

Western Culture, the Church, and the “New Cannibalism”

*Western Culture may well fall into the unthinkable, yet inevitable reality
that mirrors the heartless conversation found in 2 Kings 6:28:
“Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we’ll eat my son.”*

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Then he asked her, “What’s the matter?” She answered, “This woman said to me, ‘Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we’ll eat my son...’” 2 Kings 6:28

Introduction

Western culture is often defined as or aligned with Western or European civilization, and stems from two major sources: the Classical Period of the Greco-Roman era and the influence of Christianity. Western culture has achieved incredible success and influence in the areas of medicine, science, law, religion, architecture, literature, languages, and the arts. It has provided a standard of living unsurpassed in human history, as well as created an environment where men and women can express their thoughts and beliefs openly and freely, while advancing the concepts of human rights, equality, and democracy.

In casual conversation or in religious and academic settings, the topic of cannibalism is not usually considered to be a part of European, American, or Australasian culture, though some occurrences of cannibalism have been reported or witnessed, such as the tragic Donner Party incident in western United States (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donner_Party), or bizarre, sensationalized murder cases (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeffrey_Dahmer). Unfortunately, Western culture has accepted and practices indirect forms of cannibalism, and it seems to be moving towards the unthinkable. This deception, which we are calling the “new cannibalism,” uses the youngest and most vulnerable amongst us in a vile and unscrupulous manner.

In “civilized” society there should be an inherent revulsion towards the practice of eating the flesh of humankind, and it is understandable that criticism, doubt, and rejection of such a premise would naturally occur. This paper details the concerns that should cause all Christians to ask the Lord for discernment and prayerful, godly action.

First, let us look at what the Bible says about cannibalism, and then reflect on those Scriptures to discover if they are relevant to 21st Century Western culture.

Cannibalism: A Biblical Perspective

The books of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Zechariah contain passages referring to cannibalism. These Scriptures are either warnings from God to His chosen people or reveal the results of Israel not heeding His admonitions. The New Testament Scriptures seem to be silent on this topic, though there are passages such as John

6:53-57 that seem to touch on the cannibalism controversy. Those who try to use this passage to promote the idea that Christians practiced some form of cannibalism miss the point of what Christ said in John 6:53, "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." This and other similar statements were not commands to literally eat human flesh, but mean that Jesus alone is the source of strength and eternal life as believers partake in His divine nature. However, a number of disturbing Old Testament passages reveal how far humanity can fall when it turns away from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Verses pertaining to cannibalism first appear in Leviticus 26. God initially told the nation of Israel that if they followed His commands, peace and prosperity would follow. Next, He announced that He would not tolerate their disobedience, giving them a stern warning of what to expect if they became stubborn and prideful. Their punishment would begin with "sudden terror, wasting disease" (v. 16), and ultimately end with the unthinkable: "You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters." (v. 29)

Deuteronomy 28 contrasts the blessings of obeying God and consequences of disobedience, providing much greater detail of both the resulting curses and ultimate depravity:

The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth ... a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young.... Because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters.... (v. 49-53)

Later, 2 Kings 6 gives an actual account of a great famine in besieged Samaria. Apparently the sins of Joram, King of Israel, and his people were so great that the covenant curses of Leviticus and Deuteronomy were fulfilled during this siege. The conversation in 2 Kings 6:26-30 between Joram and a disillusioned woman testify to the degradation within the city's walls at that time:

As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, "Help me, my Lord the king!" ... Then he asked her, "What's the matter?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.' So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son so we may eat him,' but she had hidden him." When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his robes.

Other biblical accounts of cannibalism appear later during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 19:7-9; Lamentations 2:19-21; 4:9-10 and Ezekiel 5:8-10). The warnings of God's prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, to the Jewish people went unheeded, the predicted judgments again fell on them, and they resorted to cannibalism. Ezekiel 5:8-10 contains the following tragic and devastating proclamation:

Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations. Because of all your detestable idols.... Therefore in your midst fathers will eat their children, and children will eat their fathers.

It is clear from these verses that cannibalism occurred when God's people fell into deep disobedience and idolatry. There is no evidence that cannibalism ever occurred within the early Christian Church. In fact, Christian influence later became a driving force within the emerging Western culture to eliminate cannibalism in locations such as Africa, West Indies, and South Pacific islands. Regrettably, a new form of cannibalism has crept into Western culture, as influential, humanistic ideas have fed the escalating appetite to glorify and worship "self." This yearning to seek ever greater personal gratification comes with consequences, as the desire for a shortsighted version of immortality takes over, casting away moral constraints. Some want to enjoy "better" or longer life at the expense of others.

It doesn't take a prophet of God to recognize that Western culture is decaying from within, as it rejects the moral foundation of Judeo-Christian beliefs and accepts a worldview that either discards or compartmentalizes God in favor of a self-centered, autonomous approach to life. A spirit of deception is being fed by destructive, philosophical ideas which cloud the moral compass of society. Practices considered unacceptable in the past, which at their core represent unthinkable evil, are now taking a new form and being widely accepted.

Ideas Have Consequences

Certain idealistic movements have influenced Western culture, starting with the Enlightenment Period and ending with what many historians and scholars call the Postmodern era. Ideas can influence individuals and nations, negatively shaping hearts and minds to designate certain people as "things" or resources to be used, denying them full rights and privileges to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In 1948 Robert M. Weaver published a philosophical work, *Ideas Have Consequences*, focusing on the harmful effects of nominalism on Western civilization, and a prescription for a course of action to keep the West from falling into what he perceived as a severe decline. Nominalism, the belief that there are no absolute truths, dates back to Plato or earlier, and continues to influence Western culture today in the Postmodern era. Along with other ideas nominalism has helped spawn the current, evolving worldview that is harmfully influencing the political, religious, economic, and social infrastructures of Western culture.

