

In Defence of Life

Edmonton ProLife's Newsletter

www.edmontonprolife.org

Volume 6, Issue 3

'educating for life'

Summer 2008

Unity in our Diversity

United we stand - Divided they die

After the Supreme Court Morgentaler decision in 1988, the "freedom of choice" mentality was engrained in the mindset of Canadians.

New initiatives are being brought forward through legislation to save whichever unborn lives we can, be they few. It is a step forward, incrementally. Some pro-lifers though believe in an "all or nothing" approach. That approach cost us an abortion law initiated by the PC party led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The Bill was lost by 1 vote in the Senate, with the result that we are now 1 of 3 countries in the world which has NO abortion law (Cuba, North Korea are the other 2). Yes, we love to eliminate ALL abortions in Canada, but that needs a miracle by the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of all people. We lost the right to life for the unborn 1 step at a time ("slippery slope"), so we work and pray to take it back 1 step at a time.

Edmonton ProLife believes that 1 baby saved through incremental means is a gain. That is the reason we support the efforts of politicians working to advance the personhood of the unborn. Bills currently introduced into the house are explained in the next article.

Pro-lifers are united across gender, age, race, faith. Let us not be divided in what is achievable. We stood together in Ottawa on May 10th "March for Life" and in Edmonton May 4th. We will stand together at the Life chain on October 5. Will you stand with us?

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Bills, Bills, Bills! – the good kind.

Bill C484 Private Members Bill (Unborn Victims of Crime) by Ken Epp has passed 1st and 2nd reading and is awaiting committee time. The bill "protects pregnant women and their babies by making it a crime to injure or cause the death of a woman's pre-born child when the woman is a victim of crime". Pro-lifers are supportive of this bill as it addresses the injustice of not recognizing the humanity of the unborn. It only comes into effect when crimes are committed against the mother, and there is injury or death to the unborn child. A disclaimer states "this section does not apply in respect of ... conduct relating to the lawful termination of a pregnancy". Pro-aborts have become very vocal in their opposition to this bill, claiming it is an underhand way of restricting abortion.

Bill C383 Private Members Bill (Restriction of abortion) was introduced in June 2006 by MP Paul Steckley, with the assumption it would be nullified by an election soon. As this has not happened, it is possible for this bill to reach 2nd reading stage. This bill would make it illegal to perform abortions after 20 weeks gestation, with a criminal charge against the abortionist.

Bill C537 Private Members Bill (Conscience Rights for Health care workers) by MP Maurice Vellacott was introduced April 16th 2008. The bill would prohibit coercion in medical procedures that offends a person's religion or belief that human life is inviolable. The bill seeks to ensure that health care providers will never be forced to participate against their will in procedures such as abortions or acts of euthanasia. Please support these initiatives and support the cause for life.

March For Life:

Building the Culture of Life

Holding signs that read Defend Life, some 400 people walked in silence through downtown

Edmonton on May 4, 2008 to condemn abortion and assisted suicide and to demand legal protection for the unborn. The first annual March for Life began at St. Joseph Basilica and ended at the Alberta Legislature, where several speakers addressed the crowd.



