

love her and help her through her heartache. She will have a father for maybe another ten years and then just this one brother. That is true for all two-child families. I think their parents may be doing them a disservice. The world can be a lonely place, especially after the parents die.

A Catholic obstetrician whom I know and admire placed an advertisement once in a women's magazine: "Open your homes and hearts to love—have another baby." Proponents of the stop-at-two mentality were deeply offended, and there were several irate letters to the magazine complaining about this infringement of their rights to nonreproduction. They also accused him of soliciting more baby-business. He wasn't; he was merely concerned that so many of his affluent patients were asking him to tie their tubes (an operation he doesn't perform, nor does he prescribe contraceptives) after the first or second delivery. The whole thing made him sad.

What amused me about the advertisement was the outrage

it stirred. Yet it's not atypical. Although my comment that I hope to have four or five kids inevitably provokes astonishment, criticism, laughter, or all three, my friends who intend stopping at two get rather touchy if you greet *their* announcements with a similar response.

As I said earlier, my friends at playgroup are a lovely bunch of women and very good mothers. I find their criticism more irritating than offensive because I know they don't intend any insult. And I guess I find their views of the "perfect family size" disturbing not because I think it's unethical (who knows what their deep motivation might be?) but because it seems so unimaginative. Childbearing is fast becoming the activity of radicals! I guess the most subversive member of the playgroup is Daniel, who fouled up his mom's well-intentioned plans and wouldn't take "no" for an answer. To Daniel (and to all today's imaginative, radical mothers who go on to have three, four or ten children) I tip my hat!

— Mary Arnold

The Attack on the Family and the Secularizing of the Social Order

Many of the most violent attacks on morality taking place today seem to be centered around questions of sexual morality. The controversies surrounding sex education in schools, acceptance of homosexual conduct, pornography, divorce, and, of course, the paramount matter of abortion—all these would seem to have sex as their common theme. But though all these obviously concern sex, it is rather marriage and the family that is the real connection among them, for they are all attacks, in one way or another, on the family as the home of responsible sex between spouses. Every organized attack on sexual morality is in fact

an assault on the family, for each is an attempt to sever the bonds between husband and wife or parents and children, or to prevent a family from being established in the first place by poisoning the relations of the unmarried, encouraging promiscuity, pornography, homosexual conduct, or the distrust between the sexes that feminism promotes.

Alongside this fierce attack, though, there is an equally spirited defense of the family, ranging from the papal exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* to the many political action or apostolic groups explicitly calling themselves profamily. But both this explicit attack and defense are new phenomena. In the

past there was little direct criticism of the family or need to defend it. Even Margaret Sanger's propaganda for birth control was presented in the main as an aid for the traditional family. The family, then, hitherto more or less taken for granted, has become a matter of dispute. As a result, two related questions suggest themselves: Why is the family such a matter of controversy, and why has the battle begun so recently?

The family is obviously the target of an attack because of its importance. The reason it is a *current* target is because at this point in history the family has been deprived of its natural defenses, a matter I will speak about later. The ultimate target of this assault by the forces of evil is the individual, the only entity which can be saved or damned; but destroying the family is an important step toward achieving this end, because the family is both the home and the shield of the individual person.

Although both the family and the state are natural to man, "the domestic household is anterior both in idea and in fact to the gathering of men into a commonwealth."¹ It is the place where the human race forms its young, where both piety and virtue must be learned and individual character molded. As a shield the family protects the individual and also fulfills some indispensable tasks of society. It protects the individual from the state. For if the state dealt with individuals simply as individuals, instead of as members of families and other groups, the individual, standing alone, would have no defense against arbitrary exercises of state power. If children, for example, were reared in common by the state, imagine the thick books of regulations for child-raising that would be needed, regulations that would burden both the children and their keepers.

This interposition of the family and other bodies between the individual and the state is useful to the

state as well, for it frees the state from the need to attend to many petty details, which would be burdensome and make the state's officious presence resented by everyone.

The family, then, is the place where the individual can live and function as a person, where the limits of freedom and order can be set and reset with the maximum respect for the individual and the absence of administrative apparatus or bureaucracy. It is the primary home of the human race and necessary for its happy continuance.

As I said, though, it is not the family but the individual which is the ultimate object of the contemporary assault on the family, and the aim of the attack has nothing to do with sex. Implicit in secularism is a savage totalitarianism, which will not stop with merely remaking society. Its goal is the remaking of man himself after the fashion of whatever psychological theory appeals to the remakers at the time. The teachers and school psychologists, for example, who attempt to alter children's attitudes and moral standards, desire in the end nothing but an individual remade, a human being all of whose beliefs and opinions conform completely to the dictates of the secularist ideology. I suspect that the teachers and psychologists themselves scarcely realize the whole of what they are working toward, for the logic of totalitarian conformity is hidden so deeply in secularism that many of its adherents do not see it. They are nevertheless driven by it, and in the end by the fallen angelic minds, who, in one way or another, direct every attack on human welfare. The goal of the fallen angels is always the damnation of souls, and we may be sure that a totalitarian conformity will serve that end.