During the 1700s, rapid scientific achievement caused a profound shift in the mindset of western man. The Christian perspective in studying creation was replaced by scientific discovery and human reasoning. The Enlightenment Period began in the late 1700s, spreading its gospel of rationalism to a world disenchanted with the religious tyranny and abuses of the Middle Ages. It didn't take long for the dangerous mix of human reason and autonomy, or self-rule, to begin influencing and then answering ethical questions, without regard to God's revelations about man's sinful nature and the demonic realm. The worth and value of almost anything was evaluated by its utility.

Utilitarians decide moral issues, not appealing to transcendent absolutes, but by studying the effect of an action upon the system. Stealing is wrong, not because the Ten Commandments say so, but because stealing interferes with the economic functioning of society. Something is good if it makes the system run more smoothly. Something is evil if it interferes with the cogs of a vast machine. Practicality becomes the sole moral criterion. If it works, it must be good. (Veith, 1994, p. 33-34)

Also conceived during the two centuries of “enlightenment” were a number of counter-movements that acted as catalysts for postmodernism, including romanticism and existentialism. These very influential, radical ideas probably contributed to the ending of Modernism, another intellectual movement. Modernism encompassed the activities and output of those who felt the “traditional” forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization, and daily life were outdated in the new economic, social, and political conditions of the emerging industrialized age. The romantic saw nature as a living organism, believing in the existence of deity, even to the point of “God” being identical to nature and to the self. The existentialist brought to full bloom the idea of moral relativism, in which every meaning is legitimate, validating all religions, saying that individuals inhabit their own private reality of the divine, and since they are private matters, they cannot be imposed on anyone else.

Modernism for the most part tried to keep religious beliefs from influencing the public realm, while postmodernism accepts all beliefs as equal and rejects the notion of moral “absolutes.” In the meantime, the Christian cultural witness became less effective as the influences of modernism and the emerging postmodernism basically took over Western culture. Regrettably, many Christians have adopted a dualistic worldview that compartmentalizes or splits life into sacred and secular kingdoms.

Most Christians today identify the sacred solely with their personal and individual life, so that their faith has less and less to do with the culture “out there.” Christians have little influence in shaping culture because their world view precludes such an influence.... Unfortunately, Christians have been culture followers rather than culture formers. (Walsh & Middleton, 1984, p. 100)

Many believers seem to think that living in secular environments without attempting to radically transform them is acceptable. The moral condition of Western society is evidence that the corporate Christian Church has adopted a postmodern mindset by separating private religious beliefs from the secular community.

Ideas do have consequences, and the movements that edify human reasoning over supernatural beliefs have taken hold of the Western way of thinking. This has created a “no boundaries, anything goes” mentality, resulting in people doing what is “right in their own eyes.” Such unhinging from Judeo-Christian spiritual moorings creates an environment of unconstrained avarice and a growing reliance on technology and scientific advances. Acceptance of science as a “savior” to mankind, especially in medicine, ushers in opportunities for unimaginable evil, as the so-called intellectual elite redefine what it means to be human, allowing moral issues like the “new cannibalism” to progress.

Connect The Dots

Western culture has accepted postmodern principles that indirectly nurture a restrained, but growing cannibalistic mindset. The West, like the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 28, continues to be under siege, but not by a fierce-looking nation, but a fierce-looking empire of worldly ideas bent on devouring, destroying and separating the spirit of man from his Creator. These ideas are becoming more prevalent, elevating the utility of life above the truth that all are made in the image of God, deserving value and protection no matter their stature in life.

Like the besieged city in 2 Kings 6, Western culture is experiencing a spiritual famine within the “high fortified walls,” or technological achievements and military prowess of its civilization. It has rejected or minimized God in favor of mammon, causing degenerate behavior, especially in the treatment of the youngest and most vulnerable. If such spiritual famine continues, our society will not only increase the slaughter of innocent children in the womb, but will fall into unimaginable horror through methods of using the preborn victims of abortion. In our hyper-sexualized, self-absorbed culture it is literally the “least,” or “smallest” among us, residing in their mother’s wombs, who are now considered to be resources, or property instead of persons, just as the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision denied rights of personhood to American slaves. It is now these “little ones” who are treated as slaves to further the “new cannibalism.”

The Nazi regime and its approach to genocide is still hard to comprehend, yet its underlying psychology or attitude toward people with physical, emotional or intellectual disabilities, as well as cultural/racial differences, is still influential in setting the stage for the “new cannibalism.” Nazi Germany put together a grotesque, strategic plan that first developed methods for mass extermination of those who were considered “useless eaters” because they had disabilities. Then the Nazis extended their genocidal madness to entire people groups, especially the Jews. Instead of trying to legitimize the mass murder of a race of people, the same philosophy now directs the killing mentality to the preborn. Treatment of the preborn is linked to ideals and ideas that influenced Nazi Germany to pursue “The Final Solution.” With its postmodern attitude, Western culture has found fertile ground to influence current abortion practices instrumental in producing mind-numbing injustice that can be traced to our recent past. We need to be forthright in connecting the dots that show the evolution of the “new cannibalism.”

