

When Having a Baby Is a Crime

Over the years, many people have asked me to **pray** for them concerning a myriad problems and difficulties, but a request for **prayer** from a Christian living in mainland China was a first for me: His wife was pregnant with their second child, and with his country's draconian one-child policy, having a second child would mean severe fines and penalties for many years to come. Would I please pray for him and for his wife?

While the situation in China is extreme, it is part of a much larger, global picture which includes: children viewed as a burden more than a blessing; the denigration of life in the womb; the deterioration of marriage and family, which itself includes the downgrading of motherhood and fatherhood.

As we approach the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, worldwide abortion figures are staggering. Fairly recent statistics supplied by the pro-abortion Alan Guttmacher Institute indicate that China is the international leader in abortions, at roughly 8 million annually (26.1 per 1,000 women), followed by the Russian Federation, with roughly million per year (68.4 per 1,000 women), then Vietnam with 1.5 million (83.3 per 1,000 women), then America with million (22.9 per 1,000 women), then Ukraine with 635 thousand (57.1 per 1,000 women).

In Russian and Ukraine, it is not uncommon to hear of women who have had six, seven, eight or even nine abortions, since this is a principle means of **birth control**. What effect does this have on these women and on the men who father these children?

In February 1994, Mother Teresa filed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court stating, "America needs no words from me to see how your decision in *Roe v. Wade* has deformed a great nation. The so-called **right to abortion** has pitted mothers against their children and women against men. It has sown violence and

discord at the heart of the most intimate human relationships. It has aggravated the derogation of the father's role in an increasingly fatherless society. It has portrayed the greatest of gifts—a child—as a competitor, an intrusion and an inconvenience. It has nominally accorded mothers unfettered dominion over the independent lives of their physically dependent sons and daughters.”

She added, “The right to life does not depend, and must not be declared to be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign.”

Is it any surprise, then, as abortion rates have soared in numerous countries around the globe that the family structure has been in serious decline in those countries as well? Aren't motherhood and fatherhood and the esteem for babies and children closely interrelated?

China is facing a crisis now with its aging population and a disproportionate number of men compared to women, the latter being the result of parents aborting girls so that their one child will be a male.

In some cases, Chinese parents have simply discarded their female infants at birth, which brings to mind this letter dated to 1 B.C.. It was written by a Roman man named Hilarion to his pregnant wife, Alis, mixing tenderness with casual barbarity: “Know that I am still in Alexandria. And do not worry if they all come back and I remain in Alexandria. I ask and beg you to take good care of our baby son, and as soon as I receive payment I shall send it up to you. If you are delivered for a child [before I come home], if it is a boy keep it, if a girl discard it. You have sent me word, ‘Don't forget me.’ How can I forget you. I beg you not to worry.”

But China is hardly alone when it comes to low birth rates that will not be able to sustain future generations. From Japan to Greece to Russia to Spain, plummeting birth rates are

becoming a national crisis. (For more on this, see Mark Steyn's book *America Alone*.)

Putting this in the context of the wider problem of family deterioration, a *New York Times* article from February, stated, "It used to be called illegitimacy. Now it is the new normal. After steadily rising for five decades, the share of children born to unmarried women has crossed a threshold: more than half of births to American women under 30 occur outside marriage."

As striking as this is, according to a May, 2009 report in *USA Today*, America's rate of 40 percent illegitimacy for all live births was well behind that of the UK (44 percent), Denmark (46 percent), France (50 percent), Norway (54 percent), Sweden (55 percent) and Iceland (66 percent).

On the other hand, these Scandinavian countries have a higher percentage of couples living together outside of wedlock, and so the United States still leads the way in single-parent homes. Headlines like this, from Dec. 25 in the *Washington Times*, say it all: "Fathers disappear from households across America. Big increase in single mothers."

The story notes that, "Nicole Hawkins' three daughters have matching glittery boots, but none has the same father. Each has uniquely colored ties in her hair, but none has a dad present in her life. ... In her neighborhood in Southeast Washington [D.C.], 1 in 10 children live with both parents, and 84 percent live with only their mother."

What this means is that we have an epidemic of babies not wanted (either not conceived, killed in the womb or even discarded), babies born out of wedlock, single moms, absentee dads and, in many countries, an aging society that will not be replenished.

Is there any way to reverse the tide?

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