love from a parent -- especially a mother.

The question my correspondent raises is this: Is it necessary or right to knowingly bring into birth such a challenge to love when society is already overwhelmed with many cripples? Do we find justification in bearing such a child when almost any child is going to be born with the potential of an emotional cripple, due to the mores of society, the emotional and spiritual handicaps of the parents and the immediate family.

Don't we have enough difficulty learning to love when we are faced with a child that, according to Divine Diversity, is going to be quite a different person than most parents are prepared to cope with, according to their inherent bias and prejudice?

It is wonderful to learn, as I have indicated, how Mind fulfills itself through prosthetic limbs and that a phocomelia child can be the object of love, even greater love than many children. But there is something more significant in the thalidomide case.

It is an unfinished story and we shall delve into it more thoroughly.

Blessings,

Thane

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(MORE)
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