The fight on behalf of the family, then, is nothing but the defense of the individual, a battle being conducted at the inner defenses, because the outer defenses have long since been breached and

largely overwhelmed. How these outer defenses were seized brings me to my second question.

Why is the family being attacked just now? Why has the attack begun in our time? The family is the object of assault at this time because the great revolt against Christian morals that began in the late Middle Ages has almost completely attained its first objective, the desacralizing of the political and socioeconomic orders. This revolt against Christian morality—which actually may be termed a revolt against God, because it is a chafing at the restraints imposed by Him when He made us as finite and purposeful beings—is able to take on the family directly now because it has succeeded in excluding religion from our political and socioeconomic life. The remote origins of today's attack on the family may be found in the attack on economic morality that began at the end of the Middle Ages. Outside the teaching Church, these forces triumphed nearly totally. According to Church teaching, the political and social orders, obedient to Christ, were meant to be a protection to the family, which could perform its function quietly under their shadow. This is why, before our age, so little has been said about the family; it calmly went about its business, defended by the state and the social order.

The forces of secularism began their assault on society by capturing the economic system. Using the powerful motive of human greed, they demanded that economic activity be freed from its traditional restraints and from the institutions that embodied them, such as the guilds, in the interest of an unlimited and irresponsible acquisition of wealth. By secularizing the economy they were able to secularize the culture, for an economic system puts demands on a culture, and an economy that no longer respects the moral law will gradually cause changes in ways of thinking and living that will secularize a culture. By doing this, they

were able to destroy much of traditional European Catholic life, ultimately creating the secularized urban masses of today. It is important to realize the relation between family morality and economic morality, for the attack on the family is not some isolated action but rather a part of the great attempt (largely successful) to secularize society and finally seize control of the individual.

The historical movement responsible for this secularization is European Liberalism, the historical movement that has continually called for a "freeing up" of society and morality in the interests of individual appetite, whether pecuniary, artistic, or sexual. I call it European not because it is confined to that continent, but because it originated there. What is the fundamental error which underlies all its manifestations and demands? It is that religion is merely a private affair of the individual.

The phrase "religion is of private concern" hits the nail right on the head. There is nothing to prevent man as a "private" individual, that is, detached from society, from having and practicing religion. However, it is wholly impossible to establish a connection between religion and human society. The social sphere lacks religion, that is, it lacks relation to God. This shows strikingly how unacceptable to us Christians the phrase "religion is a matter of private concern" becomes.... We... must consider the phrase "religion is a matter of private concern" as *the* great and fundamental heresy of the social order... which we oppose by the statement: "Religion is *not merely* a matter of *private concern*, but it is to *no less extent* a matter of *society*."²

This exclusion of religion from public life is the fundamental error of European Liberalism. In its first appearance it sought the removal of religion from economic life; later the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century proposed the secularization of all political and cultural life, and the French

Revolution actually accomplished these objectives for a time. For the Revolution not only attempted to eliminate the influence of the Faith from social and cultural life, in fact to abolish Christianity altogether; it also banned the gathering of workingmen into guilds or unions, thus achieving all the goals of Liberalism since the end of the Middle Ages.

In abolishing religion entirely, however, the Revolution went too far for most people, and the later Liberals were generally willing to permit the Church to function if she limited her activities to the sanctuary. By attempting to prevent the Church from exercising any influence or authority in society at large, they aimed at making religion a wholly private affair of personal piety and morality. Religion now became an entirely individual and also optional matter. The more thoroughgoing secularization which the Revolutionaries originally tried—changing the calendar, closing the churches—could wait; for by establishing the notion that Christianity had nothing to say on any public, cultural, social or political question, they had effectively rendered religion harmless.

Meanwhile in England, the establishment of the new economic science by Adam Smith and others firmly planted the idea that the economic order was independent of the moral order, entirely self-contained and subject only to its own rules. This too was part of Liberalism's program, and continued the work of overthrowing Christian economic morality which had been going on since late medieval times. Nineteenth-century Liberal governments fiercely opposed attempts by workers to organize to protect themselves against the harsh conditions brought about by the free market. As Pius XI noted:

at that period rulers of not a few nations were deeply infected with Liberalism and regarded such unions of workingmen with disfavor, if not with open hostility. While readily recognizing and patronizing similar corporations amongst other classes, with criminal injustice they denied the innate right of forming associations to those who needed them most for self-protection against oppression by the more powerful.³

Liberalism, which we see today loudly clamoring for sexual freedom, at that time loudly clamored

for economic freedom. For the view of life that rejects the order of God for the use of our bodies in sex also rejects it when applied to work and moneymaking. Liberalism, consistent with its principles, first ejected Christ from the marketplace and now excludes Him from the bedroom. Thus Adam Smith must join Marsilius of Padua, Voltaire, Jeremy Bentham and the Mills as some of the principal progenitors of that secular Liberalism which so largely reigns today.

