

Where Are We Going and Why Are We in This Hand Basket?

by Robert Babecka

(Note: Referenced quotes are provided at the end of this article.)

The use of contraception has been common among pagan cultures throughout history, especially the more hedonistic cultures. The use of contraceptive drugs has even been documented among the Egyptians as far back as 1850 B.C. At least seventeen methods of contraception were in use in the Roman Empire in the first century of Christianity. Abortion and infanticide were also practiced. ("The History of Contraception Teachings," Fr. Paul Saunders, President, Notre Dame Institute, ewtn.com)

As we've shown in the articles "Who Speaks for Christ?" and "Protestants and Contraception" Christians were uniformly opposed to contraception until the twentieth century.

So where did the idea that contraception is consistent with Christianity come from? How were Christians suddenly convinced to accept this historically pagan practice to which they had been opposed for almost 1900 years?

Two words-Margaret Sanger.

In reality, a wealthy group of individuals decided to re-engineer our culture, to remove outdated moral constraints, and to limit the growth of undesirables (pronounced the minorities and the poor). These people crafted a broad-based plan for bringing about their desired changes.

Margaret Sanger was probably the most committed and certainly the most visible of these. Mrs. Sanger was the founder of Planned Parenthood. Today, Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in the country (over 100,000 abortions each year) and the oldest pro- abortion lobby organization. Before she took on the fight to legalize abortion in this country, she had to win the fight to legalize the use of contraception in society and promote its use. In addition to her work on the social front, she funded research into development of the birth control pill through the Margaret Sanger Research Bureau.

In the first half of the twentieth century Ms. Sanger published a magazine, *Birth Control Review*. Insights into the beliefs, goals, and strategy of Margaret and her associates can be understood by examining quotes from this magazine.

They were concerned with limiting the world's population, specifically the poor and disadvantaged [Quote 1]. Many also saw a need to redefine women's role in society, to get women out from under the yoke of marriage [Quotes 2].

Mrs. Sanger and many of her contemporaries had no love for Christianity. They correctly realized that contraception would be the key to undermining the moral authority of the Christian churches. The churches would either have to give up their moral position (as the Protestants did) or they would have to face the opposition of the majority of their members (as the Catholics do) [Quotes 3].

They misled the public into believing that contraception would lead to less immorality and fewer abortions. Social scientists are in agreement that the opposite is the result. With the availability of contraception people are marrying later and teenagers are having more sexual partners-proving the old adage, "A man won't buy the cow if he gets the milk for free."

Furthermore, abortion increases greatly in societies that practice contraceptive sex. (This seems to be caused mostly by the relatively high frequency of contraceptive failures combined with the greatly increased likelihood of risky sexual behavior. A secondary factor is that some people that do not use contraception reliably nevertheless mimic the sexual practices of those in society that do.) [Quotes 4]

Mrs. Sanger and other revolutionaries aggressively campaigned to convince world leaders of the wisdom of promoting contraception. Not everyone bought the plan, though. In 1936 Margaret Sanger met with Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi to discuss birth control. Gandhi disagreed strongly with her and was worried of the spiritual damage it would cause among its users [Quotes 5].

A review of Supreme Court decisions made in this century show a disturbing relationship between contraception and abortion. Planned Parenthood was active in each of these rulings; sometimes touting that abortion was unacceptable and contraception was the solution and later that abortion was necessary in a society that had contraception. Mrs. Sanger and company recognized that widespread use of contraception would alter sexual attitudes and practices, leading to more unwanted pregnancies. Abortion was necessary to achieve their ultimate objective of population control. Without it, contraception would only lead to unreasonable confidence and more unwanted children.

Step one, laws forbidding the sale of contraceptives were ruled unconstitutional. On June 7, 1965, in the case *Griswold versus Connecticut*, it was decided that the state did not have the legal right to restrict the sale of contraceptives to married people. Up until then, states had exercised this right. In fact, Protestant legislators had been responsible for these laws. The reasoning for overturning this law hinged on the fact that marriage is private and sacred. There is no hint in the ruling that there was a right to sell contraceptives to unmarried individuals [*Griswold versus Connecticut*].

Step two, laws preventing the sale of contraceptives to unmarried people were ruled unconstitutional. On March 22, 1972, in the case *Eisenstadt versus Baird*, the Supreme Court decided the state did not have the right to prevent the sale of contraceptives to unmarried people. Married people were not entitled to additional rights than unmarried people [*Eisenstadt versus Baird*].

