

Priest urges stand on genetic engineering

by Alex Matheson

A Hamilton priest has alerted Halton Roman Catholic school teachers to the dangerous lack of moral policies to deal with genetic control.

Father Steve Connor, public relations officer for the Diocese of Hamilton, said that developments in medical science could lead to dangerous and disturbing consequences. "There is now an undreamed-of power over the end and beginning of life," he told teachers in his keynote address during a recent professional development day.

Along with this control goes the most insidious aspect, further management of life, he said.

This highlights the need for a fundamental re-evaluation of standards of practice in medicine, said Father Connor, a student of bioethics.

Control of genes is what he sees as the major factor on the horizon at the moment. The mapping of genes could be complete in five years, he added.

With it goes the possibility of preventing the occurrence of 3,000 gene-related diseases.

Since it will still not be possible to save everyone, the question is who to save, Father Connor said.

Does one permit treatment for the young versus the old, the healthy versus the infirm or is a decision based on race, occupation or perceived intelligence, he asked.

With the power to remake the human person, the question is in whose image, Father Connor suggested.

He believes the responsibility for this is too great to be left only to doctors.

"Society has bought the principle that management is better than chance and we are now just beginning to get the power," he added.

Birth is an area he focussed on, in connection with management.

"It is easier to manage than follow reproductive roulette," he said.

The use of amniocentesis, coupled with

abortion, where a potential flaw is detected, is the management where genetic defect is suspected.

Father Connor said that this case of eliminating the manifestation of the problem decreases the incentive to correct the defect.

He suggested that expected success with test tube fertilization may eventually eliminate sexual intercourse as the general method of fertilization.

The priest doesn't really fear the emergence of a sinister person controlling people for malicious reasons, but merely the backing into a situation by well meaning scientists.

Some people with control over test tube clinics state that nobody would do anything deliberately evil, related Father Connor.

Silverwood

W.I. hears about Women's Place

by Eva Martin

May Bell of Halton's Women's Place in Milton was the guest speaker at Silverwood Women's Institute March meeting held at the home of Willa Shortill.

Halton Women's Place, open since October 1980, serves all of Halton. To date, about 360 women and family's have passed through their doors. Many of these women physically or mentally abused have been helped by the organization's programs.

A pot luck birthday party for members over 75 years was also celebrated.

A quilting course for 20 women is in full swing with Doris Lindsay and Willa Shortill as leaders.

Next meeting to be held on April 14, 7.30 p.m. at the home of Riny Mostaard.

However, with an expected proliferation of these clinics, we can't leave it to trust, without moral control, he said.

Clinic operators would say "a person wants a baby, they should have one," Father Connor said. He is not convinced this is adequate justification.

Despite his skepticism about things to come, he says there will be no return to an age of purity.

"There is no de-inventing. Once something is invented, it is here and there is no going back."

Father Connor defended the Catholic church, saying that it is not negative and has developed a sophisticated position on medical ethics. "It doesn't have a problem with being contemporary."

He asked teachers if the church does not have a responsibility to be a source on medical ethics.

He criticized the separate schools for not making more use of television in education, particularly in teaching moral values.

Young people spend much time watching television, so schools should take advantage of this media. He suggested dramas with a moral message.

With the power to affect creation, we have to rethink creation, he added.

He said that this will be a paramount issue when cloning of a human being is possible. The priest expects that is not more than 25 years away and could come much earlier if there is a public demand for it. The social climate does not favor it yet, he added.

Where healing ends and the creation of a superman begins, is a decision that will have to be considered soon.

"Being human is a surprise not a foregone conclusion," he said.

Father Connor asked the teachers what the result for society would be if the poor and crippled were eliminated from the world.

Ultimately, the question will be who should control the power to control genes, he said.

Anglican bishop pleads for more patience with fads

by Wilma Blokhuis

A trend evident within a certain segment of society which reflects a playboy attitude towards prevented violence against women is an old as "ancient pagan hedonism," says Bishop John Bothwell.

Speaking at the recent 29th annual meeting of Halton Family Services, the bishop said the Church should be making a stronger statement on the sexual permissiveness permeating society.

He feels today's pace of life causes "many to have renewed hunger for sexual intimacy" at the same time wishing to have "no strings attached." "Sexual intimacy for pleasure is not morally wrong if serious intentions and expression of tender loving care we require and hunger for is there."

The bishop, who describes himself as a "Christian humanist," caused a slight stir in the audience in stating "we need to be more patient in the churches and slower to judge people experimenting with newer lifestyles" such as common law or communal living.

Tradition inappropriate

"The traditional approach to sex is becoming inappropriate, and there is no new wisdom appearing to express this human need," said Bishop Bothwell of the Niagara Diocese. "Perhaps the church is not approaching this problem seriously as we have no guidance other than hedonism and the old traditional ideas."

The Anglican church leader was focusing his remarks on the 'Place of the Family in our Contemporary World, and attempted to give historical reasons why society's attitudes towards marriage has changed, with respect to a more ready acceptance of breakdowns. "The crack-up of families through separation and divorce is overtaking millions at once in many countries. It's absurd to think it's just personal."

Agreeing with Alvin Toffler's "Third Wave," the bishop feels society over the past three hundred years has been bewildered by the onslaught of the industrial revolution, and more recently, the computer age, while traditionally accepted mores are still based

in the centuries-old agricultural revolution.

Anglican change

"It was not until 15 years ago that Anglicans allowed remarriage after divorce—it was considered the unforgivable sin," he commented, adding the church is being faced with accepting a much less rigid approach. "We have to recognize this fact openly. An individual's responsibility and commitment (in a marriage) are enormously important and failure is often caused by circumstances, not moral failure."

In reflecting over his own personal beliefs, Bishop Bothwell admits "procreation is no longer the sole purpose of marriage. Couples limit their families or remain childless, which is not wrong if a responsible decision is made." This view is supported by all faiths except Catholicism, he added. He also observed "the human race can sustain itself with relatively little childbearing," because of fewer infant deaths. "Too many human births is undesirable."

ALSBO fee paid by board

By a slim margin, the Halton Board of Education voted to maintain its membership in ALSBO (Association of Large School Boards of Ontario).

In an effort to save the approximately \$21,000 membership fee, trustees Cam Jackson and Bill Priestner agreed not to join the association.

Board vice chairman Betty Fisher pointed out through ALSBO the board has an impact at the provincial level where many of the education decisions are made. She contended the association gives the board a strong voice at Queen's Park. "It is inconceivable that, trustees do not want a united front."

Esquering trustee Dick Howitt noted in the short time he has been on the board, and with ALSBO, he has seen many benefits.

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Household Hints

by Pauline McNelly



Colors readily run the first time you wash new T-shirts—but not as much if you presoak them in cool water and vinegar.

Fresh bread will be easier to cut if you dip the knife in boiling water.

Better than masking tape when you're painting around windowpanes, oil or petroleum jelly, applied to the edge of the glass with a cotton swab. Smears wipe off easily with a cloth.

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