Nazi Holocaust and Human Experimentation

Robert Jay Lifton’s book, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, is one of the most comprehensive writings concerning the crimes of the Third Reich, exposing the role played by German doctors in the Nazi genocide program known as “The Final Solution.” Lifton’s analysis of Germany’s medical profession during the dark days of Hitler’s reign provides a fascinating but terrifying insight into the thinking of doctors who seemed to value their medical profession, yet somehow believed the killing they were doing was actually a healing process for their nation. How could a doctor be a loving family man on the one hand, and at other times allow himself to perform appalling acts of horror upon men, women, and children? Lifton’s exhaustive analysis reveals a number of different mechanisms that doctors and others involved in the Nazi Holocaust used, engaging in an overall numbing process that resulted in what the author calls “medicalized killing.” Methods known as derealization and disavowal were used by Nazi doctors to divest themselves from what was actually going on in the concentration camps, rejecting the idea of mass murder. In other words, the doctors used a variety of numbing techniques that allowed them to avoid feelings of guilt when involved in the systematic killing of human beings. Many actually convinced themselves that the destruction of the Jewish community in Germany would make their nation stronger and “healthier.” The Nazi doctors diverted responsibility to others under their authority who were closer to the actual killing. German medical professionals who were steeped in mass killings of their own people

(euthanasia program), as well as what occurred at Auschwitz and other concentration camps, also tried to distance themselves from the killings by blaming higher authorities.

The numbing ... was greatly aided by the diffusion of responsibility. With the medical corpsmen closer to the actual killing ... the individual doctor could readily feel "It is not I who kill." ... Moreover, since "the Führer decides upon the life and death of any enemy of the state," responsibility lay with him (or his immediate representatives) alone. (Lifton, 1986, p. 444)

Those involved in the Nazi Holocaust also used language to deaden themselves from the evil they were perpetrating on their victims, especially the Jewish people, degrading their victims or providing excuses to justify their actions as not really murder.

A leading scholar of the Holocaust told of examining "tens of thousands" of Nazi documents without once encountering the word "killing," until after many years he finally did discover the word – in reference to an edict concerning dogs.... For what was being done to the Jews, there were different words, words that perpetuated the numbing ... by rendering murder nonmurderous ... the language used gave Nazi doctors a discourse in which killing was no longer killing; and need not be experienced, or perceived, as killing. (Lifton, 1986, p. 445)

In his book, *The New Medicine: The Revolution in Technology & Ethics*, Dr. Nigel M. de S. Cameron discusses the issue of medical experimentation on humans in Germany before and during the Nazi Holocaust. He sees this time in history as the birthing of human experimentation, where depravity flourished and the idea of consent was a foreign concept, not even considered for the unfortunate victims of Nazi barbarism. Dr. Cameron reveals the ugly truth that Germany created a dominant society, convinced of its own superiority over a class of people, who could be used as slave labor, and "...be dealt with as things rather than human beings." (p. 80)

For the first time in history, a ruling elite in the heart of Europe, the center of Western civilization, had an almost inexhaustible supply of men and women with whom they could do anything they pleased, irrespective of any antique religious or moral prejudice. (Cameron, 1991, p. 80)

Once the horrors of Nazi Germany were revealed to the world, the idea of creating or using a group of people for unethical purposes, especially in human experimentation, became unacceptable. Medical science made the effort to build a research ethic which would require a person's consent to participate. Gilbert Meilaender states in his book, *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians*, "Research subjects must be able to consent and should not be enlisted or used without their consent." (p. 110) Though this seems to be a common sense approach that the medical community should adopt to guard against the tendency to conscript unwilling subjects for research, Professor Meilaender reveals an interesting but troubling 1994 report in the *New York Times* by Ms. Jane Brody. Her statements indicated that researchers were having difficulties in finding suitable subjects for their clinical studies. One of the striking facts she reported was the following:

Interestingly, while children with cancer account for less than 2 percent of all cancer cases, about 60 percent of them participate in clinical trials.... But for adults with cancer, an overwhelming majority of cancer patients, only about 2 to 3 percent enroll in clinical trials. (Meilaender, 1996, p. 105)

After commenting on how children lack the ability to freely and knowingly give their own consent, Meilaender asked: “Do we build the cause of medical progress on their backs?” (p. 111) He then drew an unsettling conclusion concerning children and their growing role as research subjects:

Our society has gradually drawn back from a strict interpretation of the Nuremberg Code that was formulated after World War II. That code, if its requirement of consent were taken strictly, would have made it impossible to use children as research subjects. We have gradually come to accept the proxy “consent” of parents as sufficient warrant for using children in research. (Meilaender, 1996, p. 111)

After World War II, men and women who would later be recognized as the “greatest generation,” went through incredible personal challenges and sacrifices to help rebuild Western culture, as well as restoring the basic infrastructures of other nations so that the devastation and horrors of the war would not be repeated. Sadly, other conflicts such as the Korean and Vietnam Wars followed, inflicting great loss of life, and creating an atmosphere of disillusionment with government, family, and religious institutions. The offspring of the greatest generation were instrumental in starting the “sexual revolution” in the 1960s, causing the conscience of Western society to move steadily away from existing moral and legal safeguards. This revolution, which at its heart declared that authority should not be trusted, traditional moral standards were no longer practical, and personal gratification needed to be fully explored, set into motion tragic events that inevitably endorsed the idea that preborn children are expendable.

The Sexual Revolution

At the center of the sexual revolution was the idea that a woman’s body is her own, and like a man, she should be free to enjoy any or all forms of sexual gratification without being shackled by biological constraints or religious restrictions. As the children of the 60s began to move from home and college environments to positions of authority in academia, media, government, business, and medicine, Western culture found itself naturally succumbing to the emerging postmodern way of thinking that easily gravitated to focusing on “self” and not “others.” This decline in morality, along with the lack of Christian influence to counter the deception that all religions are equal and there are no absolutes, would eventually manifest itself in a declaration of war on humanity at the earliest stages of development.

