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**The fifth commandment: a Biblical and Philosophical interpretation
and its application in the USA**

by

Timothy King Lent B.A., M.A., D.Min.
#21021589

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Promoter: Prof. Dr. R. B. Grainger
Co-Promoter: Prof. Dr. J.M. Vorster

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ABSTRACT

The Fifth Commandment: A Biblical and Philosophical Interpretation and Its Application in the USA addresses today's controversial moral issues relating to life and death, viewing them from a Christian worldview. The thesis also serves as a modern commentary on Exodus 20:13, which says, "You shall not murder." The prohibition means that one may never deliberately (intentionally) and directly (not accidentally) take the life of an innocent human being. It is a moral absolute, which applies to all times, in all places and for all people. A moral absolute is grounded in God's immutable nature and, therefore, does not change with the passing of time. But its application may and often does change with time.

Three fundamental presuppositions or starting-points are at work in writing the thesis. First, God has revealed his will to humankind in the Scriptures, which are interpreted by human beings whom God has endowed with the faculty of reason. By studying human acts in the light of God's revelation in the Scriptures and various Christian theological traditions, Christian scholars in ethics have discovered moral principles which govern the lives of all human beings.

Second, God the Creator designed, as it were, the blueprint on human nature. In other words, human beings are made in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). Since he is the Designer of human nature, he knows what moral acts are best or most fulfilling for the human person. Following his principles result in moral and spiritual health. Conversely, he prohibits moral acts which he knows are harmful to the human person.

Third, the prohibition against murder is a moral truth and, as such, is not subjective; that is, its veracity does not depend on whether the person feels or even thinks that it is wrong. Rather, the prohibition is objective, independent of the person's mind, existing in reality. Moral truth exists in reality, because the moral world is just as real as the physical world.

The three presuppositions are in diametrical opposition to the modern secularist worldview. Christians should be counter-cultural, which means, first, in theory,

they are willing to critique the moral errors of modern society in the light of the moral truths which are derived from biblical revelation. Second, in practice, they are willing to stand for the sanctity of human life in a "culture of death."

**THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT:
A BIBLICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
INTERPRETATION & ITS APPLICATION IN THE USA**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the thesis, unless otherwise noted, the English translation shall be taken from the *New American Standard Bible* (Bible, 1995). It should first of all be observed that there is not unanimous recognition regarding the numbering of the Ten Commandments within Christendom. Thus, I must identify which commandment I have in mind when referring to the Fifth Commandment. Generally, Protestants regard the Sixth Commandment as "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). However, according to the Catholic position, it is regarded as the Fifth Commandment, because, in Roman Catholic reckoning, the first six verses cover only one commandment (Senior *et al.*, 1990:83).

Exodus 20:13 says, "Thou shalt not kill" (KJV). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also translates Exodus 20:13 as "You shall not kill" (Anon., 1994: 544). However most modern translations of the Bible, such as the *New International Version*, render it as "You shall not murder" (Bible, 1984). Which version of the Bible is correct? Theologian John N. Oswalt (1996) explains,

... [T]he King James Version's 'Thou shalt not kill' is too broad to convey the sense of the Hebrew of the sixth command. The word used is *harag*, which does not refer to killing in general, but to the premeditated murder of one person by another. Thus, it is not proper to build a case against war or capital punishment upon the basis of this verse.

The understanding of the concept of killing is now so broad, that the terms really need to be more clearly defined. It seems clear from the Scripture that what is meant is actually murder (Anon., 1994: 2268; Thomas, ed., 1981: 1599), a point which is not lost with C.S. Lewis when he reminds us that on the three occasions when Jesus cited this commandment, he opted for the Greek *phoneuo*, which is translated "murder," rather than *apokteino*, which is translated "kill" (Lewis, 1960: 107; Vine, 1996: 620). Indeed, of the two terms, the former more accurately translates the Hebrew word *ratsach* (Archer, 1982: 121).

Therefore, I conclude that while all murder is killing, not all killing is murder. Throughout the thesis, I have consistently demonstrated that killing in self-defence, war and capital punishment may not necessarily be identified as murder, but that direct abortion, infanticide, euthanasia and suicide – assisted or otherwise – are, in fact, murder.

In the United States of America, there is a somewhat simplistic tendency on the part of many human rights movements and animal rights activists to apply the Fifth Commandment (i.e. Exodus 20:13) to occasions of war, capital punishment and the killing of animals, but fail to do so in cases of abortion (Schlossberg & Achtemeier, 1995), infanticide, euthanasia (Schaeffer & Koop, 1983) or suicide (White, 1982). Protest marches outside prisons and demonstrations outside animal testing laboratories seem to have more than their fair share of those carrying banners that plead the “Thou shalt not kill” argument in defence of their actions.

The seeming double standards are made more apparent by the pro-life versus pro-choice debate, whether the specific issues are over matters relating to active abortion or direct termination of the lives of those diagnosed with terminal illness. What seems even more clear is that such weighty matters should not be subject to a decision-making process that is governed by emotionally-charged experience or conditioned by personal opinion. Only a reasoned treatment of all the issues in the light of the biblical evidence can truly provide an outcome that is just and righteous (cf. Sparks, 1996; Groothuis, 2000; Brooks & Geisler, 2002). Therefore, the central question of this work is: “How may one determine the temporal longevity and universality of the Fifth Commandment, when adequately interpreted and appropriately applied?”

The questions that naturally arise from this problem are:

- What is the precise meaning of the Fifth Commandment and how may it be applied to the natural moral law?

- What is the extent of the Fifth Commandment as a moral absolute?

- How do anthropological presuppositions influence and affect our perception of the Fifth Commandment?

- What is the relationship between the Fifth Commandment and current ethical issues in the USA in the light of the above findings?

The aim of this thesis is to determine the moral extent, temporal longevity and universality of the Fifth Commandment, when adequately interpreted and appropriately applied.

The objectives of this study must be seen in their relationship to the aim. In doing so, I intend to approach the subject from four angles:

- i) To establish the precise meaning of the Fifth Commandment and its application to the natural moral law;

- ii) To identify the extent of the Fifth Commandment as a moral absolute;

- iii) To assess the influence and effects of anthropological presuppositions regarding the Fifth Commandment;

- iv) To evaluate the relationship between the Fifth Commandment and current ethical issues in the USA in the light of the above findings.

The central theoretical argument of this study is that only an appropriate application of the Fifth Commandment, based upon a correct interpretation, can protect the sanctity of human life from all other ethical systems that oppose it.

This theological and ethical study will employ an exegesis of the relevant biblical texts in conjunction with appropriate literary tools, such as Hebrew lexicons and similar word study guides. It will also address and critique violations of widely recognised principles of hermeneutics, which result in relativistic interpretations of Exodus 20:13 in the USA (e.g. Henrichsen & Jackson, 1990).

Because my religious background is from within the framework of the Anglican tradition, which – in the context of this subject matter – is in broad agreement with the Roman Catholic position, I propose to avoid any unwarranted allegations of potential bias by affording due recognition to sources of information that run counter to this position before arriving at conclusions that are based on the collated evidence.

2.0 THE MEANING OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE NATURAL MORAL LAW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although the concept of the natural law or the natural, moral law may be thought by some Christians to be grounded in a secular, pagan or non-Christian philosophy, actually it is not (cf. Budziszewski, 2003). There is a biblical basis for natural law philosophy. In fact, God reveals himself to humankind through the natural law. For example, the apostle Paul writes,

¹⁴ For when the Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them (Romans 2:14-15).

2.2 THE NATURAL MORAL LAW

The concept of the natural law (or the natural moral law) is "... primarily associated with the Roman Catholic Church," and, particularly, Catholic ethics or moral theology (VanEngen, 1984:751). The natural law is, in general, an issue of debate between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The natural law, implanted by God in human nature and discovered by human reason, does not tell human beings everything about the moral difference between right and wrong. If it did, then there would be no need for divine revelation, which is God's disclosure about the truth of the human person and his or her moral acts in Sacred Scripture.

The two prominent leaders of the Reformation, Martin Luther and John Calvin, accepted a biblical, rather than a purely philosophical, concept of the natural law. Nevertheless, VanEngen (1984:752) observes, "most Protestants, especially Karl Barth, continue to hold that ethical matters cannot be known in truth apart from the revelation of God's will in Jesus Christ and Holy Scripture."

For Barth, there are primarily two reasons for rejecting the natural law and natural theology, the general revelation of God in creation and in human reason. The first is the Fall - the sin of the first human couple and its ontological consequences for the human race - destroyed the image of God in the human person (for a more complete treatment of the *imago Dei* in the thesis, cf. 4.2). Second, there is an infinite, qualitative difference between God and human beings (Demarest, 1980:944). In short, Barth rejected the *analogia entis*, the “analogy of being,” between God and human beings and stated that God is the *Totaliter Aliter*, “Wholly Other,” radically different from humans (Sproul, Gerstner & Lindsley, 1984:75).

The only principle of the law natural law, which I am addressing, is the rational law against murder, which is deliberately and directly killing an innocent human being. In other words, a rational person really knows deep, down inside that murder is wrong, because it is woven into or designed in the normal human mind. Natural law scholar J. Budziszewski (2003) writes,

Consider the natural law against murder. It is not an arbitrary whim, but a rule which the mind can grasp as right. It serves not some special interest, but the universal good. Its author has care of the universe, for He created it. And it is not a secret rule, for He has so arranged His creation that every rational being knows about it.

The natural law against murder is presupposed or unconsciously accepted by rational human beings. They know that it is just plain wrong to murder another human being. The heinousness of the act itself Budziszewski (1998) calls “a pre-philosophical intuition.” In fact, Budziszewski (1998) goes so far as to say, “we can’t not know that it is wrong to deliberately kill human beings.” In denying the moral truth of the matter, a person must deny one of four things or all of them: first, the act of murder itself is deliberate; second, the act kills; third, the victims of murder are not human and, fourth, deny that murder must not be done (Budziszewski, 1998).

Scripture itself teaches that there is a natural law in the human person (cf. Romans 2:14-15). The Gentiles (non-Jewish peoples who were not God’s covenant people), in fact, receive from God an innate consciousness of general

moral principles of right and wrong. One of them is “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). The Gentiles do not have a revealed Law from God that is written in a book, the Bible or Sacred Scripture (Romans 2:14a). But they do have a law within their very make-up or constitution as human beings (Best, 1967:28).

The Gentiles “do instinctively the things of the Law” (Romans 2:14b). The Greek root-word (*phusis*) translated “instinctively” “is connected with *phuo*, ‘grow’, and indicates ‘what things grow into’, ‘essential nature’” (Morris, 1988:92). Hence, it means “the regular, natural order of things” (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957:877). Another translation says the Gentiles “do by nature things required by the law” (NIV).

The Greek word (*hotan*) translated “when” (Romans 2:14a) or, more accurately, “whenever” suggests that “Gentiles do not always do what is right, but sometimes they do” (Morris, 1988:124). Best (1967:29) observes, “Paul does not say that all Gentiles pay heed to their consciences, nor does he say that any particular Gentile does so consistently.”

By the phrase “the things of the Law” (Romans 2:14b), Paul does not mean that the Gentiles without the Torah or Law of Moses do everything which is written in it. Rather, Because God designed the natural moral law in human nature (Greek, *phusis*) and because the Gentiles have the same human nature as the Jews, “the Gentiles frame rules of conduct for themselves and know at least some of the things the Torah prescribes for the Jews” (Fitzmyer, 1968:298).

2.2.1 Conscience

The Gentiles “are a law to themselves” (Romans 2:14c); in the words of Arminian theologian H. Orton Wiley (1943:9), “they know in themselves what is good and what is evil, through reason which is to them the herald of divine law.” Wiley (1943:9) continues, “Natural law is that which God has written upon the heart of every man, or that which the light of reason teaches us is good or evil.” Another way of expressing the same idea is the natural law can be detected by natural human reason, which, Wiley (1943:10) says, “is from the Light that

lighteth all men coming into the world.” Wiley is referring to the Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity, the agent of creation, in John 1:9.

Similarly, the Reformed theologian John Calvin (1979, II, 2, 22) defines the natural law as “the judgement of conscience distinguishing sufficiently between just and unjust, and by convicting men on their own testimony depriving them of all pretext for ignorance.” He teaches that the natural law is manifested in the behaviour of Gentiles or unbelievers. Calvin (1979, II, 2, 22) comments on Romans 2:14-15, “If the Gentiles have the righteousness of the law naturally engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether blind as to the rule of life.” Calvin (1979, II, 2, 22) continues, “Nothing, indeed is more common, than for man to be sufficiently instructed in a right course of conduct by natural law, of which the Apostle here speaks.”

In Romans, 2:14-15, then, St. Paul is teaching that it is not necessary to be either a Jew or a Christian in order to know the general moral law, implanted by God in human nature, specifically, the conscience (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:16).

God does not always speak to a person’s conscience nor can it always be one’s guide, because it has been tainted by original sin and therefore can be misinformed and distorted. Conscience can be “good” (cf. I Timothy 1:5, 19), “clear” (cf. I Timothy 3:9), “weak” (cf. I Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12), “defiled” (cf. I Corinthians 8:7; Titus 1:15), “seared” (cf. I Timothy 4:2) and “evil” (cf. Hebrews 10:22).

Nevertheless, the general law of right and wrong which is written or implanted by God in the human conscience can be defaced but not erased; it can be distorted but not totally destroyed. “Even when it is rejected in its very principles, it cannot be destroyed or removed from the heart of man. It always rises again in the life of individuals and societies” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:1958).

2.2.2 The Natural Law and the Ten Commandments

The traditional view of the Ten Commandments is that they were revealed by God to Moses and the Israelites on Mount Sinai (cf. Luther's Catechism, 1982:45). Virtually the same view is also expressed by modern biblical exegetes (c.f. Fitzmyer, 1968). The Ten Commandments are also an expression of the natural moral law, which was written by God in the human heart or conscience. St. Irenaeus (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:2070) says, "From the beginning, God had implanted in the heart of man the precepts of the natural law. Then he was content to remind him of them. This was the Decalogue."

Reformed theologian John Calvin taught that the Ten Commandments have been inscribed on the human heart. Referring to the two tables of the Ten Commandments, he says,

the very things contained in the two tables are, in a manner, dictated to us by that internal law, which ... is in a manner written and stamped on every heart. For conscience, instead of allowing us to stifle our perceptions, and sleep on without interruption, acts as an inward witness and monitor, reminds us of what we owe to God, points out the distinction between good and evil, and thereby convicts us of departure from duty.

(Calvin, 1979:II, 8, 1)

2.2.3 Noetic Effects of Sin in Reformed and Roman Catholic Theology

Although human beings have the natural law of God implanted in them, that does not mean they clearly perceive all of God's natural law. The reason is that, depending on the individual, different degrees of sin cloud the human intellect and conscience. In Reformed theology, this is called "the noetic effects of sin" (Sproul, Gerstner & Lindsley, 1984:241, 244). For Calvin, the Ten Commandments were necessary in order to give human beings a clearer knowledge of God's moral will than what they know by nature, which is liable to err. He says,

But man, being immured in the darkness of error, is scarcely able, by means of that natural law, to form any tolerable idea of the worship which is acceptable to God. At all events, he is very far from forming any correct knowledge of it. In addition to this, he is so swollen with arrogance and ambition, and so blinded with self-love, that he is unable to survey, and, as it were, descend into himself, that he may so learn to humble and abase himself, and confess his misery. Therefore, as a necessary remedy, both for our dullness and our contumacy, the Lord has given us his written Law, which, by its sure attestations, removes the obscurity of the law of nature, and also, by shaking off our lethargy, makes a more lively and permanent impression on our minds.

(Calvin, 1979:II, 8, 1)

Catholic theology also teaches the noetic effects of sin. Grace, that is, the free gift of God's revelation of himself to humankind, helps the human person to know divine truths more clearly, even if those truths can already be known by human reason alone. Thomas Aquinas (1947:I-II, q. 109, art. 1) says,

for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs Divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act. But he does not need a new light added to his natural light, in order to know the truth in all things, but only in some that surpass his natural knowledge. And yet at times God miraculously instructs some by His grace in things that can be known by natural reason, even as He sometimes brings about miraculously what nature can do.

Human reason – unaided by the special revelation of God in the Scriptures – can know God's general revelation of himself in creation and in human nature, which includes the natural law. Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 2, art. 4) writes,

It is necessary for man to accept by faith not only things which are above reason, but also those which can be known by reason.... for the sake of certitude. For human reason is very deficient in things concerning God. A sign of this is that philosophers in their researches, by natural investigation, into human affairs, have fallen into many errors, and have disagreed among themselves. And consequently, in order that men might have knowledge of God, free of doubt and uncertainty, it was necessary for Divine matters to be delivered to them by way of faith, being told to them, as it were, by God Himself Who cannot lie.

In that the natural law is inscribed on the heart or conscience of human beings, they do have a basic (but not necessarily and always accurate) knowledge of the Ten Commandments. But to make the knowledge of the natural (moral) law more clear to humankind, God reveals the Ten Commandments. "The commandments of the Decalogue, although accessible to reason alone, have been revealed. To attain a complete and certain understanding of the requirements of the natural law, sinful humanity needed this revelation" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:2071). In the words of Saint Bonaventure (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:2071), "A full explanation of the commandments of the Decalogue became necessary in the state of sin because the light of reason was obscured and the will had gone astray." This is also the teaching of Pope Pius XII (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:37) who writes,

Though human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of ... the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator; yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. ... The human mind ... is hampered ... not only by the impact of the senses and the imagination, but also by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin.

2.2.4 Summary

There is a difference between the mode of God's revelation to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Jews received God's special revelation in the Scriptures or the Ten Commandments, which were inscribed on two stone tablets. The Gentiles did not possess the specially revealed, external law of God, that is, the Ten Commandments. But God so designed human nature that the Gentiles did possess an internal law of God. It is a part of God's general revelation of himself to all human beings and is called "the natural law." The human heart or conscience, then, contains the Ten Commandments, though not necessarily in the exact sequence of their written form.

In summary, even though in one way the Gentiles do not possess the Ten Commandments in writing; in another way, the Gentiles possess the same law, but inside of themselves. In fact, they possessed in their very nature as human beings the Ten Commandments before they were revealed to the Jews on Mount Sinai. Old Testament scholar Walter C. Kaiser (1991:81-82) says that

it must not be thought that the Decalogue was inaugurated and promulgated at Sinai for the first time. All Ten Commandments had been part of the law of God previously written on hearts instead of stone, for all ten appear, in one way or another, in Genesis.

For example, the First Commandment is already in Genesis 35:2; the Second, in Genesis 31:39; the Third, in Genesis 24:3; the Fourth, in Genesis 2:3; the Fifth, in Genesis 27:41; the Sixth, in Genesis 4:9; the Seventh, in Genesis 39:9; the eighth, in Genesis 44:4-7; the Ninth, in Genesis 39:17 and the Tenth, in Genesis 12:18; 20:3 (Kaiser, 1991: 80-81).

2.2.5 The Natural, Moral Law in Moral Philosophy

Christians have a basis for moral discussions with non-Christians about the *commune bonum* or “common good” and ethics, especially the Fifth Commandment. In the Reformed Protestant tradition, it is called *gratia communis* or “common grace,” which means that God blesses both Christian and non-Christians with good things in life and even a basic (though fallible) knowledge of what is good or morally right. As Jesus teaches, God “causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45). In the words of the Calvinist theologian Louis Berkhof (2008),

It is due to common grace that man still retains some sense of the true, the good, and the beautiful, often appreciates these to a rather surprising degree, and reveals a desire for truth, for external morality, and even for certain forms of religion.

Similarly, in the English or Anglican Protestant tradition, theologian Philip E. Hughes (1984:480) comments,

It is due ... to common grace that man retains within himself a consciousness of the difference between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice.... Man, in short, has a conscience and is endowed with the dignity of existing as a responsible being.

Therefore, because of the common grace of God, both Christians and non-Christians can know and teach truth. They both can make positive contributions to culture or society.

The Latin philosophical and Roman Catholic view of the natural law are similar to the doctrine of common grace, which is held by many Protestants. Because of the natural law, which is known partially, though not infallibly, by the human mind, Christians have a basis for moral discussions with non-Christians about the Fifth Commandment. Philosopher Mortimer Adler (2003) says,

The idea of a natural right order to which all things, including human beings, should conform is one of the most ancient and universal notions. It is a major principle in the religious and philosophic systems of ancient India and China, as well as in classical Greek philosophy. In Western society, especially from the Roman jurists and the theologians of the Middle Ages on, we find the doctrine of the natural moral law for man.

The term “natural law” itself can be somewhat confusing. It does not mean “the laws of nature discovered by the physical sciences” (Adler, 2003). On the contrary, philosopher Peter Kreeft (1994:100) explains,

By ‘natural law’ is meant two things: first, that it is a law that is naturally known, innately known, instinctively known, known by natural reason; and second, that it is a law based on human nature and for the flourishing and fulfilling of human nature.

The natural law, then, is not limited to only one nation or people but is universal, that is, it can be known by all peoples of all nations. The Roman lawyer Marcus Tullius Cicero (in Coker, 1938:151) says,

There is in fact a true law – namely, right reason – which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions it restrains them

from doing wrong. Its commands and prohibitions always influence good men, but are without effect upon the bad. To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation, and to annul it wholly is impossible. Neither the senate nor the people can absolve us from our obligation to obey this law.... It will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all peoples; and there will be one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and sponsor. The man who will abandon his better self, and in denying the true nature of man, will thereby suffer the severest of penalties, though he has escaped all other consequences which men call punishment.

Cicero teaches that the natural moral law is absolute (applying to all times, in all places and for all people) and unchangeable. It is not one thing in, say, 2007 B.C. and another in 2007 A.D. To break a precept or principle of the natural law is, in the end to be broken by it. Cicero's phrase, "The man who will abandon his better self" may also be translated from the Latin as "He who disobeys it (that is, the moral law) denies himself and his own nature." In other words, one harms oneself by disobeying the natural law. To do so, is to act contrary to human nature.

Since there is a natural law, then there must be a natural Law-Giver. Cicero teaches that the natural law comes from God. In other words, the natural law is a "given," implanted by God in human nature, specifically, in human reason, for the governing of a human being's behaviour and that of society.

2.2.6 The Relationship between the Natural Law and Positive Law

Positive law, that is, law made by human beings, and morality relate but do not equate. Each is a distinct discipline or sphere of knowledge. However, many human laws presuppose moral values (the difference between right and wrong) and enforce them, expressing what ought to be done and forbidding what ought not to be done (Kirk, 1991:109). In that sense, law enforces morality. However, in America, a common view is "Law should not enforce morality," which, if it means the enacted law should be morally neutral, it is incorrect. Law, in fact, has a moral basis. "Even *bad* law has a moral basis — a basis in *false* morality" (Budziszewski, 2001). For example, a law requiring highway taxes is based on the moral notion that people should pay taxes for the benefits of driving on well-

kept highways. Again, driving laws that set speed limits are based on the moral view that drivers should be concerned about the safety of other human being driving on America's roads. Still again, the law against murder is based on the moral view that a human being must not kill another innocent human (Budziszewski, 2001).

When laws are truly right, in accordance with *recta ratio*, "right reason," they are just. When they oppose the basic rationality or commonsensical notion of a group of human beings, they are unjust (Kirk, 1991:109-111). They should not be followed by a person, even if a particular society or community follows or obeys them. They are not really laws at all, because they are not true, corresponding to the good of the human person, in particular, and the community, in general (Morris, 1959:51). Positive law, that is, human law, is true and just when it agrees with either the Divine law in Scripture or the natural law or both kinds of law. A contemporary English rendering of the Yale University's Old English edition of Sir William Blackstone (2007) *Commentaries on the Laws of England* reads,

as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should, in all points conform to his maker's will. This will of his maker is called the law of nature [or natural law].... This law of nature being coeval [at the same time] with mankind and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all of their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.

There are different kinds of positive law for a particular society or form of government. For example, a state legislature, which consists of men and women, creates laws. Another example of positive law is the Constitution of the United States. Laws also come from a sovereign body representing a king or queen, etc. Positive law, since it is made by fallible human beings, can be unjust and must conform to or be judge by a higher law, which is called the "natural law."

2.2.7 The Natural Law as Taught by the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church teaches the reality of the natural law. Pope John Paul II (1993:51) says, the natural law “is inscribed in the rational nature of the person, it makes itself felt to all beings endowed with reason.” The natural law is rooted in the very nature of the human person, prior to the existence of all human governments. It is a general inner notion of right and wrong, which is common to human beings of all cultures and at all times. The natural law is known by human reason. Aquinas (1947:I-II, q. 91, art. 2) says,

Hence the Psalmist after saying (Ps. 4:6): ‘Offer up the sacrifice of justice,’ as though someone asked what the works of justice are, adds: ‘Many say, Who showeth us good things?’ in answer to which question he says: ‘The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us’: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light.

Thus, the natural moral law is not an invention of the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, it is intrinsic (inherent) to human nature and springs from it.

Thomistic scholar Walter Farrell argues that since human beings are created by God, since they, too, are a part of the natural order of creatures, humans are guided by the natural law in accordance with their own created nature. Farrell (1938) says that the natural law

means that every single thing in the universe is governed or directed by God but each single thing according to its nature. The truth is so obvious that we take it for granted but still overlook it. We would be totally astonished to see a squirrel developing like a tree or shrinking under spring rains like a cheap suit of clothes; and our astonishment would have this profound truth as its basis. Man, like every other creature, is a part of nature and, like every other creature, is governed according to his nature.

Not only Catholicism, but also Orthodoxy and Mainstream Protestantism agree that both humans and animals are governed by natural law, but with this essential difference: humans are endowed with the faculty of reason; they have free-will. They can choose to go against their own nature. Adler (2003) says, “the natural law as applied to physical things or animals is inviolable; stars and

atoms never disobey the laws of their nature. But man often violates the moral rules which constitute the law of his specifically human nature.” A human being is a “rational animal,” made in the image of God, possessing the spiritual faculty of free-will. That is why he or she can choose to violate the law of his nature.

2.3 THE MEANING OF THE WORD ‘KILL’ IN EXODUS 20:13 AND NUMBERS 35:9-29

2.3.1 Two Old Testament Words for Killing

In the **Introduction** to the thesis, I argued that Exodus 20:13 should be translated “You shall not murder” (Bible, 1984), not “Thou shalt not kill.” The modern translation is supported by scholarly consensus. In the Old Testament, the general or most common Hebrew word for “kill” is *harag*. It occurs over 160 times and refers to both justified (lawful) or unjustified (unlawful) killing, such as murder. It is not the word that is used in Exodus 20:13. Rather, the Hebrew word in that verse is *rasah*. Biblical scholar Frank E. Hirsch (1915) observes that the Hebrew word *rasah* means “to ... kill, especially with premeditation.” Jesuit commentator and biblical scholar John E. Huesman (1968:57) says, “The Fifth Commandment seeks to protect the very sacredness of human life by forbidding murder. Killing in battle or by capital punishment is not an issue here. The Pentateuch fully approves both.” Hence, *rasah* “did not cover the subject of killing in war or capital punishment, which were done only at the command of God; thus, they were not in the same category as murder” (Chavalas, 1996). Hebrew biblical scholar Gleason L. Archer (1976:1032) notes that the verb *rasah* in Exodus 20:13 “is a specific term for murder, and is never used of executing a criminal or slaying an enemy in battle.” Therefore, “murder” is a more accurate translation of *rasah* than “kill” in Exodus 20:13 (Burke, 1986:434).

God says, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13, KJV). However, in the next chapter of Exodus, he says, “He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 21:12). Critics of the Bible point out that this is a contradiction. However, it really is not. Archer (1982:121) explains why,

much confusion has arisen from the misleading translation of Exodus 20:13 that occurs in most English versions. The Hebrew original uses a specific word for murder (rasah) in this sixth commandment and should be rendered 'You shall not murder' (NASB). This is no prohibition against capital punishment or capital crimes, since it is not a general term for the taking of life, such as our English word 'kill' implies. Exodus 21:12, right in the very next chapter, reads: 'He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.' This amounts to a specific divine command to punish murder with capital punishment, in keeping with Genesis 9:6: 'Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man' (NASB).

Therefore, the advantage of translating *rasah* as “murder” in Exodus 20:13 is that it eliminates the notion of a prohibition against all kinds of killing and leaves open, for example, the justification of killing in self-defense or war (Burke, 1986:17).

In terms of both biblical exegesis and philosophical reasoning, there is a difference between killing and murder. Killing is the general term for ending the life of a human being. But murder is the specific meaning for intentionally and directly killing an innocent human being. Hence, while all murder is killing, not all killing is murder. Therefore, Exodus 20:13 refers to killing an innocent being, specifically, the deliberate (intention) and direct (not accidental) destruction of innocent human life. Exodus 20:13, then, does not refer to killing in war nor to capital punishment, both of which are permitted in Sacred Scripture.

2.3.2 Five Different Terms for Killing in Numbers 35

The meaning of Exodus 20:13 may be further clarified in the light of Numbers 35, which uses five different terms (cf. Bible, 1995) for killing or ending the life of another human being. The Hebrew word *rasah* is translated “manslayer” in verses 6, 11, 12, 25, 26, 27, 28; “murderer” twice in verse 16, twice in verse 17, twice in verse 18, once in verse 19, twice in verse 21; once in verse 30 and once in verse 31; “kills” in verse 27; “put to death” in verse 30. It is the same word that is used in Exodus 20:13. The Hebrew word *nakah* is translated “killed” in verse 11 and “kills” in verses 15, 30. The Hebrew word *muth* is translated

“put to death” in verses 30, 31. The Hebrew *gaal* is translated “avenger” in verses 12 and *dam gaal* is translated “blood avenger” in verses 19, 21, 24, 25, 27 (twice).

2.4 INTENTIONAL AND UNINTENTIONAL HOMICIDE

Numbers 35 is a rather extensive treatment of homicide. Legally or according to secular law, homicide means, in general, the killing of one human being by another, “whether lawfully or unlawfully” (Garner & Black, eds., 1999:739). Referring to the context of Numbers 35, biblical commentator Lauriston J. Du Bois (1969:499) observes,

Here is underlined the importance of intent as the basic ingredient to determine the nature of the crime. This principle is recognized in most civilized countries as the important factor in determining the guilt or innocence of the one suspected.

The point again is that all murder is killing but not all killing is murder. The latter has to do with intent. In other words, one person deliberately or freely chooses to end the life of another innocent person. Numbers 35 teaches that there is a difference between unintentional killing and murder. Moral theologian Bernard Haring (1981:36-37) comments:

Murder is the sin of intentional homicide. If the defense of one's own life or that of others, or other human good, causes the death of the unjust aggressor, this has not at all the malice of murder and does not fall under the biblical commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.'

2.4.1 Unintentional or Accidental Killing: Manslaughter

In Numbers 35, “manslayer” is a general term for someone who kills another human being. Its specific meaning, according to the context, is someone who kills another person unintentionally. For example, the Lord says,

you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer (rasah) who has killed (nakah) any person unintentionally may flee there. The cities shall be to you as a

refuge from the avenger (gaal), so that the manslayer (rasah) will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial. These six cities shall be for refuge for the sons of Israel, and for the alien and for the sojourner among them; that anyone who kills (nakah) a person unintentionally may flee there (Numbers 35:11-12, 15; cf. Exodus 21:13).