Upcoming Events



- **June 7, 2008 - The second annual Crossroads Cross-Country Pro-Life Walk** starts this weekend in Vancouver. The walk will arrive in Alberta on June 7th and will walk across the province for the following 10 days. You can join the walk at any point and offer support. This is a spiritual and sacrificial offering to end abortion, according to the walk organizer, Calgarian Cyril Doll. The walkers will speak at churches, to youth and other groups on the weekends. They will be in Calgary on the June 7-8 weekend and in Edmonton June 14-15. They are scheduled to arrive in Ottawa on August 16th. To learn more about the walk, contact Cyril Doll at cyril@crossroadswalk.org or go to <http://www.crossroadswalk.org/Schedule/CanadaWalk.asp>.
- **June 14th 2008 - Canada Silent No More & Together For Life Ministries** presents Celebrate Life- A Music Benefit Concert With Master Violinist Serguei Popov and Ballerinas, Helena & Lisa Popov from Europe Doors Open 6:00PM 10233 Jasper Ave (City Centre Church). Seats are \$25.00, 50.00, \$100.00 each, Call (780) 939-5774 for tickets.
- **July 17 to 26 Capital Ex** - The biggest educational booth for Edmonton Prolife takes place during Capital Ex. Over 800 000 people will visit Capital Ex during these 10 days. We need over 60 volunteers to fill our shifts. If you would like to help Edmonton Prolife by volunteering to sit at our booth for a four-hour shift, please call Karen at 425-1637 or email edmpl@interbaun.com. We value and appreciate your commitment to our cause; your admission to the grounds will be paid for by Edmonton Prolife.
- **September 20, 2008 – Walkathon.** Edmonton Prolife holds it's annual walkathon at /rundle Park. We hope to have a reunion of sorts this year. If you have ever participated in the Edmonton walkathon we encourage you to plan on being here this year. We hope to see many of you at the walk. The pledge sheet is included with this newsletter. Please consider supporting Edmonton Prolife by walking or sponsoring a walker. This is our only fundraiser for the year. A pledge sheet has been included in this newsletter. Call Karen at 425-1637 for more information.
- **October 5 Life Chain 2008** - Plans are now underway for organizing Life Chain 2008. Your commitment will last one hour but your presence will make a difference for life. Church contacts are desperately needed if we plan on meeting our goal of filling 50 city blocks. The commitment of church volunteers will be two meetings and sharing info with your pastor and church secretary. You will need access to the internet. If you cannot be a church contact but wish to attend Life Chain call Karen to be added to our supporter list. Last years event was supported by Holy Family parish, Go Life U of A Prolife group, St. John Evangelist Parish, St Alphonsus Parish, Edmonton Latin Community, The Canopy, Mark Isinger and friends, Alberta Prolife, The Back Porch many individuals and families. Please let us know if you will commit to bring 10 people to fill a block. If you want to be part of the biggest Prolife prayer event in Edmonton call Karen at 425-1637.
- **Join others in an hour of peaceful, prayerful activism against the daily slaughter of innocent babies. Morgentaler Abortion Clinic: 12490, 109 A Ave.**

The fourth Sunday of every month. Candle light Rosary at 7:30 pm. Contact Maryellen at 476-4026

For information on any of the above events, call the Edmonton Prolife office at **425-1637** or email us at

edmpl@interbaun.com

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New board members welcomed. Meetings held bimonthly first Tuesday, 5:30 pm, at EPL office. All EPL members welcome to at

Churches - a natural forum for pro-life work.

If there is any progress to be made in the prolife effort it must come from the church communities. We must be united in our defense for the dignity of all persons.

Why churches?

They comprise a massive communication system. Pastors have regular opportunities to know their people and to speak to them. Further, the problems of abortion and euthanasia are primarily spiritual and moral. The onslaught against the religious value of the sanctity of life has largely created the legal and political crisis in our nation. Therefore, the crux of the resulting problems needs to be addressed in our churches.

Pro-life work is primarily about ministering to people: the unborn children dying, the mothers and fathers deeply hurt by abortion, families disturbed by questions surrounding euthanasia.

Prolife churches make it "safe to come home" - - to provide a place of compassion, a recognition of the need to grieve, time to heal, and the sacramental and scriptural means to healing. Sometimes church leaders are uncertain of how to deal with women who have had abortions, and some fear to displease pro-abortion members of their congregation. Church leaders should not fear, there is a great need for healing, for truth, for ministering, for changing laws and for changing cultural values.

We encourage our prolife churches to continue their ministry. We ask for prayers for those church communities who refuse, out of misguided intentions, to build a culture of life. We ask all church leaders to join us in putting respect for life back into our community.

The following is a list, and by no means complete, of the various denominations and organizations that have taken a prolife stance.