Ironically, the children of parents who fought against Hitler’s Germany became the instigators of redefining humanity and human sexuality by using similar numbing methods as those used by Nazi doctors during World War II. Instead of dehumanizing a particular race or group of people as Germany had done, Western culture accepted a strategy to dehumanize the preborn, so that the objective of total sexual freedom could be reached. The fight for reproductive “rights” and the legalization of unrestricted abortion was aided by an unrelenting war of words (e.g., blob of flesh, fetus, product of conception, terminating the pregnancy, a

woman's "right" to choose) to empathize with the woman, while dehumanizing her baby. Under this barrage of deceptive language, the preborn child was transformed in the minds of many as a non-person, even a parasite, while the "health" of the mother became the main focus in achieving her right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The architects of the sexual revolution, now adults and occupying positions of social, academic, and economic influence, finally found their champions within the halls of judicial power, who were sympathetic to the mantra of a "woman's right to control her own body." Taking advantage of the spiritual slumber prevalent within much of the Church concerning moral and political issues, those who fought for unrestricted abortion rights in the United States were rewarded by two U.S. Supreme Court decisions, *Roe vs. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* on January 22, 1973. These rulings opened the door to unbelievable injustice for the preborn who were forced into the category of "thing," instead of being recognized as a person residing in a mother's womb. These decisions created an umbrella of legal protection and medical acceptance for a killing process, which in reality is a license for mass murder.

The war of words and the high court decisions have allowed the general public, including many in Christian churches, to disassociate themselves from the killing. Many have accepted deceptive terms for the preborn and passed responsibility to those closest to the killing (i.e., abortionists), as well as to those in the judicial system who made it the law of the land. These and other decisions concerning the "right" to abortion have also provided the means for Western civilization to have at its disposal an inexhaustible supply of aborted "little children" who can be used under certain circumstances as "material" for medical research or "other" purposes. At this juncture in history the "new cannibalism" is beginning to take shape, as unrestricted abortion and other reproductive technologies produce victims for use under the deceptive guise of "healing" and "helping" others.

The New Cannibalism: Part I – Moving Toward the Unthinkable

Since 1973 over 55 million babies in the United States have been reported killed by induced abortion (<http://www.numberofabortions.com>). This number is actually higher since the statistics are based on voluntary surveys of abortion facilities that report their information, and does not include babies aborted by the "morning-after pill" (RU486).

The vast majority of abortions are performed on perfectly healthy babies as a means of birth control. The worldwide abortion figures are now over 1 billion, revealing incomprehensible injustice "...that seems right to man but in the end ... leads to death." (Proverbs 16:25) To give this ethically bankrupt practice the means to somehow "redeem" itself, transplant surgeons and medical researchers are claiming that the abortion-related deaths of the preborn can be used to help those suffering from terminal illness or disease.

One of the chief arguments for using aborted baby parts, or what the medical community commonly calls "fetal matter" or "tissue" centers on the concept that preborn babies selected to be aborted will die anyway, so why not use their remains to benefit the living. Such twisted logic focuses on the possibility of fetal tissue as a "potential" cure for a wide variety of medical problems, such as diabetes and Parkinson's disease. However, this argument ignores the basic fact that vulnerable, voiceless, innocent victims, created in the image of God, are destroyed to meet the health needs of others. Such humanitarian reasoning tries to soothe the national conscience, but the killing of those deemed "unwanted" or unjustly defined as non-persons for the good of others can in no way be morally justified.

Questions about the use of fetuses and fetal tissue in biomedical research were raised in the United States in the early 1970s. Between 1969 and 1973, all 50 states enacted the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, allowing for the donation of all or part of the body of a dead fetus for research or therapeutic research. Prospects for the use of fetal tissue increased after the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion. As the availability of fetal tissue increased, so did the concern over the potential for controversial research on living, soon-to-be-aborted fetuses and anxiety over maltreatment of dead abortuses. (Coutts, 1993, p. 2)

After the *Roe* and *Doe* decisions legalized abortion in all 50 U.S. states, strict guidelines were set up concerning research on living fetuses, but guidelines for dead fetuses or fetal tissue were less specific. In 1987 the debate on fetal tissue research grew more intense when Mexican researchers reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* “that they had transplanted fetal neural tissue into the brains of two young Parkinson’s disease patients, and the condition of both patients improved substantially.” (Coutts, 1993, pp. 3-4) In June 1988 a Focus on the Family article, “Spare Parts from Babies – Are We Going Too Far?” provided the following comments:

National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) President Dr. Jack Willke, a physician, calls the fetal tissue transplant procedure “fatally flawed” because its source is an innocent unborn baby. According to Dr. Willke, the argument that the victim “is going to die anyway” was used by Nazi doctors at the Nuremberg trial following World War II to explain away the horrible experiments they conducted on Jews. The rationalization was rejected then, Dr. Willke notes, and it should be rejected now.” (Andrusko, 1988, p. 11)

The same article also voiced concerns from other professionals not associated with pro-life organizations who strongly opposed fetal tissue research, especially for commercial uses, including Jeremy Rifkin, President of Economic Trends.

Treating human beings like “commodities” is terrible, Rifkin says, but matters are likely to get worse if fetal harvesting becomes widespread. “Once this thing enters the marketplace,” he says, “we might see a whole new industry based on the exploitation of women. Poor or Third World women might be contracted as breeders of fetuses that could be aborted for spare parts for medical use.” (Andrusko, 1988, p. 11)

Despite the claims that fetal tissue could revolutionize certain medical problems, research in this area slowed dramatically in the U.S. in 1988, when a moratorium was declared on federal funding for human fetal tissue research. This measure was lifted by President Clinton in 1993 when he signed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Revitalization Act. Many of the governmental task forces and advisory committees that studied the issue of fetal tissue research, which influenced President Clinton to lift the ban, emphasized the desire to properly regulate this research.