Legally or according to secular law, the verse refers to manslaughter or, more precisely, involuntary manslaughter, a “Homicide in which there is no intention to kill or do grievous bodily harm” (Garner and Black, eds., 1999:976). In short, the person has no “malice aforethought” (Garner & Black, eds., 1999:976). The next several verses in Numbers 35 refer to manslaughter, specifically, accidental killing. Scripture says,

But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or threw something at him without lying in wait, or with any deadly object of stone, and without seeing it dropped on him so that he died, while he was not his enemy nor seeking his injury, then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the blood avenger (dam gaal) according to these ordinances. The congregation shall deliver the manslayer (rasah) from the hand of the blood avenger (dam gaal), and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he fled; and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. But if the manslayer (rasah) at any time goes beyond the border of his city of refuge to which he may flee, and the blood avenger (dam gaal) finds him outside the border of his city of refuge, and the blood avenger (dam gaal) kills (rasah) the manslayer (rasah), he will not be guilty of blood because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer (rasah) shall return to the land of his possession (Numbers 35:22-28).

The “avenger” (verse 12) or “blood avenger” (verse 19) is not a private citizen or vigilante, one who decides to take “matters into his own hands” and kill a murderer. Rather, he is a close relative of the person who is murdered and is appointed by the elders of a city to execute a murderer (cf. II Samuel 14:7). Therefore, the blood avenger’s authority to act as executioner is delegated to him by the duly appointed public authority, namely, the elders of the city (cf. Deuteronomy 19:12; Joshua 20). In keeping with Genesis 9:6, the murderer could be put to death (cf. Exodus 21:12).

2.4.2 Intentional Killing: Murder

Referring to the intentional act of killing an innocent human being, Scripture says,

But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer (rasah); the murderer (rasah) shall surely be put to death. If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and as a result he died, he is a murderer (rasah); the murderer (rasah) shall surely be put to death. Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and as a result he died, he is a murderer (rasah); the murderer (rasah) shall surely be put to death. The blood avenger (dam gaal) himself shall put the murderer (rasah) to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him (Numbers 35:16-19).

Legally, the verses refer to murder, which is “The killing of a human being with malice aforethought” (Garner & Black, eds., 1999:1038). In other words, the intention of the person was determined by the kind of object he used to kill another human being, such as an instrument of iron, stone or wood. The murderer received the death penalty (cf. Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:17; Deuteronomy 19:11-13). The person appointed to execute the murderer was called “the blood avenger.”

The following verses refer to premeditated murder. Scripture says,

If he pushed him of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait and as a result he died, or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and as a result he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer (rasah); the blood avenger (gaal) shall put the murderer (rasah) to death when he meets him (Numbers 35:20-21).

Legally, in the context, the specific kind of murder the author refers to is first-degree murder (or ‘murder one’), which is “Murder that is willful, deliberate, or premeditated” (Garner & Black, eds., 1999:1038). It may involve “lying in wait” to kill a person (Garner & Black, eds., 1999:1038).

The Law of Moses protected a person who was accused of the crime of murder, because in a Jewish “court of law,” one witness was not sufficient to convict a

person and, thus sentence him to death. The provision of at least two witnesses was a safeguard, protecting the accused person so that he was not put to death for a crime that he did not, in fact, commit. For example, Scripture says,

If anyone kills (nakah) a person, the murderer (ratsach) shall be put to death (ratsach) at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death (muth) on the testimony of one witness. Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer (ratsach) who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death (muth)” (Numbers 35:30-31; cf. Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; 1 Samuel 21:4).

2.5 SELF-PRESERVATION AND ITS RELATION TO KILLING IN SELF-DEFENSE

According to *Black’s Law Dictionary*, killing in self-defence is called “justifiable homicide,” which is permitted legally or according to secular law when a person is “faced with the danger of death or serious bodily injury” (Garner & Black, eds., 1999: 739). If someone attacks an innocent person with a knife and that person, in defending himself, kills the attacker, it is called “killing in self-defence.” Pope John Paul II (1995:55) comments,

Unfortunately it happens that the need to render the aggressor incapable of causing harm sometimes involves taking his life. In this case, the fatal outcome is attributable to the aggressor whose action brought it about, even though he may not be morally responsible because of a lack of the use of reason.

One directly wills to save one’s life; but in the process of doing so, the aggressor is killed. In moral theology, this is called “the principle of double effect.” In other words, the first effect of the act is directly intended and meant to save one’s life. The second effect of the act is not directly intended but kills the aggressor. It is a side-effect of the direct act of saving one’s own life. Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 7) explains the principle of double effect,

Nothing hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended, while the other is beside the intention. Now moral acts take their species according to what is intended, and

not according to what is beside the intention, since this is accidental as explained above (43, 3; I-II, 12, 1). Accordingly the act of self-defense may have two effects, one is the saving of one's life, the other is the slaying of the aggressor. Therefore this act, since one's intention is to save one's own life, is not unlawful, seeing that it is natural to everything to keep itself in 'being,' as far as possible.

2.5.1 Exodus 20:13 and Killing in Self-Defense

Killing in self-defence is not an exception to the commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13), because killing in self-defence is not the same as murder. According to official Roman Catholic teaching, “The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:2263). Similarly, “If a man kill another in self-defense, having used every means consistent with his own safety to avoid the infliction of death, he evidently does not violate this Commandment” (The Catechism of the Council of Trent, 1982:422). According to orthodox Reformed or Protestant teaching, “The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are: all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense” (The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1951:304). Hence, “public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense” do not constitute murder and thus do not violate the commandment of Exodus 20:13. Protestant theologian Charles Hodge (1940b:364) gives four reasons that homicide in self-defence is not forbidden by the commandment,

That homicide in self-defense is not forbidden by the sixth commandment, is plain, (1.) Because such homicide is not malicious, and, therefore, does not come within the scope of the prohibition. (2.) Because self-preservation is an instinct of our nature, and therefore, a revelation of the will of God. (3.) Because it is a dictate of reason and of natural justice that if of two persons one must die, it should be the aggressor and not the aggrieved. (4.) Because the universal judgment of men, and the Word of God, pronounce the man innocent who kills another in defense of his own life or that of his neighbour.

For example, the Law of Moses or the Torah says, "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account" (Exodus 22:2). Presumably, it is dark or night and the thief is killed as an act of self-defense. There is no penalty in the Law of Moses for killing a person as a legitimate act of self-defense. Thomas Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 7), commenting on Exodus 22:2, explains why, "Now it is much more lawful to defend one's own life than one's house. Therefore neither is a man guilty of murder if he kill another in defense of his own life."

Scripture goes on to say, "But if the sun has risen on him, there will be blood guiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (Exodus 22:3). Why does killing a thief during the day change the morality of the act? According to Archer (1976:1033), "in such a case the householder could more accurately gauge the intentions of the intruder." Likewise, if one man slaps another in the face and the other man responds by killing him, the act is unlawful, illicit. The response is not in proportion to the offense. The counter aggression is excessive, thus making the act wrong. In the words of Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 7),

Wherefore if a man, in self-defense, uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repel force with moderation his defense will be lawful, because according to the jurists 'it is lawful to repel force by force, provided one does not exceed the limits of a blameless defense.'

2.5.2 Killing in Self-Defense as a Natural Response of Self-Love

Like other animals, human beings have natural inclinations; one of which is the automatic or built-in tendency to preserve one's own life. Now, although all murder is killing, not all killing is murder. Therefore, the law in human beings by nature or the natural law includes, among other things, self-love (Farrell, 1938). Any person, then, should defend himself or herself from an aggressor who might be trying to kill him or her with a knife, gun or any other deadly object. The automatic response is to defend oneself, because one naturally loves oneself and wants to preserve oneself. Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 7) writes, "one is bound to take more care of one's own life than another's." Hence, "Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is

legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994: 2264). Pope John Paul II (1995: 55) says,

There are in fact situations in which values proposed by God's Law seem to involve a genuine paradox. This happens for example in the case of legitimate defence, in which the right to protect one's own life and the duty not to harm someone else's life are difficult to reconcile in practice. Certainly, the intrinsic value of life and the duty to love oneself no less than others are the basis of a true right to self-defence. The demanding commandment of love of neighbour, set forth in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, itself presupposes love of oneself as the basis of comparison: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Mk 12:31).

Self-love, then, is inherent in the very nature of a human being. It is a "given," implanted by God, the Creator of human beings, in human nature. That is why a man or woman can kill a deadly aggressor in self-defence. It is natural or normal for human beings to protect themselves, keep themselves in being. It is how God programmed human nature. That is why Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5) says, "everything naturally loves itself, the result being that everything naturally keeps itself in being, and resists corruptions so far as it can." In other words, the natural inclination of living creatures is to keep itself in being.

However, there is an exception to the natural inclination of self-love. It is called "sacrificial love." It is that act of self-forgetfulness and self-transcendence by which one individual goes out of himself in love to die for another person. John Paul II (1995:55) comments,

Consequently, no one can renounce the right to self-defence out of lack of love for life or for self. This can only be done in virtue of a heroic love which deepens and transfigures the love of self into a radical self-offering, according to the spirit of the Gospel Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:38-40). The sublime example of this self-offering is the Lord Jesus himself.

The New Testament carries over the same general distinction between killing and murder as was used in the Old Testament. In the New, two Greek words are most often used to refer to killing a human being. The first is *apokteino*, which occurs 75 times and is the most common word for “kill.” The second is *phoneuo*, which occurs only 11 times and is the specific term for “murder” (Burke, 1986:17). Exodus 20:13 is quoted by Jesus four times (cf. Matthew 5:21; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20), once by Paul (cf. Romans 13:9) and once by James (cf. James 2:11). In every instance, the word is *phoneuo*, a translation of the Hebrew word *ratsach*, meaning, “murder” (Lewis, 1960:106-107). Jesus uses the verb *phoneuo*, meaning, “to murder,” to describe the killing of righteous Abel (cf. Matthew 23:35).

That *phoneuo* is not only killing but also, specifically, murder is supported by the Scripture, which says, “You have condemned and *put to death (phoneuo)* the righteous man; he does not resist you” (James 5:6). In other words, deliberately or intentionally killing the righteous (morally speaking), innocent human beings, is murder. Hence, the Greek may be translated, “You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you” (James 5:6, NIV).

Therefore, both special revelation (God’s supernatural disclosure of moral right and wrong in the Scripture, the Fifth Commandment) and general revelation (God’s natural revelation to human reason and conscience in the natural law) teach that it is wrong for a person, deliberately and directly, to kill an innocent human being. Murder, then, is categorically, unequivocally and absolutely wrong. It is the ultimate injustice, because the act takes away the life of an innocent person who, by nature, has the right to live.

3.0 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AS A MORAL ABSOLUTE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, my primary purpose is to present what C. S. Lewis and other Christian philosophers have said about the universal moral law and why I agree with their arguments for moral absolutes. However, before arguing for moral absolutes, it is important to see why the philosophy of moral relativism opposes the notion of absolute moral values.

First, the notion of absolutes suggests being an “absolutist” in sense of a totalitarian authority, such as a government in which there is only one right way of thinking and conduct. If the citizens of that government do not agree with it, they could be punished or even killed for failure to adhere to, say, its religion and ideology. I, too, with disagree with such a notion. Hence, an absolutist or absolutism is not the same as believing in the existence of moral absolutes.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1904) is associated with a form of ethics called “deontological ethics,” which stresses the duty to moral principles rather than their consequences (teleological ethics). In other words, if a moral act conforms to the right moral principles, then the act is right, regardless of its consequences (Geisler & Feinberg, 1980:387). “What is right, therefore, is found in norms, not in ends” (Geisler & Feinberg, 1980:388). Rules are more important than results in evaluating or determining whether a moral act is right or wrong. In short, this ethic stresses duty for duty’s sake.

In deontological or duty-centered ethics, the good results of a moral act are important. However they are not the reason for performing the act; rather, the reason is the intrinsic goodness of the moral act, that is, an act is good in itself and, therefore, one ought to do it (Geisler, 1971:20). For example, attempting to help a drowning person is good, because it is intrinsically good to help a person in need, whether the attempt is successful or not (Geisler, 1971:22). However, there are some valid criticisms of deontological ethics. For example, Geisler (1980:392) writes,

[T]he failure to consider the results of our decisions is unloving, if not at times inhumane. The Pharisees felt they were doing their duty by not helping people in need on the Sabbath, but Jesus criticized them for this (Mark 3:1f.).

A rational person should be concerned not only with the duty to perform moral acts but also their foreseeable consequences, both immediately and remotely, now and in the future. In the words of Geisler (1980:392),

... [T]he deontological ethic is often nearsighted. At best it appears to be concerned only about immediate consequences of actions, not long-range results. If one is not concerned with long-range results, then why buy life insurance or submit to polio inoculation? However, wisdom dictates that one must be concerned about the future (Prov. 30:24, 25).

Second, the notion of moral absolutes suggests rigidity of thought, which may result in showing a lack of love for others who fail to conform to the absolutes. This, however, is not in keeping with the Christian ethic of love, which seeks not only to understand what a person did but why he or she did it. For example, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13) is a moral absolute. However, it takes into consideration the subjective factors in, say, a person who commits suicide, thus violating the Fifth Commandment. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994: 2282-2283) says,

Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide. We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.

A person who commits suicide may have been suffering not only from extreme physical pain but also emotional pain, such as depression or other emotional problems. Such pain clouds one's reason; one is not thinking clearly or rationally in desiring death. In moral theology, the subjective factors are called

“mitigating factors,” so that the person who commits suicide, even though the act itself is objectively wrong, is psychologically responsible and, thus, no guilt can be attributed to him or her.

Third, if one grants that there are, indeed, moral absolutes, what are the moral consequences for a person who violates one of the absolutes? For example, in the United States, men and women who believe in moral absolutes usually believe that abortion is murder, thus violating the commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). However, since it is murder, should not the doctor who performed it be sent to prison for the crime of murder? What about the woman who had the abortion? Should she not receive the same fate as the doctor, because she chose to kill her baby?

Not everyone in the pro-life movement in the United States agrees with what the consequences should be for violating a moral absolute. Some would agree with the position of sending the woman and doctor to prison. However, others would say that such as punishment is too radical, especially since abortion is not against the law in most states in the United States of America and the Supreme Court of the United States declared that abortion is legal in 1973 in its decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

Moral relativism and the moral relativist make valid points, which the moral absolutist would typically grant (Kurtz, 1988:65-73). The moral absolutist would also grant that not all moral principles or laws are absolutes (Geisler, 1989a:102-103). Nevertheless, I maintain that the prohibition against murder in Exodus 20:13 is a moral absolute. It means that never, under any circumstance, should one human being deliberately (intentionally) and directly (not accidentally) kill an innocent human being. In other words, it applies to all time, in all places and for all people. There are no exceptions to it. In this chapter, I shall define and critique relativistic philosophies, which deny the moral absolute prohibiting murder.

3.2 THE MEANING OF SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

Are all moral principles subjective? Are some objective and absolute? Or is all morality merely subjective? Are there any moral absolutes? Do right and wrong exist only in a person's head? Or is there a real right and wrong outside of the person to which his or her thoughts correspond? Before attempting to answer these questions, some definitions of are in order.

Subjective knowledge is to be distinguished from objective knowledge. *Subjective* refers to knowledge which comes from inside the person. It is dependent on one's mind, feelings, and perceptions. Objective refers to knowledge which is independent of the knower, the person (Kreeft, 1990:31-32). Similarly, there is a difference between mores and morals. Mores are created or invented by human beings. But *morals* are discovered by human beings (Kreeft, 1990:35).

3.3 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE MORALITY

There are objective moral values or principles. Objective moral principles are not simply a person's own principles but real moral principles. One does not create or invent them; rather, one discovers them (Kreeft, 1990:35). Christian philosopher and apologist C. S. Lewis (1960:25) contends,

If your moral ideas can be truer, and those of the Nazis less true, there must be something – some Real Morality – for them to be true about. The reason why your idea of New York can be truer or less true than mine is that New York is a real place, existing quite apart from what either of us thinks. If when each of us said 'New York' each means merely 'The town I am imagining in my own head', how could one of us have truer ideas than the other? There would be no question of truth or falsehood at all.

Similarly, philosopher William Lane Craig (2008) says,

To say that there are objective moral values is to say that something is right or wrong independently of whether anybody believes it to be so. It is to say, for example, that Nazi anti-

Semitism was morally wrong, even though the Nazis who carried out the Holocaust thought that it was good....”

3.4 ETHICS AND THE REAL WORLD OF MORAL VALUES

Ethics is about the *real* world. But *real* is not to be understood exclusively, as if the only real world were the physical, empirical world (Kreeft, 1984:170). The world of values, that is, the world of moral right and wrong, is just as real as the physical world. The reason is that values are objectively real, even though they cannot be seen. “There is no more reason to deny the objective reality of moral values than the objective reality of the physical world” (Craig, 2008). I do not impose objective moral principles on others any more than I impose the law of gravity or mathematics on others.

3.5 SUBJECTIVISM: A CRITIQUE

Prior to the 20th century and now the 21st century, practically all societies believed in objective moral principles or values. However, the philosophical doctrine of subjectivism denies that there are objective moral values and moral absolutes. Lewis (1967:73) comments,

Until modern times no thinker of the first rank ever doubted that our judgements of value were rational judgements or that what they discovered was objective. ... The modern view is very different. It does not believe that value judgements are really judgements at all. They are sentiments, or complexes, or attitudes, produced in a community by the pressure of its environment and its traditions, and differing from one community to another. To say that a thing is good is merely to express our feeling about it; and our feeling about it is the feeling we have been socially conditioned to have.

Subjectivism, in the final analysis, means that morality is a matter of personal tastes, feelings or opinions. Based on these, each person decides what he or she thinks is right or wrong.

For the subjectivist, such as the philosopher A. J. Ayer, morality is like tasting food. One eats the food that one likes, but one discards the food that one does

not like. Similarly, if one likes a certain type of behaviour, then it is right; but if not, then it is wrong. Right behaviour may be right for one person but wrong for another. No act is really (intrinsically) morally wrong, since it depends on whether the person doing it feels it is right or wrong (Ayer, 1952:103).

3.5.1 Problems with Subjectivism

In Book I of *Mere Christianity*, Lewis points out that human beings argue over morality. Their arguments presuppose an objective standard of measurement against which to decide who is right and wrong. In practice, subjectivists who believe that morality is merely a matter of feelings, likes and dislikes, contradicts their subjectivism. When they are treated wrongly or unjustly, they say, "That is wrong" or "That is not fair." They are not merely appealing to their feelings or dislikes but presuppose an objective standard of morality, one which is outside or independent of their feelings. In short, they think that they are really being treated wrongly or unfairly (Lewis, 1960:17-18).

Lewis (1967:73) points out another problem with subjectivism, saying,

Everyone is indignant when he hears the Germans define justice as that which is to the interest of the Third Reich. But it is not always remembered that this indignation is perfectly groundless if we ourselves regard morality as a subjective sentiment to be altered at will. Unless there is some objective standard of good, over-arching Germans, Japanese and ourselves alike whether any of us obey it or no, then of course the Germans are as competent to create their ideology as we are to create ours.

If subjectivism were true, then any behaviour, such as, rape, child abuse, murder or tyranny can be right, if a person or society thinks or feels it is right. The largest number of people who have the strongest feelings about a moral act prevail.

3.5.2 Adolf Hitler Example

Was Hitler right because he felt that killing millions of people Jews was right? If subjectivism were true, then even the Holocaust was not really wrong. In fact, it is really nonsense to condemn any human act as evil, because that is only my feeling or society's feeling about it. Craig (2008) observes,

The fact is that we do apprehend objective values, and we all know it. Actions like rape, torture, child abuse, and brutality are not just socially unacceptable behaviour — they are moral abominations. ... People who fail to see this are just morally handicapped, and there is no reason to allow their impaired vision to call into question what we see clearly.

3.5.3 Subjectivism: An Intellectual Disease

Subjectivism, in the long run, makes nonsense of philosophy itself as an attempt to achieve consensus about anything at all. Not only that, but it is a philosophical “heresy,” an intellectual disease if, carried out consistently, could possibly destroy the moral fabric of a society. Lewis (1967:73) says,

Out of this apparently innocent idea comes the disease that will certainly end our species (and, in my view, damn our souls) if it is not crushed; the fatal superstition that men can create values, that a community can choose its ‘ideology’ as men choose their clothes.

Not only the West, in general, but also the United States, in particular, is imbued with the intellectual disease of moral relativism, which begins in its colleges and universities and spreads to popular culture, especially in movies and songs.

3.6 RELATIVISM: A CRITIQUE

There are two kinds of relativism: individual or personal, and cultural. According to individual moral relativism, "There are no absolutes". But the statement "There are no absolutes" is itself an absolute. The statement is self-defeating, contradicting itself. Therefore, absolute relativism is false.

According to individual moral relativism, moral principles are right at some time and in some place for some people; but no moral principle is right at all times, in all places and for all people. But individual moral relativism itself is a principle that applies to all times, in all places and for all people. In short, it is an absolute moral principle. It destroys itself and is therefore false.

3.6.1 **The 20th Century Background to Cultural Relativism and the Examples of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Nazi Atrocities of World War II.**

In 1906, anthropologist William Graham Sumner's book *Folkways* was published. After studying different cultures, Sumner (1906:76) wrote, "World philosophy, life policy, right, rights, and morality are all products of the folkways." In his book *Cultural Relativism*, Melville J. Herskovits (1972:15) says moral "judgements are based on experience, and experience is interpreted by each individual in terms of his own enculturation." The majority of people in a culture shapes the moral values of those who belong to it. In the book *Evolutionary Ethics*, philosopher Antony Flew (1968:55) says, "All morals, ideas and ideals have originated in the world; so that, having thus in the past been subject to change, they will presumably in the future too, for better or for worse, continue to evolve." For Flew, everything is evolving, changing; therefore, there can be no unchanging or absolute moral law.

The cultural relativist says that one's culture determines right from wrong. There is no transcendent point of reference, that is, no God or absolute moral law, in which to ground ethics or morality. The laws of each society are right for that society.

Is cultural relativism true? Was it right for the South African government to make apartheid legal in the 20th century? According to cultural relativism, apartheid was right for South Africa. But Nelson Mandela was wrong for protesting apartheid, if cultural relativism were right. If it were right, then civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was morally wrong. In Alabama and Mississippi, he opposed the cultural acceptance of segregation and discrimination. Were segregation and discrimination right for white culture but wrong for blacks?

Cultural relativism is morally absurd. What about the Nazis under German law during World War II? They had their own laws. The Nazis did not believe they were answerable to the laws of England, Russia or the United States. If cultural relativism were right, then the Nazis were justified in what they did to the Jews; but the Jews say that the Nazis were wrong. Cultural relativism leads to the absurd moral conclusion that for the Nazis, mass murder was right; but for the Jews, it was wrong. This “flies in the face” of the common moral sense of human beings. In other words, it is contrary to the natural moral law, which, as we have been arguing, God inscribed in the very nature of human beings, in human nature.

Were the Nazis really, that is, objectively, wrong in what they did to the Jews? Or were they wrong only according to American culture? If cultural relativism were true, then it was right for the Nazis, according to their own moral standards, to put the Jews to death. The cultural relativist has no objective basis for condemning the Holocaust. At best, he can only say that according to his cultural standards, it is wrong.

Lewis argues that no culture, country or nation can really be wrong if cultural relativism is true, if each is right by virtue of making its own moral rules or laws. He says that there must be an objective, absolute standard, a standard outside of the world by which it is measured. Lewis (1960:25) observes,

if the Rule of Decent Behaviour meant simply 'whatever each nation happens to approve', there would be no sense in saying that any one nation had even been more correct in its approval

than any other; no sense in saying that the world would ever grow morally better or morally worse.

Granting cultural relativism, no one can say that the moral acts of one culture, nation or community are really or objectively right and another are really wrong.

At his closing address to the International Military Tribunal in the Nuremberg Trials, Robert Jackson, Chief Counsel for the United States, reminds the international community of judges of its transnational responsibility to judge the Nazis according to a higher law than that of their own respective countries. Jackson (1971:122) says,

As an International Military Tribunal, it rises above the provincial and transient and seeks guidance not only from international law but also from the basic principles of jurisprudence which are assumptions of civilization and which long have found embodiment in the codes of all nations.

Jackson is appealing to the fact that the Nazis had violated a higher law, which, in effect, transcends or “rises above” the “provincial” and “transient” laws of particular nations or even “international law” (Jackson, 1971: 122). The Nazis, then, should be judged by the International Military Tribunal according to moral principles or rules of a higher law, namely, “the basic principles of jurisprudence which are assumptions of civilization and which long have found embodiment in the codes of all nations” (Jackson, 1971: 122).

Although Jackson does not exactly say what those basic principles of jurisprudence are, undoubtedly, one of them is the prohibition against murder, which is a moral absolute. Implicitly, Jackson argues that if each society or nation determines right from wrong, then it can practice genocide, oppress and murder its citizens and be right according to its own moral standards. Therefore, higher, universal moral laws must be used to convict the Nazis of the crime of genocide, mass murder.

3.6.2 Progress Presupposes an Absolute Moral Standard

All moralities are not equal. Even moral relativists such as Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre (Craig, 1984:47, 48) admit that some moralities are better than others. A moral relativist might argue, for example, that democracies which promote toleration are better than Nazi morality which is intolerant. A variation of the same argument is that humankind is making moral progress, moving from the unenlightened morality of killing so-called inferior races to the enlightened morality of treating all human beings with respect, regardless of their race (Kreeft, 1994:70-71).

However, relativists are inconsistent when, on the one hand, they reject an absolute standard for morality and, on the other hand, boast about progress, whether it be moral or social progress. Progress presupposes an independent, objective, absolute standard, a standard outside of the world by which it is measured. Lewis (1960:25) says,

The moment you say that one set of moral ideas can be better than another, you are, in fact, measuring them both by a standard, saying that one of them conforms to that standard more nearly than the other. But the standard that measures the two things is something different from either. You are, in fact, comparing them both with some Real Morality, admitting that there is such a thing as real Right, independent of what people think, and that some people's ideas get nearer to that real Right than others.

There can really be no measuring of progress (moving from bad to good morality, good to better morality, better to best morality) unless there is an objective standard or rule by which to measure the progress. Lewis (1967:73) writes,

If 'good' and 'better' are terms deriving their sole meaning from the ideology of each people, then of course ideologies themselves cannot be better or worse than one another. Unless the measuring rod is independent of the things measured, we can do no measuring. For the same reason it is useless to compare the moral ideas of one age with those of another: progress and decadence are alike meaningless words.

G. K. Chesterton (1959:35) makes the same point, saying, "If the standard changes, how can there be improvement, which implies a standard?"

In fact, it is a logical fallacy to measure moral progress by the progress itself, as relativists often do. Lewis (1970:21) observes,

If things can improve, this means that there must be some absolute standard of good above and outside the cosmic process to which that process can approximate. There is no sense in talking of 'becoming better' if better means simply 'what we are becoming' – it is like congratulating yourself on reaching your destination and defining destination as 'the place you have reached.'

In other words, *petitio principii*, "reasoning in a circle," a circular argument, begging the question, already assuming in an argument what is to be proved as the conclusion. The concept of progress, then, presupposes an absolute standard for morality.

3.6.3 Introduction to Postmodern Ethics

Chronologically, modernism refers to a period of European thought, from the Renaissance (14th – 17th centuries) and reaching its height in the Enlightenment (17th – 19th centuries). In philosophy, the modern period began with the French philosopher Rene Descartes. He sought to build a system of truth on his own independent thinking or reason alone: *Cogito, ergo sum*, "I think; therefore, I am" (Leffel, 2008). Modernism includes both theistic and non-theistic thinkers, Christians and non-Christians. However, they both had in common the ability of human reason to know objective truth, the validity of the laws of logic, such as the law of non-contradiction and the law of identity. They both believed that there was a real world, an objective reality, external to one's mind and could be know by reason and perceived by the humans senses (Groothuis, 2000:35-36). However, "postmodernism blithely declares an end to the typecast 'Enlightenment' or modernist project of truth-seeking rational inquiry" (Norris, 1998:836). In other words, in much of postmodernist philosophy, "the traditional view of truth as objective and knowable is no longer accepted" (Groothuis, 2000:23).

It is difficult to explain postmodernism, because it is “a loose coalition of diverse thought” (Moreland, 2004a). There is not even a consensus as to what the philosophical movement should be called. Various terms have been proposed, such as postmodernism, ultra modernism, super modernism or even anti-modernism (Groothuis, 2000:32). Nevertheless, in this chapter, “postmodernism” shall be used to describe the relatively new philosophical movement.

Because of the diverse terminology they use, postmodern authors are often difficult to understand. For example, understanding Jacques Derrida presupposes that the reader is familiar with the writings of Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Heinrich Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss, John Langshaw Austin, Michel Foucault, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (Cutrofello, 1998:897). Philosopher Andrew Cutrofello (1998:897) comments, “Lacking such familiarity, readers of Derrida are often not in a position to recognize – let alone assess – the philosophical moves he makes.” In his book on postmodernism, even Christian philosopher and apologist Douglas Groothuis (2000:66) admits to “the density and outright unintelligibility of much postmodern writing.”

Several noteworthy postmodern thinkers are Friedrich Nietzsche, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michael Foucault and Richard Rorty. Although postmodern authors reflect diverse points of view, nevertheless, there are certain characteristics of postmodern thinkers. (Moreland, 2004a): Postmodernism is an intellectual reaction to modernism. Philosopher John R. Searle, a defender of Enlightenment rationality, summarizes the philosophy of postmodernist thinkers,

In many respects, they see themselves as challenging the Enlightenment vision that there is an independently existing reality, that we can have a language that refers in some clear and intelligible way to elements of that reality, and that we can obtain objective truth about that reality. They advance the view that what we think of as reality is largely a social construct, or that it's a device designed to oppress the marginalized peoples of the world

-- the colonial peoples, women, racial minorities. They see the attempt to attain rationality and truth and knowledge as some kind of power play, and what they want instead is what they take to be more liberating -- a rejection of the rationalist view.

(Postrel & Feser, 2000)

Christian philosopher William Lane Craig (1994:43) says, "Post-modernism is frequently accompanied by deconstructionism, which seeks to dismantle traditional, rational, objective notions found in modernism." Postmodernism rejects philosophical modernism's view of truth as correspondence of the mind with reality (Audi, 1995: 634) and "metanarratives," or "grand narratives," meaning a world view, a comprehensive, consistent view of reality (Lyotard, 1984:xxiv). Kenneth Gergen (Groothuis, 2000:188) says, "For the postmodern there is no transcendent reality, rationality, or value system with which to rule between competitors."

Since postmodernism rejects grand narratives, it also rejects universal truths, which apply to all times, in all places and for all people. In postmodernist philosophical literature, "human knowledge consists of multiple perspectives with no fixed, independent criteria for choosing between them" (Furrow, 2001: 1351). According to postmodernism, "if one claims to have the truth ..., this assertion is a power move that victimizes those judged not to have the truth" (Moreland, 2004b). For postmodernism, reality (the objective world, which is external to the individual) cannot be known except through the lenses of one's culture. Therefore, truth is contextual, belonging to those who live in a particular community.

Postmodernism also rejects moral absolutes, universal laws or ethical principles, which apply to all times, in all places and for all people. For example, the American postmodernist atheist Richard Rorty rejects any universal, trans-cultural moral laws, which apply to all people, in all times and in all places (Groothuis, 2000:187-189). Even though Rorty does not like to be labelled a

moral relativist, nevertheless, he is, “because he has no absolute, objective and universal standard for ethical evaluations” (Groothuis, 2000:190). Philosopher Douglas Groothuis (2000:41) observes,

In the modern era, moral relativism was adopted primarily by the cultural elite, while common folk continued to hold on to a vestigial Christian morality. In the postmodern era, nearly everyone believes moral values are relative – that is, constructed by cultures, not ordained by God.