Baptists for Life – www.bfl.org

The Mission Statement of Baptists for Life helps the Body of Christ articulate the biblical pro-life message in word and deed.

Our Vision is to see local churches all over the world engaged in compassionate sanctity of human life ministry as a means of fulfilling the Great Commission.

Baptists for Life, Inc. was established in 1984 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in response to the horrors of

abortion and the needs of women facing its temptation. Its first goal was the establishment of a pregnancy care center in Grand Rapids, now known as the Alpha Women's Center. The Lord has enabled Baptists for Life (BFL) to duplicate and multiply this ministry many times over in other cities, and now in other parts of the world.

In the 1990s, BFL broadened its scope to include the elderly, handicapped and terminally ill who are threatened by euthanasia – another attack on the sanctity of human life. The Lord led BFL to develop a program called LIFT, which stands for Loving Individuals in Final Transition. This respite care ministry is used by churches to minister to the needs of terminally and chronically ill patients and their loved ones.

Today, BFL also works with missionaries to help them apply biblical pro-life principles to pressing needs on their fields of service, using both the pregnancy care center model and LIFT. God has greatly blessed these efforts in Eastern Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia.

Lutheran's For Life www.lutheransforlife.org

Witnessing to the sanctity of human life, through education based on the word of God. Lutherans For Life is a pro-life, pro-family ministry, neither a church body nor a denomination but a voluntary organization of "For Life" individuals.

Our Mission is to witness to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God.

Our Vision is to be a powerful, biblical, pro-life voice and resource to Lutherans and, through them, transform society.

Lutherans For Life believes that the Church is compelled by God's Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless. The crisis of our times is the repudiation of biblical truth manifested in the wanton destruction of innocent human life through legalized abortion-on-demand and the growing threat to the lives of others through legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia. Therefore, as Lutherans For Life, we will strive to give witness, from a biblical perspective, to the Church and society on these and other related issues such as chastity, post abortion healing, and family living.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. www.evangelicalfellowship.ca

The EFC promotes an evangelical Christian understanding on matters of law and public policy. It intervenes before government and the courts on issues of concern to Evangelicals, seeking to uphold care for the vulnerable, religious freedom, sanctity of human life, marriage and family, and freedom of conscience. The EFC develops guiding principles for response to

these issues in a manner that reflects our Christian citizenship.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) believes that abortion is an issue that deserves a full and frank discussion – that abortion should not be swept to the margins. Canada continues to lose touch with its foundational principles including the sanctity of all human life and its inestimable worth. Most of what we read and hear about abortion today focuses on a woman's right to "choose". This focus, however, ignores the fundamental issue, which is that the unborn child is a human being with intrinsic value, and a fundamental right to life that must be protected and defended.

We must continue to speak in the public square and in the courts about abortion and the rights of the unborn child. At times, resisting a culture of death and despair could make us feel defeated and discouraged, but we ought to take heart. Upholding life is worth the effort. Every life preserved is worth a celebration

The following Edmonton churches are members of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and through this affiliation they have pledged to take a stand against abortion.

Abundant Life Ministries, Bethesda Christian Fellowship, Beulah Alliance Church, Beverly Alliance Church, Braemar Baptist Church, Calvary Community Church, Clareview Evangelical Free Church, Congregation Beit Mashiach, Family Worship Centre, Ellerslie Road Baptist Church, Emmanuel Community Reformed Church, First Evangelical Missionary Church, Gateway Alliance Church, Gospel Centre Pentecostal Church, Greenfield Baptist Church, Laurier Heights Baptist Church, Living Hope Christian Centre, Marketplace Chapel, McKernan Baptist Church, McLaurin Memorial Baptist, Mill Woods Evangelical Missionary Church, Mill Woods Pentecostal Assembly, North Alliance Church, North Christian Fellowship, North Pointe Community Church, Northwest Pentecostal Assembly, Peoples' Church, Richfield Christian Fellowship, Richmond Park Evangelical Missionary Church, Salvation Army: Central Community Church, West Christian Assembly.