There was only one large milestone left in their plan-the legalization of abortion. This milestone was accomplished in 1973 with the ruling of the Supreme Court case, *Roe versus Wade*, which legalized abortion in our country. The rights established in *Griswold versus Connecticut* were cited in this ruling. On June 29, 1992, in the case *Planned Parenthood versus Casey* the Supreme Court went even further. It denied the right of a husband to be informed if his wife was procuring an abortion, because of her right to

privacy. This completely discounted the argument establishing the right to contraception in *Griswold versus Connecticut* on the grounds that a "marital zone of privacy" (among husbands and wives, not as a barrier between them) existed and should be protected by the state. [Planned Parenthood versus Casey]

Planned Parenthood had advanced arguments to protect the sacredness of marriage and improve marital relations in their battle to legalize the sale of contraceptives. Planned Parenthood opposed these same values when their usefulness to further their agenda ended.

Over time, as millions of women in our country procured abortions and abortion became more mainstream, even among Christians, acceptance of this practice by Protestant churches has become more common. Today, even large denominations, such as the United Methodists actively support abortion rights. With this kind of change of heart occurring in the Protestant community, ties to the constant Christian teachings against contraception are almost completely severed. Likewise many Christians that belong to pro-life churches (Catholics and Protestants) have become accepting of abortion.

Referenced Quotes

Quote 1

"Let the aim of the State be not numbers, but citizens of quality physically, mentally, and morally. Let the aim of the church be not numbers, but Christians of quality mentally, morally, and spiritually. As in the great war it was not Germany, breeding like rabbits, that won, but France, a nation practicing Birth Control." ("Citizens and Christians of Quality." *Birth Control Review*, Volume IX, Number 9 (September 1925), page 257.)

Quotes 2

"Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating the world. To accomplish this, there is but *one* way. Science must make woman the owner of herself, the mistress of her person. Science, the only savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will, or will not, become a mother." Robert Ingersoll. *Birth Control Review*, Volume II, Number 9 (September 1918), page 6.

"Knowledge of birth control is essentially moral. Its general, though prudent, practice must lead to a higher individuality and ultimately to a cleaner race. (Margaret Sanger. "Morality and Birth Control." *Birth Control Review*, Volume II, Numbers 2 and 3 (February-March 1918), page 14.)

Quotes 3

"Another reason why birth control appeals to the advanced radical is that it is calculated to undermine the authority of the Christian churches. I do not expect every one to agree with this statement, but it is the opinion of many who, like myself, look forward to seeing humanity free some day of the tyranny of priests no less than of capitalists....The church

will never be converted to birth control. It prefers that the world should be over-populated by the ignorant and unthinking. It will continue to thunder against the prevention of conception as an `unholy interference with the laws of God and nature.' But those who take its clamor with a grain of salt will increase in numbers, until birth control finally looms up as one of the principal factors in the downfall of the church. Walter Adolphe Roberts. "Birth Control and the Revolution." *Birth Control Review*, Volume I, Number 6 (June 1917), page 7.

"The Catholic Church is the bigoted, relentless enemy of birth control. It makes no bones about its stand. This [birth control] movement threatens its hold upon the poor and the ignorant, and probably only the existence of restraining laws prevents it from applying the thumb-screw and the rack to all those who believe in woman's right to practise voluntary motherhood. But, since the methods of the Inquisition are out of date, it would compromise by clapping us all into jail. "The birth-controllers are at it again!" runs a medieval editorial in *The Holy Name Journal*, the organ of one of the most powerful Catholic societies in America.

"Prison starvation seems but to have whetted their desire to continue the propaganda for what will ultimately be the extermination of the masses upon which our country must rely in the future." Observe the admission that our propaganda (as the Holy-Namers see it) "*will ultimately*" succeed ... Do we expect ever to win over the Catholic Church to our way of thinking? Not right away. We are aware that it will fight to the last ditch against this ideal. But we propose to go on enrolling Catholics under our banner of progress by the thousands today, by the hundreds of thousands in a year or two. In the long run, reason will inevitably triumph over darkness and superstition. Even the Catholic Church will yield to the force of public opinion." (Editorial Comment. *Birth Control Review*, Volume II, Number 6 (June 1918), page 16.)