Most committees expressed concern about the moral relevance of abortion to the use of aborted fetal tissue. In order to address problems of complicity with abortion, many advisory committees specified that, as much as possible, a woman’s decision to abort

should be separated from her decision to donate fetal tissue for transplantation. Most groups required anonymity between the donor and the recipient.... All committees specified that no one should benefit economically from donating or distributing tissue.... (Coutts, 1993, pp. 6-7)

Regrettably, once the ban was lifted, effective regulation of fetal tissue research became nominal at best, as abortion clinics, fetal tissue entrepreneurs, and medical researchers found ways to circumvent the supposed safeguards. For instance, the Uniform Anatomic Gift Act which makes it a federal crime to buy and sell fetal tissue, gives the impression that there are proper oversight and strict regulations concerning fetal tissue research. Unfortunately, the harsh truth is that fetal tissue research turned into big business for human-remains trafficking.

In 1997 Life Dynamics, a pro-life organization based in Denton, Texas, exposed that certain entities tied to fetal tissue research were doing legal gymnastics to obtain aborted baby parts for distribution to medical researchers. Aided by testimonies of “technicians” employed by these businesses, Life Dynamics revealed that fetal-tissue research has a dark and sinister side, centering around two motives: profit and an almost inexhaustible supply of “little men” and “little women” with whom medical science can do anything it pleases for the so-called benefit of society.

The probe unearthed grim, hard-copy evidence of the cross-country flow of baby body parts, including detailed dissection orders, a brochure touting “the freshest tissue available,” and price lists for whole babies and parts. One 1999 price list from a company called Opening Lines reads like a cannibal’s wish list: Skin \$100. Limbs (at least 2) \$150. Spinal cord \$325. Brain \$999 (30% discount if significantly fragmented). (WORLD, 1999, p. 16)

There is also a veil of altruism that these organizations which market aborted baby parts try to promote. Establishments such as the Maryland based Anatomic Gift Foundation (AGF) want to portray their business as compassionate, caring and loving, and they especially emphasize their work in aiding medical research to improve the health of others. However, this mask of helping humanity cloaks a deceptive desire, or even hunger, to maliciously use the youngest and most vulnerable among us to achieve what can only be described as an appalling means to a selfish end. For example, Brenda Bardsley, who works for AGF, believes she is performing her Christian duty by providing the services that support fetal-tissue research.

Mrs. Bardsley says she’s prayed over whether her business is acceptable in God’s sight, and has “gotten the feeling” that it is. She also ... reads the Bible “all the time.” And though she can’t cite a chapter and verse that says it is OK to cut and ferry baby parts, she points out that God commands us to love one another. For Mrs. Bardsley, aiding medical research by supplying fetal parts qualifies. (WORLD, 1999, p.19)

Mrs. Bardsley and others at AGF do not feel ashamed or hide from the fact that they and society are benefiting from the victims of abortion.

“We have a lot of pride in what we do.... We think we make a difference with research and researchers’ accessibility to human tissue. Every time you go to a drug store, the drugs on the shelf are there as a result of human tissue donation. You can’t perfect drugs to be used in human beings using animal models.”

“Abortion is legal, but tragic. We see what we’re doing as trying to make the best of a bad situation.... We don’t encourage abortion, but we see that good can come from fetal-tissue research. There is so much wonderful research going on – research that can help save the lives of wanted children.” (WORLD, 1999, pp. 18 & 19)

It is this unholy trinity between abortion clinics, fetal-tissue entrepreneurs like AGF, and medical research facilities that allows the United States and other countries to willfully contribute to the “new cannibalism,” which many perceive as good, but at its core is barbaric and evil. The suggestion that Western culture has developed a pattern of behavior akin to cannibalism may seem insulting or farfetched at best. Yet, without their consent the smallest, most vulnerable human beings, created in the image of God, are being indirectly consumed for “medical purposes,” with very little outcry from the Christian Church.

As Nazi Germany did during World War II, today’s advocates for reproductive rights, for their own distorted ends, want to control the public’s mindset concerning the preborn. Constantly implementing deceptive terms in conjunction with legal precedence creates an atmosphere where people will either find solace in, or allow a separation from, the results of abortion on demand. This separation from the truth of abortion is a mechanism that employs indifference to sooth the conscience, while denying complicity with those closest to the murderous acts (abortionists) and the authorities instrumental in legalizing abortion. Though Western culture still tries to pride itself in high literacy rates, educational prowess, technological achievements, and respect for human freedom, it has lost a foundational principle of its Judeo-Christian heritage, which declares that all human life is wonderfully unique and valuable from conception, with a godly purpose to be fulfilled until natural death (see Jeremiah 1:4-5, Psalm 139:13-16 and Ephesians 1:3-4).

Sadly, the tentacles of the “new cannibalism” reach not only into the business of harvesting remains from aborted babies for fetal-tissue research, it also has a stronghold in the area of stem cell research. Stem cells can be classified in a number of ways, but the three main types are adult, fetal, and embryonic.