The Catholic Church is a Pro-Life Church

"The first right of the human person is his life . . . It does not belong to society, nor does it belong to public authority in any form to recognize this right for some and not for others; all discrimination is evil. . . Any discrimination based on the various stages of life is no more justified than any other discrimination. . . . In reality, respect for human life is called for from the time that the process of generation begins. From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is

neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth."*
*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1974), paragraphs 11-12.

Is your church community ready to count itself as Proudly ProLife? Contact Karen at 425-1637 for resources and information to help encourage and educate your members. If you would like to receive monthly prayer intentions and other prolife news for your church community please send an email to edmpl@interbaun.com. We will include you in our monthly updates.

Defining the Human Person

Ten Categories of Cultural Discourse

The following is part three of a four part series, from "Life Principles", by Father Spitzer, which will be continued through volume six of "In Defense of Life".

In this ongoing four part series we now proceed to the second step in the Life Principles Program - **Ten Categories of Cultural Discourse.**

The first notion to be affected by one's choice about happiness/purpose is "success." If I choose Happiness 3 to be my fundamental purpose in life, then I will very likely shape my view of success in life around it. This view of success will, in turn, influence my view of quality of life. I make judgments about my life every day. Are things going well? Am I progressing? Am I using my time well or am I just wasting my time? Are my talents being utilized, or are they underutilized? Notice how this view is linked also to my sense of self-worth. If I believe that I am underutilizing my talents and time, I will believe that I am underliving my life, which will cause me to underestimate my worth or value. Conversely, when I believe that I have a good quality of life, that I am using my time and talents to the full, that I am hyper-living my life, I will judge my worth and value in a way which gives spirit, creativity and energy.

This view of my self-worth will, in turn, affect my view of "love." We all know the cliché, "The person who does not love himself will be unable to love anyone else." Love may be defined as "gift of self." Therefore, the kind of love I manifest will be determined by the kind of self I want to give away. And the kind of self I want to give away will be determined by the kind of self I have appropriated through my view of purpose and success in life.

My view of purpose, success, self-worth and love will combine to influence my view of suffering. Everyone needs to see purpose in suffering (i.e., to see some good for self, others or the culture in that suffering). If we did not, we would become incurably depressed. A purposeless experience of pain and negation generally leads to a sense of bewilderment, depression and

sometimes even despair. But if we see purpose in that pain and negation, if we see a positive horizon for self or others, we not only develop resilience, we can actually move beyond the suffering to new heights of freedom, commitment, love and self-transcendence. Suffering then, is frequently our most poignant moment of decision. The choice we make about it could steep us in bitterness or raise us to new meaning. It could close us to others and to the human community or it could open us to new horizons of the common good and common purpose. It could blind us to everyone else's needs, or it could lead us to a new vision of others, and to a new level of compassion. Suffering can change the whole course of our lives. It can shut us down or liberate us.

One's view of purpose, success, self-worth, love and suffering, in turn, influences one's view of ethics. If I, for example, have a Level 3 purpose in life (desiring to use my time and talents to contribute to as many facets of the world in as many ways as I can) I will likely have a corresponding Level 3 view of self-worth, love and suffering. This, in turn, will motivate me to acquire habits which will help me to achieve this contributory objective (and to avoid pitfalls to achieving it). The ancients called these good habits "virtues." The pitfalls they called "vices" or "deadly sins."

The more one loves contribution, and the people to whom one contributes, the more one will love the virtues (habits) that help to promote this. That same love will, in turn, make me more wary of the vices which threaten it. As will be explained, a Level 2 perspective of happiness, self-worth, love, and suffering will give rise to a more restricted view of virtue and vice than a Level 3 perspective. Similarly, a Level 4 perspective will give rise to an even more enhanced view of virtue and vice.