For postmodernists, morality is also contextual, belonging to those who live in a particular community. Dwight Furrow (2001:1351) comments on the rejection of moral absolutes in postmodern ethics,

If there are no general substantive truths regarding how human beings ought to live, and rival points of view are incompatible or incommensurable, then the attempt to articulate universal norms or general descriptions of social reality will in fact only express a partial perspective inappropriate when applied outside their context.

Postmodernism replaces “metanarratives” with “stories” or local views of truth and morality, which are subject to different or relativistic interpretations (Leffel, 2008). Hence, truth, reality, morality and words or language are not objective and universal; rather, they are social constructions by various groups or cultures (Moreland, 2004a). In short, to be postmodern is to leave behind the modern or old understanding of truth and ethics (Groothuis, 2000:20).

Postmodernism is an intellectual movement, almost a matter of course or taken for granted by many Western colleges and universities. It is the epistemological “air” which today’s academic or professor breathes. Christian apologist and cultural analyst Os Guinness (Webb, 1997) comments,

At the moment, one of the Christian claims that seems embarrassing is the claim to truth. If you claim anything close to absolute truth on a modern campus, you are seen as Neanderthal, obscene, politically incorrect. A kind of ‘brave new world’ feeling is prevalent, in which people are saying that truth is

dead, following Nietzsche's thought, and ... if truth is dead, then knowledge is simply power. The underlying idea is that if you simply understand the gender, race, or class of the person who makes the claim to truth, you will then discover the real bid, which is the bid for power. Everything is reduced to the role of power.

3.6.4 The Influence of Nietzsche's Philosophy on Postmodernism and Deconstructionism

The German atheistic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) has a profound influence on postmodern philosophy. Though his fictional character the “Madman,” he proclaimed the death of God (Nietzsche, 1982:95-96). The Madman (Nietzsche, 1982:95) asks, “Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing?” Without a fixed, absolute standard for meaning, moral values and truth eliminated; thus, persons and cultures are left with creating their own meaning, moral standards and truth. For Nietzsche, objectively, the world is meaningless; so a person must create his or her own meaning.

Nietzsche (1982: 470) wrote, “I mistrust all systematisers and I avoid them.” He had a strong dislike for systematizing a body of knowledge or a coherent world view. Similarly, in postmodern philosophy, “metanarratives” or coherent world views are to be abandoned, because they aim at controlling others, even oppressing them.

“Much of Nietzsche's philosophy is a forceful denial of what philosophy had for thousands of years considered truth” (Miethe, 1981:134). For Nietzsche, objective truth, real truth outside a person's mind, does not exist. For him, the “concept of truth was nonsensical” (Miethe, 1981:143). Truth is not “out there,” that is, to be discovered in the world; rather, truth is a human invention. Humans create their own “truth” or “truths” (Miethe, 1981:143). For example, Nietzsche (1967:291) says, “there are many kinds of ‘truths,’ and consequently there is no truth.” However, Nietzsche's statement itself purports to be really true. In effect, he says, “It is really true that there is no truth,” which is self-

defeating and, therefore, false. Elsewhere, Nietzsche (1982:47) writes, “truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are.” Like illusions, truths seem to be real but are not. However, in order to know that something is an illusion, first presupposes a knowledge of reality by which to judge truth to be illusory. Hence, Nietzsche must first know reality, that is, truth, in order to say that truth is an illusion, which is self-refuting and, therefore, contradictory, false.

Nietzsche (1967:14) writes, “What is *belief*? How does it originate? Every belief is a considering-something- true.” However, belief is not objective, in touch with reality; rather, belief is only subjective, inside one’s own head. Nietzsche (1967:14) explains why, “[E]very belief, every considering-something-true, is necessarily false because there simply is no *true world*.” Thus, the real world, what is “out there,” independent of the knower, cannot be known. What can be known is “a *perspectival appearance* whose origin lies in us” (Nietzsche, 1967:14-15). However, to say that one cannot know the objective world is an objective claim about the world, describing it as it really is. Thus, it is self-refuting and, therefore, false. In short, postmodernist philosophy is but a footnote on Friedrich Nietzsche.

Philosopher Peter Kreeft (1999: 51) calls Nietzsche the “philosopher with a hammer” and rightly so, because of Nietzsche’s influence on the postmodern philosophy of language, namely, deconstructionism. For example, Nietzsche (1982:483) connects the elimination of grammar (meaningful syntax or word order) with the elimination of the concept of God, saying, “I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.” In fact, Nietzsche (1967:18) says, “the nihilist does not believe that one needs to be logical.” Nietzsche’s atheism is a matter of belief (which, for him, can neither be proven true nor false) rather than logical argumentation.

Why attack grammar? The reason is that “grammar is the traces of God and creation and form and objective truth and order in language” (Kreeft, 1999:51). In fact, the Second Person in God is called the “Word” God’s verbal communication to humanity (cf. John 1:1). “Word” is a translation of *λογος*, the

Greek word which from the English word “logic” is derived. God created the human person and all subsequent human beings with a rational mind. The Christian teaching on God, human beings and language is a kind of a *a priori* (prior to sense experience) rationalism. In other words, a human being’s mind, at the time of birth, is not blank. It is rationally structured, designed to function in a certain ways by God (Clark, 1988:130). Philosopher Gordon Clark (1988:130) says, “[A]n unstructured blank is no mind at all.”

In any language, grammar -- reasonably ordered or sequential words, which make sense or can be understood by oneself and others -- presupposes meaningful communication between those who speak the same language. A translation from one language into another would not work if words did not have roughly equivalent meanings across cultures. The communication, then, from one language to the next, is truly or adequately understood between, say, two individuals, even if it is not exhaustive, that is, every nuance or connotation of the word is understood by each person. Therefore, language, one’s use of words, presupposes logic, the rational ordering of one’s thoughts and words. Clark (1988:126) says, “The fact that a word must mean one thing and not its contradictory is the evidence of the law of contradiction in all languages.” Clark (1988:130) later proceeds to give an example of the logic of language, saying, “If dog is the equivalent of not-dog, and if $2=3=4$, ... zoology and mathematics disappear.”

3.6.5 Postmodernism and Multiculturalism

Not multiculturalism *per se*, but a radical form of multiculturalism is associated with postmodernism. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of multiculturalism. First, a valid or correct multiculturalism recognizes cultural diversity while acknowledging objective, universal truths, including moral truths. It also recognizes that moral principles are derived from human nature, the common humanity that all human beings share. Hence, there are “objective moral goods – such as justice and liberty – for which we should strive and uphold. And whenever an injustice has occurred, we should do our best to rectify it” (Beckwith & Koukl, 1998:81). When, for example, in university courses, people

have been ignored because of their race religion or gender, then, in the interest of being objective, discovering truth, it should be corrected. They should be included, for example, in history, sociology and political science textbooks. This multicultural principle also applies to individuals who have been ignored on the same grounds (Beckwith & Koukl, 1998:81).

Second, a radical multiculturalism, while recognizing cultural diversity, refuses to accept the notion of objective, universal truths and moral absolutes. Beckwith and Koukl (1998: 81) comment, "no single culture, thinker, or group has discovered the objective 'truth' about anything, because no universal truth exists." A radical multiculturalism is equivalent to cultural egalitarianism, which means that all cultures are essentially equal and, thus, one culture is not morally better than another; nor can one culture be morally right and another wrong. However, there are at least two philosophical problems with such a view. First, the view itself purports to be really true, an objective truth, independent of the understanding of a particular culture, which postmodernism rejects. Second, the view that all cultures are essentially equal and, thus, one culture is not morally better than another, becomes a universal truth, applying to every culture and, thus, it is an absolute truth, which postmodernism rejects (Beckwith & Koukl, 1998:83). Radical multiculturalism cancels out its own claims and is, therefore, false.

3.6.6 Critique of Postmodernism's Denial of First Principles

There are first principles of metaphysics or ontology (being or reality), epistemology (knowing objective truth) and ethics (knowing what one ought to do). First principles (or foundational principles) are based on the philosophy of realism, which means there is a real, external world, a reality that is outside the human mind and can be known by it. Thought and thing can relate or the mind can correspond to reality (Geisler, 1999:634). First principles "are not conclusions found at the end of a set of premises but rather premises from which conclusions are drawn" (Geisler & Bocchino, 2001:324). First principles are self-evident or "so obviously reasonable that they neither demand nor admit proof (Geisler & Bocchino, 2001:324). In other words, a person knows naturally

and immediately (or by direct intuition) that they are true, even if he or she cannot always justify or explain why they are true (Geisler, 1999:635).

A self-evident principle may not be self-evident to everyone. In such as case, the problem is not with the principle which is self-evident in itself; rather it is with the person's understanding of it. In a self-evident truth, the predicate is reducible to the subject, either directly or indirectly. If one does not understand or see a self-evident principle, one needs to analyze it carefully to find out why it is so. For example, the statement "Being exists" is self-evident, because to exist is to be. Similarly, the statement "Every effect has a cause" is self-evident, because an "effect" is that which is "caused" (Geisler, 1999:260).

First principles are also called "axioms," "givens," "starting-points" or "presuppositions" upon which knowledge and ethics are built. If one asks, "What is before or beyond the first principle?" Then the answer must be "nothing." One stops explaining or proving at the first principle, because it is first. There is nothing before it. That is why it is called a "first principle." Lewis (1947:91) says,

[Y]ou cannot go on 'explaining away' for ever: you will find that you have explained explanation itself away. You cannot go on 'seeing through' things for ever. The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it. It is good that the window should be transparent, because the street or garden beyond it is opaque [cannot see through it]. How if you saw through the garden too? It is no use trying to 'see through' first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To 'see through' all things is the same as not to see.

First principles of being or reality are the foundation for knowing reality. Without them, nothing could be known. The first of the first principles is being (reality or what is) is the foundation or basis for knowing anything. Rene Descartes' principle "I think; therefore, I am" is incorrect, because one cannot think unless one first is or exists. Hence, "I am; therefore, I think." Epistemology is based on ontology or knowledge is based on being. In short, being precedes thinking (Geisler, 1999:634).

First principles are undeniable. In other words, any postmodernist philosophy, in the attempt to deny them, actually uses them (Geisler, 1999:635). For example, the law of non-contradiction is actually undeniable. The law of non-contradiction says, "A cannot be both A and non-A at the same time and in the same sense or respect;" or, a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time and in the same sense; or, a statement cannot both be true and not true (false) at the same time and in the same sense.

Logic is the precondition to rational thinking. In other words, one cannot think without using logic. For example, if a person thinks that he or she does not use logic, that person thinks and, therefore, uses logic. A thinker must use laws of thought (whether he or she knows those laws formally or not) in order to think correctly (Geisler & Brooks, 1990:7-8, 11-20).

In general, postmodernism rejects epistemological realism (knowledge of objective truth), including the fundamental laws of logic, such as the law of identity and the law of non-contradiction. For example, Jacques Derrida attacks logic as being the invention of white, Western men. Derrida calls such logical thinking "white mythology" (in Groothuis, 2000:36). However, such an attack on logic involves a contradiction. Groothuis (2000:36) explains,

Derrida must presuppose basic logical principles even to state this charge. White mythology must be rejected as false, but this assumes the law of contradiction, which is part of white mythology. So he refutes himself.

One cannot deny the law of non-contradiction without actually using it in the very denial. For example, "The law of non-contradiction does not apply to reality." But the statement "The law of non-contradiction does not apply to reality" actually uses the law of non-contradiction in order to deny it. In other words, one assumes that the statement "The law of non-contradiction does not apply to reality" is true as opposed to the false view, which is "The law of non-contradiction applies to reality."

In general, postmodernism rejects metaphysical or ontological realism (knowing objective being or reality). Following Nietzsche, postmodern philosophy

attempts to deny objective being, existence or reality. For example, the statement "Reality cannot be known" is self-defeating, because it claims to know the reality that reality cannot be known, in which case reality can be known. Similarly, the statement "Reality cannot be described" is self-refuting, because to describe something is to put it into words, to explain it. Hence, "Reality cannot be described" is describing reality, putting into words a statement about reality (Geisler, 1999:250, 540). The claim cancels out itself and is, therefore, false. Similarly, the statement "Nothing can be known" is self-defeating, because it is a claim to know that nothing can be known, in which case something can be known.

Knowing the truth about reality is not always obvious or self-evident. In fact, individuals often make mistakes in understanding reality. But that does not prove reality cannot be known. In fact, mistakes presuppose that reality can be known. It presupposes reality as the standard of measurement against which to know a mistake or error. For example, one "could not know an illusion [something not real] unless it was seen on the backdrop of reality" (Geisler, 1999:635). Likewise, one could not say that a line is crooked unless one first knows what a straight line is. The straight line is the reality, the standard of measurement or "ruler," against which a line is determined to be crooked. Similarly, one could not know what a dream is unless one first knows that one is awake. Being awake is the reality, the standard of measurement or "ruler," against which a person knows that he or she has been dreaming.

3.6.7 Critique of Postmodernism's Denial of Truth

There are logical problems with the philosophy of postmodernism. Many of its attacks of objective truth are self-defeating. A self-defeating statement destroys itself, commits verbal "suicide," killing its own claim to truth. For example, "I cannot speak a word of English." It is self-defeating, because the person who made the statement spoke in English. Therefore, the statement is false (Geisler, 1999:250).

Philosopher John Caputo (1987:156), explaining Derrida's feminist view of truth, writes, "The truth is that there is no truth." If, on the one hand, the statement means "truth does not exist," then it is self-defeating, because it purports to be a truth that truth does not exist. If, on the other, the statement means "there is no objective truth," which is a truth outside a person's thoughts and feelings (independent of the knower, whether or not he or she believes it to be true), then it is also self-defeating, because it purports to be really true, an objective truth, independent of the person who makes the claim. Therefore, it is false.

Another logical fallacy of postmodernism is the view that "Truth is a social construction of language, made up by a particular group or community; truth, then, does not connect a person to objective reality, the reality outside one's own community" (Groothuis, 2000:106). However, the statement itself presupposes that it is objectively true, describing reality as it really is, in which case it is self-defeating and, therefore, false. If the statement itself is only a social construction, then it cannot accurately describe reality, in which case it opens up the possibility of objective truth, a reality beyond the statement itself (Groothuis, 2000:106).

3.6.8 Critique of Deconstructionism

According to postmodernist deconstructionism, words that are both written and spoken do not have a fixed, unchanging, objective meaning. Jacques Derrida (1978:104) writes, "words and language in general are not and cannot be absolute objects. They do not possess any resistant and permanent identity that is absolutely their own." However, as the author of the writing or sentence itself, Derrida presupposes that he has one meaning in mind.

For example, philosopher John Searle criticizes Derrida's deconstructionist view of language (Postrel & Feser, 2000). In response, Derrida attacks John Searle for misinterpreting and misrepresenting Derrida's writings. In doing so, Derrida the author presupposes that his intended, fixed meaning should have been understood by Searle. Derrida "even claimed that his point should have been clear and obvious to Searle!" (Groothuis, 2000:233). Theologian Millard

Erickson (in Groothuis, 2000:233) comments on Derrida's criticism of Searle, because it is

an incredibly nondeconstructionist, nonpostmodern response for someone who maintains that the meaning of a text is not in the author's intention, but in what the reader finds it saying to him or her.

What can be learned from the inconsistency of Derrida and other deconstructionists? There is, in D. A. Carson's (Groothuis, 2000:233) words,

a link between text and authorial intent. I have never read a deconstructionist who would be pleased if a reviewer misinterpreted his or her work: thus in practice deconstructionists implicitly link their own texts with their own intentions.

If, according to postmodern deconstructionism, words do not have a fixed, unchangeable meaning, then "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13) can mean virtually anything, depending on the meaning the reader gives to the words. For one reader, it might mean "You may kill a pre-born human baby," because that is not murder. For another, the text might mean "You may kill a terminally ill child, man and woman," because, it is an act of mercy. For still another interpreter, the text might say, "You shall not kill animals," because they, too, are alive. Hence, by killing animals, one deprives them of their "right" to life. However, in order to deconstruct the sacred text in such ways, one must completely ignore the original meaning of the Hebrew words themselves, that is, what they mean to the people to whom they were originally addressed and how they are used throughout Scripture.

Hermeneutically, there is no use in being sceptical, saying, "One cannot know an author's intended meaning." The view is self-destructive or self-defeating, because the author of the statement itself intends to deny an author's intended meaning. Therefore, the view is false. Nor can one become a linguistic nihilist, concluding, "Words have no meaning." If words have no meaning, then why use words to communicate that statement? It is self-defeating, because it uses meaningful words to communicate that words have no meaning. Hence, the view is false (cf. Moreland, 2004a). Therefore, postmodernism or

deconstructionism, in attempting to deconstruct objective truth, deconstructs itself, destroying the validity of its own claims (Craig, 1994:44).

3.6.9 Postmodernism and the Denial of Universal Human Rights

According to the natural moral law view of “essentialism,” there is an unchanging, essential human nature (a moral design to being human) that is shared by all individual human persons and all groups of persons, that is, in all cultures throughout the world (Groothuis, 2000:217). The atheistic postmodern American philosopher Richard Rorty would recognize the human rights of a lost child who is “the remnant of a slaughtered nation whose temples have been razed” (Rorty, 1991:201). However, a lost, wandering child does not intrinsically or inherently deserve to be taken in by anyone and receive shelter, because, according to postmodernism, a human being does not have a human nature or essence, which is universal, shared by all human beings, and, thus, deserves to be protected simply by virtue of the fact that he or she is a member of the human species. That would be a concession to the natural moral law, which postmodernism summarily rejects.

Then why, upon what basis, would Rorty care for the orphaned child? The answer is “it is part of the tradition of our community that the human stranger from whom all dignity has been stripped is to be taken in [and] reclothed with dignity” (Rorty, 1991:202). However, if, as postmodern philosophy maintains, morality (right and wrong behaviour) is a “social construction,” created by each society or community and does not hold true outside one’s own society, then there can be no universal human rights to protect humans whose rights may be abused or violated in other societies. There is no philosophical basis, say, for the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which presupposes that such rights are transcultural, applying to all human communities throughout the world. Undoubtedly, postmodernism would not go so far as to deny the moral validity of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. But, in principle, postmodernism leads to such a denial, because it rejects absolute moral values, viewing them as culturally conditioned moral rules.

3.7 A MORAL ABSOLUTE IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ABSOLUTELY MORAL BEING

God is the basis for moral absolutes; or, objective morality presupposes the existence of God. If there is no God, then morality cannot be objective. There can be no objective morality, no real right and wrong, such as, "You shall not murder." Instead, morality is subjective and, at best, based on custom or human convention. In the words of the atheist Paul Kurtz (1988:73), "The moral principles that govern our behaviour are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion." At the most, the prohibition against murder is a rule of society and the same society which makes it a prohibition can change it to "You can murder." Or, an individual who chooses to murder is only acting unfashionably. He is merely a non-conformist who breaks with society's custom against murder.

If there is no God in whom to ground morality, then human beings decide what is right and wrong, whether it be individuals or society as a whole. Craig (2008) says,

because of its coherence and internal consistency, the Nazi ethic could not be discredited from within. Only from a transcendent vantage point which stands above relativistic, socio-cultural mores could such a critique be launched. But in the absence of God, it is precisely such a vantage point that we lack.

3.7.1 Inconsistent Relativists

Is cannibalism right if a person or a society says it is? If a nation passed a law that paedophilia with a consenting boy or girl nine years of age or older was morally right, would it really be right? Or would it really, that is, objectively, be wrong? Is it always and everywhere wrong for a man to rape a woman? Or is it only wrong because the laws in the United States and other nations say it is? If one nation says that rape is morally right and another says it is morally wrong, which nation is right? Or is each right according to its own laws? Was it really wrong, that is, objectively evil, for men to hijack airplanes on 9/11 and fly them into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon? Or was it only wrong according to most Americans? If there are no objective, moral absolutes, no universally

binding moral standards of right and wrong, then no act can be judge to be universally and really, objectively or intrinsically (in itself) wrong. Philosopher Jonathan Dolhenty (2003) says that most people “who say they believe in moral relativism never act as if they really do.” They cannot live consistently as moral relativists. They may say one thing, namely, morality is relative. However, they think and live on the premise of absolute moral values.

3.7.2 Inconsistent Concerning the Holocaust

Most moral relativists do not believe that the Holocaust was relatively wrong or wrong according the government of the United States of America. They usually insist that it was really, that is, objectively, evil. Dolhenty (2003) asks,

But by what standards, or on what grounds, or by what criteria, if judging human acts is relative matter and there are no absolute standards that can be used to make a judgment?

3.7.3 The Moral Inconsistency of Atheism

Even atheists (such as Nietzsche, Camus, Russell and Sartre) cannot live consistently with their atheism, insofar as they live as if God exists, as if there are absolute, objective moral values. They may say that morality is purely subjective and relative, but they do not live that way. For example, there was a student in an ethics course at a university in Indiana who did not believe in moral absolutes. He wrote an excellent, well-documented paper on moral relativism and presented the paper to the ethics professor in a blue folder.

He was expecting to get and “A” but was astonished when he received back his paper with the grade “F.” On the paper, the professor explained why the student received an F: “I don’t like blue folders,” to which the student protested,

‘That’s not fair. That’s not right. That’s not just! You didn’t grade the paper on its merits.’
[T]he professor calmly retorted, ‘Wait a minute. Hold on. What’s this you say about being fair, right, and just? Didn’t your paper argue that it’s all a matter of taste? You like chocolate, I like vanilla?’

The student replied, 'Yes, that's my view.'

The professor responded, 'Fine, then. I don't like blue. You get an F!'

(Geisler and Turek, 1998:47, 48)

The point is that if a moral relativist is treated unfairly, he or she will usually protest such treatment by implicitly appealing to an absolute, objective standard, such as fairness, rightness or justice. Hence, moral relativists may say that morality is totally relative and may even act that way. But when it comes to being treated unjustly, their reaction to it shows that they do, in fact, believe in an absolute, objective standard of morality (Geisler and Turek, 1998:48).

3.7.4 The Examples of Nietzsche, Camus, Russell and Sartre

Neither the concept of God nor the acceptance of objective morality can be eradicated from the human heart. Although they may neither be conscious of it nor admit it, even atheists live on the premise that God exists, because they believe in real right and wrong. The atheistic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche broke off his friendship with Richard Wagner, because of the composer's anti-Semitism. For Nietzsche, anti-Semitism was really wrong (Craig, 1984:48).

The atheistic existentialist philosopher Albert Camus believed that life, ultimately, was absurd. Yet he also believed that human love and brotherhood were really right, objectively right. Apologist and cultural critic Francis A. Schaeffer (1982a:134) commented on Camus' inconsistency: "Camus never gave up 'hope,' centered in random personal happiness, though it went against the logic of his position."

Similarly, after World War II, Jean Paul Sartre condemned anti-Semitism. For him, such a view which leads to the destruction of millions of Jews was really wrong, not merely an opinion (Craig, 1984:48). Likewise, in 1960, Sartre signed the "Algerian Manifesto," which affirmed that the Algerian people had a right to fight the French government in order to form a nation of their own, independent of France. However, when he signed it, he believed that the resistance of the

Algerians was really or objectively right. Thus, not only Camus but also Sartre “was being inconsistent to his presuppositions” (Schaeffer, 1982a:134).

The philosopher Bertrand Russell denounced war, believing that the destruction of innocent lives was really wrong. When criticized for holding a position that was inconsistent with his atheism, Russell (Craig, 1984:47) admitted, “I don’t know the solution.” Therefore, Russell is inconsistent, on the one hand, to deny the existence of God and, on the other, affirm objective morality, real right and wrong. Craig (1984:47) says that an atheist

cannot live as though it is perfectly all right for soldiers to slaughter innocent children. He cannot live as though it is all right for dictatorial regimes to follow a systematic program of physical torture of political prisoners. He cannot live as though it is all right for rulers like Idi Amin or Pol Pot to exterminate millions of their own countrymen. Everything in him cries out to say these acts are wrong – really wrong. But if there is no God, he cannot. So he makes a leap of faith and affirms values anyway.

Though an atheist says that God does not exist, his acceptance of objective morality implies that God does exist. Schaeffer (1982a:24) says,

God has created a real, external world. ... That real, external world exists. God has also created man as a real, personal being, and he possesses a ‘manishnesses’ from which he can never escape.

The “manishness of man” refers to traces or signs of God’s presence in every human being (even if he or she denies God’s existence) from which he or she cannot really escape (Schaeffer, 1982a:201). Hence, atheists, too, would say that anti-Semitism is really wrong, the slaughter of innocent people is really wrong, genocide is really wrong.

3.7.5 Moral Absolutes and Their Relation to the Natural Moral Law and Its Natural Moral Law-Giver, God

There is a natural moral law, which issues from human nature, that is, from the very way in which a human being is “put together” or designed. Kreeft (1996:74) writes,

Morality is natural, or based on human nature. There is a ‘Natural (moral) Law.’ Morality is discovered, like stars, not invented, like games. It is not man-made, arbitrary, and changeable. Its laws are intrinsic to human nature, as the laws of hygiene are to the nature of the body or the laws of physics are to the nature of matter.

God is the author of the natural moral law. Kreeft (1990:45) says,

God made the moral rules, but not in an arbitrary way. He inscribed them in human nature and human knowledge. He made the rules of morality as the laws of human nature, just as he made the laws of physical nature. The law of gravity is true because that’s the nature of matter. The law of love is true because that’s the nature of man: man was designed to love, as matter was designed to attract. The difference between moral laws and physical laws is that man can disobey the laws of his nature, but matter can’t. Man alone has free will and moral choice.

The natural moral law is universal, that is, it can be known innately by every human being, because God implanted or inscribed it in the human heart, the inner person. That is why Christians can appeal to people of all faiths or no faith at all to fight against moral wrong. Even though Christians could, they do not need to appeal to the Bible in public to protest such behaviour as child abuse, rape or murder. Such behaviour does violate God’s will. But it also violates the natural moral law (Kreeft, 1990:45). Such acts are, in the words of the Nuremberg Trials, “crimes against humanity” (Kreeft, 1990:42-43).

3.7.6 Lewis’ Support for Moral Absolutes or Universally Accepted Moral Values

Cultural relativism teaches that different cultures have different moralities and, therefore, there are no moral absolutes, which issue from the natural moral law in human nature. To this Lewis (1967:77-78) responds,

this is a lie - a good, solid, resounding lie. If a man will go into a library and spend a few days with the Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics he will soon discover the massive unanimity of the practical reason in man. From the Babylonian Hymn to Samos, from the Laws of Manu, the Book of the Dead, the Analects, the Stoics, the Platonists, from Australian aborigines and Redskins, he will collect the same triumphantly monotonous denunciations of oppression, murder, treachery and falsehood, the same injunctions of kindness to the aged, the young, and the weak, of almsgiving and impartiality and honesty. He ... will no longer doubt that there is such a thing as the Law of Nature. There are, of course, differences. There are even blindnesses in particular cultures - just as there are savages who cannot count up to twenty. But the pretense that we are presented with mere chaos ... is simply false.... Far from finding a chaos, we find exactly what we should expect if good is indeed something objective and reason the organ whereby it is apprehended - that is, a substantial agreement with considerable local differences of emphasis and, perhaps, no one code that includes everything.

There are moral absolutes, that is, principles which apply to all times, in all places and for all people. Every human being can know that there are moral absolutes. It is moral common sense (Kreeft, 1990:43-44). In other words, humans know by nature that there are moral absolutes, even though there are differences on how moral absolutes should be applied in specific situations (cf. Kreeft, 1990:34).

3.7.7 Men without Chests

As a result of denying the objective moral law, society is producing in its institutions of education what Lewis (1955:35) calls "men without chests." The chest refers to "the heart, conscience or moral organ for apprehending objective, moral absolutes, the natural moral law" (Lewis; 1955:34). Hence, Lewis (1955: 34) says, "The head rules the belly through the chest."

The objective moral law still exists, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to apprehend it, because modern men and women are becoming indoctrinated with subjectivism and relativism, especially in colleges and universities. Men without chests, then, means blunting the common moral sense of human beings. Therefore, they must return to the old-fashioned belief in absolute,

objective moral values. Lewis (1967:81) says, “Unless we return to the crude and nursery-like belief in objective values, we perish.”

3.8 SUMMARY

There are moral absolutes. The source of them is God. Only an absolute divine will can be the source for an absolute moral law, a law which is binding on all people at all times and in all places (Kreeft, 1990:40). In the final analysis, one can account for the moral law and, thus, for moral absolutes, from one of two world views.

3.8.1 Two World Views to Explain the Moral Law and Moral Absolutes

The first world view is atheistic evolution. Its position is based on a “faith” that over millions, if not billions, of years of evolution human beings finally emerged on earth and, eventually, created moral laws for society. However, the problem with this view is that pure, mindless, blind chance emerged from mindless matter to create complex human beings who have the in-built capacity to create moral laws. In this scenario, the effect, humans with minds, is greater than the cause, namely, mindless matter. This, however, violates a fundamental rational law, namely, an effect cannot be greater than its cause.

The second view accounts for human morality, a sense of the moral law in human nature, by ascribing it to the Creator of human beings. It, too, is based on faith but one that is more reasonable than the previous view. The argument is as follows: If there is a moral law in human nature, then there must be a Moral Law-Giver. The moral law presupposes that human beings are ordered (made in a certain way) to discover moral laws by reason and issue them for the good of society. However, there cannot be an effect, namely, the moral law, without a cause, namely, the Moral Law-Giver, and this Moral Law-Giver Christians call “God.” This view does not end in a fallacy, because God, the Infinite Cause, is greater than the effect, finite human beings.

3.8.2 The Noetic Effects of Sin

But human beings can know the effects of the moral law, that is, moral absolutes, without knowing their cause – namely, God, just as a scientist can know God’s natural effects in the study of nature without knowing God to be the Creator-cause of the effects (Kreeft, 1990:44-45). Why? It can be attributed to the noetic effects of sin, the influence of sin on the human mind. Sin can blind the mind so that human reasoning or thinking can be misdirected, even distorted.

Nevertheless, deep down inside every human being can know that God exists (cf. Romans 1:18-20). Why, then, does not everyone seem to know it? The reason is that the human mind can suppresses the knowledge of God’s existence. “In other words,” writes Reformed theologian R. C. Sproul (Sproul, Gerstner & Lindsley, 1984:244),

[T]he noetic influence of sin is the influence of a sinful heart on the use of the mind, leading the mind to suppress information which the mind (as a reliable instrument of knowledge) cannot help apprehending.

Similarly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994:1958) says,

The natural law is immutable and permanent throughout the variations of history; it subsists under the flux of ideas and customs and supports their progress. The rules that express it remain substantially valid. Even when it is rejected in its very principles, it cannot be destroyed or removed from the heart of man. It always rises again in the life of individuals and societies. ‘Theft is surely punished by your law, O Lord, and by the law that is written in the human heart, the law that iniquity itself does not efface.’

The *Catechism* quotes St. Augustine, which may also be translated, “It is certain, O Lord, that theft is punished by your law, the law that is written in men’s hearts and cannot be erased however sinful they are” (Augustine, 1961:47). In other words, the natural moral law, the general law of right and wrong which is written or implanted by God in human nature, can be defaced but not erased; it can be distorted but not totally destroyed. Just as the

knowledge of the effect cannot not be known (to use a double negative), so is it true of the knowledge of the Cause, God.