Adult stem cells are cells that can be taken from any human being who has already been born (not just adults), without harming that person. These stem cells are found in human blood, bone marrow, skin, brain tissue, and other parts of the body, including the placenta and umbilical cord ... *fetal stem cells* are typically taken from a fetus’s bone marrow or sex-related cells (which will develop into ovaries in females or testes in males). They are most often taken from aborted fetuses, but they can also come from miscarried or stillborn fetuses, or potentially from fetuses still alive in the womb.... *Embryonic stem cells* come from embryos approximately 7 to 10 days old. ... The embryo is destroyed in the process of harvesting embryonic stem cells. (Kilner & Mitchell, 2003, pp. 62-63)

Adult stem cell research has been very successful in finding a number of medical remedies to improve treatments for conditions such as sickle-cell anemia, multiple sclerosis, heart damage, Parkinson’s disease and liver failure. A June 14, 2012, *Washington Times* article stated, “For the first time, doctors have successfully transplanted a vein grown with a patient’s own stem cells.... In this case, the patient was a 10-year-old girl in Sweden who was suffering

from a severe vein blockage to her liver.” The article mentioned that similar methods have already been used in developing new windpipes and urethras for patients, and that the possibility of producing kidneys, lungs and livers from adult stem cells will soon become scientific fact, not fiction.

The Washington Times ran another story on October 9, 2012, about two scientists who will share the Nobel Prize in medicine for cell discovery, saying,

The work of British researcher John Gurdon and Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka ... has raised hopes of developing transplant tissue to treat diseases like Parkinson’s and diabetes.... Basically, their work paved the way to making the equivalent of embryonic stem cells without the ethical questions the embryonic cells pose.

These and other developments in adult stem cell therapy seem to preclude the need for research on fetal or embryonic stem cells. Unfortunately, the “new cannibalism” sees these sources of stem cells as an endless supply of “material” to be used at the whim of medical research. Even if the possibilities of finding medical cures through human embryonic stem cell research are remote, the utilitarian, egotistical approach prevalent in this postmodern culture continues to feed its selfish ambition to manipulate life and death, attempting to lengthen lives at the expense of early human life.

There is also a strong move within the research community to use embryos, conceived and cryopreserved by in-vitro fertilization treatments, for couples dealing with infertility.

In-vitro fertilization has given countless couples, rendered infertile by cancer, illness or nature, the chance to become biological parents. But ... many of them remain torn over the fate of frozen embryos that they no longer need.... At least 400,000 embryos are frozen at clinics around the country, with more being added every day, and many people who are done having children are finding it harder than they had ever expected to decide the fate of those embryos. (Parker-Pope, 2008, pp. 1-2)

Western culture has generally convinced itself that embryos, frozen or created in a Petri dish, are not really human nor expected to live, and should be used for the greatest good for the greatest number. Again, this line of utilitarian reasoning takes a culture down a dangerous slippery slope, producing devastating results, and needs to be countered by the biblical principles of law, love and justice.

Human embryonic stem-cell research is the equivalent of murder – a clear violation of the sixth commandment “You shall not kill” ... even embryonic persons. To claim life is going to be lost anyway is not a sufficient defense. It is like saying “these Jews are going to be gassed anyway, so let’s do horrible experiments on them to gain information that will benefit our soldiers” – precisely the reasoning many Nazi physicians used to justify many of their atrocities. Rather than exploiting an unfortunate problem, the biblical mandate to “choose life” would dictate that means should be found to allow those unwanted embryos another “home” where they will be given a chance at development and life.... We do have a biblical mandate to care for the afflicted. But doing so must be guided by biblical love, which is defined as selflessness. Caring for those afflicted by disease should never be at the expense of others’ lives. We should never tolerate

murdering someone for their liver, so neither should we allow the killing of an embryonic person for his/her stem cells. While we may selflessly sacrifice our own lives for the benefit of others, we do not have the right to sacrifice others' lives for our own selfish gain.... Biblical justice demands that the embryo's need for life outweighs the patient's need for comfort or freedom regardless if it is from the pain of arthritis, or the limitations due to heart disease, the crippling effects of osteoporosis, etc. All such consequences are secondary to the embryo's need for life. (Kilner, Hook & Uustal, 2002, p. 88)

Western culture along with much of the Western Church has turned a blind eye to the plight of the preborn as it basks in the glory of its technological accomplishments, financial successes, leisure pursuits, military strength, and diverse communities. Unless there is a return to the biblical mandate, "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8), Western culture will continue its free fall into degenerate behavior while calling "evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20).

The current administration has been given the green light to continue its funding of embryonic stem cell research, despite criticisms that claim the work relies on the destruction of human embryos. An August 24, 2012, on-line article in Huff Post Politics provided some historical perspective from the previous administration to the more open and aggressive present policy.

President George W. Bush also permitted stem cell research, but limited the availability of taxpayer funds to embryonic stem cell lines that were already in existence and "where the life and death decision has already been made." Obama's order removed that limitation, allowing projects that involve stem cells from already destroyed embryos or embryos to be destroyed in the future. To qualify, parents who donate the original embryo must be told of other options, such as donating to another infertile woman.

Will liberal policies toward the funding of taxpayer dollars for embryonic stem cell research allow Western culture to cross its "Rubicon" in expanding the indirect forms of cannibalism already occurring? Or, is there another stage to the "new cannibalism" that will deceive "civilized" nations even further, as they accept new ways to consume the flesh of their young?

The New Cannibalism: Part II – Crossing the Rubicon?

The idiom, "Crossing the Rubicon," often refers to taking a risky course of action, or "passing a point of no return." In 49 BC Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon River, which was considered an act of insurrection under Roman law. Caesar eventually won the civil war, so he and his army were not punished, but the axiom lives on, denoting "no turning back" for actions taken.

Western culture thinks of cannibalism as formerly occurring in far-off third world jungles or the humorous subject of newspaper or television cartoons. To insinuate that Western culture is taking part in direct forms of cannibalism might seem idiotic or preposterous, but it must be recognized that our "civilized world" has already succumbed to an indirect cannibalistic way of life concerning the preborn, and is on the precipice of "Crossing the Rubicon," advancing to direct acts of cannibalism.