The combined viewpoint of purpose, self-worth, love, suffering and ethics now influences the notion of freedom. Freedom could be divided into "freedom from" and "freedom for." "Freedom from" tends to resist commitment. If, for example, I believe that my purpose and happiness in life will come almost exclusively from admiration, control and comparative advantage (without regard for the net positive effect I am having or the contribution I am making), I am likely to view freedom as something which will promote ego-gratification. Anything which will enhance my control, autonomy and admiration will be viewed as liberating. I will also view hindrances to control as disempowering. Hence, I will see freedom as escape from constraint and the promotion of independence. This promotion of independence can make me view others as problems. It can, therefore, make commitments seem like a form of servitude. Long-term commitments will seem particularly disempowering and disenfranchising.

Alternatively, "freedom for" views commitment as empowering. If, for example, I have a Level 3 purpose in life, I will be living essentially for the net positive effect I can make to others and the world. I will have certain objectives in mind to promote these good effects. These objectives form the basis of my commitments. Commitment, therefore, does not feel disempowering (as it does in the Level 2 perspective). It feels liberating. I do not wish to escape constraint, but rather to engage in whatever **discipline** is required to actualize my dreams.

"Freedom from" is, therefore, illusory. I may **feel** free, but that feeling comes at the cost of undermining my capacity to commit, which, in its turn, undermines my capacity to actualize my long-term goals. Again, my view of happiness/purpose affects my capacity for self-actualization.

Thus far, we have been looking at how the various levels of happiness/purpose influence an **individual's** vision, desire, and conviction. Now, we turn to the effects of happiness/purpose on the **culture**. The culture (which transmits our societal values, virtues, and goals) is perhaps most influenced by the concepts of "person," "rights," and the "common good." The concept of "person" is the most important because the notion of "rights" and "common good" are directly dependent on it. The way the culture views "person" is the way it interprets "rights" and the "common good." Narrow notions of "person" lead to equally narrow notions of "rights" and the "common good."

As one moves through the four levels of happiness, one achieves greater appropriation of the objective definition of "person." Recall the definition from Section II: A "person" is "a being possessing an intrinsic guiding force (whether this be merely genetic, a soul, or both) toward fulfillment through unconditional, perfect and even unrestricted truth, goodness, love, beauty and being." This defining characteristic reveals both the fulfillment of a person and what differentiates humans from other animals. It therefore marks the point of transition between the genus of animals and the human species.

As one moves up the various levels of happiness, one becomes more and more disposed to seeing and acting on this objective definition. If, for example, I believe that my purpose in life is to optimize the contribution I can make to others (Level 3) and to involve myself in ultimate Truth, Love, Goodness, Beauty and Being (Level 4), then I would not only readily agree with the above objective definition of human person, I would be free to act upon it.

Conversely, if I view the purpose of life almost exclusively from a Level 1 perspective (pursuit of pleasures and external possessions) and/or a Level 2 perspective (pursuit of ego and comparative

advantage), the above objective definition of "person" might seem to be quite bewildering. Even if one did acknowledge the truth of this definition, one would not be particularly inclined to act upon it, for the pursuit of ultimate Love, Truth and Fairness would be antithetical in many respects to ego-gratification, pleasure seeking, and comparative advantage.

The notion of "person" determines the way in which "rights" and "common good" are interpreted. If we reduce "persons" to merely material entities such as clumps of chemicals (Level 1), we are likely to bias our view of rights in favor of those who have or can enhance their material pleasures and possessions. Even though we may think of ourselves as far more high-minded than that, it might be interesting to check our feelings. If, for example, I believe that the goal of human life is to achieve sensual pleasure and possession, it will be difficult for me to resist the corollary opinion that the poor do not have as good a life as I. This could lead to the consequent opinion that the poor have less worth than I, which, in turn, could lead to the further implicit opinion that they are intrinsically inferior. Even if I cannot bring myself to hold these opinions consciously and explicitly, they could nevertheless be subconsciously present, resisting or working against my conscious opinions every moment of every day. One can never be sure where or how they will manifest themselves.