Murder is really wrong. That statement is not merely a feeling that it is wrong nor society's consensus that it is wrong. Rather, it is wrong because it is an objective injustice, deliberately taking the life of an innocent human being who has, by nature, the right to life.

4.0 ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section may be called “Theological Anthropology” to distinguish it from secular anthropology. The former seeks to understand the human person with the inclusion of faith, particularly, the Christian theological tradition. The latter seeks to understand the human person to the exclusion of faith, particularly, faith in God as understood by the Christian theological tradition.

To express the same point in another way: A “sound” anthropology is built on a sound theology, which is a true or correct understanding of God. If a theology, a particular understanding or “school of thought” on God is distorted or truncated, it is also likely that the anthropology following from it will be distorted or truncated, that is, a limited or lopsided. Likewise, if God is denied or excluded as a fundamental presupposition of anthropology, then it is also likely that the anthropology following from it will be distorted or truncated.

Similarly, a “sound” ethic is built on a sound anthropology, which is a true or correct understanding of the human person. If an anthropology, a particular understanding or “school of thought” of the human person, is distorted or truncated, it is also likely that the ethic following from it will be distorted or truncated.

Dignity is derived from the Latin word *dignus*, meaning “worth” or “value.” *Kabod*, the Hebrew word translated “glory,” is derived from the *kabad*, meaning “‘weighty,’ ‘heavy,’ or ‘important’” (Sproul, 1978:103). *Kabod*, then, is “something weighty or impressive” (Sproul, 1978:103). When the word “glory” is applied to God, it does not mean that he is literally weighty or heavy in pounds, but in importance, significance (Sproul, 1983:98). In short, it refers to God’s dignity, that is, his value or worth, which is infinite. Similarly, human beings have dignity in that there is something weighty or impressive about them (Sproul, 1988:75, 76). For example, Reformed theologian R. C. Sproul (1983:98) says,

[W]hen we feel we are being unduly ignored or not taken seriously we complain, 'That person took me lightly.' To be taken lightly is to be treated with indignity, to be deemed insignificant. Here one's value or worth as a person is called into question.

Human beings, whether Christians or non-Christians, have almost an innate, immediate sense of their own dignity. In other words, most humans, sensing their own value, want to be treated with respect (Sproul, 1988:71).

The commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13, NIV) presupposes the sanctity of human life, which, in turn, presupposes the *imago Dei*, the biblical teaching that a human being is "made in the image of God" (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). If there is no *imago Dei*, no divine likeness to the human person, then nothing, ultimately (except human might), stands in the way of murdering him or her.

4.2 CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Genesis chapter 1 is the general account of the creation of humankind. Genesis 2: 7-27 is the specific account of the creation of man and woman separately (cf. esp. 2:7). The *locus classicus* of theological anthropology is Genesis 1:26-27, which says,

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our Likeness....' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:26-27; cf. 5:1-2).

Orthodox theologian Kallistos Ware (1979:64) comments,

The human person forms the centre and crown of God's creation. Man's unique position in the cosmos is indicated above all by the fact that he is made 'in the image and likeness' of God (Gen. 1:26).

The pinnacle or highest point in material creation is not held to be the cosmos, as vast as it is, nor the universe itself, as seemingly infinite as it is. Rather, the

human person is the highest point in creation, possessing the most value in the world, because he or she is made in the image of God (Geisler, 1989a:303). Because of the image of God in the human person, he or she, out of all the life-forms in the world, is most like God.

In Genesis 1:26-27, “man” is a translation of the Hebrew word *adham*, the Greek or Septuagint translation *anthropos* and the Latin Vulgate *hominem*, each of which is a general term, referring to “all human beings” or “humankind.”

The image of God is expressed in sexual differentiation: “male and female” are created in God’s image. Males and females have the same human nature, both being made in the image of God. Hence, the verse teaches the essential (by nature) equality of males and females.

As sexual beings, men and women are essentially, not accidentally, different from each other. Scripture says,

The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman (ishshah), because she was taken out of man (ish)’ (Genesis 2:22-23, NAS).

In the Hebrew, there is a wordplay on the words translated “man” and “woman.” In Hebrew, “man” is *ish* and “woman” is *ishshah* (cf. Genesis 2:23). Here, then, is sexual differentiation. Males and females are not exactly the same yet they are both human beings with dignity.

But the bodily differences between a male and a female are not merely tacked on to a human being, like an appendage. On the contrary, a man is *ish*, that is, masculinity is rooted in or springs from the core of a man’s being. A woman is *ishshah*, that is, femininity is rooted in or spring from her very being. Therefore, sexual parts are not extras tacked on to a human male and a human female. Rather, they express outwardly the inner dimension of being male and female.

Man and woman are essentially or ontologically equal, that is, equal in being, because they both have the same human nature. In other words, both are made in the image of God. Scripture says, The “Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man” (Genesis 2:22). In the Hebrew, “rib” (*tse'la*) means “side.” The woman is not from the man’s head, which suggests his superiority over her; nor is she from his feet, which suggests her inferiority to him. Rather, woman is from man’s rib or side, which suggests equality between the different sexes (Thomas, 1977:43).

God has universal ownership of creation, because he is the creator of the heavens and the earth (cf. Genesis 1:1). Hence, the earth does not belong to human beings; rather, it belongs to God. Scripture says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it” (Psalm 24:1). “Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine” (Job 41:11b). This, of course, includes all living creatures. The Lord says,

For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all it contains (Psalm 50:10-12).

Because human beings are made in the image of God, he gave them dominion over the earth. Scripture says, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’” (Genesis 1:26; cf. Psalm 8:6-8). However, to be made in the image of God is to have relative, not absolute, dominion over creation (cf. Genesis 1:26-28).

Psalm 8 is a poetic commentary on Genesis, chapter 1. The psalmist or biblical poet says that the image of God in the human person means “You crown him with glory and majesty!” (Psalm 8:5b). These words, in the Old Testament world, were commonly used in reference to kings (Taylor, 1955:52). Being made in God’s image, “not only do humans resemble God, but they are to represent him as well. Humans beings are to reign as God’s agents or stewards on earth” (Geisler, 1989b:17). Even though God is the ultimate and absolute

King of the universe, infinite or unlimited in his power and wisdom in governing the world; nevertheless, he delegates his kingship, so that a human being, although finite by nature, is a king of the living creatures under him and a king over nature, although in a limited sense (cf. Moltmann, 1993:365pp.). Timothy Ware (1979:64-65) comments, "Man is a finite expression of God's infinite self-expression."

Humankind's dominion over the world is delegated. God says, "Rule ... over all the earth" (Genesis 1:26). The Hebrew word (*radah*) translated "rule" means "to trample or to prevail over." The image conveyed is that of a person dominant or victorious" (Geisler 1989a:305). Another term for human dominion is "subdue" (Hebrew, *kabash*, Genesis 1:28), which means "to tread down or to bring into bondage. It conveys the image of a conqueror placing his foot on the neck of the conquered. It implies some form of control or power over nature" (Geisler 1989a:305). Hence, human beings are not only in nature, but are distinct from it and placed over it. They are not only living creatures, but are distinct from them and placed over them.

However, dominion means to use properly animals and nature, not abuse them. In other words, human beings cannot do whatever they want (not using any moral restraints) with animals and the world's resources. For example, Scripture says, "A righteous man has regard for the life of his animal" (Proverbs 12:10). Hence, ruthless treatment of animals is morally wrong and so is the abuse of natural resources, both of which are gifts from God to be used responsibly by human beings (Martens, 1980:92, 93). There should be a reasonable purpose in killing an animal, such as to eat it or use its skin for clothing. Biblically, it is not wrong to eat meat (cf. Genesis 9:1-3). St. Augustine of Hippo (n.d.: I, 20). says that animals are "by the just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive for our own uses." But it is wrong to kill animals simply for the sake of killing. It is a useless act and an abuse of dominion over animals.

4.2.1 The Image of God and the Christian Explanation for Origin of Human Personality

Basically, there are two conflicting explanations to the origin of human personality. Atheistic evolution says that human life evolved by blind chance from mindless matter over millions, if not billions, of years. Humans, then, are neither planned nor purposed by a Divine Mind or God. The origin and growth of the human race were the result of a long series of accidents. In short, impersonal matter brought about personal creatures, human beings. Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer (1972b:9) explains the philosophical problem with such a view, saying, "Beginning with the impersonal, everything, including man, must be explained in terms of the impersonal plus time plus chance." When an explanation is made, human personality with all of its beauty and complexity usually disappears, such as in the views that humans are highly evolved animals, or electro-chemical machines. Therefore, a purely naturalistic explanation, one that excludes God as creator, ends up being reductionistic, reducing the human person to impersonal factors.

The Christian view of human personality traces its origin to a personal God who created human beings in his image, which is revealed as three-fold. †The Christian interpreter of Sacred Scripture, because he or she has the complete revelation of God in the New Testament, can look back into the Old Testament and see intimations of plurality in God or the Godhead or diversity within the unity of God; in short, the Trinity. However, there is no explicit revelation of the Trinity in the Old Testament. Because the revelation of God progresses from the Old Testament to the New, the Christian can see God in the Old Testament preparing to reveal himself as Trinity in the New Testament.

There is an intimation of plurality in God where the sacred text quotes God, referring to himself with a plural pronoun, saying, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26). The phrase "Let us" has been understood to refer to the Lord in consultation with his angels (Brown, Fitzmyer & Murphy, 1968:11). However, such an interpretation is doubtful. Hebrew scholar and Old Testament exegete Gleason Archer (1982:359) says the first person plural ("Let us") "could hardly include the angels in consultation with God, for nowhere is it ever stated that man was created in the image of angels, only of God." Only the human

person, neither angel nor animal, is referred to as “the image of God” in sacred Scripture.

Personality is inherent or “intrinsic to what always has been,” because before the creation of the world and human beings, love and interpersonal communion existed between the three persons in God (Schaeffer, 1982b:12). Scripture says,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning (John 1:1-2).

And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began (John 17:5).

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world (John 17:24, NIV).

The reason, then, human beings are persons, the explanation for the origin of human personality, is that they are made in the image of the Infinite-Personal God (Schaeffer, 1972b: 14). Schaeffer (1972a:21) writes,

The universe had a personal beginning -- a personal beginning on the high order of the Trinity. That is, before "in the beginning" [Genesis 1:1] the personal was already there. Love and thought and communication existed prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Human beings are persons who are made in the image of a God who is himself personal. Schaeffer (1982a:94) says, “Without such a source men are left with personality coming from the impersonal (plus time, plus, chance).”

What distinguishes human beings from animals and all other life-forms? The *imago Dei!* Schaeffer (1970:49-50) comments,

On the side of His infinity there is a great chasm. He creates all things and He alone is Creator. Everything else is created. Only He is infinite and only He is the Creator; everything else is the creature and finite. Only he is independent; everything else is dependent. So man, the animal, the flower, and the machine, in the biblical viewpoint, are equally separated from God in that He created them all.

More will be discussed about the essential difference between humans and animals in 4.5.3.

4.2.2 **The *Analogia Entis***

The source of human personhood is a divine personhood. In theological anthropology, the effect, the human person, although finite or limited in being, resembles or reflects the infinite cause, namely, God the Creator. In other words, human beings are like God; they reflect the One who made them. "God is spirit" (John 4:24). He is called "the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). Men on earth are fathers of the human body, but the Heavenly Father, God himself, is father of the human spirit (Bruce, 1964:359-360).

Scripture says, "He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? (Psalm 94:9). Philosophically, this is called the *analogia entis* or "analogy of being," the personal similarity between the human creature and God the Creator. In other words, someone, who is God, made a miniature someone like himself, who is a human being, a person.

Just as God is a centre of consciousness or self-awareness who loves, thinks and wills, so, too, human beings have a centre of consciousness or self-awareness that loves thinks and wills. Human beings can think abstractly, because God thinks abstractly. Human beings can love beauty, because God is beauty and loves beauty. Human beings can freely choose a course of action, because God is sovereign, free to do as he wills.

The image of God, the *imago Dei*, inheres or is in the human spirit (Payne, 1980:836). Hebrew scholar Gleason Archer, Jr. explains the biblical meaning of spirit. He writes (in Payne, 1980: 837),

[R]uah (spirit) is the principle of man's rational and immortal life, and possesses reason, will and conscience. It imparts the divine image to man, and constitutes the animating dynamic which results in man's nepesh (soul) as the subject of personal life.

The image of God, then, refers to the spirit or spiritual aspect of the human person. St. Thomas Aquinas (1920: I, q. 3, art. 1) writes,

Man is ... the image of God, not as regards his body, but as regards that whereby he excels other animals. Hence, when it is said, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness', it is added, 'And let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea' (Gn. 1:26). Now man excels all animals by his reason and intelligence; hence it is according to his intelligence and reason, which are incorporeal, that man is said to be according to the image of God.

The image of God imprinted on the human person is, says Aquinas, “incorporeal.” In other words, it is not material, a body; rather, it is spirit. There are two general meanings of the word “spirit.” First, it means “The power of thinking – conscious, deliberate, rational understanding” (Kreeft, 1995:50). Second, spirit means “The power of willing and choosing and deliberately loving” (Kreeft, 1995:50). Hence, “a spirit is the ‘I’ that thinks and wills” (Kreeft, 1990:137). “Intellect and will are spiritual,” belonging to a human being’s spirit. The will can choose between good and evil, but matter cannot. It just is (Kreeft, 1995:95, 96).

A human being, a person, is both inner and outer, spirit and body. Every human being has a spirit (Greek, πνευμα, *pneuma*), a non-material core or center of identity, a “spirit-I” that is self-conscious and conscious of other persons and things in the external world. The apostle Paul says, “For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him?” (I Corinthians 2:11a, NAS). The phrase “the spirit of the man, which is in him” is general, that is, “applicable to everyone” (Grosheide, 1984:69). The phrase “stands for the person of man, his ego, his self-consciousness” (Grosheide, 1984:69). There is, then, a spirit in the body of every human person (Collins, 1985:37).

Human thought is immaterial. Scripture says, “‘For who has known the mind (Greek, νοϋς, *nous*) of the Lord that he may instruct him?’ But we have the mind (*nous*) of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16, NIV). Like God the creator, the human creature, the human person made in his spiritual image, has a mind, a spiritual faculty.

Similarly, sacred Scripture says, "How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts!" (Psalm 92:5, NIV). For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? (I Corinthians 2:11, NIV). God has thoughts. God's thoughts are immaterial, because God is Spirit (cf. John 4:24), an immaterial, real entity or being. Like God the creator, the human person has immaterial thoughts. Philosopher Peter Kreeft (1995:97) writes: "thought is spirit, not matter."

Because the image of God in the human person is spiritual, immaterial, then that image, the person's spirit, cannot die. The human body, of course, is material and whatever is material can be broken down into parts, undergoing decomposition. But the human spirit is immaterial and, thus, invisible, but just as real as the human body. Since the human spirit is immaterial, not made of any physical parts, it cannot fall apart, as the human body does at death. Thus, the spirit is simple (without parts) and indivisible (Kreeft, 1995:47).

Reformed theologian Charles Hodge (1940:97) writes, "The essential attributes of a spirit are reason, conscience, and will. A spirit is a rational, moral and therefore also, a free agent." Made in the image of God, a human being has free-will and is, therefore, free to make choices (cf. Genesis 2:16). Otherwise, the prohibition to Adam makes no sense. God said, "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Genesis 2:17). Thomas Aquinas (1947: I, q. 83, art. 1) writes, "Man has free-will: otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain." Nevertheless, a human being was not created to be absolutely free, that is, free to choose whatever he or she wants, to be without any limitations or restrictions (cf. Genesis 2:17). The biblical term for limiting a person's freedom of choice is called "law." Another aspect, then, of being made in the image of God is the human person's moral sense, the "ability to comprehend the difference between right and wrong and make moral decisions" (Archer, 1982:259).

4.2.3 The Icon of the Human Person

The human person is made in the “image of God” (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; Colossians 3:10). In other words, there is something divine in being human, a ‘stamp’ or ‘spark’ of divinity in each person. “Image” is a translation of *εικον* or *eikon*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. The English word “icon” is derived from the Greek word. In Orthodox theology, an icon is a sacred work of art, such as an artistic image of any of the saints. A human is an icon, a sacred image of God. The greatest icon in the world cannot be found in any religious work of art. Orthodox theologian Timothy Ware (1964:226) writes, “The best icon of God is man.” Murder, then, is wrong, because it is an act of sacrilege. It is an affront to God in whose image man is made.

Even after the Fall, the original sin of the first human couple, the human person still reflects his or her Creator, God. Theologian and philosopher Norman L. Geisler (1971:151) says, “Even after man sinned, the image of God remained in man. It was marred with sin to be sure, but there was still something about man which was good and like God.” After the fall, the image of God in the human person is defaced, not erased (Geisler, 1971:151). Geisler (1971:153) says, “there are no men who are totally deprived of their good natures which make them in God’s image, for if they were then they would no longer be men.” No person can be so sinful as to destroy the image of God, to become non-human. There is still good in human nature. There is a little bad in a good human being and a little good in a bad or morally evil human being.

4.2.4 The Embodied Person

To be made in the image of God is to be an embodied person, meaning that the divine imprint, God’s image in a person’s spirit, is connected to or overflows into the human body. However, just because human bodies come in all sizes and shapes, does not mean that God does, for God is Spirit, incorporeal (cf. John 4:24). In short, to be made in the image of God is to be a person and one cannot be a complete human person without a human body.

The Christian view of the human person is holistic, not dualistic in the sense of Platonic dualism. This means that the body and soul are two separate parts of the human person, often in opposition to each other. The soul is spiritual and therefore good; but the body is material, less valuable than the soul. In his book *Phaedo* -- a dialogue between Simmias and Socrates -- Plato teaches that the body is evil and “the soul is contaminated by such an evil” (in Flew, 1964:43). Purification “consists in ... separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body” (in Flew, 1964:45). The ideal state of the soul is to be “freed from the body as from fetters” (in Flew, 1964:45). For many ancient Greeks, following the teachings of Plato, the ideal state of the soul is to be released from the body, making its way back to God in the heavenly or spiritual world.

4.2.5 Soul as the *Totus Homo*

The biblical view of the human person is significantly different from Plato’s view of the soul. Scripture says, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath* (Hebrew, *neshamah*) of life; and man became a *living being*” (Hebrew, *nephesh chayyah*, Genesis 2:7). The exegete or interpreter should not read into the term “living being” or “soul” a Platonic meaning, which is the spiritual, eternal part of a person that survives the death of the body and lives forever.

The Hebrew word (*nephesh*) translated “living being” or “soul” (KJV) means “life, self, person” (Thomas, 1981:1563). A soul is “a complete person” (Simpson, 1952:494). It also includes a person’s desires or passions or appetites or emotions (Thomas, 1981:1563). The Hebrew word is predominantly translated as “soul.” Soul, then, includes not only the immaterial, inner person but also the *totus homo*, the “total or whole person” – body and spirit.

The soul (*nephesh*) is animated or possesses life (cf. Genesis 2:7). When sacred Scripture refers to “seventy souls” (cf. Exodus 1:5, KJV) of the Israelites going down into Egypt (cf. Exodus 1:1), it means seventy “persons,” not seventy disembodied spirits. Therefore, contrary to Plato, a human being does not **have**

a soul. Rather, he or she is a soul (Moody, 1981:173). Contrary to Plato, a human being is an animated body, not an incarcerated soul. A human being, then, is an embodied person.

4.2.6 Self-Creation through Embodied Moral Acts

The image of God is imprinted on the human spirit. The spirit (the immaterial “I” or self, the centre of external consciousness or awareness of others and internal consciousness or awareness of oneself) is rational or intellectual (capable of knowing) and volitional. In other words, I am the source or cause of my choices, because I have free-will. Medieval historian Richard Hogan writes,

[A] human person is not just a spiritual being. A human being has a body. Therefore, the internal acts of knowing and willing, powers of a person’s soul, ... find expression through the body.

(Hogan & LeVoir, 1992:40)

Similarly, in his book *The Last Things*, theologian Romano Guardini says a person is “spirit expressed and made active through the body” (in Liptak, 1988:6). In other words, a person expresses himself or herself through the body; that is, bodily acts, and bodily acts in turn therefore are moral acts when they are freely chosen by the person who performs them. One then cannot separate ethics from the bodily dimensions of the human person.

Because human beings have free-will, they create themselves. In a sense, self-creation is a philosophical absurdity, because humans cannot create themselves, be the cause of their own existence. But in a moral sense, self-creation is correct. Human beings throughout their lives are constantly creating or moulding themselves. By their free choices, they determine what kind humans they are going to be. Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II (1993:71) writes,

Human acts are moral acts because they express and determine the goodness or evil of the individual who performs them. They do not produce a change merely in the state of affairs outside of man but, to the extent that they are deliberate choices, they give moral definition to the very person who performs them.

To use the analogy of a sculptor, a human being's choices shapes him or her. Church Father and theologian Gregory of Nyssa says, "Thus *we are in a certain way our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions*" (in Pope John Paul II, 1993:71). A person becomes, as it were, his or her own work of art. Therefore, a person is not only a human being but also a *human becoming*, meaning a life-long process of choices which defines him or her. Christian apologist C. S. Lewis (1960:86) observes,

[E]very time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself.

Who I am, then, is neither solely because of my heredity nor my environment, but my choices. In other words, I am not determined; rather, I am self-determining. Philosopher Peter Kreeft (1992:92) comments,

God has given the human creature the incredible dignity of collaborating in its own creation.... God supplies only the raw material: existence (through creation), heredity (through evolution) and environment (through providence). These make me what I am, but who I am is up to me. The form I construct out of this matter, the statue I sculpt out of this marble, is mine and is me.

4.2.7 Different Terms to Describe the Whole Person

There are at least four terms to describe a human being in his or her totality. First, a person is a "holistic" being, that is, a unified psycho-physical organism, an interrelated whole. The distinct human faculties of body, spirit, intellect, will and emotions form a unified being, a complete person.

Second, a human person is “psychosomatic unity,” from the Greek words *psuche*, meaning “soul” and *soma*, meaning “body.” In other words, body and spirit, the material and the immaterial, are joined together to form a unified (one) human person. *Psuche* influences *soma* and *vice versa*. Soul and body, then, refer to the whole human person. Each is necessary for person to be whole, complete. “The body is the soul in its outward form” (Pedersen, 1926:171).

Third, a human person is an “integrated being,” from the Latin *integer*, meaning “whole.” In other words, all of the distinct parts or faculties of a human being come together to form one whole person. Theologian Frank Stagg (1962:25) observes,

[A] person may be analyzed in terms of reason, emotion, volition, or flesh; but these cannot in fact be separated one from the other. One's mind cannot be placed in one room, his emotions in another, his will in another, and his flesh in yet another. In the New Testament, man is a complexity of bodily, rational, emotional, volitional, moral, spiritual, and other factors, distinguishable in analysis but not separable in actuality.

A scholar can study and specialize in some facet of the human person but such a limited or narrow study can result in the academic error, which is called “hyper-specialization.” The human person can become compartmentalized to such an extent that one loses a vision of the person in his or her totality.

4.2.8 Theological Reasons for the Value of the Human Body

There are at least four theological reasons for the great value of the human body. First, the body has value because as an effect, it is ontologically (related in being) connected to its cause, the God who created it (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). It is “very good” (cf. Genesis 1:31), because it reflects the goodness of its source (cf. I Timothy 4:1-5). The second reason is the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. In him, God assumed a human body (cf. John 1:1-2, 14). Therefore, theologically, it is wrong to depreciate the human body and matter in general, because God came into the material world in the person of Jesus Christ. In other words, God made bodily contact with the very matter that

he himself created and walked on the material earth as Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As the Second Person of the Trinity, he added matter to the Godhead forever (Paxton, 1977:22).

The third reason the body is valuable is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, proving God's concern for the whole person – body and spirit (cf. I Corinthians 6:13-14). The fourth is that at the end of time, the new, eternal world will begin, which means that the cosmos, the material world itself, will be redeemed or saved (cf. Romans 8:18-23; II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1-4).

Docetism, a teaching fully developed around the mid-second century A. D., was rejected by the church as a heresy. It taught that Jesus merely appeared to be human but really was not, because if Jesus is God and he assumed a human body, became man, then God became contaminated by matter, which is evil. However, the church rejected docetism because it was a false teaching, contrary to what Scripture itself says about creation, the incarnation, the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the dwelling of God's people in a new material world at the end of time (Paxton, 1977:22).

4.2.9 Not a Complete Person without a Body

A human being is not complete without his or her body. The reason death is a tragedy is that it is an abnormal state of the human person, rending asunder, dividing the spirit from the body. Death is not normal, a part of life, as many people say. Rather, death is abnormal, a consequence of sin (cf. Romans 6:23; 5:12; I Corinthians 15:56).

Thomas Aquinas teaches that a human being is incomplete without a body. Aquinas (1947: supp., q. 75, art. 1) answers the following objection to this idea,

Objection 4. Further, the last state of a thing is the most perfect, since thereby it attains its end. Now the most perfect state of the soul is to be separated from the body, since in that state it is more conformed to God and the angels, and is more pure, as being

separated from any extraneous nature. Therefore separation from the body is its final state, and consequently it returns not from this. Reply to Objection 4. Other things being equal, the state of the soul in the body is more perfect than outside the body, because it is a part of the whole composite; and every integral part is material in comparison to the whole: and though it were conformed to God in one respect, it is not simply. Because, strictly speaking, a thing is more conformed to God when it has all that the condition of its nature requires, since then most of all it imitates the Divine perfection.

Aquinas is saying that it is not a natural condition for the human person to be without a body, as is the case with a person who is dead. Death, then is not God's original design for the human person. The apostle Paul says, "we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (II Corinthians 5:4). A Christian is not perfected at the moment of death, because the soul or spirit is separated from the body. Plato and his followers believed that the human soul was imprisoned by the body. For them, "salvation" was when the soul was separated from the body and became a disembodied spirit. But that is not the teaching of Christianity.

The perfection of Christians takes place at the resurrection. Their souls will reunite with their bodies, becoming immortal, glorified bodies. Scripture says, "we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). Paul did not say "redemption from (Greek, εκ, "out of") our body," for that would have been Platonic. Rather, Paul says, "redemption of (Greek, του) the body."

For a Christian, salvation is not a flight or escape from the world, which is God's creation. Nor is it an escape from the human body. Rather, salvation, ultimately, involves the whole person – body and spirit – and the world to which human beings belong (Ladd, 1977:15). Not only, then, is the whole person – body and spirit – redeemed (or saved) now but also the body shall one day be raised from the dead, redeemed from the effects of sin, one of which is death. Again, Paul says,

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21).

4.3 CHRISTIAN PERSONALISM: THE HUMAN PERSON AS A SUBJECT

4.3.1 Introduction: Personalism as a Response to Various Forms of Dehumanization

Like many "schools" of philosophy, personalism is difficult to define, or at least arrive at a rigid definition. It is very broad in perspective. Like existentialism, personalism cannot be confined to one particular system of thought. It is typically associated with existentialist philosophy but it crosses other disciplines, such as psychology and theology. However, a central idea of personalism is the recognition of the irreducible value or worth of the person (Hellman, 1981: 4). It stresses the priority of persons to things. Personalism, then, is a presupposition, a basic attitude toward the dignity of persons. It is an appropriate philosophical response to various forms of dehumanization or depersonalization. However, before addressing personalism, I shall contrast it with two types of dehumanization in this section.

4.3.2 Reductionism as a Form of Dehumanization

Reductionism is a form of dehumanization of depersonalization. Simply put, reductionism is "nothing buttery," or "nothing but." For example, John B. Watson, the father of behavioristic psychology, says that a human being is a highly conditioned animal. Watson (1930:v) writes,

Human beings do not want to class themselves with other animals. They are willing to admit that they are animals but 'something else in addition.' It is this 'something else' that causes the trouble. In this 'something else' in bound up everything that is classed as religion, the life hereafter, morals ... and the like. The raw fact that you, as a psychologist, if you are to remain scientific, must describe the behavior of man in no other terms than those you would use in describing the behavior of the ox you slaughter, drove and still drives many timid souls away from behaviorism.

Reductionism tends to narrow the human person down to one thing, one dimension, in the light of one's discipline or academic expertise (Frankl, 1969:20-21). It errs in reducing the complexity of a human person down to a single factor, whether it is biological, bio-chemical, neurological or animal. An animal may behave like a human in several respects, but a human being is much more than an animal.

Psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl told the story about a rabbi who was called upon by two parishioners. One complained that the other parishioner's cat had taken five pounds of butter and eaten it. But the other parishioner denied it. The rabbi said to them, "Bring me the cat." The cat was brought to him. Then he said, "Bring me the scales to weigh the cat." They did. The rabbi put the cat on the scales and it weighed five pounds. The rabbi said, "Now I have the butter, but where is the cat?" This is what happens when reductionists say that a human person is nothing but a highly conditioned animal or a naked ape. Like the rabbi, they say, "Now we have it! But where is the human being?" (Frankl, 1985:62-63).

For example, the statement "A human being is nothing but a complex bio-chemical mechanism" is a form of reductionism (Frankl, 1969:21). It is a denial of the image of God in the human person. Frankl (1969:16) comments,

... [M]an, as long as he regarded himself as a creature, interpreted his existence in the image of God, his creator; but as soon as he started considering himself as a creator, began to interpret his existence merely in the image of his own creation, the machine.

A human being is like a machine and a computer, but he or she is also much more than both (Frankl, 1969:21).

There are a couple of possible reasons for the philosophy of reductionism. First, if one does not believe in God, then one will not understand human beings as the image of God. Instead, the human person will be understood in terms of nature alone. The second is the tendency for scientists to over generalize on the basis of their data (Frankl, 1969:21).

Reductionism tends to reify the human person, that is, reduce him or her to a thing, an object. This philosophy can lead to despair, even suicide. Interdisciplinary scholar William Irwin Thompson wrote,

[H]umans are not objects that exist as chairs or tables; they live, and if they find that their lives are reduced to the mere existence of chairs and tables, they commit suicide.

(in Frankl, 1969:85-86)

Reductionism may rob a person of meaning and purpose. When that happens, a person experiences "the existential vacuum," an inner sense of emptiness or meaninglessness. Frankl (1969:85) observes,

[E]ducation often adds to the existential vacuum. The students' sense of emptiness and meaninglessness is reinforced by the way in which scientific findings are presented to them, by the reductionist way, that is. The students are exposed to an indoctrination along the lines of a mechanistic theory of man plus a relativistic philosophy of life.

A high school or college student who is taught that he is nothing but a complex machine and that there are no absolute values to stand for in life may eventually come to find that his life is empty, meaningless. Frankl (1969:86) himself recalls his own experience as a student, saying,

I well remember how I felt when I was exposed to reductionism in education as a junior high school student at the age of thirteen. Once our natural science teacher told us that life in the final analysis was nothing but a combustion process, an oxidation process, I sprang to my feet and said, 'Professor Fritz, if this is the case, what meaning does life have?'

A person is much more, qualitatively different from, an electro-chemical machine, even though the human nervous system is like a highly complex electrical circuit. Similarly, a person is much more, qualitatively different from, a computer, even though the human brain stores information and uses it in a highly complex process. Scientifically, a human being may be analyzed as a living organism, "a material object, made up of carbon, oxygen, calcium, and

whatever other elements are to be found in the body” (Macquarrie, 1972:100). However, a person is much more than a living organism.

