

7: The Newspeak of Abortion

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Ideas have consequences, and words shape ideas. Words, however, may be defined in different ways. In national politics, for example, how terms such as freedom, justice, human rights, sovereignty, peace, and security are defined and understood determine the actions a nation takes, or does not take. This is no less the case in the national debate on abortion. When the child-in-utero is termed a fetus, it is considered a growth within a woman, and like a tumor it can be excised for the health or convenience of the mother. Ignoring traditional, absolute moral standards, millions of people have redefined what it is to be human. To satisfy the self-interest of the mother or father – or in the case of stem cell research, of the scientist or corporation – the lives of millions upon millions of unborn children are terminated, sometimes in the most brutal ways.

Abortion continues because, as George Orwell wrote in his book, *1984*, “the most grossly obvious facts can be ignored when they are unwelcome.” With Orwellian fervor, new words are created to disguise certain unacceptable acts. The same willful blindness that now exists with regard to abortion is what allowed the holocaust to occur, Gulags to exist, and mass genocide to take place in China, Cambodia, Rwanda, East Timor and Bosnia – to cite just a few examples. It is what Alexander Solzhenitsyn described as “the desire not to know,”



The divisiveness over abortion in America today is not due to a lack of facts. Science has determined when life begins, and legal rulings do change the actuality of conception. The continuation of this atrocity is due to ignoring truth as an objective reality. Relativism is the accepted approach in modern society. By not acknowledging truth as definitive, it is easier to act solely to satisfy one’s ego and desires. Today, many Catholics do not look to the Church and its teachings on moral issues such as the sanctity of life, but rely on their own, often poorly informed, consciences. And those consciences can be placated by redefining the terms that describe the truth.

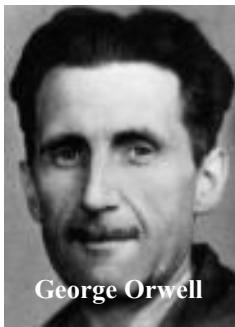
We live in an Orwellian-society, with Newspeak common. If a person is against the gay lifestyle, he is defined as homophobic. In someone opposes gay marriage, he is called intolerant and bigoted. If one is in favor of protecting the life of the unborn, he is against a woman’s right to choose; the person is termed anti-choice, not pro-life. If one is opposed to embryonic stem-cell research, he is impeding scientific research that could lead to significant advances in health care.

Ours is a society motivated by materialism and self-satisfaction, which is only slightly tempered by spiritual or religious concerns. Too many people have partitioned their minds, so that they can hold contradictory views and simultaneously accept both. Politicians will state that they are personally opposed to abortion, but will not act to ban it because they do not want to deny their constituents a choice. Business owners will accumulate vast wealth by overcharging their customers, and then donate substantial

sums to charity. Some Catholics will go to Mass on Sunday, and then disregard the Church's teachings the rest of the week. These people have lost their integrity of conscience, and no longer are upset by a discrepancy between truth and falsehood, between reality and perception.

Reality is external and definitive. People, however, do not act on reality, but on the perception of reality. Since perception exists in the human mind, people can transform reality into something that fits their interests and desires. This allows them to ignore unpleasant truths and to rationalize their actions so that they may be comfortable with what they do.

Perception, as a product of the mind, also subjects people to be manipulated by others who can change perceptions. Corporations do not spend huge sums of money to present the facts about their products or services. Rather, they try to create an image, to mold one's perceptions, to create a desire even without a need. In like fashion, there are well-established and well-funded groups that are trying to reshape the public's perception, and thus override the truth, of when life begins.



their daily lives.

An important step for those groups is to redefine words – abortion as choice, child as fetus, pro-life as anti-choice, adherence to doctrine as fundamentalism. If we allow others to set the parameters for the abortion debate, the cause is lost. If we are to be prepared to deal with the many propositions, scientific advances, and arguments that are put forth that affect human life, we must be well grounded in our own Faith and the teachings of the Magisterium. Our Councils, working with our priests and pastors, can serve an important role through education and information to prepare our members, as well as others in our parishes and communities, to deal with these issues in