I do not mean to be accusatory here. Indeed, I do not even want to suggest that Level 1 individuals would not have the best intentions toward their fellow human beings. I only suggest that if a Level 1 individual begins to act merely out of subconscious convictions, he may be inclined to confuse poverty (or even middle class status) with inferiority. This could lead to inadvertently denying personhood to a whole group of people whom he implicitly considers to be inferior. This would clearly affect his interpretation of "rights."

If, for example, a Level 1 individual interpreted a fall in Joe's productivity to be a decline in his intrinsic worth, he might believe that an investment in Joe's health insurance would not be a good use of the world's limited resources. If Joe were to subsequently find himself in the hospital, this Level 1 individual might finally (reluctantly) resign himself to the fact that even though Joe had some worth earlier in his life, his ratio of production to consumption now manifests little of that former state. He might convince himself that it is best to take the most practical way out (i.e. a denial of fundamental health care to Joe). Though it is a hard decision to make, it is socially responsible for it avoids wasting our limited natural resources.

A Level 2 view of personhood can lead to similar proscriptions of rights. Rights would now be conditioned by status, respectability, achievement or power. Again, I am not suggesting that Level 2

individuals would **explicitly** proscribe the rights of people with lower levels of status, respectability or achievement. However, such individuals might **implicitly** believe that people of lesser status have a significantly lower quality of life. This bias could affect one's judgment about the worth or worthiness of individuals who are in ambiguous or vulnerable states of life (e.g., the preborn or the elderly). When this occurs, many citizens could easily err on the side of denying rather than according rights.

The ambiguities surrounding the abortion issue also play into this implicit bias. Here we see that the unborn child's right to life comes into conflict with a woman's right to privacy and custody over her own person. The right to life must be considered more fundamental than the right to privacy. For the former is the condition necessary for the possibility of the latter. If one is dead, one's right to privacy is a moot question. Why is it then, that many today have subordinated the less fundamental right to privacy to the more fundamental right to life? It arises out of the so called ambiguity surrounding the personhood of the unborn child. The unborn child does not "**look** like an adult." She has not actualized much of her full potential. The concrete manifestation of status, power and achievement is so much lower than her mother's, she seems to be "less of a person." Furthermore, she is dependent on her mother, which from a Level 2 point of view, could be construed to be a lack of status and therefore a lack of personhood. This dependency could also be viewed as an imposition on her mother which she has no right to do. An individual with ambiguous personhood should not be allowed to impose on an individual with clear personhood. A Level 2 perspective makes all of these judgments to proscribe the right to life seem tenable.

A Level 3 prospective, however, would be oriented towards the intrinsic goodness, dignity, and lovability of the **other**. The contributory nature of this perspective moves one to take careful account of the dignity and mystery enshrouded in this being which does not yet have an impressive physical appearance, achievements or status. This Level 3 perspective is free to attend to the presence of a unique guiding force towards fulfillment in unconditional and perfect Truth, Fairness, Love, Beauty and Being. At the very moment one attends to this mystery, one cannot deny its existence, for it seems to characterize beings of human origin.

Thus if one holds to a Level 3 view of happiness, one will probably be inclined to hold to a Level 3 view of "person" and "rights." If one sees the intrinsic dignity, lovability and transcendent mystery in individuals, one will not be inclined to judge their worth on the basis of high achievement, high popularity, high status, etc. One would then be inclined to accord rights to individuals on the basis of this **intrinsic dignity**. Therefore, this perspective would assess the unborn

child's personhood (and therefore her right to life) as more fundamental than the mother's right to privacy.

It should again be emphasized that those who have subordinated the right to life to the right to privacy have frequently done so with good intentions. A Level 2 cultural bias has allowed limited autonomy, physical appearance and actualization to be interpreted as a limit to personhood. This, in turn, has hidden the presence of the guiding force toward unconditional fulfillment which characterizes beings of human origin. As a result, a human person's **inalienable** right to life has been unwittingly denied. This critical error of omission must be corrected to preserve not only the dignity and rights of countless human mysteries but also the culture itself.