4.3.3 Non-Therapeutic Experimentation as a Form of Dehumanization

The second form of dehumanization in non-therapeutic experimentation. Therapeutic experimentation is morally justified, because it is for the well being of the patient, the subject (Liptak, 1988:27). But non-therapeutic experimentation is not for the benefit of the human subject but for some other reason, such as the good of the government or the advancement of medical science or research. To experiment on the human subject without his or her consent is non-therapeutic and, therefore, is morally wrong, because it violates the medical principle of free and informed consent.

The terms “free” and “informed” consent are morally crucial: First, a human being must freely choose to be the subject of experimentation. It cannot be done by force, that is, against a person’s will. Second, one must be informed of the experimentation. It cannot be done without the person’s prior knowledge and consent. By not being informed, humans can be and have been manipulated or exploited in the name of science. The principle of free and informed consent respects the dignity of the human person. Humans are free to make choices. It is what separates them from all other life-forms.

In the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, Nazi physicians and scientists performed non-therapeutic experimentations on the prisoners. For example, research was performed on the inmates of Dachau. They were immersed in basins of ice cold water and remained there until the point of death. Then they were removed immediately and subjected to different methods of re-warming. Because of moving from one extreme temperature to another, many inmates died (Brennan, 1983:53).

August Hirt (professor at the University of Strasbourg and a surgeon) studied the severed head of inmates who were killed in gas chambers. By measuring the size of their skulls, Hirt attempted to prove the inferiority of the Jewish race (Brennan, 1983:49, 53). Jewish human beings were killed, reducing them to unwanted objects. Such "research" or "experimentation" was not therapeutic, that is, for the benefit of the individuals on whom it was performed. Rather, it was non-therapeutic, performed to advance the belief that the Aryans were the superior race.

Nazi scientists attempted to develop a device for aiding German pilots who had to bail out of their planes. Scientists wanted to know the extent of human endurance at high altitudes and air pressures. Instead of experimenting on German pilots, the inmates of Dachau were chosen. William Brennan (1983:53), Professor in the School of Social Services at St. Louis University, commented,

[They] were locked inside airtight pressure chambers and exposed to atmospheric conditions simulating those encountered by German aviators in falling great distances without a parachute and without oxygen.

Many inmates from the concentration camps died from experiments in the Holocaust, even though such experiments contributed to the so-called development of science.

In non-therapeutic experimentation, researchers must either ignore or reject the humanity of their subjects. What was missing from such research, according to Brennan (1983:57) was

[T]he human being as an irreducible entity whose dignity requires the utmost respect and loving care. Instead, humanity is shorn away and relegated to the level of sheer anatomy. The subjects are perceived as simply experimental material, as disparate groups of tissues, organs, and biochemical elements.

In short, non-therapeutic experimentation violates the dignity of the human person as a subject, turning him or her into an object, experimental material. In fact, according to the testimony of Jadwiga Dzido, a survivor of the Holocaust, "We were told every day that we were nothing but numbers, that we had to forget that we were human beings" (in Brennan, 1983:66).

Jewish philosopher Martin Buber makes a distinction between "I-Thou" relationships, where one human treats another as a person, and "I-It" relationships, where one human treats another as if he or she were a thing, an object. The concept also applies to relationships between groups and even nations. In other words, the more one group of humans regards another group as an It,

[T]he easier it will be for man to debase himself, to bestialize himself in the wanton mass murder of his fellow man as the Nazi Socialists had done. The more we regard our fellow man as an It, as an object or thing to serve our pride, vanity, or sensual gratification, the more bestial and dehumanized we ourselves become.

(Lescoe, 1980:165)

Philosopher Francis Lescoe is describing the ethical doctrine of self-creation. In other words, when humans treat another person as an "it", they also reduce or depersonalize themselves to the level of an it, a thing. The reason is that human beings define or "create" themselves by their moral acts. By their acts, they can either debase or ennoble themselves.

In response to the Holocaust, the first principle of human experimentation in the Nuremberg Code is called "the canon of loyalty" (Liptak, 1988:27). The Code says, "The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential" (Nuremberg Code, 1949). This means that one may not experiment on a human being without his or her consent.

4.3.4 Every Human Being is Infinitely Precious

There are six principles of personalism, which are relevant to theology, philosophy and ethics. The first principle of personalism is that every human being is infinitely precious. This refers to the inestimable worth or dignity of the person. Because there is a “core” to a human being, because each human being has a spirit, each is a “self,” a “person.” In other words, because human beings are made in the image of God, every human being is a person, not a thing; a subject, not an object; an I, not an it; a who, not a what; someone, not something. In short, a human person is *no-thing, not nothing* (Frankl, 1969:6).

A human being, then, is more valuable than any thing or object. If one were to take the money from all the banks in the world and combine it and put it into one bank and its value were trillions or zillions of dollars, it would not be worth the value of one person to God. Its value would pale in comparison to just one individual. Ware (1979:65) comments,

Human persons are not to be measured quantitatively; we have no right to assume that one particular person is of more value than any other particular person, or that ten persons must necessarily be of more value than one. Such calculations are an offense to authentic personhood. Each is irreplaceable, and therefore each must be treated as an end in his or her self, and never as a means to some further end. Each is to be regarded not as object but as subject.

4.3.5 A Person is an Embodied Self, an “I”

The second principle of personalism is the self-possession of the human person. In other words, a person is an “I,” a “self,” belonging to himself or herself. Another way of expressing the same truth is God makes a human person for his or her own sake, which is called the “selfhood” of the human person (Crosby, 1999). Hence, the Second Vatican Council declares, “man is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself” (Vatican II, 1965b:24). Another translation of the Latin is man is “the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake” (Crosby, 1999). Still another way of expressing the

same truth is a person is a being of his or her own, in possessions of himself or herself. Roman Catholic philosopher John F. Crosby (1999) explains the personalist meaning of the Vatican document, saying,

God wills each human being for his own sake -- which means that God recognizes each human person as a being of his own, existing in self-possession, as one who cannot exist as a mere part of some whole, or as a mere instrumental means of achieving some result.

Still another way of expressing the same truth about the human person is God makes a human person for his or her own sake, which is called the “selfhood” of the human person. To “use” a person merely or only as a means to an end is, in effect, to turn a human being instrument, a thing (Crosby, 1999).

4.3.6 The Personalist Principle or Second Categorical Imperative

The third principle of personalism is called the “personalist principle.” Immanuel Kant refers to it as the “second categorical imperative,” which is an ethical principle for how one human being should treat another. Kant (1949:178) writes, “Act so as to treat man, in your own person as well as in that of anyone else, always as an end, never merely as a means.” Similarly, the Polish philosopher Karol Wojtyła (1993:41, 228), before he became Pope John Paul II, says, “The person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end.” To “use” a person merely or only as a means to an end is, in effect, to turn a human being into an instrument, a thing (Crosby, 1999). Likewise, Frankl (1997:92) teaches the personalist principle when he writes: “On the human level, I do not use another human being but I encounter him, which means that I fully recognize his humanness.” In other words, human beings are not things to be used but persons to be respected.

The personalist principle, then, means that "... genuine ethics always depends on treating people as ends rather than means" (Carmody & Cohn, 1988:236). Frankl (1986:126) applies the principle to the employer-employee relationship. He says, "the dignity of man forbids his being himself a means, his becoming a mere instrument of the labor process, being degraded to a means of production." In other words, the wealthy or socially advantaged should not use (exploit) the poor or socially disadvantaged. Humans are not things, like shoes, which are thrown away when they are worn out or no longer useful. Working poor persons are not to be subordinated by the rich to the sub-human level of tools, which are merely used for the sake of profits (Carmody & Cohn, 1988:236). The poor should be valued as persons for their own sakes and not be used merely for the sake of someone else. A human being is not an object to be used but a subject to be respected and loved. A human being uses things and love persons. However, there is a tendency to invert the principle -- to use persons and love things. Christians should challenge any attempts to depersonalize human beings.

4.3.7 Each Human Being is Unique

The fourth principle of personalism is that each human being is unique. There are many similarities between human beings. The reason is that all human beings have the same nature, a human nature. Because every human being has the same nature, every human being is equal in value or dignity. Sometimes, of course, the individual can get lost or feel lost in the masses, collective human beings. One may talk in the abstract about humanity, the human race or humankind in general.

Nevertheless, a human being is a person, a concrete, specific, precise, here-and-now individual. Frankl (1967:44) writes,

Each human being is unique ... and thus neither expendable nor replaceable. In other words, he is a particular individual with his unique personal characteristics who experiences a unique historical context in a world which has special opportunities and obligations reserved for him alone.

Elsewhere, Frank (1986:72) says, “‘to be equals to be different.’ ... For the uniqueness of every individual human being means that he is different from all other human beings.” Each person *sui generis*, one of a kind, distinct or separate as a person from every other person in the whole world.

4.3.8 Each Human Being is Unrepeatable in Worth

The fifth principle of personalism is that because each human being is unique, he or she is also unrepeatable in worth. Although every human being has the same nature, a human nature, not every human being is the same as a person. In fact, not two human persons are the same. This is expressed well in the old proverb, “When God made you, He threw away the mould.” In other words, one person cannot fit into the mould out of which another person was made.

Hundreds of thousands of human beings may share the name “John.” But no one else can be John the person, because he is a unique individual, unrepeatable in worth. Even cloning cannot make two human beings exactly the same, because while the human body can be duplicated, the human spirit cannot. Frankl (1986:136) comments, “a unique person ... can never be replaced by any double, no matter how perfect a duplicate.”

For example, one might think of other humans in terms of a certain pre-planned mould or classification, such as a typical woman, a typical adolescent or a typical American, lumping each group into a general type or pattern. However, such stereotypical thinking tends to lose sight of human beings as persons of unique worth (Crosby, 2000).

Stereotypical thinking violates how a human being experiences himself or herself as a person. A human being feels and knows that he or she is much more than a class, a general type. For example, a human being is not like a particular issue of a magazine, which, if lost, can easily be replaced by printing another copy of the same issue. To treat another human being that way is to offend him or her as a person, because a person feels or senses that he is “more more than just a replaceable instance of a type” (Crosby, 2000).

4.3.6 Each Human Being Has a Unique Meaning

The sixth principle of personalism is that each human being is unique and, therefore, has a unique meaning in life. Frankl (1967:44) writes,

Each human being is unique ... and thus neither expendable nor replaceable. In other words, he is a particular individual with his unique personal characteristics who experiences a unique historical context in a world which has special opportunities and obligations reserved for him alone.

Franklian scholar Ann V. Graber (2004:101) explains what Frankl means,

Each person is unique and cannot be replaced by another. There will not be a second chance to fulfill the special assignment for which the individual is responsible. The task is specific and unique as is the opportunity to accomplish the task.

For example, thousands of individuals may be able to do John's job. But no one else can be John doing his job. It is unique for John, because he is unique and the moments in which he does his job are unique and he fulfils unique meanings during those moments, which no one else can fulfil for him.

Therefore, personalism teaches that every human being that one meets is a person, always remains a person and should be treated as a person. It applies labour in that one must keep in mind that the human being next to whom he or she works is a person. It applies to psychotherapy in that therapist and client must relate to one another as persons. It applies to medicine in that the physician must keep in mind that his or her patient is someone, not something. The principle applies to friendships and, especially, relationships between family members.

4.3.7 What Personalism Does Not Mean

Personalism does not mean that there is no common nature to human beings. Rather, it means that there is more to a human being than human nature, because a human being is also a person and a person is unique and, therefore, different from other persons. Personalism does not deny objective, universal moral laws. Rather, it emphasizes that such laws exist for the sake of persons, their own good or fulfillment.

Personalism is not opposed to science. However, personalism opposes a scientist who reduces a person to a thing. Frankl says, "a human being is no thing. This *no-thingness, rather than nothingness, is the lesson to learn from existentialism*" (Frankl, 1969:6). The existentialist does not oppose science, rightly understood. Rather, he or she criticizes scientism, the notion that the scientific method (an empirical way of knowing, based on one or more of the five human senses) alone is the only valid method of testing and knowing reality (Macquarrie, 1972:99-100).

A person is a subject, not an object, an I, not an it. Philosopher Peter Kreeft (1989:39) says,

You can't understand a person as an object of inquiry, as you can understand nature, for the very good reason that a person is not an object, therefore not an object of inquiry. What makes a person is precisely being a subject, not an object. To know a person you must get within, you must 'walk in his moccasins.'

Personalism is not the same as radical subjectivism. Personalism does not mean that a person lives in his or her own private, little world. It does not mean, for example, that the only truth is my truth. On the contrary, the personalist knows that there is objective truth, which exists outside of a person whether he or she perceives it. Nevertheless, it is the individual, the person, who must grasp the truth for himself or herself. In other words, "'True' does not *mean* 'true to me', but I want to know what this truth means to me" (Kreeft, 1989:167).

Personalism does not deny the objective or factual nature of knowing about a human being. Rather, it says that a person is first (and foremost) a *who*, then a *what*; such as an individual that has a problem and needs help. For example Frankl (1969:28), a medical doctor, reminds surgeons (including himself) and psychotherapists that “we are not merely treating diseases but dealing with human beings.” Similarly, as a psychiatrist and therapist (or “logotherapist”), Frankl (1967:144) admits, “we should not be disdainful of technique, for in therapy a certain degree of detachment on the part of the therapist is indispensable.” “However,” Frankl (1969:6) writes,

[T]his is not to say that we logotherapists overrate the importance of techniques. ... [W]hat matters in therapy is not techniques but rather the human relations between doctor and patient, or the personal and existential encounter.

This is a personalist principle. In other words, a patient is someone, not something, a subject to be understood and respected, not merely an object to be manipulated.

4.4 THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

4.4.1 Introduction

The commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13, NIV) presupposes the sanctity of human life, which, in turn, presupposes the *imago Dei*, the biblical teaching that a human being is “made in the image of God” (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). The term “sanctity of human life” comes from the Latin term *sanctus*, meaning “holy.” Because human beings are made in the image of God, human life is sacred or holy. The sanctity of human life ethic is ontological. In other words, all human beings are valuable, first and foremost, because of who they are and not what they can do nor how useful they are to others and society. Therefore, human life is so sacred, so precious, that to kill a human being is to attack God in effigy (cf. Genesis 9:6).

4.4.2 Non-Christian Origins of the Traditional Western Ethic: The Sanctity of Human Life

Hippocrates, the Greek physician and father of medicine, taught the sanctity of human life in his Hippocratic Oath (5th century B.C.). It contains such statements as

I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly, I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion.... Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of a man or woman....

(Hippocrates, 1923:299-301)

Hippocrates was not interested in promoting Christianity, for his Oath was written long before the Christian religion began. Nor was Hippocrates a monotheist, believing in only one God. Rather, Hippocrates, the Greek physician, was probably a polytheist, believing in many gods, as the opening words of the oath declare: "I swear by Apollo the physician, and Asclepius, and Hygieia (or Health), and Panacea (or All-Heal), and all the gods and goddesses, that according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this oath" (Hippocrates, 1923:299).

The Oath presents a short, general summary of medical ethics. Abortion was practiced by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Oath, however, explicitly opposes abortion and euthanasia or mercy killing. The Hippocratic Oath reflects the Greek philosophical views of the Pythagoreans, because they outlawed mercy killing and abortion. The Oath commits a physician unconditionally to healing, protecting and caring for a patient in all phases of his or her life, from before birth to the moment of death.

What is particularly disturbing to many medical schools in America today is the Hippocratic Oath's unequivocal rejection of abortion and mercy killing or euthanasia. The Oath says, "I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion." A pessary (from the Greek word *pessarion*), is a medicated plug or tampon of wool or lint, which is inserted into the womb and aborts the human fetus. The Oath says, "Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course." This refers to the practice of euthanasia or mercy-killing. Today, it is called physician-assisted suicide. The medical doctor feels pressured to end the lives of his patients, because they ask the doctor to do so. There are also many families who, out of pity, ask the doctor to end the lives of their loved-ones.

Today, the Hippocratic Oath is deleted either according to the world view of the medical doctor upon graduation from medical school or the world view of the medical school itself or both. For example, instead of saying, "Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course," the edition of the Oath for graduates from the School of Medicine at Tufts University says,

If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty.

(Lasagna, 1964)

In the 20th century, the Hippocratic Oath was reaffirmed in the Declaration of Geneva, or Geneva Code, which was adopted by the Second General Assembly of the World Medical Association in Geneva, Switzerland in 1948. One of the reasons it was adopted was to respond to abuses in medicine by physicians in the Holocaust of Nazi Germany. It was the physician's code of medical ethics. The Code makes such statements as "The health of my patient will be my first consideration" and "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of its conception" (Declaration of Geneva, 2006a). The Geneva Code teaches that doctors are to respect human life. It implies that human life begins at the moment of conception.

Many medical schools in the United States have revised the Geneva Code to suit their own particular philosophies and moral values. For example, in 1971, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine changed the phrase in the Geneva Code from "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception" to "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life," deleting the phrase "from the time of conception" (Schaeffer & Koop, 1983: 3). The World Medical Association itself changed the morally controversial phrase in Geneva Code so that it now simply says, "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life" (Declaration of Geneva, 2006b).

4.4.3 A Medical, Philosophical and Societal Shift from the Sanctity of Life to the Quality of life Ethic

Medical doctor Malcolm Watts (1970:67) defined the sanctity of human life as "the intrinsic worth and equal value of every human life regardless of its stage or condition." Watts (1970:67) called the concept of the sanctity of human life the "traditional Western ethic." Although the notion of the sanctity of human life was commonly accepted in the West, the concept has steadily been changing and may even be abandoned, especially in America. One of the moral reasons for the change is the widespread acceptance of abortion, since it was declared legal by Supreme Court of the United States (*Roe v. Wade*) in 1973. Another reason is that physicians and hospitals are accepting euthanasia as a moral right of terminally ill patients (Singer, 1983:128, 129). Ethicist Peter Singer (1983:129) comments,

Whatever the future holds, it is likely to prove impossible to restore in full the sanctity-of-life view. The philosophical foundations of this view have been knocked asunder.

Since the sanctity of human life ethic is slowly being eroded at its core, relative, rather than absolute, value will eventually be placed on human lives (Watts, 1970:68). The old ethic, the sanctity of human life, stresses the absolute value of innocent human life. The new ethic, the quality of human life, stresses the relative value of human life. The old ethic is based on a moral absolute. The

new is based on moral relativism. In other words, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13) is an absolute moral law. Now it is becoming relative; that is, "You may murder" human beings, such as the undesirable, the defective or the terminally ill.

However, because the shift from the old to the new ethic is not yet complete, men and women must still "separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing, which continues to be socially abhorrent" (Watts, 1970:68). For example, no pregnant woman goes into an abortion clinic, saying, "I am going to kill my unborn child." Rather, she says euphemistically, "I am going to terminate my pregnancy." Hence, she separates the idea of abortion from killing, because, emotionally, it would be too painful to admit that she is killing her own child, a human being.

Ethicist Joseph Fletcher (1974:13) says, "we should drop the classical sanctity-of-life ethic and embrace a quality-of-life ethic instead." In fact, the quality of life ethic is widely accepted today in America. It says that defective human lives are not worthy to be lived. Their condition prevents them from living so-called "meaningful lives." This ethic judges the value of human life by other peoples' standards of quality and usefulness. Anyone who does not meet those standards is a candidate for death. The person's death would relieve others of financial and emotional burdens (Powell, 1981:56).

4.4.4 Nazi Germany: An Example of Quality of Life Ethics

The quality of life ethic was prevalent in Nazi Germany, that is, during the Holocaust. For example, Hitler ordered the deaths of the insane, elderly men and women in state homes, and so-called defective children (such as the mentally disabled and the physically handicapped). His reasoning was that they would only be an expense, a financial burden, to the government. In short, they were killed, because they could not make a contribution to society. For Hitler, such human beings are unwanted (by others and society in general) and human beings can be put to death (Powell, 1981:26).

Large ethical errors usually begin as small ones. Because they go unchecked, they grow and become worse. Alexander (1949:44), American Medical Science Consultant to the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, criticizes the Nazi euthanasia movement under Hitler, saying,

Whatever proportions these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in the basic attitude of the physicians. It started with the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived. This attitude in its early stages concerned itself merely with the severely and chronically sick. Gradually the sphere of those to be included in this category was enlarged to encompass the socially unproductive, the ideologically unwanted, the racially unwanted and finally all non-Germans.

4.4.5 Quality of Life Ethic and Its Connection to Abortion, Infanticide and Euthanasia

Likewise, in America, legalized abortion paved the way for other kinds of legal killings, such as infanticide and euthanasia. Once the devaluation of one category of human life (the unborn) is accepted, then it is only a matter of time before other kinds of human life (infants with deformities, the terminally ill and the elderly) are devalued and then destroyed (Brennan, 1983:81). This is the domino effect: allow abortion and other legal deaths will follow.

Fletcher (1974:15) notes the connection between abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, saying, "To speak of living and dying ... encompasses the abortion issue along with the euthanasia issue. They are ethically inseparable." For example, abortion is prenatal infanticide and infanticide is postnatal abortion. Again, abortion is also prenatal euthanasia and euthanasia is postnatal abortion (Brennan, 1983:82).

Nobel Prize winners James B. Watson and Francis H. Crick, co-discoverers in 1962 of the double helix of DNA, see a link between abortion and infanticide. Watson (1973:13) says,

Fortunately ... through such techniques as amniocentesis, parents can often learn in advance whether their child will be normal and healthy or hopelessly deformed. They then can choose either to have the child or opt for a therapeutic abortion.

There is a rational or logical connection between abortion and infanticide. If a deformed foetus can be aborted, then why not a deformed infant? Watson (1973:13) continues,

If a child were not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed the choice that only a few are given under the present system. The doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so chose and save a lot of misery and suffering.

If it is arbitrary to declare when human life begins in the womb, say, for example, the point of viability, then why not arbitrarily declare when life begins outside the womb? Watson proposes “three days after birth.” Then the infant is human.

Similarly, Francis Crick, quoted in the *Pacific News Service*, January 1978, says, “no newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment and that if it fails these tests it forfeits the right to live” (Schaeffer & Koop, 1983:40). Crick’s judgment reflects the quality of life ethic. One is not fully human if one is somehow defective. Barbara Smoker, former President of the National Secular Society and Vice-Chairman of the British Humanist Association, agrees, saying, “At birth the baby is only a potential human being” (Smoker, 1973:3). She also says that is humane for a doctor or midwife to kill “any baby with obvious severe defects, whether of body or brain” (Smoker, 1973:3).

Infanticide is not a theory in America but a reality. One of the earliest recorded examples in American medicine was in 1971, when a baby was born with Down’s Syndrome and an intestinal blockage at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore. The baby’s parents would not give the doctors permission to perform corrective surgery. On the child’s bassinet was a sign which read, “Nothing By Mouth.” It took 15 days for the baby to die of starvation and

dehydration. Another example was on April 9, 1982, when infant Doe was born with Down's Syndrome and a deformed oesophagus in a Bloomington, Indiana hospital. His parents refused to give the doctors permission to perform corrective surgery and for the baby to be fed intravenously. Infant Doe died of starvation and dehydration within six days (Brennan, 1983:86, 87).

4.4.6 Critique of the Quality of Life Ethic

The quality of life ethic is a worldly or earthly concept. It is purely materialistic and therefore non-theological. The *imago Dei* that makes each person's life sacred does not come into view. Unlike the sanctity of human life ethic, the quality of life ethic does not assign divine value to every human life. Humans assign value to each life, deciding who is worthy to live and who is not.

The sanctity of human life ethic teaches that human life is a continuum from the moment of conception to the moment of death. At no point between these two poles can it be said that life is not human life. One's humanity cannot be negated by stage of growth nor by limited physical and mental conditions. The zygote, the embryo, the fetus, the infant, the physically and mentally disabled and the terminally ill are all made in the image of God. His life is in every human being, thus making human life inherently valuable. In other words, humans are valuable on ontological grounds, because of their being, who they are, and not, contrary to the quality of life ethic, on functional grounds, because of what they can do or how useful they are to society.

4.5 MORAL DISTINCTION IN THE CREATED ORDER

4.5.1 The Similarity between Human Beings and Living Creatures

Today, there are many people in the Animals Rights Movement who believe that the killing of animals is wrong. There are even protestors who carry signs which say, "Thou shalt not kill." The movement received its impetus in the 1970s from Peter Singer. For him, human beings are animals and, as such, are no better than some other kinds of animals. In fact, Singer (1983:129) asks,

"[W]hy should we believe that the mere fact that a being is a member of the species *Homo sapiens* endows its life with some unique, almost infinite, value?" Singer (1983:129) rejects the biblical concept of the *imago Dei* as a basis for making ethical decisions, saying,

We can no longer base our ethics on the idea that human beings are a special form of creation, made in the image of God, singled out from all other animals, and alone possessing an immortal soul.

Because Singer rejects the biblical doctrine that human beings are made in the image of God, then he also rejects its corollary, namely, the sanctity of human life. That is why, for Singer, all human beings are not equal in value and that some animals are even more valuable than humans.

However, in a sense, Singer is right: human beings are equal to animals in certain respects. The reason, however, is that both are creatures, created by God. The biblical sage says,

I said to myself concerning the sons of men, 'God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts.' For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity. All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20, NASB).

According to the sacred author, there is a sense in which human beings are equal to animals, living creatures. The author calls human beings "beasts" (cf. vv. 18, 19), which is a translation of a Hebrew word (*behemah*), meaning "animal" or "cattle" (Martens, 1980:92).

The author of the Book of Genesis recognizes definite similarities between human beings and animals. Both come from the ground. Scripture says, "Out of the ground (Hebrew, *adamah*) the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird" (Genesis 2:19). "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" (*adamah*, Genesis 2:7).

Humans and animals are alike in that both have “souls.” The author of Genesis writes, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). The words “living being” translate the Hebrew words *nephesh chayyah*, which the King James Bible renders “living soul.”

The same Hebrew word used in Genesis 2:7 to refer to the soul of a human person is also used to refer to various forms of animal life. As was previously mentioned, Scripture says, aquatic creatures are called “living creatures” (*nephesh chayyah*, Genesis 1:20). “God created ... every living creature (*nephesh chayyah*) that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind” (Genesis 1:21). The land animals, “cattle,” “creeping things” and “beasts of the earth,” are called “living creatures” (*nephesh chayyah*, cf. Genesis 1:24, 30; 2:19). The birds are called “living creatures” (*nephesh chayyah*, cf. 1:30; 2:19). Therefore, both human beings and animals are animated creatures. They both have a “soul,” which means life-principle, “that which breathes” (Baker, Rake & Kemp, 1994:6). “Thus, one must avoid reading the modern meaning of the word ‘soul’ back into biblical texts” (Willis, 1979:86). Soul describes a living creature in its entirety, the bird, the fish and a human being as a whole” (Willis, 1979:86). Each living species has its own distinct kind of life.

Humans and animals are alike in that both have a “spirit.” Scripture says, “The Spirit (Hebrew, *ruach*) of God has made me, and the breath (Hebrew, *neshamah*) of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4). Similarly, “Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath (*neshamah*) to the people on it and spirit (*ruach*) to those who walk in it” (Isaiah 42:5). Spirit (*ruach*) means “wind, breath, mind” (Payne, 1980:836). The psalmist says,

O Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom You made them all; the earth is full of Your possessions. There is the sea, great and broad, in which are swarms without number, animals both small and great. You send forth Your Spirit (ruach), they are created; and You renew the face of the ground” (Psalm 104: 24-26, 30).

In verses 29-30, spirit “means ... life-giving principle” (Ash & Miller, 1980:350). God is in control of the spirit, the life-principle, the breath, of all life-forms. Hence, both human beings and animals have a spirit, a life that “is created and sustained when God breathes into man’s or beasts’ nostrils the breath of life” (Willis, 1974:55). It rationally follows, then, that since both humans and animals are animated by a spirit, they are alike in that both die. The psalmist, referring to various life-forms, living creatures, says to God, “You take away their spirit (*ruach*), they expire, and return to their dust” (Hebrew, *aphar*, Psalm 104:29b). Likewise, when a human being dies, his or her “spirit will return to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). “By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, till you return to the ground (*adamah*), because from it you were taken; for you are dust (*aphar*), and to dust (*aphar*) you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

4.5.2 Other Respects in Which Humans and Living Creatures Are Similar

In other respects, animals are like human beings. Some animals have a very high level of intelligence. For example, scientist John Clayton (1998) observes:

In the animal world, we find animals that have very high intelligence. Whales, porpoises, and some apes have been shown to have high reasoning ability and are able to solve problems. Some researchers have placed the IQs of whales and gorillas in the 90s – which is within the range of normal humans.

The size of the human brain is not totally unique. There are animals which have brain-sizes similar to and even larger than humans. Clayton (1998) continues,

Animals like whales have brains that are considerably larger than ours. Some scientists studying the human brain have attempted to make arguments for evolution based upon the fact that other animals share brain characteristics with man. From a strictly mechanical viewpoint, the human brain has too many characteristics in common with other animals for it to be viewed as radically different and unique.

Even genetically, human beings and certain animals are alike. For example, when the DNA from humans is compared with the DNA of chimpanzees, it is 98.5% identical (Clayton, 2001). “Creatures as distant from humans as the fruit fly or roundworm have genes whose DNA sequence is recognizably similar to their human counterparts, as if they were variant spellings of the same word” (Wade, 1998). Comparing the similarity in DNA between humans and chimpanzees, *The New York Times* science commentator Nicholas Wade (1998) writes, “It is a serious puzzle for biologists to explain how two such similar genetic programs generate such different animals.”

4.5.3 What Makes a Human Being a Person: The Essential Difference, the Distinguishing Characteristic, between Humans and Animals

In one sense, the human person’s relationship to animals is interpreted or understood downwardly, in relation to other material creatures. In that human beings are living creatures, just as other living creatures, such as animals, plants and insects, they are separated from God the Creator, as it were, by an infinite chasm. The reason that human beings and animals are similar in many respects is that both are creatures or life-forms, created by the same source of life, namely, God. For many theologians, the “puzzle” of the similarity of DNA of humans and chimpanzees is explained by recognizing that God created two distinct species, not that humans necessarily evolved from chimpanzees.

In another sense, the human person’s relationship to animals is interpreted or understood upwardly, vertically, in relation to God the Creator. Granted, the term “spirit” (*ruach*) is used in sacred Scripture in a general sense for the life of both animals and human beings. Nevertheless, it also has a more specific theological meaning, which pertains to human beings alone. In other words, a human spirit is different in kind from an animal spirit, because *ruach* is also “the technical term for the image of God in man” (Archer, 1982:259).

Schaeffer (1970:50) says,

On the side of God's infinity everything else is finite and equally separated from God; but on the side of His personality God has created man in His own image. Therefore, man's relationship is upward rather than downward....