Now Catholicism has, of course, always opposed this Liberalism, and several nineteenth-century popes issued perceptive analyses and condemnations of it, recognizing and pointing out its root error. Leo XIII, for example, wrote in the encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum*:

Many wish the State to be separated from the Church wholly and entirely, so that with regard to every right of human society, in institutions, customs, and laws, the offices of State, and the education of youth, they would pay no more regard to the Church than if she did not exist; and, at most, would allow the citizens individually to attend to their religion in private if so minded.⁴

This was the kind of civilization that European Liberalism sought to introduce everywhere, a civilization in which all public life, all public discourse, would be conducted without reference to God or to religion. This civilization they termed progressive and modern. It is in this context that the famous last condemned proposition of the Syllabus of Errors must be understood, namely, "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization."

Far from being an absurdity uttered by an imbecile, this condemnation, made so fearlessly by Pius IX, was directed against the fundamental error that Christ's Church could and should acquiesce in her progressive exclusion from the



public and corporate life of man. For if the Church must confine its activity to conducting services for those who choose to attend, and must take no part in the moral, social, and cultural life of man or the education of youth, then the world is separated not only from the Church but from God as well, for all of human life then has nothing to do with religion. God may exist, but don't bother about Him. He has no relevance to human life or society.

It is not hard to see that this is the same sort of society that secular Liberals of our era and nation desire to introduce. One can see this in the hostility of public educationists to religious schools or to prayer in the public schools, in the outrage Liberals give vent to when religious doctrine is made a factor in political debate, in the studious ignoring of God in broadcasting or academic discourse. In short, God is never, anywhere, under any circumstances, by anyone, to be mentioned as in fact

existing as our Creator and coming Judge. At most, religion may be mentioned and examined as a sociological phenomenon or private system of belief, but only as a matter of private choice, basically an irrational adherence to an idiosyncratic system of belief. This is their ideal. This is what Liberalism strives for in society.

NOTES

1. Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, section 10. Translation from *Seven Great Encyclicals* (New York: Paulist Press, 1963), p. 6.
- 2) Oswald von Nell-Breuning, *Reorganization of Social Economy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1936-37), p. 299.
- 3) Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, section 30. Translation from Nell-Breuning, p. 408.
- 4) Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas Praestantissimum*, section 39. Translation from Etienne Gilson, ed., *The Church Speaks to the Modern World* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image, 1954), p. 79.

— Thomas Storck

case, it is genetically irrelevant how many other kids succeed the first-born *Wunderkind*. Or it is arguing for the nurture advantages of the one- or two-child family? In this case, all the listed statistics for the over-achieving of firstborns in large families—like James Joyce, first in a family of 10—need to be thrown out as counter-evidence to the ZPG agenda.

There is very little published evidence that the people whose tastes incline them to favor vasectomies, strangled births, and abortifacients are prepared to clarify which chain of reasoning, beyond intellectual peer pressure, has brought them to what we may politely term their logical conclusions. What we can do is deal with the ZPG claim about birth-order placement and genius, by browsing in an encyclopedia and checking out the first chapter of a few biographies.

Let us begin with a few intellectual heavyweights. "Heavyweight" we define as someone whose name could not be omitted in a serious detailed history of the West. In examining the families they were born into, we do, as the ZPG-ers claim, detect possible statistical patterns in some birth-order figures. However, the figures are not what the ZPG people predict.

For example, Jane Austen was seventh in a family of eight. Napoleon Bonaparte was eighth of eight. Benjamin Franklin was seventeenth of 17. Samuel Coleridge was thirteenth of 13. St. Thomas Aquinas was the youngest son in his father's second marriage; at least three or four older sisters are known to have existed. Gandhi was the youngest in a large family. Mozart was seventh of seven. Schubert was thirteenth of 14. The famous tenor Enrico Caruso was eighteenth-born in his family.

If we lower the achievement crossbar a bit, but not too far, we find that Irving Berlin was seventh

Birth Order Statistics and ZPG Myths

I believe that the most anti-scientific and hysterically pseudo-religious group in the world today is the Zero Population Growth bunch. False projection and hatred of life is their forte, and facts are not allowed to intrude. You will notice that I am a little bit sour on the subject.

— R. A. Lafferty,
science fiction writer,
in *Luna*, Spring 1977

Zero Population Growth, or ZPG, is a relatively recent addition to the mental universe of what, for want of a better term, we still describe as the American educated class. In a derivative trickle-down fashion, ZPG terms, attitudes, ideals, are part of the liberated-Catholic intellectual kit. The two-

child Dick and Jane family ideal, the state-subsidized prevention of conception (hopefully with high-paying jobs for the operators of the relevant bureaucracy), a general anti-fertility *ethos*: all these now need to be dealt with as implicit premises rather than as reasoned conclusions.

ZPG slipped into and then out of the realm of civic debate for several reasons. As a result, one specific ZPG claim—that firstborns more tend to be over-achievers than those that appear at the tail-end of a large family—has never received the scrutiny it deserved. The claim already involves its proponent in the nature vs. nurture debate about human upbringing. But is ZPG arguing for a biological superiority in coming first? In that