It was recently revealed that China has developed a new lucrative business: selling “dead baby” pills as stamina boosters. A May 7, 2012, *Mail Online* article provided the following sickening details concerning this gruesome business:

Thousands of pills filled with powdered human flesh have been discovered by customs officials in South Korea.... The capsules are in demand because they are viewed as being a medical “cure all.” The grim trade is being run from China where corrupt medical staff are said to be tipping off medical companies when babies are aborted or delivered still-born. The tiny corpses are then brought, stored in household refrigerators in homes of those involved in the trade before they are removed and taken to clinics where they are placed in medical drying microwaves. Once the skin is tinder dry, it is pummeled into powder and then processed into capsules along with herbs to disguise the true ingredients from health investigators and customs officers.

Could a form of this “new cannibalism” find its way into the United States or Europe? A March 29, 2012, *Washington Times* article, “PepsiCo Denies Accusations on Link to Aborted Fetal Cells,” revealed an unsettling collaborative effort between the San Diego based biotech company, Senomyx, and the food and beverage giant, PepsiCo:

So far, researchers using aborted fetal cell lines haven’t been able to cure paralysis or reverse the effects of Parkinson’s disease, but they may be able to make diet sodas taste better. ... After a review of Senomyx’s patents in 2011 showed that the company was using the fetal cell in its research, more than a dozen pro-life groups launched a boycott of Pepsi products that spread to 11 nations....

Senomyx claims on its website to have isolated human taste receptors that provide electrical or biochemical readout when a particular flavor ingredient interacts with the receptor. Debi Vinnedge, Executive Director of Children of God for Life, which brought the issue to public attention in March, 2011, believes PepsiCo, as well as other food and beverage companies who have contracted with Senomyx, have not openly explained what constitutes the taste receptors. Vinnedge wants the public to know that Senomyx is using HEK 293, which is a human embryo kidney cell line produced from an aborted fetus in the 1970s and used in more than 70 Senomyx patents, all related to flavor enhancers. Ms. Vinnedge commented, “What Pepsi is doing is saying that they’re not taking the cells directly from a fetus. Well, that’s true, they’re taking them from a lab.... They’re doing this with semantics to get around what they are really doing.”

On June 3, 2011, a CBS.com article provided the following concerning the Senomyx/Pepsi controversy:

[Senomyx] appears to be engineering HEK cells to function like the taste-receptor cells we have in our mouth. This way, Senomyx can test millions of substances to see if they work as different types of taste enhancers without subjecting human volunteers to endless taste tests....

To non-scientists this may sound a bit strange, but the reality is that HEK 293 cells are widely used in pharmaceutical research, helping scientists create vaccines as well as drugs like those for rheumatoid arthritis. The difference here is that Senomyx’s work for

Pepsi is one of the first times the cells have (potentially) been used to create a food or beverage. (And it's important to note that no part of the human kidney cell are ever a part of Senomyx's taste enhancers or any finished food products.)

For Debi Vinnedge ... that doesn't matter. "It's the eeew factor. It strikes a really strong reaction in people," she said in an interview.... Even though HEK 293 cells trace their origin to a single fetal kidney back in the 1970s – everything since has come from cultured cell lines – Vinnedge considers their use unethical because it indirectly creates a market for aborted fetuses and encourages scientists to hunt for new embryonic cell lines.

What's more troubling than the "eeew factor" is that even if the HEK 293 cell line is not currently being directly consumed in any food products, it is still being used in a laboratory setting to help improve the taste of drinks or food products. Senomyx and other supporters such as PepsiCo value this human cell line for its utility, disregarding its human origin. These companies believe that using aborted baby parts, or "cultured" cell lines, which may include human embryonic stem cells, is not only cost efficient and beneficial to society but morally acceptable as well.

The following reader's online comment to a March 31, 2011, *Miami New Times Blogs* article, "Are Aborted Fetus Cells Helping to make your Diet Pepsi Sweeter?" by Laine Doss is an example of the growing mindset in Western culture that enables the direct and indirect forms of "new cannibalism" to gain acceptance:

I don't mind that Senomyx uses HEK cell lines. If you look into it many universities and research centers use the cells. I would imagine that many of the people who are aghast at the use of these cells, actually use products on a daily basis that benefited from this cell line. If a baby is going into a trash can I am all for it being used for research. I wouldn't want to do the work, but if someone else wants to, more power to them.

Not long after the boycott was initiated against Pepsi by pro-life groups, a concerned shareholder filed a Shareholder Resolution in October, 2011, with the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC). PepsiCo attorneys responded by drafting a plea to the SEC to nullify the resolution. In 2012 PepsiCo succeeded, with the help of the current Administration, to keep its contentious process from being altered by shareholder input.

In a decision delivered Feb 28th ...[the] Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) ruled that PepsiCo's use of cells derived from aborted fetal remains in their research and development agreement with Senomyx to produce flavor enhancers falls under "ordinary business operations." ... In that filing, PepsiCo pleaded with the SEC to reject the Shareholder's Resolution filed in October, 2011 that the company "adopt a corporate policy that recognizes human rights and employs ethical standards which do not involve using the remains of aborted human beings in both private and collaborative research and development agreements." (Henry Westen, 2012, p.1)

It should be noted that a May 1, 2012, *Washington Times* article informed the general public that Debi Vinnedge called off the year-long pro-life boycott of Pepsi products. The article

referenced a letter written to the group by Paul Boykas, PepsiCo Vice President for global public policy:

...the company does no research that uses embryos or fetal cells and that Senomyx will not use the HEK line for Pepsi products.... “Senomyx does not use HEK cells or any other tissues or cell lines derived from human embryos or fetuses for research performed on behalf of PepsiCo....”