Therefore, a human being is not a person, because he or she has a soul or a spirit. An animal also has a soul or a spirit. But that does not mean an animal is a human person. What, then, makes a human being a person? To be human, a person, is to be made in the image of God. The determining element, that which makes a man and woman a human person, is the image of God. He, then, is in the innermost centre of a human being. The divine imprint or "spark of divinity" in human nature cannot be eradicated by anyone or anything in the world. If it could, then a man or woman would no longer be human, a person (Ware, 1979:67). To state the point another way: What is human nature? It is the image of God in the human person. By virtue of creation, there is a real sense in which God is in every human being. The image of God means that out of all the life-forms in the world, human beings are most like God. A human being, then, in the words of Scripture scholar David Clines (1968:53),

is the one godlike creature in all the created order. Its nature is not understood if it is viewed merely as the most highly developed of the animals, with whom it shares the earth, nor is it perceived if it is seen as an infinitesimal being dwarfed by the enormous magnitude of the universe. By the concept of the image of God, Genesis affirms the dignity and worth of humanity, and elevates all humans – not just kings or nobles – to the highest status conceivable, short of complete divinization.

Ware (1979:65) writes, "Fundamentally, the image of God in man denotes everything that distinguishes man from the animals." Nowhere in Scripture does it say that animals are made in the image of God. Rather, it says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness....' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:26a, 27). Agreeing with Ware is Reformed theologian Charles Hodge (1940:96) who says, "It was the distinguishing characteristic of man that he was created in the image and likeness of God."

4.5.4 The *Imago Dei* and Distinctively Human Phenomena

An article in *Time* magazine begins: "No single, essential, difference separates human beings from other animals" (Lemonick, 1994). But Christianity teaches that there is an essential difference between human beings and all other life-forms in several respects. There is (to borrow a phrase from Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer) a "mannishness of man" which distinguishes human beings from animals. The meaning-equivalent to Schaeffer's phrase today would be the "humanness of human beings." Schaeffer (1982a:178) says, "the 'mannishness' of man ... is my own term for meaning that man is unique. People have certain qualities that must be explained." Elsewhere, he calls it "the distinctiveness of man" (Schaeffer, 1982a:182). The "the mannishness of man" refers to the fact that "human beings are different from all other things in the world" (Schaeffer, 1982e:357). In other words, "man is different from non-man. Man is personal in contrast to that which is impersonal" (Schaeffer, 1982a:278). A human being, then, has personality, that is, a spirit, ego or centre of consciousness. The mannishness of man is evidence that human beings are made "in the image of a personal God" (Schaeffer, 1982a:201).

Because human beings are the *imago Dei*, they have certain traits or characteristics that animals do not. These are called "distinctively human phenomena." There are several distinctively human characteristics, which distinguish human beings from animals. The first is rationality, "that which can be reasonably thought about and discussed in terms of antithesis" (Schaeffer, 1982a:269). Animals do not develop logical arguments, reason with mathematical concepts, discuss right and wrong or justice and injustice. But human beings "put concrete and abstract concepts into words which communicate these concepts to other people. People also have an inner life of the mind; they remember the past and make projections into the future" (Schaeffer, 1982e:357). The image of God, then, gives the human person the "ability to reason in a generalizing, philosophical manner, which distinguishes man from beasts" (Archer, 1982:259).

The second characteristic is the search for meaning in life. Animals do not ask: Why am I alive? What is the meaning of my life? Is there life after death? But human beings ask such questions and philosophize about them. An animal cannot perceive his own life as meaningless and then commit suicide. But humans can (Schaeffer, 1982d:270).

Third, creativity, in general, and art, in particular, are the result of being made in the image of God. It distinguishes human beings from animals. Schaeffer (1982b:394) observes,

[[I]t is part of the image of God to be creative, or to have creativity. We never find an animal, non-man, making a work of art. On the other hand, we never find men anywhere in the world or in any culture in the world who do not produce art. Creativity is a part of the distinction between man and non-man. All people are to some degree creative. Creativity is intrinsic to our 'mannishness.'

Even the most primitive art forms display the mannishness of man. Schaeffer (1982d: 10) comments, "The cave paintings at 20,000–30,000 B.C. ... show that man has always felt himself to be different from non-man." (Schaeffer, 1982d:10). For another example, Schaeffer (1982d:271) says,

Archaeologists unearthed a man that they say lived something like 40,000 years ago. They found him buried in a grave of flower petals. Now that's intriguing. You don't find animals burying their dead in flower petals.

God is creative. After all, he is the Creator of heaven and earth (cf. Genesis 1:1-2). Because God is creative and human beings are made in his image, humans, too, are creative. Adam was called to be creative, that is, to cultivate and keep the Garden of Eden orderly (cf. Genesis 2:15). God created a cosmos, meaning an orderly, beautiful world. Similarly, humans are capable of taking the elements of creation, refashioning them into beautiful works of art (Williams, 2000). Human creativity, such as canvas painting, architecture, poems, musical lyrics and instruments, is innate, issuing from human nature, because humans are made in the image of God (cf. Psalm 8)..

In a sense, certain animals are “creative” like human beings. For example, a circus animal can be trained to play music and count to 10. However, the animal is trained by Pavlovian conditioning, in which the trainer desires a certain response in the animal, which is then rewarded with food or some kind of treat, called “a positive reinforcement.” The training is continued until the circus animal’s “creativity” is engrained in its brain (Clayton, 1978:49). Such creativity is the result of conditioning.

Creativity is not due to intelligence alone. Humans are more creative than animals, even some humans who have lower intelligence than animals. Clayton (1978:47) writes,

I have a foster son with the measured Stanford-Binet intelligence quotient of about 55. There are many porpoises and chimpanzees who have intelligence quotients somewhat higher than my son. Have you ever seen a porpoise or chimpanzee express himself in art or music? ... Beyond drawing a circle there is no capacity for even a primitive level of art ability. ... My son, on the other hand, draws pictures of sensitivity and expression. He creates and invents his own songs. Obviously, he does not do these things because of his intelligence.

Thus, creativity is evidence of the “mannishness of man” or humanness of human beings. It is a distinctively human phenomenon, suggesting that humans are made in the made of God.

Another distinctively human mark, another sign of human transcendence, that the human person is more than matter alone but rather made in the image of God, is the human capacity to worship a Supreme Being. In secular terms, humans are religious animals. The image of God involves the spiritual capacity of thinking about God and responding to him in worship, which distinguishes humans from animals (Archer, 1982:259). Hodge (1940:97) says,

In making man after his own image, therefore, God endowed him with those attributes which belong to his own nature as a spirit. Man is thereby distinguished from all other inhabitants of this world, and raised immeasurably above them. He belongs to the same order of being as God Himself, and is therefore capable of communion with his Maker. This conformity of nature between man and God is not only the distinguishing prerogative of

humanity, so far as earthly creatures are concerned, but it is also the necessary condition of our capacity to know God, and therefore the foundation of our religious nature. If we were not like God, we could not know Him.

Is the religious sense in the human person supported by human experience? Yes! Human beings, from the beginning of human history to the present, are worshipping animals. They do not build altars for worship. But humans have worshiped God, a god, gods, someone, something or virtually anything. In short, humans are incurably religious. Christians attribute the inclination to worship, a religious inclination, to the *imago Dei*, the biblical doctrine that human beings are made in the image of God (Williams, 1998).

Human beings experience a consciousness of God, an awareness of deity; however, animals do not. Clayton (1978:48) observes,

My mentally retarded foster son with an I.Q. of less than 55 leads us in prayer, talks about God, and participates in worship. No recorded observation has ever been made of a porpoise or a chimpanzee doing these things in any way, no matter what their intelligence was measured to be.

The image of God means that human beings partake of God's nature as spiritual beings and – out of all the living creatures in the world – humans are capable of the most intimate communion with God (Hodge, 1940:97). Human beings, then, are different from animals in kind, not merely degree. In other words, the difference between humans and animals is not merely quantitative but also qualitative. In short, there is a distinct, essential difference between human beings and animals, because human beings are made in the image of God. They are not merely highly evolved animals.

4.5.5 Peter Singer and the Animal Rights Movement

Peter Singer teaches a quality of life ethic, which means that a person is valuable because of his or her functions or usefulness Singer (1983:129). It is a utilitarian ethic. Scripture, however, teaches the sanctity of human life ethic,

which means that a person is valuable, first and foremost, because of who they are, not what they can do or how useful they are to others and to society. The sanctity of life is an ontological (rooted in one's being) ethic.

Singer seeks to establish his own scale of values instead of God's. In other words, the value that human beings receive, the quality attributed to them, is the one that some human beings place on others. The criteria of value are determined solely by human beings, not by a transcendent God. In other words, *homo mensura*, "man is the measure" of value, moral right and wrong.

Singer is a vegetarian and a prominent leader in the Animal Rights Movement. Animal rights activists apply the commandment "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13, KJV) to the killing of animals. For example, some activists carry placards, which say, "Meat is murder." In his book *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo (1887:1, 20) using a *reductio ad absurdum* argument, explains why such a view is wrong,

[S]ome attempt to extend this command even to beasts and cattle, as if it forbade us to take life from any creature. But if so, why not extend it also to the plants, and all that is rooted in and nourished by the earth? For though this class of creatures have no sensation, yet they also are said to live, and consequently they can die; and therefore, if violence be done them, can be killed. ... Must we therefore reckon it a breaking of this commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' to pull a flower? ... [I]f, when we say, 'Thou shalt not kill,' we do not understand this of the plants, since they have no sensation, nor of the irrational animals that fly, swim, walk, or creep, since they are dissociated from us by their want of reason, and are therefore by the just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive for our own uses; if so, then it remains that we understand that commandment simply of man. The commandment is, 'Thou shalt not kill man;' therefore neither another nor yourself, for he who kills himself still kills nothing else than man.

Killing an animal is not a violation of the Fifth Commandment. It is not murder, since animals are not human beings. One can only murder a human being, not an animal. Underlying the protest against killing animals is the belief that eating meat is wrong.

4.5.6 Human Diet before and after the Account of the Flood in the Book of Genesis

Prior to the Flood, human beings only ate fruits and vegetables, for the Lord had said, "... I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you" (Genesis 1:29). But after the Flood, God said that animals could be eaten: "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant" (Genesis 9:3). But even before the Flood, God covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve with "garments of skin" (Genesis 3:21). The Hebrew word (*or*) translated "skin" refers to animal skin, which presupposes the killing and skinning of an animal to cover the first couple (Schultz, 1980:657).

As a Jew, Jesus ate the Passover meal, which included eating a lamb. Mark says, "And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover *lamb* was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?'" (Mark 14:12). Luke says, "Then came the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it'" (Luke 22:7-8). In the immediate context, "Passover" refers to the lamb. It was killed in order to be eaten at the Passover meal by Jesus and the apostles. This was in keeping with the requirements for observing the Passover in Exodus 12.

There is more evidence that Jesus did not oppose the eating of meat. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus taught that the father celebrated his son's returning home or repentance by killing a fattened calf and eating it (cf. Luke 15:23-24). Jesus would not have chosen the illustration if it were wrong to eat meat.

In a vision, Peter saw "all *kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and the birds of the air*" (Acts 10:12; cf. vv. 9-16). The voice said to Peter, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat!" (Acts 10:13). He was told to eat meat, which, under Jewish law, was unclean, ritually forbidden (cf. Leviticus 11). Peter the Jew learned that "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy" (Acts

10:15). In other words, Peter was under the New Covenant and was therefore no longer bound by the food-laws of the Old Covenant (Bruce, 1983:218-219). Jesus said, "there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; ... because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated" (Mark 7:15a, 19a). Mark explained the meaning of Jesus' words, "Thus He declared all food clean" (Mark 7:19b). Jesus taught that no food, including meat, can defile a person spiritually.

The apostle Paul condemned the heresy of incipient Gnosticism, which devalued or depreciated material pleasures, such as eating meat and sexual intercourse in marriage (Guthrie, 1957:92). He wrote, "*men* ... forbid marriage and *advocate* abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth" (I Timothy 4:3). The Greek word (*broma*) translated "foods" was translated "meats" in the *Authorized Standard Version* or *King James Bible* in 1611 A.D. In modern English, "meat" primarily refers to animal flesh. However, at the time of the *Authorized Standard Version*, meat meant "food of any kind" or food in general. The biblical Greek word has much the same meaning. But the heresy Paul attacked included, among other things, forbidding Christians from eating of meat general (Wuest, 1973:67-68). Paul teaches that even animals may be eaten with a spirit of gratitude to God (cf. I Timothy 4:4).

4.5.7 Hierarchy of Being

In sacred Scripture, there is a hierarchy of life, ranging from the highest to the lowest in value. At the top of the hierarchy is divine life, the life of God. He is absolute, underived being. He possesses the highest, ultimate value of being and from him is derived all other created forms of life. Under God, next in the hierarchy of being, is angelic life. Human beings are next, lower than the angels (cf. Psalm 8:5; Hebrew 2:9). Animals are next in value, then plants and finally minerals.

The diagram of the hierarchy of being is as follows:

God
Angels
Humans
Animals
Plants
Minerals

God has made human beings in such a way that they have more intrinsic value than animals. That is why he gave human beings dominion over the animal world. The higher governs the lower. Thomas Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 1) says,

Now the order of things is such that the imperfect are for the perfect.... Now the most necessary use would seem to consist in the fact that animals use plants, and men use animals, for food, and this cannot be done unless these be deprived of life: wherefore it is lawful both to take life from plants for the use of animals, and from animals for the use of men. In fact this is in keeping with the commandment of God Himself: for it is written (Gn.1:29,30): 'Behold I have given you every herb ... and all trees . . . to be your meat, and to all beasts of the earth': and again (Gn. 9:3): 'Everything that moveth and liveth shall be meat to you.'

Jesus teaches that there is a divinely established hierarchy of being. He says that human beings are more valuable than any other created life-forms in this world. He declares that human beings are more valuable than animals, saying,

What man shall there be among you, who shall have one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it, and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! (Matthew 12:11-12).

In informal logic, this is called *argumentum a fortiori* or "argument from the lesser to the greater" case. In other words, if it is right to care for an animal in

need and human beings are more valuable than animals, then there is an even greater reason to care for a human in need.

Similarly, human beings are more valuable than birds. Jesus says, "Look at the birds of the air ... your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" (Matthew 6:26). Again,

Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ... Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29, 31).

On another occasion, Jesus said, "Look at the birds of the air ... your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" (Matthew 6:26). Again, Jesus uses an *argumentum a fortiori*, that is, since God cares for the birds, and human beings are more valuable than birds, then God cares even more for humans than birds.

Jesus teaches that human beings have greater value than plants, saying,

Observe how the lilies of the field grow.... But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?" (Matthew 6:28, 30).

Still again, Jesus uses an *argumentum a fortiori*. In other words, if God takes care of the grass, he will certainly take care of human beings who are more valuable than grass.

Singer rejects the divinely established hierarchy of being. He opposes "discrimination" based on species. He calls it "speciesism." For Singer, not all human beings are persons nor are all animals non-persons. For him, "the life of a fetus is of no greater value than the life of a nonhuman animal at a similar level of rationality" (Singer, 1979:122-123). In short, "the life of a newborn baby

is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee" (Singer, 1979:122-123).

For Singer, a newborn infant is not a person (Singer, 1979:84). Singer goes still further, regarding gravely defective human beings as non-persons. "So it seems that killing, say, a chimpanzee is worse than the killing of a gravely defective human who is not a person" (Singer, 1979:97). According to Singer, certain animals are "persons," such as chimpanzees, apes, whales, dolphins, monkeys, dogs, cats, pigs, seals and bears (Singer, 1979:95, 103). Why does Singer make such comments? Because he regards "ethics as entirely independent of religion", a premise which he states at the beginning of his book (Singer, 1979:3). In short, Singer's point is that one can be a human and not be a person; conversely, one can be a person and not be human.

If we make animals into persons, then some absurd consequences follow. A dog that kills a cat should be arrested and tried for murder, because, under the Constitution of the United States, persons are tried for crimes. This same line of reasoning applies to a bear killing a human being. Second, a dog in "heat" that forces itself on another dog would be charged with rape and tried in a court of law, because persons are charged with crimes in a court of law. Animals that are persons would have a right to be married and other such rights as belonging to persons.

Are whales and dolphins more important than a human fetus? If so, then the hierarchy of being is inverted. Then it is morally wrong to kill animals and skin them for the purposes of human food and clothing. It is also morally right to allow tiny human beings to be killed by abortion. The inversion of being leads to an inversion of moral values, which the prophet Isaiah denounces, saying, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20).

Christian theological anthropology teaches that the difference between human beings and animals is not only quantitative but also qualitative, not only in degree but also in kind. In other words, there is a distinct, essential difference between human beings and animals, because human beings are made in the

image of God. They are not merely highly evolved animals. The image of God in a human being means that he or she is a person even, if he or she does not always function like one. As such, every human being is worthy of respect.

Since Singer rejects the *imago Dei* in the human person, Singer (1983:129) refuses to recognize the unconditional equality and value of all human beings, regardless of their stage of development or their physical and mental condition, saying,

*[W]e will not regard as sacrosanct the life of each and every member of our species, no matter how limited its capacity for intelligence or even conscious life may be. If we compare a severely defective human infant with a nonhuman animal, a dog or a pig, for example, we will often find the nonhuman to have superior capacities, both actual and potential, for rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and anything else that can plausibly be considered morally significant. Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species *Homo sapiens* leads it to be treated differently from the dog or pig.*

Contrary to Singer, the image of God in the human person is a safeguard against murder. Murdering an innocent human being is not wrong merely because society says it is, nor merely because the law says it is, nor because one feels that it is wrong, nor because moral philosophers have taught that it is wrong, nor because a person invested with a high degree of authority, such as a president, king or queen of a nation, says it is wrong. Rather, the ultimate reason murder is wrong is that human beings are made in the image of God. Joseph Ratzinger, who is Pope Benedict XVI, comments,

Human life stands under God's special protection, because each human being, however wretched or exalted he or she may be, however sick or suffering, however good-for-nothing or important, whether born or unborn, whether incurably ill or radiant with health – each one bears God's breath in himself or herself, each one is God's image. This is the deepest reason for the inviolability of human dignity, and upon it is founded ultimately every civilization.

(Ratzinger, 1990:60)

4.5.8 The Eclipse of God

In the increasingly secularized West, in general, and in America, in particular, many modern men and women are experiencing what the Jewish existentialist philosopher Martin Buber calls “the eclipse of God.” In an eclipse, the sun is blocked temporarily by the moon. The eclipse itself does not mean that the sun does not exist. It is still objectively real even though, briefly, it cannot be perceived by the senses. Similarly, God exists, is objectively real, even though, temporarily, his existence may not be perceived, because of the “darkness” in human beings due to either ignoring or denying his presence or both (Kreeft, 1994:34, 38).

Theology (God’s existence and who he is) and anthropology (who the human person is) are so related that the loss of the sense or awareness of God is related to the loss of the sense of God in humans, for they are made in his image. This, in turn, eventually results in the loss of the value of human life. Ware says, “... losing our sense of the divine, we lose also our sense of the human” (Ware, 1979:67). Likewise, Pope John Paul II (1995:22) comments,

Man is no longer able to see himself as ‘mysteriously different’ from other earthly creatures; he regards himself merely as one more living being, as an organism which, at most, has reached a very high stage of perfection. Enclosed in the narrow horizon of his physical nature, he is somehow reduced to being ‘a thing’, and no longer grasps the ‘transcendent’ character of his ‘existence as man’. He no longer considers life as a splendid gift of God, something ‘sacred’ entrusted to his responsibility and thus also to his loving care and ‘veneration’. Life itself becomes a mere ‘thing’, which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation.

Similarly, Pope Benedict XVI writes,

When the human person is no longer seen as standing under God’s protection and bearing God’s breath, then he begins to be viewed in utilitarian fashion. It is then that the barbarity appears which tramples upon human dignity.

(Ratzinger, 1990:60)

If the Bible's teaching that human beings are made in the image of God is rejected, then human value is "up for grabs." Nothing, ultimately, stands in the way of devaluing and dehumanizing human beings. After a human being has been dehumanized verbally, then it is only a matter of time before a man or woman is dehumanized in practice, treated like junk, expendable and even murdered for ideological or sociological purposes, such as was done by the Nazis to the Jews and other "less desirable" people in the Holocaust. In other words, "verbicide," which means "death by words or descriptions," paves the way for homicide, which is the act of killing a human being.

4.6 SUMMARY: HUMAN DIGNITY AS A SECULAR COUNTERPART TO THE *IMAGO DEI* AND SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

4.6.1 Human Dignity and International Law

Protecting and preserving the dignity of the human person has been a major concern of international law, especially since the Holocaust. For example, the United Nations General Assembly stresses the "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). It also states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). International law recognizes that "the essential rights of man are not derived from the fact that he is a national of certain state, but are based upon attributes of his human personality" (American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, 1948). Again, "All men are born free and equal, in dignity and in rights" (American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, 1948). The dignity of the human person is presupposed in Article 17 of the Right to Recognition of Juridical Personality and of Civil Rights, which says, "Every person has the right to be recognized everywhere as a person having rights and obligations, and to enjoy the basic civil rights" (in Montgomery, 1986: 241). International law even refers to "the inherent dignity of the human person" (American Convention on Human Rights, 1969). In short, to

be human is to have a dignity (worth or value) that no other creature on earth has.

4.6.2 The Basis of Human Dignity: The Doctrine of Creation

“[A]ll human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person, and that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993). If by the phrase “dignity and worth inherent in the human person” the Vienna Declaration means a dignity which is not given to the human person by God, but is purely materialistic, that is, understood in terms of this world only – as if a human being were only the most highly evolved species of animals – then such a definition is highly objectionable to a Christian. Sproul (1982:44-45) comments,

In this view, man is the highest point on the evolutionary scale of life that emerged out of the primordial slime. Man, the grown-up germ, is the result of cosmic accidental forces.... This view.... leaves us with a philosophy of insignificance, in that man begins in the slime and is destined for organic disorganization or disintegration.

Intrinsic or inherent dignity is that which resides in a human being by virtue of himself or herself. But what intrinsic dignity is there in the dirt or dust from which human beings emerged? How can the slime or mud from which the human person arbitrarily and accidentally evolved possess the highest form of value on earth? Hence, human dignity is not intrinsic.

On the contrary, there can be no true human dignity without divine creation. In other words, a transcendent Creator, a Divine Being from outside the cosmos or creation, comes into it and invests human beings, who are merely matter without him, with divine worth or dignity. Human dignity, then, is extrinsic, derived from something or someone outside of the human person, imparting worth or value to him or her. Sproul (1988:76) writes,

God ... says that there is a weightiness to being human, because he assigns value, significance, or weight to human life. You and I

do not have intrinsic dignity. There is only One who possesses that eternal weight of glory in himself, One alone who is intrinsically kabod. Nevertheless, ... God says, 'I'll make a man in my own image. I'll stoop down to the dirt, form it, and breathe a bit of my life into it.' So God did. That ... bit of dust, which had no intrinsic dignity belonging to itself whatsoever, became – the Scriptures tell us – 'a living being.' That lifeless bit of mud began to move, throb, think, choose, act, care, and love – all because God stamped it with himself.

4.6.3 The Relation of Human to Divine Dignity

Quid est homo? “What is man?” (Psalm 8:4). In other words, what is it that is weighty or impressive about a human being, giving him or her dignity, inestimable and inviolable worth? It is the *imago Dei*, the “image of God” (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). Human dignity, then, is derived from God. The dignity of the human person is expressed in the words of the psalmist, who says to God, “...You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!” (Psalm 8:5). Biblical commentator F. F. Bruce (1964:34) says,

The psalmist is overcome with wonder as he thinks of the glory and honor that God has bestowed on mankind, in making them but little lower than Himself and giving them dominion over all the lesser creation.

There is a manuscript variation in Psalm 8:5. In Hebrew manuscripts, the word *Elohim* is translated “God;” hence, a human being is made a little lower than God. In the Septuagint translation, the Greek word is not *Theos* (which is a translation of *Elohim*), translated “God;” rather, it is *angelous*, translated “angels;” hence, a human being is a little lower than the angels (Ash & Miller, 1980:54). Regardless of which rendering is accepted, the author’s point is to stress the lofty dignity of the human person.

The human person, made in the image of God, is closer to God than all other created life-forms on earth. A human being is not a little higher than the apes but a little lower than God or the angels. Therefore, the value of a single human being is so great that it cannot be estimated by any other human being. Both God and human beings possess glory or dignity. However, as great as it is,

human dignity is but a small or finite reflection of God's infinite dignity (Sproul, 1982:50).

How closely related are theology, the doctrine of God, and anthropology, the doctrine of the human person related? So closely that when God is deprived of his glory, honour, then human beings are deprived of theirs (Barth, 1933:51). In other words, to dishonour God is to dishonour oneself (cf. Romans 1:24, 26, 28), for, ontologically (in terms of being), the Cause of being, God, is inextricably related to the effect, the human person; or, theologically, human beings are made in the image of God.

Therefore, human beings have dignity by virtue of their origin, being made in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). Their dignity or worth is confirmed by redemption, which is Jesus' death on their behalf, and, finally, their ultimate destination, namely, life with God forever (Sproul, 1983:98, 99). The *imago Dei*, then, is the basis for human dignity and for treating human beings with respect. This dignity is always to be attributed to them, whether they live up to it or not (Frankl, 1967: 111).

5.0 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND CURRENT ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE USA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The World View upon Which the Present Chapter Depends

Proportionally, chapter 5 of the dissertation is much longer than the previous chapters, because it forms the “heart” or essence of the dissertation. The previous chapters establish the biblical and philosophical foundations upon which chapter five rests. They presuppose and lead up to the present chapter. The first four chapters integrate faith and reason, Christian and non-Christian philosophy and, particularly, ethics. They reflect a realist epistemology, which teaches that reality can really be known truthfully, not exhaustively. They also reflect a realist perspective of ethics, which teaches that moral right and wrong can really be known truthfully, not exhaustively. They affirm that the prohibition against murder is a moral absolute while admitting that one does not have absolute knowledge or understanding of an absolute.

Several of Karol Wojtyla or Pope John Paul II’s writings have been used in writing the dissertation. The reason for doing so is neither to support nor endorse the Roman Catholic teaching that he is the “Universal Head of the Church” and infallible. Rather, Wojtyla is cited because he was both a theologian and philosopher who articulated a realist philosophy, opposing relativism in its moral and epistemological forms. He studied at the Pontifical Angelicum University in Rome, Italy, and, in 1948, earned a Ph.D. at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. He also studied at the Catholic University of Lublin in Poland, where he earned a doctorate in theology in 1957. He was, then, a philosopher in his own right, which is supported from the fact that he once held the Chair of Ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin.

5.1.2 The Fifth Commandment as the Basis of Human Civilization

The Fifth Commandment is the basis of human civilization. One of the “givens” or starting-points of a civilized society is for human beings to live together in peace and safety. In order to do so, it must have laws against murder, presupposing the Fifth Commandment, which says, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).

¶In fact, civilized societies presuppose not only the Fifth Commandment but all the Ten Commandments, even if the people of those societies do not know the Commandments from reading the Bible. Biblical commentator William Barclay (1973:11) says,

The Jewish ethic, which was the foundation of the Christian Ethic, was itself founded on the Ten Commandments. But these Commandments might well be called the universal foundation, not only of Jewish ethics, but of all ethics. They contain the basic laws of human conduct in society, laws which are not so much particularly and exclusively Jewish, but which are the starting-point of life for all men who have agreed to live together in any community.

In *Sumpter v. State of Indiana*, Judge Hunter J. Arterburn (1974:3) giving the opinion of the court, writes, “Virtually all criminal laws are in one way or another the progeny of Judaeo-Christian ethics.” One of those criminal laws is based on the Fifth Commandment. “In the modern world, a ... statute ... prohibiting murder ... exists in almost all legal codes; it has become a part of state law, rather than purely religious or moral law” (Craigie, 1984:1076). The Fifth Commandment is moral common sense, because if a society legalized murder, one could not walk the street, go to work or be at home without fear of being killed. The Fifth Commandment protects every innocent human being’s right to life, that is, the right to be protected from murder by the government under which one lives. The Fifth Commandment presupposes the right to life just as the Commandment “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15) presupposes the right property.

5.1.3 The American Political Doctrine of Human Rights

The ultimate source of human rights, especially the right to life, is God. They come from him as an effect naturally comes from its cause. Christian apologist, theologian and international rights scholar John Warwick Montgomery (1986:213) says, "The Bible leaves no doubt that the panoply of human rights derive from man's status as creature of God, made in His image." Therefore, the *imago Dei*, the image of God imprinted in the human person, is "the source of man's rights as creature" (Montgomery, 1986:212).

The American political doctrine of human rights comes from two sources: the natural moral law which is in human nature and the God who made human nature. Human rights spring from the biblical teaching that every human being is made in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). Elaine Pagels (in McKay & Cleveland, 1979:4), former professor of history and religion at Barnard College of Columbia University, writes,

Where, then, do we get the idea on which contemporary human rights theory rests: that ultimate value resides in the individual, independent from and ever prior to participation in any social or political collective? The earliest suggestion of this idea occurs in the Hebrew account which describes Adam, whose name means 'humanity,' as being created in the 'image of God.' ... This account implies the essential quality of all human beings, and supports the idea of rights that all enjoy by virtue of their common humanity."

God, then, is the ultimate source of the natural moral law and human rights. God put the sense of right and wrong and the idea of human rights in human nature (cf. Romans 2:14-15). What is human nature? It is the image of God in the human person. It is what makes the male gender and the female gender a human being.

5.1.4 The Right to Life: Recognized by the International Community

The international community recognizes a human being's right to life and thus indirectly supports the moral truth of the commandment "You shall not murder." Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person." Rene Cassin, the primary author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, locates its ideological roots in the Ten Commandments (Montgomery, 1986:30). True, there is no reference to transcendence in the Declaration, such as "laws of nature and nature's God." Montgomery (1986:275) explains why it was left out,

The Commission of Human Rights, which drafted the Declaration (chiefly drawing on Cassin's labors) and the Third Committee which revised it (one of its most influential members was Lebanese Christian Charles Malik) avoided for political and pragmatic reasons the question of the ultimate origin of human rights – leaving each signatory and reader to supply the lacuna (hopefully with transcendence, as Cassin and Malik surely did).

Section I, Article 2, Sub-Section 1 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) says,

Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law.

Thus, one may not murder, but one may lawfully kill in certain situations. Section I, Article 2, Sub-Section 2 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) says,

Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:

- (a) in defence of any person from unlawful violence;*
- (b) in order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;*
- (c) in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.*

The European Convention was influenced by the common legal systems of the European states, all of which were, ultimately, derived either from the Classical-Christian Code of Justinian or common law or a moral orientation, the latter two being shaped by Sacred Scripture (Montgomery, 1986:44).

Chapter 1, Article 1 of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948) says, "Every human being has the right to life, liberty and the security of his person." Chapter 2, Article 4, Section 1 of the American Convention on Human Rights (1969) says, "Every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." The American Convention on Human Rights is particularly significant, because it says that the right to life shall be protected by law "from the moment of conception." It is also significant that the United States of America has not ratified the American Convention on Human Rights. One of the reasons, undoubtedly, is the strong wording of the right to life in Article 4. Montgomery (1986:49) observes,

The wording of the American Convention on the right to life directly reflects the Catholic-Christian influence from South and Central America, and leads to the sobering thought that international human rights protections and ideals may exceed the level of civil rights in our own highly secularized 'land of the free and home of the brave' [United States of America].

Part 3, Article 6, Section 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) says, "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life."

5.1.5 The Recognition of the Right to Life by Christian Philosophers, Legal Scholars and Ethicists

From a Christian perspective, a human being has the right to life. Innocent human life is inviolable, untouchable. In other words, it cannot be deliberately harmed by anyone. The right to life is basic or foundational to all other human rights. It takes precedence over all other rights, even the right to liberty or

freedom of choice, which is so highly valued in the United States. The reason the right to life is more basic than the right to liberty is that one cannot have freedom of choice unless one is first alive (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:11).