"The church has been powerless and the champions of worn out moral creeds find themselves trying in vain to force all women to become mothers against their wills." (Margaret Sanger. "Birth Control or Abortion?" *Birth Control Review*, Volume II, Number 11 (November 1918), page 3.)

Quotes 4

Birth control encourages early marriage by removing the fear of a large family. It is, therefore, an important factor in the campaign against immorality and venereal disease. (Dr. C. Killick Millard. "Famous British Health Official Advocates World Wide Birth Control," *Birth Control Review*, Volume II, Number 10 (October 1918), page 8.)

"... since women limit their families by abortion if by no other means, a free, unhindered spread of the knowledge of scientific birth control would do away with the appalling number of abortions occurring annually in the United States." (Margaret Sanger. "A Victory, A New Year and A New Day." *Birth Control Review*, Volume III, Number 2 (February 1919), pages 3 and 4.)

"... there cannot be any doubt about it, just as all those who work for birth control are diminishing the frequency of abortion, so every attempt to discourage birth control promotes abortion." (Havelock Ellis. "Birth Control in Relation to Morality and Eugenics." *Birth Control Review*, Volume III, Number 2 (February 1919), pages 7 and 9.)

Quotes 5

"I suggest that it is cowardly to refuse to face the consequences of one's acts. Persons who use contraception will never learn the value of self-restraint. They will not need it. Self-indulgence with contraceptives may prevent the coming of children but will sap the vitality of both men and women, perhaps more of men than of women. It is unmanly to refuse battle with the devil." ("Temperance" by Dr. Donald DeMarco, *Lay Witness*, April 2000.)

Griswold versus Connecticut

This law, however, operates directly on an intimate relation of husband and wife and their physician's role in one aspect of that relation.

The present case, then, concerns a relationship lying within the zone of privacy created by several fundamental constitutional guarantees. And it concerns a law which, in forbidding the use of contraceptives rather than regulating their manufacture or sale, seeks to achieve its goals by means having a maximum destructive impact upon that relationship. Would we allow the police to search the sacred precincts of marital bedrooms for telltale signs of the use of contraceptives? The very idea is repulsive to the notions of privacy surrounding the marriage relationship.

We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights-older than our political parties, older than our school system. Marriage is a coming together for better or for worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred. It is an association that promotes a way of life, not causes; a harmony in living, not political faiths; a bilateral loyalty, not commercial or social projects. Yet it is an association for as noble a purpose as any involved in our prior decisions.

Eisenstadt versus Baird

The Court of Appeals went on to hold, "To say that contraceptives are immoral as such, and are to be forbidden to unmarried persons who will nevertheless persist in having intercourse, means that such persons must risk for themselves an unwanted pregnancy, for the child, illegitimacy, and for society, a possible obligation of support. Such a view of morality is not only the very mirror image of sensible legislation; we consider that it conflicts with fundamental human rights. In the absence of demonstrated harm, we hold it is beyond the competency of the state." We need not and do not, however, decide that important question in this case because, whatever the rights of the individual to access to contraceptives may be, the rights must be the same for the unmarried and the married alike.

If under *Griswold* the distribution of contraceptives to married persons cannot be prohibited, a ban on distribution to unmarried persons would be equally impermissible. It is true that in *Griswold* the right of privacy in question inhered in the marital relationship. Yet the marital couple is not an independent entity with a mind and heart of its own, but an association of two individuals each with a separate intellectual and emotional makeup. If the right of privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child.

Planned Parenthood versus Casey

2. Section 3209's husband notification provision constitutes an undue burden, and is therefore invalid. A significant number of women will likely be prevented from obtaining an abortion just as surely as if Pennsylvania had outlawed the procedure entirely. The fact that 3209 may affect fewer than one percent of women seeking abortions does not save it from facial invalidity, since the proper focus of constitutional inquiry [505 U.S. 833, 838] is the group for whom the law is a restriction, not the group for whom it is irrelevant. Furthermore, it cannot be claimed that the father's interest in the fetus' welfare is equal to the mother's protected liberty, since it is an inescapable biological fact that state regulation with respect to the fetus will have a far greater impact on the pregnant woman's bodily integrity than it will on the husband. Section 3209 embodies a view of marriage consonant with the common law status of married women, but repugnant to this Court's present understanding of marriage and of the nature of the rights secured by the Constitution. See *Planned Parenthood of Central Mo. v. Danforth*, 428 U.S. 52, 69 . Pp. 887-898.