One would hope PepsiCo made the decision to alter their “ordinary business operations” with Senomyx on sound moral principles, rather than reacting only to financial fallout and negative public relations created by the boycott. It would have been even more encouraging if PepsiCo had severed all ties with a company that uses HEK and “cultured” human cell lines. Business relationships between companies such as Senomyx and PepsiCo are probably very numerous. Only time will tell if employees become whistleblowers or pro-life organizations expose more forms of the “new cannibalism” under the guise of “ordinary business operations.” If more such atrocities surface, will the Christian Church begin to take effective action to stop commercial and medical entities from using the preborn as material for their products or research endeavors?

Initial Response

Has the Western Church become irrelevant and dysfunctional in responding to the growing number of moral issues affecting Western culture and the world today? What many call the “culture of death” seems to be having greater success in spreading its message of godlessness in Western culture than the Church is in extending its godly influence. Western Christians need to be brutally honest with themselves and acknowledge that large segments of the Church are becoming “...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:4,5). Many of us need a Holy Spirit wake-up call to open our spiritually blurred or blind eyes to see just how ineffective the Church has become due to spiritual and moral decay. This decay has enabled the murder of millions of innocent babies in the name of reproductive choice each year, with no end in sight. Our ineffectiveness in stemming the tide of abortion has allowed the creation of a new killing field in the laboratory where humanity, under the guise of research, is being destroyed to provide so-called “health” benefits to a world possessed with adoring “self.”

As Western culture tries to be tolerant of the many voices crying out for acceptance, the inevitable result of an “anything goes” type of society naturally begins to take shape. This “Gomorrhah culture” has been emerging, aided by ideologies that helped spawn the sexual revolution that looks to self-rule and reliance upon technology and science to shape society, not Judeo-Christian values. The worldview that accompanies this mentality accepts all sorts of viewpoints, creating a spiritual vacuum. Hence, the Church, which had incredible influence on Western culture in the past, needs to confront societal ills today, being willing to die to self and obey God at all costs, even unto death.

To effectively respond to moral issues like abortion and the “new cannibalism,” the Christian Church must realize that it needs to engage itself “fully” into society, to be the salt and light God intends it to be. Full engagement begins with total surrender to Almighty God, and a willingness to be open to the Isaiah spirit that declares “Here am I. Send me” (Isaiah 6:8). This

commitment helps the believer to better understand God's unconditional love extended through the Holy Spirit, which needs to be displayed and ministered to those around us. We must not forsake our first love if we want to move in God's power and strength. We must first love Him and our neighbors, which include the unborn. The Church must recognize that it can no longer be in love with this world, but needs to be a stranger to its ways, and give complete allegiance to the one and only God who can give strength and purpose to a dying world.

Final Thoughts

A June 1, 2012, *Washington Times* article, "Bill to Ban Abortions for Sex Selection Defeated," continues to show just how entrenched abortion is in Western society, especially in the United States. Congress could not even pass a bill that protects against abortions performed because the expected child is the "wrong" sex. The votes fell well short of the two-thirds needed for passage of the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act (PRENDA). The *Times* article stated, "The Obama administration does not support PRENDA because government should not intrude in medical decisions or private family matters in this way." The rejection of this bill should have produced a thunderous rebuke from church leadership throughout United States, as well as other western nations. Instead, there was mostly silence with sparse, ineffective action.

Another *Times* article, "Premeditated Murder of Newborns," dated March 13, 2012, revealed that two bioethicists, Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva, published a paper in the prestigious *Journal of Medical Ethics*, which proposes the deliberate, premeditated murder of newborn babies. The mere fact that such an outrageous paper was allowed any recognition by a well established medical journal is testimony that the medical profession has lost its direction, meaning and purpose. A mentality that even allows the discussion of accepting infanticide, in union with sex selection abortions, feeds into the "culture of death" that causes the "new cannibalism" to thrive and move toward its logical but unthinkable end. The author of the article, Representative Christopher H. Smith, stated the following extreme and bizarre statements by the two bioethicists:

"...when circumstances occur after birth such that they would have justified abortion, what we call after-birth abortion should be permissible." ... "Actual people's well-being could be threatened by the new (even healthy) child requiring energy, money and care which the family might happen to be in short supply of."

The article also said:

The murder of newly born children is further justified by Mr. Giubilini and Ms. Minerva because newborn infants, like their younger sisters and brothers in the womb, "cannot have formed any aim that she is prevented from accomplishing." In other words, no dreams, no plans for the future, no "aims" that can be discerned, recognized or understood by adults means no life.

The influence of abortion and the "new cannibalism" may gain increased prominence as traditional values voters become disillusioned or frustrated because their presidential and congressional candidates are not being elected. After the 2012 elections in the United States many conservative talking heads and pundits tied to national organizations and the media placed blame for the recent GOP presidential loss at the feet of social conservatives or the religious right. If the Republican Party's platform on the sanctity of life becomes more aligned with the

pro-abortion Democratic Party platform, because party leaders believe it will sway more voters toward the GOP, the “new cannibalism” will gain additional momentum. When it comes to voting, believers must realize they themselves are in league with supporting the agenda of death if they vote for candidates who do not protect human life. It can also be said that if Christians do not undertake the privilege of voting, they miss the opportunity to support pro-life candidates and legislation, and by default they support the pro-death agenda.

Though the “new cannibalism” hasn’t fully blossomed into Western civilization knowingly accepting the eating of human flesh, the indirect forms of cannibalizing the preborn must be recognized and confronted by the Body of Christ. If these veiled forms of cannibalism are increasingly accepted, Western culture may well fall into the unthinkable, yet inevitable reality that mirrors the heartless conversation found in 2 Kings 6:28: “Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we’ll eat my son.”

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