The extent of a human being's right to life is from the moment of conception or fertilization to the moment of death. At no point between the two poles, is it morally right to say that a human being is no longer human, a person, regardless of his or her stage of growth or size, physical and mental condition. It is wrong, then, to deny any innocent human being his or her the right to life. "The right to life remains complete in an old person, even one greatly weakened; it is not lost by one who is incurably sick. The right to life is no less to be respected in the small infant just born than in the mature person" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:12)

5.1.6 The Difference Between Alienable and Inalienable Rights

There is a significant difference between alienable and inalienable or unalienable rights, which, if not properly distinguished, may result in injustice, namely, the denial of human rights, especially the right to life. A government of a particular country can confers rights on its citizens through passing laws, which is called positive or human-made law. However, the same government that gives rights to its citizens can also revoke those rights, which means that they are alienable rights (Adler, 1987:48). Philosopher Mortimer Adler (1987:48) writes,

What the state does not give, it cannot take away. If human rights are natural rights, as opposed to those that are civil, constitutional, or legal, then their being rights by natural endowment makes them inalienable....

An inalienable right should not be taken from a human being, because it does not come from the state government nor from any human government. Therefore, the state does not grant the right to life; it only recognizes the right by protecting it. The right is antecedent to its recognition by the state (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:10)

5.1.7 The Ultimate Source of Inalienable Rights

Only a Divine Being, only God, from outside the cosmos or creation can come into it and invest human beings, who are only material beings without him, with divine worth or dignity. The stamp of divinity is impressed on every human being. That is why Thomas Jefferson (1776) writes, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Montgomery (1986:208) agrees, saying, "Only a transcendent Creator can supply the needed title for inalienable rights." The stamp of divinity is impressed on every human being. That is why "even a single human life is of infinite value in the eyes of its Creator, and thus it deserves every protection" (Montgomery, 1986:209).

5.1.8 The American Doctrine of Inalienable Rights

The Founders of America based the doctrine of inalienable rights on the God who created the human race. He endowed or bestowed those rights on all human beings. Jefferson (1776) mentions three unalienable rights: "all men are created equal; ... they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; ... among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The Founders of the United States of America believed in a Supreme Being or God who created humankind. They taught that all human beings or "all men are created equal" (Jefferson, 1776). By "equal," the Founders did not mean that all human beings are equal in wealth, ability or achievements. Rather, the Founders meant that every human being is entitled to equal rights under the law, because every human has the same nature (Eidsmoe, 1987:365).

5.1.9 The Denial of Alienable Rights

By the use of force or political power, a state or government can unjustly take away a person inalienable right. Nevertheless, even though it is taken away, ontologically, it continues to exist, inhering in the very being of the human person. Adler (1987:63) explains,

The fact that human rights are inalienable does not prevent them from being abrogated or transgressed by tyrants and despots, or from being trampled upon by the violence of individual criminals or terrorist groups. Even when they are abrogated, transgressed, or trampled upon, we must remember that their continued existence provides our basis for crying out and fighting against the injustice that has been committed.

Today, the inalienable right to life is being violated in the United States. Any culture that denies a human being his or her inalienable right to life Pope John Paul II (1995:87) calls “the culture of death.” Elsewhere, Pope John Paul II (1999:4) writes,

Human life is sacred and inviolable from conception to its natural end. ‘Thou shalt not kill’ is the divine commandment which states the limit beyond which it is never licit to go. ‘The deliberate decision to deprive an innocent human being of life is always morally evil.’

No one, then, has a right to take away the life of an innocent human being, because it is an inalienable right. God alone is sovereign. According to his will, he gives human life and he takes it.

5.2 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND ABORTION

5.2.1 The Bible and Abortion

The smallest living things are complex. The psalmist marvels at the intricate, complex design of human life in the womb, saying,

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body (Psalm 139:13-16a).

The psalmist is teaching that God is the creator of prenatal life in its developmental stages. He refers to himself as a human being, a person, in the earliest stages of his life by using the pronouns “my,” “me,” and “I.” The psalmist knew he was a human being before he was born.

Like sewing a fabric, God is weaving or putting together a human life in the womb: “You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13). In a parallel passage, Job asks God a rhetorical question: “Did you not ... clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews?” (Job 10:11, NIV).

The psalmist speaks of his “frame,” that is, the formation of his skeleton or bones (Psalm 139:15a). He says, “I was made in a secret place,” meaning, the privacy of the womb (Psalm 139:15b). The phrase “woven together in the depths of the earth” (Psalm 139:15c) is a metaphor. The psalmist is comparing the womb to the earth. Just as seeds germinate in the earth, so life germinates in the womb.

The phrase “my unformed body” may also be translated “my unformed substance” (Psalm 139:16, NASB). It appears only once in the Old Testament and means “embryo” (McCullough & Ballard, 1955:716). The psalmist is referring to the earliest stages of human life. The substance or the stuff of human life exists in the mother’s womb but has not taken on, as yet, any discernible form.

Scripture teaches that God is the creator of each human life and is personally concerned about the unborn from the moment of conception and throughout all the developmental stages of human life in the womb (Archer, 1982:246). The psalmist says, “Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands” (Psalm 119:73, NIV). Job says, “Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One form us both within our mothers?” (Job 31:15, NIV).

Job understands that God forms or makes human life in the womb. So does Jeremiah. The Lord says to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew

you, and before you were born I consecrated you....” (Jeremiah 1:5; cf. Galatians 1:15). God had a plan for Jeremiah even before he was born. God’s plan is not only for Jeremiah but for every human being before he or she is born. The psalmist says to God, “your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:16, NIV). Abortion, however, contradicts the plan God has for each human being.

Scripture teaches that human life begins at conception. The psalmist says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). The author is referring to the beginning of his life at the moment of conception. He says his mother conceived “me,” not “it,” not an impersonal mass of pregnancy tissue. For the psalmist, at the moment of conception, a human life comes into existence and has a personal identity (Montgomery, 1981:93). Christian apologist and legal scholar John Warwick Montgomery (1981:93-94) says,

Man is not man because of what he does or accomplishes. He is man because God made him. ... For the biblical writers, personhood in the most genuine sense begins no later than conception; subsequent human acts illustrate this personhood, they do not create it. Man does because he is (not the reverse), and he is because God brought about his psycho-physical existence in the miracle of conception.

In the Bible, the human foetus or developing life in the womb is called a “child.” For example, “This day is a day of distress, rebuke, and rejection; for children have come to birth, and there is no strength to deliver” (Isaiah 37:3, NASB). In other words, “children” (Hebrew, *benim*) are in the womb of the woman who is about to give birth, but she is unable to do so. What is significant about this passage is that before birth, what is known today as a fetus was known to the biblical author as a child, a human being.

The Hebrew word translated “children” (*benim*) is used of both pre-natal and post-natal human life or intra-uterine and extra-uterine human life, that is, a human being both before birth and after birth. For example, Scripture says, “The children struggled together within her” (Genesis 25:22, NASB). The

“children” (*benim*) refer to Jacob and Esau in Rebekah’s womb (cf. Genesis 25:21-24). Similarly, Scripture declares, “Moses spoke to the children (*benim*) of Israel” (Deuteronomy 1:3, NASB). However, these “children” are post-natal or extra-uterine, outside the womb. They include adult Israelites.

The same Hebrew word for “children” (*benim*) may also be translated as “sons”. Sacred Scripture says, “The sons (*benim*) of Israel cried out to the Lord” (Exodus 14:10, NASB). The singular, “son,” (Hebrew, *ben*) is used of Abraham’s son Ishmael. For example, “Ishmael his son (*ben*) was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin” (Genesis 17:25, NASB). The same Hebrew words (*benim*, plural, or *ben*, singular) refer to both pre-natal and post-natal human life or intra-uterine and extra-uterine human life, that is, a human being both before birth and after birth. Therefore, the Old Testament or Hebrew Scripture teaches that the human life in the womb is just as human as the life of an infant, child, adolescent or adult. The only difference is in degree of growth, not kind.

The Old Testament also teaches that the life of the unborn child is just as human as the life of the mother. Scripture says,

If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot (Exodus 21:22-24, NASB).

In other words, a pregnant woman is somehow hurt from two men fighting. As a result of the blow she receives, she delivers a child prematurely. If there is no damage to either the mother or the child, then the husband may demand that a fine be paid by the one who harmed her. However, if either the mother dies or the child is born and then dies due to the blow, then the *lex talionis* or law of equal punishment applies: “life for a life” (Exodus 21:23).

Note that the woman did not have a miscarriage, deliver a dead baby, due to her injury (cf. Exodus 21:22). The Hebrew word in Exodus 21:22 is *yatsa*,

meaning to “come forth” or “give birth” (Geisler & Howe, 1992:79). In other words, the woman delivers a live, premature baby. But later the baby dies. The author does not use the normal Hebrew word (*shakol*) for “miscarriage.” The reason is that he did not mean for his readers to understand the word as “miscarriage” (Geisler & Howe, 1992:79).

The *lex talionis* applies not only for the death of the mother but also for the child’s death. The Mosaic law placed an equal value on the life of the mother and life of the child in her womb. Therefore, the unborn child is human and has a right to life, just as any other innocent human being has (Eidsmoe, 1984:174, 175).

In Exodus 21:22, the word “child” (Hebrew, *yeled*) is used for pre-natal or intra-uterine human life, that is, life in the womb. *Yeled* is also used for post-natal or extra-uterine human life, that is, life outside the womb, as in the young child Isaac (cf. Genesis 21:8) and the three-month old baby Moses (cf. Exodus 2:1-3). *Yeled* can also be translated “youths” (cf. Daniel 1:6, 17). For the biblical authors, then, there is no distinction between a human being inside the mother’s womb and outside her womb. Both modes of life are human, regardless of their location.

That a child is just as much a human being before birth as after is a teaching of the New Testament. The infancy narratives in the Gospel of Luke emphasize the value God places on conception, foetal life, and infancy. For example, Mary conceives the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1:35). For nine months, God dwells within her womb. Jesus, then, was once a zygote, an embryo and a foetus. He went through every stage of pre-natal development. This in itself is evidence the God places infinite value on the pre-natal or intra-uterine human life. Every human womb, then, is sacred, not only because of creation as the *imago Dei* but also the incarnation, meaning that the Son of God assumed human nature through the Virgin Mary.

The proof that God highly honours the female gender is the incarnation. Scripture says, “... God sent forth His Son, born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4, NASB). God chose to enter world through a woman. He chooses the woman as

the proper channel for bringing new human life into the world. In a sense, every birth is a sacramental, a sacred sign, a reminder of the Christ child.

Shortly after Mary conceives the Son of God, she greets Elizabeth. Luke says, “the baby (βρεφος, *brephos*) leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41, NASB). The “baby” (βρεφος) refers to pre-natal or intra-uterine human life, that is, John the Baptist inside Elizabeth’s womb. “Baby” (βρεφος) also refers to post-natal or extra-uterine, that is, a human being outside the womb. The word is used of the newly born infant Jesus. Luke says the shepherds “found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby (βρεφος) as He lay in the manger” (Luke 2:16; cf. Luke 2:12). Hence, the life of John the Baptist in Elizabeth’s womb is just as human as the life of the infant Jesus. In modern terminology, the zygote, embryo and foetus, the life in the womb, is just as human as a human outside the womb.

Mary accepted her pregnancy with the words: “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38, NASB). Mary said, in effect, “Lord, if you want me to have a child, I will.” She understood that a child is a sacred gift from God. So did the psalmist who said, “Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Psalm 127:3, NASB). But abortion is the refusal to receive God’s gift of a child.

Today, abortion is justified if a woman is too young or too poor. Mary was both. She was somewhere between fourteen and eighteen years of age. Mary and Joseph were so poor that they could not afford to sacrifice a lamb. Instead, they offered a sacrifice of the poor, as the Torah or Law of Moses prescribed, namely, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons” (Luke 2:24; cf. Leviticus 12:8). In his book *Psychology as Religion*, Paul Vitz (1977:89) observes,

Recall that the young Mary was pregnant under circumstances that today routinely terminate in abortion. In the important theological context of Christmas, the killing of an unborn child is a symbolic killing of the Christchild.

Since the Bible teaches that the unborn life in a mother's womb is human being, is abortion killing a human being? Yes. Abortion is a violation of the commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). It is a sin. But a woman who has had an abortion can be forgiven by confessing her sin and accepting God's forgiveness (cf. Psalm 32:1-5; I John 1:9). She must then learn to forgive herself, realizing that the blood of Christ has atoned for her sin. Counselling a woman to have an abortion is also a sin, which God can forgive.

5.2.2 Human Life Begins at Conception

Human life begins at the moment of conception or fertilization. In other words,

From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother, it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth. It would never be made human if it were not human already.

(Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:12)

That human life begins at the moment of conception or fertilization is neither merely a theological nor a philosophical view. Rather, it is a scientific fact. On 23 and 24 April, 1981, the United States Congress had hearings on the question: When does human life begin? Several scientists appeared before the Senate Judiciary subcommittee to give an answer to Congress. Micheline Matthews-Roth (in Powell, 1981:71), formerly Professor at Harvard University Medical School, said,

In biology and in medicine, it is an accepted fact that the life of any individual organism, reproducing by sexual reproduction, begins at conception (fertilization), the time when the egg cell from the female and the sperm cell from the male join to form a single new cell, the zygote; this zygote is the starting cell of the new organism.

Hymie Gordon (Powell, 1981:71), past Professor and Chairman of the Department of Medical Genetics at the Mayo Clinic, testified, "By all the criteria of modern molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception."

Jerome LeJeune (Powell, 1981:70), formerly Professor of Fundamental Genetics at the University of Descarte, Paris, France, said,

To accept ... that after fertilization has taken place a new human life has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence.

Dr. Jasper Williams (Powell, 1981:72, 74), past President of the National Medical Association, testified, "The work ... with test tube babies has repeatedly proved that human life begins when after the ovum is fertilized the new combined cell mass begins to divide." Dr. Watson A. Bowes, Jr. (Powell, 1981:74), formerly of the University of Colorado Medical School, said, "the beginning of a single human life is from a biological point of view a simple and straightforward matter – the beginning of conception."

The theory of progressive humanization means that life begins at conception but it is not yet human life, but eventually becomes human some time before birth. The theory attempts to deny the scientific fact that human life begins at the moment of conception or fertilization. However, in biology, no one really argues the same point with, say, mice, chimpanzees or cattle. No one really believes in the progressive "micification" of mice nor the progressive "chimpanzification" of a chimpanzee. When mice conceive, mice-life begins; when cattle conceive, cattle-life begins; when a chimpanzee conceives, chimpanzee-life begins. But when it comes to human life, many people deny that human life begins at conception, because they "separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing, which continues to be socially abhorrent" (Watts, 1970:68).

5.2.3 Scientific Evidence for the Humanity of the Fetus

Scientific evidence leads to the conclusion that the foetus is human. First, there is genetic proof that human life begins at conception. From the moment of conception, all the genetic characteristics of a distinct human being are present. In fact, the unborn's genetic code is different from its mother's at the moment of conception. This suggests that there is another, distinct life inside the mother's body. The fetus is not part of the woman's body; rather, it is another human body inside of her. Daniel Callahan (Tanner, 1985:73), past Director of the Institute of Society, Ethics, and the Life Sciences, said, "Genetically, hormonally, and in all organic respects save for the source of its nourishment, a foetus and even an embryo is separate from the woman."

Second, a conceived, unborn human life has a human father and mother. Sperm are not human beings but they are human sperm. An ovum is not a human being but it is a human ovum. The union of sperm and ovum form a zygote, a distinct human being. Every human begins as a tiny, one-celled organism. If that tiny human being is allowed to develop without interruption, it will become a fully developed human being.

Third, in the third week of pregnancy, the embryo has a heartbeat and in the sixth week, human brain-waves. In American medicine, when the brain-waves cease, it is a sign of death. Why not consider them a sign of human life for the foetus (Tanner, 1985:74, 75)?

Fourth, the science of foetology presents empirical evidence that human life is inside the mother's womb. That is why, for example, in 1980, the Preface to the 16th edition of *Williams Obstetrics*, a standard textbook in many medical schools in the United States, says, "Happily we have entered an era in which the foetus can be rightfully considered and treated as our second patient" (Tanner, 1985:16). Hence, the physician now treats the foetus as a patient. Before the 1970s, one could be ignorant about the nature of life inside a woman's womb. However, such ignorance is now dispelled by the advances in scientific knowledge. For example, intrauterine photography or ultrasound imaging has

made it possible to see inside the womb. One can now see human features developing in the earliest stages of pregnancy.

5.2.4 Philosophical Arguments and Faulty Criteria for Determining the Humanity of the Foetus

A zygote, a tiny, one-celled organism, is a human being. There is a distinction between human life and human growth. Human life begins at conception. The one-celled organism, zygote, is a human being. From what *it is*, follows what it *will become*. The *becoming* is an unfolding of what it already *is*. Therefore, one cannot become human unless one is already human. Everything that a human will become is already present at conception. The zygote is not a potential human but a human with potential.

If one is not certain that the embryo or foetus in the womb is a human being, then the benefit of the doubt should be given to the unborn life. If a hunter is not certain that what is moving in the bushes is a human being or a deer, then the hunter should not shoot, because he or she might kill a human being. That would be the most rational judgement a hunter could make. Likewise, if there is doubt about the unborn being human, then the most rational judgement would be not to abort, because one might be killing a human being.

This section is a critique of the faulty criteria used to determine when the fetus becomes a human being. The first argument against the humanity of the fetus is called the age argument. In other words, the fetus is not human, because of its age or length of time in the mother's womb. However, if one excludes the humanity of the fetus because of its age, then why not exclude the elderly as human beings because of their age, for example, anyone who is over the age of 80? The fact of the matter is that age (however young or old) does not determine one's humanity, that is, make one a human being.

The second argument against the humanity of an unborn child is called the unusual size argument. In other words, a zygote is not human because of its unusual size, namely, a tiny, single-celled organism at the moment of conception. However, if one excludes the humanity of the unborn because of its

unusual size, then why not exclude as human beings those who are midgets, the obese, or anyone over eight feet tall as human beings, because of their size? The fact of the matter is that unusual size does not determine one's humanity.

The third argument against the humanity of the foetus is called the location argument. In other words, the foetus is not human because of its location, where it is, namely, inside the mother. However, if one excludes the humanity of the foetus because of its location, then why not exclude from the human race other people whose locations are different from Americans, for example, those living on the other side of the globe or near the equator? The fact of the matter is that location does not determine one's humanity.

The fourth argument against the humanity of the foetus is called the viability argument. In other words, the foetus is not human because it depends on its mother in order to live. However, if one excludes the humanity of the foetus because of viability, that is, because it cannot survive without depending on its mother, then why not exclude as human beings those humans who are on life-support systems or those who cannot feed themselves or care for themselves? The fact of the matter is that viability does not determine one's humanity.

The fifth argument against the humanity of the foetus is called the argument from consciousness or self-awareness. In other words, the foetus is not human because it is not aware of itself as a human being. If one excludes the humanity of the foetus because it is not conscious of itself as a human being, then why not exclude as human beings those who are asleep, knocked unconscious and many drug addicts as human beings? The fact of the matter is that consciousness does not determine one's humanity.

The arguments from viability and consciousness are functionalist definitions of a human being. In other words, one is considered human if he or she performs certain functions. But, as John Warwick Montgomery (1985-1986:67) says, "People function as humans because they are human; they do not become human by performing human functions."

The sixth argument against the humanity of the foetus is called the argument from being unwanted. In other words, the foetus is not wanted by its mother and, after being born, may suffer verbal and even physical abuse for many years, thus resulting in psychological or emotional scar for the rest of its life. However, if one denies the humanity of the foetus because it is unwanted, then why not exclude as human beings those who are unwanted or anyone who is a bother or a nuisance? Just because someone is unwanted does not mean that he or she is not a human being nor is it a reason to kill anyone who is unwanted (Geisler, 1986:89, 90). Therefore, both scientific evidence and philosophical reasoning lead to the conclusion that a zygote, embryo or foetus is a human being.

The purpose of this section is to respond to pro-choice arguments. They are largely pragmatic in nature, that is, they are believed and practiced by men and women who justify abortion in the United States. The first is the argument from freedom. Pro-choice means that pregnant women may either freely choose to have an abortion or keep their child. However, freedom is not absolute. In other words, no one has a right to do whatever he or she pleases. One's freedom is limited by another person's right to be free. A woman's freedom to choose ends when her pregnancy begins, because another human being is in her body.

The second argument (closely related to the first) is that a woman should not be forced to have an unwanted pregnancy. However, implicit in the act of sexual intercourse is the choice to have a child. Hence, choosing to engage in intercourse entails, among other things, choosing a child, whether or not the child is wanted (Geisler, 1971:224). Freedom presupposes responsibility, the notion that one is accountable for his or her choices. However, many Americans want freedom without responsibility. Perhaps that is why Frankl (1969:49) often said, "... the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast should be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast."

The third argument is the right to privacy, which means that government should not interfere with a woman's decision to have an abortion. But government also exists to protect human lives (cf. Romans 13:1-7). That is why laws should be passed to protect unborn human beings from abortion. They have no right to

develop in the privacy of their mother's womb. Rather, their privacy is invaded by the instruments of abortion. Actually, abortion is not a private issue, because it involves two human bodies, not one: first, the mother's body; second the body of the unborn child inside her.

The fourth is a gender argument. In other words, men cannot become pregnant; so they do not know whether they would have an abortion. Therefore, they should not tell women what to do with their bodies. But abortion is not a gender issue. Rather, it is a moral issue. Since the life in a mother's womb is human, then the choice one makes regarding him or her is a moral choice. It is no more right for a woman to choose to kill an innocent, defenceless human being than it is for a man. She does not have a the right to kill just because she is capable of doing something a man cannot, namely, conceive a child.

The sixth is the argument from moral neutrality. In other words, no one has a right to impose his or her morality on others or legislate morality. The fact of the matter is that law can and should impose or enforce morality. Laws against child abuse enforce morality. In effect, those laws say, "Child abuse is wrong; therefore, you should not abuse a child. Laws against theft enforce morality. Laws against stealing enforce morality. In effect, those laws say, "Stealing is wrong; therefore, you should not steal." Laws against rape enforce morality. Laws enforce or impose morality so that the innocent can be protected. Budziszewski (2001) observes that laws which require highway taxes "are based on the moral idea that people should be made to pay for the benefits that they receive." Budziszewski (2001) also says that laws which set speed limits are "based on the moral idea that we ought to have regard for the safety of our neighbours." Although law and morality do not equate (the one discipline cannot be reduced to the other), they do relate to each other.

Seventh, abortion should remain legal; because if it does not, then women will resort to harmful, illegal behaviour. For example, they will perform their own abortions with "Rusty coat hangers in back alleys." In other words, because a certain behaviour is illegal and harmful, it should become legal. But illegal behaviour is not a reason for making it legal. Should stealing be made legal, because it is presently illegal and harmful to others? Should rape be made

legal, because it is presently illegal and harmful to others? What about incest and drunk driving? Having illegal abortions is not a reason to make them legal. A sanitary abortion by sterilized instruments is no more right than an unsanitary abortion by "rusty coat hangers in back alleys." A sanitary death is just as wrong as an unsanitary death (Geisler, 1986:89).

Eighth, abortion should be permitted because of possible child abuse. Having to bear an unwanted pregnancy may cause a mother to resent and abuse her child. It would have been better for her to abort the child than to make him or her suffer. However, the argument is really not a solution to child abuse, because abortion is the ultimate form of child abuse. In abortion, the unborn child can be poisoned, dismembered or crushed to death. At least there is hope for an abused child to be saved from further abuse. But after an abortion, the human fetus has no such hope (Geisler, 1989a:140-141).

Ninth, abortion should be permitted in cases of rape. After all, the rape victim has suffered a tremendous trauma. She should be shown compassion. However, the complicated moral issue resulting from a rape is this: If, on the one hand, the life conceived in the rape victim is not human, then she may have an abortion; but if, on the other hand, the life within her is human, then abortion is not right. In other words, the abnormal circumstances surrounding the conception of a child does not change the moral act of killing an innocent human being, which is objectively wrong. Therefore, it is wrong for a rape victim to have an abortion.

The compassion argument can be viewed from two vantage points. First, compassion should be given to the mother whose body has been violated. Second, compassion should be shown to the innocent human being conceived inside her, because the unborn human has not done anything that is deserving of death. The unborn child should not have to die because of the evil which was inflicted on the mother. In short, compassion should be given to two victims in a rape -- the mother and her child (Kreeft, 1983:116).

The argument from force as a justification for abortion can also be viewed from two vantage points. First, rape is force exerted on a woman against her will.

Second, for her to have an abortion is to exert a violent, destructive force on the innocent, defenceless human inside her (Kreeft, 1983:97, 126). An evil has been inflicted on the woman. But she should not respond to it by committing another evil, namely, abortion. Two wrongs do not make a right. It is wrong for both the woman to be victimized by the rapist and the foetus to be victimized by the mother. The one life is traumatized and the other is killed (Kreeft, 1983:154).

It takes a great act of love to accept an unwanted child, especially one who has been conceived from rape. For example, Willke (1997) received a letter from an anonymous woman who admitted,

I am the product of rape. An intruder forced his way into my parent's house, tied up my father and, with him watching, raped my mother. I was conceived that night. Everyone advised an abortion. The local doctors and hospital were willing. My father however, said, 'Even though not mine, that is a child and I will not allow it to be killed!' I don't know how many times ... I have thanked God for my wonderful Christian father.

It is wrong for a rape victim to have an abortion. However, she must know that God can forgive her, because he is rich in mercy and compassion (cf. Psalm 32; Micah 7:18-19; I John 1:9).

Tenth, one of today's ironies is that while human life is being devalued, certain lower forms of life are receiving increasing value. In fact, in some circles of the animal rights movement, animals are considered more valuable than human foetuses. For example, according to Peter Singer, pigs, dogs, and chimpanzee are more valuable than human foetuses (Singer, 1979:122-123). So are apes, whales, dolphins, monkeys, cats, seals and bears (Singer, 1979:95, 103). So, the reasoning goes, it wrong to kill animals and eat them; however, it is not wrong for a woman to have an abortion, which is killing a human being. In short, it is worse to kill animals than tiny human beings. Blaise Pascal's (1989:127) words apply to the moral absurdity of such reasoning: "Man's sensitivity to small things, and his insensitivity to the most important things, are surely evidences of a strange disorder." Again, "To be so insensitive as to despise matters of

importance, and to become insensitive to that point that is most vital to us, is absurd" (Pascal, 1989:127).

5.2.5 Bioethical Issues Related to Abortion

This section will focus on moral issues in biotechnology or reproductive technology, such as embryo wastage, *in vitro* fertilization and artificial insemination, resulting in the death of human embryos. At the moment of conception, a human ovum is fertilized. This single-celled organism or zygote is "new human being with his own growth. It would never be made human if it were not human already" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:12). Tertullian (in Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:6), a lawyer-convert to Christianity, writes, "The one who will be a man is already one." In other words, what a human being is (its essence) and will become (the unfolding of its essence) is already present at the moment of conception.

A human embryo is neither a mass of pregnancy tissue nor an animal which will become a human being. Rather, an embryo is a tiny, undeveloped human being. All the human potential for future development is there at the very beginning of its life. Hence, the embryo is a human with potential, not a potential human being. The 1995 Ramsey Colloquium on Embryo Research declared,

The [embryo] is human; it will not articulate itself into some other kind of animal. Any being that is human is a human being. If it is objected that, at five days or fifteen days, the embryo does not look like a human being, it must be pointed out that this is precisely what a human being looks like – and what each of us looked like – at five or fifteen days of development.

(*On Human Embryos and Stem Cell Research, 1999*)

Philosopher Francis J. Beckwith (2001) observes,

A human person does not come into existence when human function arises, but rather, a human person is an entity who has

the natural inherent capacity to give rise to human functions, whether or not those functions are ever attained. And since the unborn human being has this natural inherent capacity from the moment it comes into existence, she is a person as long as she exists.

At the very beginning, the human embryo is tiny and would fit on the tip of a pin. Even though conception has taken place outside the womb, in vitro embryos – resulting from the artificial insemination of an ovum in a test tube or glass dish – are human beings. Since the embryo is a human being, then “the embryo must be treated as a person” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1). If one grants that the human embryo should be treated as a person, then he or she should have certain human rights, “among which in the first place is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1).

Beckwith (2001) argues that every animal organism has a nature or essence, making it what it is at conception. At the moment of conception of a pig, the life of a pig has begun. It is not a horse, because the horse has a nature, a blueprint, which is different from the pig and makes it the kind of being that it is. At the moment of conception of a horse, the life of a horse has begun. It is not a cat, because the cat has a nature, a blueprint, which is different from the horse and it makes the horse the kind of being that it is.

From the moment of human conception, then, there is a substantial self – that which makes a person, a person – that does not change with all the changes which occur in, or happen to, a human being’s body. Beckwith (2001) says,

[B]ecause the functions of personhood are grounded in the essential nature of humanness, and because human beings are persons that maintain identity through time from the moment they come into existence, it follows that the unborn are human persons..

Although for scientific purposes the human embryo may be referred to as an “it;” in reality, the embryo is not an it, a thing, but a human being, whether in the

mother's womb or outside of it. Therapeutic medical intervention on the embryo is morally right, since the purpose of such intervention is for the well-being of the human embryo. Hence, the human embryo should not be an object of scientific experimentation or research unless it is for a therapeutic purpose, that is, to save the tiny human being's life (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1).

Non-therapeutic experimentation is not for the benefit of the human subject but for some other reason, such as the advancement of science or the good of other human beings (Liptak & Duffy, 1988:133). According to the Roman Catholic Church,

No objective, even though noble in itself, such as a foreseeable advantage to science, to other human beings or to society, can in any way justify experimentation on living human embryos or fetuses; whether viable or not, either inside or outside the mother's womb.

(Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1)

The objection to non-therapeutic experimentation on living embryos and foetuses is based on the premise of Christian personalism (cf. 4.3 of the thesis). Such experimentations violate their dignity as human beings who should have the same right to respect a child already born and every other human being (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1). Another objection to non-therapeutic experimentation is that it involves, in most cases, a risk of damaging, if not killing, the human embryo. Nevertheless, experimentation may be performed as a last resort to save the embryo's life, that is, the life of a tiny human being (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1).

Usually, with *in vitro* fertilization, "not all of the embryos are transferred to the woman's body; some are destroyed" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1). Disposing of human embryos is called "embryo wastage." But again, "The embryo is not just biological tissue; it is the body of someone meant to develop as a human person, to be treated as such" (Albacete, 1987:14).

Embryo wastage, like non-therapeutic experimentation on embryos and fetuses, is dehumanizing, because a human being is to be respected and treated as end in himself or herself and not merely as a means to some other end (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1). He or she “can never be downgraded to the level of a thing” (Pope John Paul II, 1999:4).

Generally, in biotechnology, an embryo, a human being, is often treated as if he or she were a product, an object; “a *what* rather than a *who*” (Dennehy, 1986:17). The human embryo is a subject, not an object, someone, not something. Christian personalism teaches that the most human context for conception to occur is through the conjugal act, an interpersonal act, not through a series of impersonal laboratory techniques. In short, a human being should be “begotten, not made” (May, 1984:123).