Finally, if I hold to a Level 4 view of happiness, I am likely to hold to a Level 4 view of personhood, in which case I would be likely to see the presence of the intrinsic guiding force toward unconditional, unrestricted, and perfect Truth, Love, Fairness, Beauty and Being in every being of human origin. Level 4 goes beyond Level 3 by attending to both creation and the spiritual in human beings. Most Level 4 individuals would hold that the guiding force toward fulfillment in unconditional and perfect Truth, Love, Fairness, Beauty and Being is a transcendent soul. Many religious traditions would hold that this soul is made in the very image of God and that all of us, therefore, are linked to each other and to God in our spiritual origins. We are co-responsible for each other as if we were "spiritual kin." The Level 4 perspective, then, acknowledges more than the intrinsic goodness and dignity of beings of human origin. It acknowledges our inextricable interrelationship and interdependence. This interrelationship should not be viewed so much as an **obligation** to be co-responsible, but rather as an invitation to allow this co-responsibility to motivate a love that will eventually give rise to eternal joy in our interrelationship with one another. Thus, Level 4 goes beyond the acknowledgment of dignity to the eternal interrelatedness and lovability of all beings of human origin. Such dignity, interrelatedness (kinship) and lovability illicit a transparent and spontaneous judgment of eternally significant personhood which flows into a conception of not only inalienable but eternal rights grounded in an eternal dignity and destiny.

What does this do to my view of rights? Everything. I no longer **assume** that human essence and dignity are present in a being of human origin; I can **actually** connect with it through the very transcendental qualities I recognize in myself. I desire to attribute transcendental dignity to this transcendental being of human origin. Such transcendental dignity grounds and guarantees, with remarkable force, the words of Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all (beings of human origin) are created

equal and are endowed with inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...." To the degree that we recognize Level 4 within ourselves (our fulfillment and happiness coming from the five transcendentals), we will recognize our own spirit. And to the degree that we recognize our own spirit, we will connect with and recognize the spirit of others. At this point human rights truly are, in Jefferson's words, "self-evident," and so is the equality upon which they are premised.

There is another area of rights affected by the levels of happiness: the reciprocity between rights and responsibility. In Levels 1/2 the emphasis tends to be either on possession or ego-gratification, both of which are oriented towards oneself. If Levels 1/2 are the only grounds of my identity, it will tend to bias my understanding of rights towards what is owed to me rather than what I owe to others. As a result, I might tend to forget the responsibility entailed by every claim to rights. If this view of rights becomes culturally normative, it could undermine the common good, for the common good requires at least some Level 3 commitment. We cannot seek the good for all of us unless we are committed to seeking a good beyond ourselves (Level 3).

Levels 3/4 help us to be free for the common good. Therefore, any view of rights which embraces a Level 3/4 perspective will see rights as protecting and promoting this common good. Rights are not merely a vehicle to protect **me**, they are a vehicle to protect **all** individuals in the culture.

Rights viewed from a Level 3/4 perspective hold to the intrinsic value of each individual, while holding to the necessity of the common good. In this way, the good of the whole is neither exaggerated to the detriment of the individual nor the good of the individual exaggerated to the detriment of the whole.

Hopefully, this brief look at the interrelationship among the ten major categories controlling both individual and cultural self-conception and self-actualization has shown how the four levels of happiness and personhood affect rights, the common good and the culture. If we truly want to protect inalienable rights of all citizens, if we truly want the common good to supplant mere egocentric interests, if we really want our quality of life to be enhanced by generative and transcendental concerns; indeed, if we really want our beliefs about ethics and freedom to influence the way we live, then we will have to come to the best possible understanding of "person," and then, using true freedom of the heart, live out of that understanding so that our common welfare may flourish.

This series concludes next newsletter.