Another problem with biotechnology is that the embryos, human beings, are entrusted to “the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:2). The experimental scientist has the authority to decide the fate of human beings. In effect, the researcher takes the place of God, deciding which human embryos shall live and which shall die (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1). Bioethicist Leon Kass (1972:53) observes,

We have paid some high prices for the technological conquest of nature, but none so high as the intellectual and spiritual costs of seeing nature as mere material for our manipulation, exploitation and transformation. With the powers for biological engineering ..., there will be splendid new opportunities for a similar degradation of our view of man. Indeed, we are already witnessing the erosion of our idea of man as something splendid or divine, as a creature with freedom and dignity. And clearly, if we come to see ourselves as meat, then meat we shall become.

Cryopreservation of embryos (freezing them) is dehumanizing, because embryos are human beings. Destroying extra or spare embryos, those that are not artificially inserted into the woman’s uterus, is the moral equivalent to killing them, because morality is concerned with both ends, that is, the outcome of the

act, and means, that is, the act itself (May, 1984:122). Even if the intentions of the researchers are good, nevertheless, “subjectively good intentions cannot alter the morality of procedures in themselves wrong” (Liptak & Duffy, 1988:46-47). In short, directly destroying human embryos (in non-therapeutic experimentation or research) is objectively, wrong, that is, the act itself is wrong, because, in the process, an innocent human being is killed. It is the moral equivalent to abortion.

The premise behind biotechnological reproduction is “If it *can* be done, then why not do it?” After all, human life *can* be conceived *in vitro*, outside of the womb in a glass tube; embryos, human beings, *can* be frozen and stored away to be implanted later in a woman’s uterus; they *can* be used as objects of research and, in the process, be destroyed. But “what is technically possible is not for that very reason morally admissible” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:Intro, 4). In short, just because scientists *can* do something does not mean they should do it (Geisler, 1989a:178). It is even possible to destroy the human race by nuclear weapons; nevertheless, that does not mean human beings ought to destroy themselves (Geisler, 1989a:180).

The morality of stem cell research shall be evaluated in the light of the previous conclusions. First, human life begins at the moment of fertilization or conception. Second, a zygote embryo and fetus is a human beings at different developmental stages. In the light of those two premises, is research using embryonic stem cells morally right? I propose two answers to the question. First, if the stem cells are obtained from surplus or spare embryos that have been obtained from *in vitro* fertilization; if they were then frozen and later removed to thaw, if they were then used for the purpose of experimentation and destroyed in the process, then such research is morally wrong. It is dehumanizing to the embryo who is a tiny, undeveloped human being. Second, if the embryos are created by means of *in vitro* fertilization with the direct purpose of destroying them in order to obtain their stem cells for research, then it is morally wrong. If the stem cells are obtained from aborted embryos and fetuses, then such research is wrong (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987:1).

No experimental scientist is allowed to kill a human being and then use its bodily tissues and organs as was done, for example, in the Holocaust by Nazi scientists. Likewise, no scientist should be allowed to kill a human embryo and then use its bodily tissues and organs, since an embryo is a human being. Similarly, performing an abortion in order to obtain embryonic stem cells is wrong.

To apply a previous ethical principle to stem cell research, if the object of the act itself is wrong (what a person is doing), then the act is morally wrong, even if it produces so-called good results for other human beings. If the means of an act are wrong, then so is the end. Since the means of obtaining the embryonic stem cells are wrong, namely, killing a tiny human being, then the end of the act, namely, experimenting with the embryo's stem cells (in order to cure various diseases in adults, such as Parkinson's disease), is also wrong.

Does this mean that Christian ethicists should oppose stem cell research? No! In fact, stem cell research is right under certain conditions. First, as the Linacre Centre Healthcare Ethics rightly says, embryonic stem cells may be taken from an embryo or foetus that has spontaneously miscarried with the consent of the parents (Cloning and Stem Cell Research. 2001). Second, according to the Pontifical Academy for Life (2000a), stem cells may be taken from the bone marrow and brain cells of adults and even from umbilical cord blood. Lopez (2001), interviewing David Prentice, Professor of Life Sciences at Indiana State University and Adjunct Professor of Medical and Molecular Genetics at the Indiana University School of Medicine, says that stem cells are "capable of producing different types of cells, mostly blood cells, muscle cells and neural cells." Prentice (Lopez, 2001) continues,

[A]dult stem cells can ... make bone, muscle, cartilage, heart tissue, liver, and even brain. Interestingly enough, we now know that our brain contains stem cells which can be stimulated to make more neurons, or to take up different job descriptions as muscle or blood. Bone marrow and cord blood are already successfully being used clinically, while clinical use of embryonic stem cells is years away. Current clinical applications of adult stem cells include treatments for cancer, arthritis, lupus, and making new corneas, to name a few.

The Linacre Centre Healthcare Ethics (Cloning and Stem Cell Research, 2001:6) recommends that in order to avoid the human body's rejection of foreign adult stem cells, it is better for the patient, if possible, to use his or her own stem cells. It is not necessary, then, to obtain stem cells from human embryos, since they can be obtained from the tissues and various organs in adults. Therefore, Prentice (Lopez, 2001) says that embryonic stem cell research is morally wrong,

because human beings are killed in the process. Scientifically there is no disputing that we are a human being even at the one-cell stage. It has never been acceptable to sacrifice one set of human lives for the potential benefit of others.... Human embryonic stem cell research assigns different values to different human beings, designating some as people and some as property.

5.2.6 The Morning-After-Pill and Abortion

Before examining the morality of the morning-after pill, Shea (2004a) states. an embryological fact, namely, human life begins at conception or fertilization, not implantation (on the uterine wall), which occurs 7 to 14 days later. In 1979, the scientific fact was challenged by Clifford Grobstein, a frog embryologist. According to him (Shea, 2004b), prior to implantation, life is in a "pre-embryo" stage of development, a term which was coined. However, he eventually admitted that he coined it to deny the human status of the fertilized egg or embryo at the moment of conception, whom he called a "pre-person" The term pre-embryo made its way into moral theology through the teachings of the Jesuit theologian Richard McCormick, who accepted Grobstein's terminology. However, the term has been discredited by most human embryologists. The American Association of Anatomists did not include the term in its official lexicon of anatomical terminology, *Terminologia Embryologica*. The term has been excluded from official text books in human embryology (Shea, 2004b). Therefore, pre-embryo is not scientifically accurate.

One of the widely distributed morning-after pills is called Preven (an emergency contraceptive kit). It is a combination of estrogen and progesterone. Usually,

two pills are taken within 72 hours of intercourse. Then two more pills should be taken 12 hours later. For several years, the morning after pill has been given to rape victims as an emergency contraceptive.

There are a couple of possible ways in which the morning-after pill works. First, it may, writes Menart (2000), "delay ovulation or impair the transportation of the sperm or egg, thus prevention contraceptive." In this sense, it would serve a contraceptive function. Second, if conception or fertilization of the embryo has occurred, the pill may adversely alter the lining of the uterus, making it difficult for the embryo (in this stage of development called a "blastocyst") to attach to the uterine wall, which is called implantation. By the time of implantation, notes Irving (2001), the embryo is approximately five-to seven days old. Menart (2000) points out that the failure to implant results in an abortion, the expulsion and death of a human being its earliest stages of development. In this sense, as the Pontifical Academy of Life says (2000b:1), the morning-after pill is not contraceptive but abortifacient.

Therefore, since the life of a human being begins at conception, then a pill which expels the human embryo before implantation is morally equivalent to a chemically induced abortion. If the woman's intent is to end her pregnancy, according to the Pontifical Academy of Life says (2000b:2), then the act is called "direct abortion;" otherwise, it is an indirect abortion. Either way, the act kills a human being.

There are unknown factors surrounding, say, the rape of a woman who immediately goes to the hospital and takes the morning-after pill. First, says, Shea (2004a), "The fact is that a woman who has been raped within a few hours of going to the emergency room may or may not have already conceived." Secondly, it would be too early for a pregnancy test to yield any results. The third factor, as Menart (2000) observes, is that in taking the morning-after pill, she may, in fact, risk killing a newly conceived human being.

5.2.7 Thomas Aquinas' View of Abortion

Many Christians believe that abortion is not wrong, because they deny that human life beings at conception. They rightly say that even Thomas Aquinas did not believe that human life begins at conception. Aquinas' view of abortion was shaped by the commonly accepted scientific view of his day, which was Aristotle's incorrect view of embryology. Aquinas' teaching on abortion centers around the question of "ensoulment." In other words, when does a foetus receive a human soul and thus become a human being? Aquinas' view was that a male did not have a soul and therefore was not fully human until the fortieth day of pregnancy. The female did not have a soul and therefore was not fully human until the eightieth day of pregnancy.

For Aquinas, when the foetus of a male and female respectively receives a soul (ensoulment), it is also called "animation," that point when human life begins. It was also called "formation;" because the foetus had taken on "a human form" or looked human. Since the foetus could not be seen inside the mother's womb in Aquinas' day, the way people probably knew about formation was from observing the body of a miscarried child (Quick Questions,1993).

Another reason that Aquinas believed that human life began some time after conception was that he accepted the theory of the spontaneous generation of life, which means that "life spontaneously arises from non-living matter" (Quick Questions, 1991:29). How does this theory apply to human reproduction? It suggests that the

'fetal matter' in the case of the mother and seminal fluid in the case of the father ... were transformed from non-living matter successively into vegetative, animal, and finally human life.

Each of these stages was thought to come about by the infusion of a soul: vegetative life the by the infusion of a vegetative soul, animal life by the infusion of an animal soul, and human life by the infusion of a human soul.

Since, according to Aquinas, the soul is the form of the body – that which gives life and makes an organism the kind of creature it is – if an organism possesses distinctively human qualities, we can conclude it possesses a human soul.

(*Quick Questions*, 1991:29)

Aquinas' embryology reflected the "science" of his day, which was limited, flawed. Since embryology is a science and science is a developing discipline, then, of course, scientists today know a great deal more about embryology than Aquinas did. Willke (1997) notes that in the light of today's embryology, there is empirical or observable evidence for the humanity of the foetus, such as "electron microscopes, ultrasonic stethoscopes, and Realtime ultrasonic movies, and increasingly sophisticated knowledge of chromosomes and genes."

For Aquinas, therefore, abortion was not homicide or killing until ensoulment happened. Regardless of when he believed that the human soul was infused into the unborn child's developing body, he taught that abortion was a violation of natural law and was morally wrong. In his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Book IV, Distinction 31, Aquinas listed abortion, even in the first trimester, "among evil deeds" and said that it was "against nature" (Smith, 1992:73, 74). In short, "he regarded abortion at every stage as a grave sin" (Rice, 1999:350).

5.2.8 Abortion and the Principle of Double Effect

The deliberate and direct intention to kill an innocent human either as an end in itself or as the means of attaining another end is morally wrong (Mangan, 1981:338, 339). It is prohibited by the commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13).

To avoid confusion, the terms direct and indirect intention need to be defined and distinguished. First, *direct intention* is to will or choose to do something either as an end in itself or as a means to an end. For example, when a surgeon amputates a patient's gangrenous arm, the surgeon directly intends to save the patient's life. The doctor chooses (and approves) the amputation as a means to that end (Mangan, 1981:345).

Indirect intention is to will or choose something as a foreseen side effect of by-product. However, the effect of the act is neither wanted nor approved. For example, a person with a cold takes some cold medicine, foreseeing that the medicine will also cause unwanted drowsiness. The person directly intends to take the medicine in order to get rid of the cold. But he or she does not directly intend (hence, indirect intention) the unwanted drowsiness, which is associated with taking the medicine (Mangan, 1981:345, 346). Therefore, it is right to perform an act that will produce two foreseen effects, the one good and the other is not.

Four moral principles are involved in applying the principle of double effect. First, the object of the act (what one is directly choosing to do) must be either morally good or indifferent. If the object of the act is evil in itself, then nothing can make it morally good. An example is deliberately and directly killing an innocent person (Mangan, 1981:347).

The second principle is that the evil effect is not directly intended as a means to the good effect (Mangan, 1981:348). As was previously stated (cf. **5.2.4**), the end or the good result of an act, does not justify the means or the act itself, if it is wrong (May, 1987:33). There is nothing really new about the moral principle. In fact, the apostle Paul himself opposed a version of the principle in his day, which said, "Let us do evil that good may come" (Romans 3:8, NASB).

The third principle is that the good effect is directly intended, not the evil effect. A person foresees the evil effect but does not approve it. The bad effect is only permitted or tolerated. To intend directly the evil effect is wrong. The fourth principle is that there is a proportionately grave reason for permitting the evil effect, because it is morally impossible to avoid, issuing immediately and equally issues from the same act (Mangan, 1981:353).

There is a significant moral difference between direct and indirect abortion. The direct killing of the foetus as a means to saving the mother's life is wrong. But if, in saving the life of a pregnant woman, the foetus dies as a side effect, and the death was not intended (desired or wanted), but inevitable, then it is not directly killing an innocent human being. Rather, it is an indirect abortion. Indirect

abortion is justified by the principle of double effect wrong (Mangan, 1981:338, 339). The principle was used by Thomas Aquinas to justify killing another person in self-defence. Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 7) says,

Nothing hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended, while the other is beside the intention.... Accordingly, the act of self-defense may have two effects, one is the saving of one's life, the other is the slaying of the aggressor. Therefore this act, since one's intention is to save one's own life, is not unlawful, seeing that it is natural to everything to keep itself in 'being', as far as possible.

Though direct abortion is morally wrong, indirect abortion is not. For example, a cancerous uterus that is threatening the life of the mother may be removed, resulting in the death of the unborn child. The act constitutes an indirect abortion. Similarly, if the embryo does not implant on the wall of the uterus but remains lodged and grows in the fallopian tube, damaging it and threatening to explode, thereby killing the mother, then the damaged part of the tube may be removed. The act constitutes an indirect abortion (Charles Rice, 1999:354-355).

In both pathological conditions, the doctor foresees that the death of the foetus will necessarily result from the operation. From one act, then, two effects issue equally and immediately (Mangan, 1981:351). But the death of the foetus (the evil effect) was not directly intended by the doctor. It was only foreseen and permitted. However, if the surgeon directly intends the death of the foetus (the evil effect) so that the mother's life will be saved (the good effect), then the act is morally wrong. Because indirect abortions are not morally wrong, they may be performed in Catholics hospitals in the United States (Anon., 1971:13).

5.2.9 An Ethical Response to Abortion by the Pro-Life Movement in the United States

The biblical background to this section is the *locus classicus* on the Christian's relationship to human government is in St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* (cf. 13:1-7). The apostle teaches that as good citizens, Christians, like anyone else, should obey the secular authorities of the government (cf. 13:1-2). Paul does not mean that a believer should obey any law, regardless of objections one may have.

The apostle presupposes that the laws of a particular form of government are just, not unjust. Biblical commentator Leon Morris (1988:459), referring to Paul, writes, "He does not speak of the situation in which the state asks the citizen to do something against the law of God." Elsewhere, Morris (1988:461) comments, "Anything in the directions given by authority that is manifestly not from God shows that the authority has exceeded its lawful function." In the context, Paul envisions neither a tyrannical government nor a government in which "the just rights of individual citizens or of a minority group are neglected" (Fitzmyer, 1968:326). The state, then, can only command obedience "within the limits of the purposes for which it has been divinely instituted" (Bruce, 1963: 237). However, a state country or nation "must be resisted when it demands the allegiance due to God alone" (Bruce, 1963: 237).

A Christian, in good conscience, should obey civil authority (cf. Romans 13:5). Obedience, however, is limited by the very fact that a human being has a conscience. Morris (1988:465) says, "what is against conscience cannot be done." In fact, "The believer may have to refuse obedience on the grounds of conscience" (Morris, 1988:465). This is called "conscientious objection."

Therefore, conscience both obliges a person to be obedient and sets a limit on obedience, depending on the nature of human authority, that is, whether one perceives that authority to be just or unjust (Morris, 1988: 465). Obedience to any human authority is not absolute, that is, passive, unquestioning, slavish. New Testament scholar Ernst Kasemann (Morris, 1988:465, footnote 39) writes, "Christian obedience is never blind; and, indeed, open-eyed obedience, directed by *syneidesis* (conscience), must even be critical."

There are several examples of civil disobedience in sacred Scripture (cf. Exodus 1:15-21; Daniel 1:1-16; 3:1-28; 6:1-23). For example, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish authorities, had Peter and John put in jail, because by their teaching, Jews were being converted to Christianity (cf. Acts 5:12-18). When they were delivered from jail, they continued to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 5:25). They were arrested again and brought before the Sanhedrin. A second time the authorities commanded Peter and John to stop teaching about Jesus,

saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name" (Acts 5:28).

The apostles' dilemma was either to obey the Sanhedrin or to obey Christ, who commanded them to preach the gospel (cf. Matthew 28:18-20). They decided to obey a higher authority than the Sanhedrin and therefore said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Because of their disobedience, they were beaten. The Sanhedrin again "ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and *then* released them" (Acts 5:40). The apostles, however, disobeyed the Sanhedrin again and "kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). In the act of civil disobedience, God gives individuals "the strength and the courage to resist unjust human laws" (Pope John Paul II, 1995:73).

In general, there are two guidelines to determine if Christians should practice civil disobedience. First, if the civil authorities issue a law, commanding a believer to do something that God forbids, then it is right to disobey it. Second, if the civil authorities issue a law, forbidding a believer from doing something that God commands, then it is right to disobey it (Sproul, 1986:205).

St Augustine (Aquinas, 1947:I-II, q. 95, art. 2) says, "that which is not just seems to be no law at all." In fact, an unjust law "is no longer a law but a perversion of law" (Aquinas, 1947:I-II, q. 95, art. 2). Hence, no one is obligated in conscience to obey unjust human laws (Aquinas, 1947:I-II, q. 96, art. 4). Charles Rice (1999:84-85), who specializes in the jurisprudence or theory of law of Thomas Aquinas, explains Aquinas' view of civil obedience and civil disobedience,

The human law is itself part of God's plan. As such, it obliges in conscience because the legislator ultimately derives his authority from God for the purpose of promoting the common good [cf. Romans 13:1-7]. But if that legislator abuses his authority by enacting unjust laws, such laws are 'acts of violence rather than laws' [I-II, q. 96, art. 4]. Aquinas' analysis is a prescription for limited government, providing a rational basis on which to affirm that there are limits to what the state can rightly do. His insistence that the power of the human law is limited implies a 'right' of the person not to be subjected to an unjust law.

Christians belonging to the Pro-Life Movement in America protest the 1973 Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion in *Roe v. Wade*. Francis Schaeffer (1982:130), a pro-life Christian activist writes, "If there is no final place for civil disobedience, then the government has been put in the place of the Living God." Government is not God and when it demands obedience to all of its laws, it takes the place of God. Schaeffer (1982:131) says, "when *any office* commands what is contrary to God's Law it abrogates its authority." The reason that pro-life groups engage in civil disobedience at abortion clinics is that they believe that a law permitting the killing of unborn children is unjust.

Christians can and should disobey unjust laws permitting abortion and euthanasia, because, in principle, "man can never obey a law which is in itself immoral" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:22). Civil laws authorizing abortion and euthanasia are violations of law as such and, therefore, are not true laws, morally obligating Christians to obey them (Pope John Paul II, 1995:72-73). Such laws are perversions of the law (1947:I-II, q. 95, art. 2).

Ethically, there is really no problem with the legitimacy of civil disobedience. However, there is a problem with how it is performed, especially when it is contrary to the teaching and non-violent life of Jesus Christ. He teaches his followers to be peacemakers (cf. Matthew 5:9). That is why Christians, in protesting unjust laws of a government, should advocate non-violent civil disobedience. In fact, Christians should do everything within their power to resolve a conflict with government (on the federal, state or local levels) peacefully. As citizens of the United States of America, Christians have the same rights as other citizens to express publicly and by means of peaceful protests (such as picketing) that abortion is wrong. From early history of the United States to the present, citizens have been free to criticize the American government, even, if necessary advocate overthrowing it. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees the freedom of religion, speech, the press and "the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" (Whitehead & Schaeffer, 1985:33)

As good citizens, Christians should first approach the government (on federal, state and local levels) with words, communication, not public demonstrations nor force. Lynn Buzzard (1987:22), a legal scholar, says,

Civil disobedience should never be seen as a simple shortcut to accomplishing what the slower, more accepted means of social change – the political process and moral and spiritual education – are meant to accomplish. Our democratic system is based on the ideal that the appropriate good will result if rational people reason together through dialogue and verbal suasion. Yet this ideal would be utterly circumvented if every new subculture group that arose with a cause should bypass dialogue and immediately resort to civil disobedience, especially of the violent sort.

5.3 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND EUTHANASIA

5.3.1 Ethical and Unethical Euthanasia

According to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1980:2), euthanasia is

an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering may in this way be eliminated. Euthanasia's terms of reference, therefore, are to be found in the intention of the will and in the methods used.

The commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) refers to the deliberate (intentional) and direct killing of an innocent human being. It is a moral absolute (cf. 3.0 of the thesis). In other words, there are no exceptions to it. Exodus 23:7 says, “The innocent and the just you shall not put to death” (Senior, 1990: 87). “You shall not murder” applies to euthanasia, which is mercy killing (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:2). For example, in an act of “mercy,” a doctor ends the life of a patient who is suffering from a terminal illness, because it is more compassionate to end the patient’s life than to see him or her linger on in suffering.

Euthanasia can be by either commission or omission. A direct act with the intention of ending the suffering person’s life is wrong. This is called “active

euthanasia.” It directly leads to death. Omitting or withholding the natural means for sustaining human life, such as food and water, with the intention of ending a sick person’s life is wrong (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:2). This is called “unnatural passive euthanasia” (Geisler, 1989a:163). It is euthanasia by omission, which directly leads to death.

There is a significant moral difference between allowing a terminal patient to die and doing something to hasten his or her death. In the former, there is no longer any hope that a treatment can save the patient’s life and, therefore, he or she may be allowed to die. In the latter, one intends, either by action or omission, to end the suffering patient’s life (Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania, 1999).

Morally, *treatment* must be distinguished from *care*. Treatment refers to the doctor using whatever medical interventions and medications are necessary to save a person’s life and restore him or her to health, if possible. Care refers to “ordinary help due to sick patients, such as compassion and spiritual and affective support due to every human being in danger” (Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania, 1999). Care is an obligation but treatment may not be. Care also includes providing the ordinary or natural means for sustaining human life, such as food or nutrition) and water or hydration (Pope John Paul II, 2004:4). Food and fluids should be given to every human being, whether a person is well or ill. They are not medicine, because if a healthy person does not receive them, he or she will eventually die. If food and water sustain life, keep a person alive, then how much more is that true of someone who is sick, such as a chronically ill, terminally ill or a physically or mentally incapacitated person. Nutrition and hydration should even be administered artificially unless or until they become clearly useless or burdensome (Liptak, 1990:7).

Extraordinary means of treatment are different from ordinary means. William E. May (2005) says that ordinary or proportionate means of treatment are morally necessary and, typically, are not burdensome to a patient. Ordinary means of treatment offer some reasonable hope of benefitting the patient, preserving life and aiding in the restoration of health (United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2001:56).

Extraordinary or disproportionate means of treatment are optional, not morally necessary. In the patient's judgment, they do not offer any reasonable hope of recovery and may even impose an excessive burden on him or her (United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2001:57). In summary, extraordinary means of treatment are "all medicines, treatments, and operations, which cannot be obtained or used without excessive expense, pain, or other inconvenience, or which, if used, would not offer a reasonable hope of benefit" (McCarthy, 1988:152).

Financially, if the treatments are too burdensome on the terminally ill patient, his or her family or the community of which the patient is a member, the he or she may discontinue it. Discontinuing extraordinary or disproportionate means of treatment presupposes that the life of a terminally ill person should not be preserved at all costs. He or she may choose to end such treatments, allowing death to occur naturally. However, the dying patient should continue to receive care, which is due to every sick person (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:4).

In general, artificially administered nutrition (food) and hydration (fluids) constitute ordinary means of treatment. However, in certain instances, ordinary means may actually become extraordinary. For example, if a terminally ill cancer patient's death is imminent and he or she begins to vomit from continuing to receive artificially administered nutrition and hydration, then they have become not only futile but also excessively burdensome, offering no hope to the dying patient. In such a case, the cancer patient may actually suffer more from receiving the food and fluids. Therefore, they may be withdrawn. In such an instance, the terminally ill person is not bound to use extraordinary means of treatment (Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania, 1999).

The patient's decision to end disproportionate, burdensome or extraordinary means of treatment is not the moral equivalent of suicide. Rather, it is accepting the fact of one's mortality, which everyone must accept, with or without warning, either sooner or later (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:4). Therefore, to allow death to occur naturally is not wrong.

5.3.2 The Persistent Vegetative State and Palliative Care

What is the persistent vegetative state (abbreviated as PVS)? A person in such a state is brain-damaged, resulting in a form of deep unconsciousness. A person in such a condition “shows no evident sign of self-awareness or of awareness of the environment, and seems unable to interact with others or to react to specific stimuli” (Pope John Paul II, 2004:6). Medical science cannot “predict with certainty who among patients in this condition will recover and who will not” (Pope John Paul II, 2004:6). The longer patients are in such a state, the more difficult it is for them to recover. However, there are patients who have recovered, at least partially (Pope John Paul II, 2004:6).

The persistent vegetative state is also called “cerebral death,” suggesting that a person in such a state is “brain dead.” However, “This is not true. There is a failure of function at one level in the brain, but not all, and *the person in PVS is definitely not dead*” (Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania, 1999). The brain stem, which controls involuntary functions, is still intact. That is why a person in such a state can, for example, still breathe, blink, and perform involuntary movements.

The clinical term (a term used by medical doctors in a hospital setting) persistent vegetative state may call into question whether a patient in such a condition is still a human being. After all, a vegetative state or the condition of being a vegetable is not the same as being human. Such a connotation or suggestion of the vegetative state is erroneous, because from the moment of conception to the moment of death, a human being is and always remains human, regardless of his or her physical or mental disabilities. Thus, a human being cannot become a “vegetable” or an “animal” (Pope John Paul II, 2004:3). In short, once a human being, always a human being!

Usually, a person in a persistent vegetative is not about to die; unless he or she is terminally and imminently ill. A person’s life in the persistent vegetative state can be prolonged for weeks, months or even years, provided that he or she receives food (nutrition) and fluids (hydration) artificially by means of tube feedings state (Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania, 1999).

It is not extraordinary or burdensome treatment to give food and fluids to persons in a persistent vegetative state, because such treatment does not cause suffering. If, however, a doctor or nurse deliberately removes the artificial means of nutrition and hydration, the patient will eventually die of either dehydration or starvation or both. Such an act constitutes “euthanasia by omission” (Pope John Paul II, 2004:4). As a general rule, then, food and fluids are ordinary means of treatment and should be artificially administered to the patient in the persistent vegetative state, “unless or until the benefits of nutrition and hydration are clearly outweighed by a definite danger or burden, or they are clearly useless in sustaining life” (McHugh, 1991).

McHugh (1991) outlines four kinds of medical conditions, which may or may not result in death, and how nutrition and hydration are related to each. The first is the *unconscious, imminently dying patient*. In other words, there is no evidence that the patient is aware of his or her condition and surroundings. For death to be imminent means that by all medical indications, a physician can predict that death will probably happen soon, shortly, within a few hours or days, in spite of what life-prolonging methods are used. The point is that death may happen any time and the process of dying is irreversible. In such a state, artificial nutrition and hydration are useless. However, they pose no apparent burden to the patient.

The second is the *unconscious, non-dying patient*. The person is not aware of his or her condition and surroundings. There is no indication that he or she is suffering nor in a terminal condition. In such a state, nutrition and hydration should be given to the person, because there is no observable evidence that they are useless and burdensome, especially since they sustain the patient’s life. In fact, to withdraw them is to bring about the patient’s death by either starvation or dehydration or both.

The third is the *conscious, imminently dying patient*. In other words, the patient is aware of his or her condition and surroundings; death may happen at any time. Artificial nutrition and hydration are not only useless but also possibly burdensome. In such a state, the patient may request that they be withdrawn.

The fourth is the *conscious, irreversibly ill, but not imminently dying patient*. In other words, the patient is aware of his or her condition and surroundings. His or her illness is worsening and cannot be reversed. However, the patient is not yet near the time of death. In such a state, nutrition and hydration are not useless, because they sustain life; nor are they unreasonably burdensome. Hence, the patient should continue to receive nutrition and hydration. However, if it becomes evident that they are unreasonably burdensome for the patient, they may be withdrawn.

Scripture teaches that death is the divine penalty for sin (cf. Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 5:12). The body is mortal; hence, humans must die. "It is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27, NKJV). Death is not only a divine law but also a universal law of nature. There is "a time to be born and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2, NIV). Geisler (1989a:168) says, "Extraordinary efforts to fight the divinely appointed limits of our mortality are really working in opposition to God." It is, in effect, resisting God (Geisler, 1989a:168).

Palliative care involves relieving pain, comforting the person who is suffering. Sacred Scripture says, "Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to him whose life is bitter" (Proverbs 31:6, NASB). During biblical times, wine was used for medicinal purposes, namely, to dull or help one forget one's pain. The proper use of medicine is to kill pain, not the person. A terminally ill person who is in extreme pain may be given strong medication to control or relieve it, thus dying comfortably. The patient may also refuse to be heavily sedated and thus, fully conscious, prepare for his or her death (United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2001:61).

Because the pain of a terminally ill person may be extremely severe, a physician may give the patient a strong dose of medication, which, indirectly, may shorten a person's life, provided that the doctor's direct intention is "not to hasten death" (United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2001:61). In this instance, the principle of double effect applies. In giving the medication, there are two foreseen effects; the one is good but the other is not. The good effect is directly intended by the doctor or nurse, namely, relief from suffering. But the bad effect of hastening death is not. It is a foreseen but unintended side-effect,

a result of a good effect. The bad effect is tolerated but it is neither directly chosen nor approved (Geisler, 1989a:170).

Euthanasia is not made right strong feelings of compassion for the person who is suffering, the good intention of relieving suffering or the sincere belief that one is right in ending the life of a terminally ill patient. Such factors are subjective and express what is going on inside the person but they do not “change the nature of this act of killing, which will always be in itself something to be rejected” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:2). Objectively, euthanasia, which is the direct and intentional act of killing an innocent human being, is wrong, regardless of the subjective factors involved.

Compassion or pity is certainly a normal response when seeing a terminally ill person suffering. But does true compassion entail putting a person to death? Actually, euthanasia (or physician-assisted suicide and assisted suicide) is a misguided sense of compassion, a false sense of mercy (Pope John Paul II, 1995:15, 66). True compassion prompts human beings to move out of themselves so that they “not only feel *for* but *with* those who suffer” (Poupard, s.a.). Therefore, on an emotional level, to show compassion is to suffer with those who suffer, sharing their pain or agony. But “it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear” (Pope John Paul II, 1995:66).

Philosophically, abortion and euthanasia are related, because many of the arguments which justify abortion may also be used to justify euthanasia. Abortion is pre-natal euthanasia and euthanasia is post-natal abortion. The following chart (Willke, 1997) shows the similarities between the arguments for abortion and euthanasia:

REASON	ABORTION	EUTHANASIA
Usefulness	a burden	a burden
Wanted	unwanted	unwanted
Degree of perfection	handicapped	handicapped
Age	too young	too old

Intelligence	not yet conscious	not really conscious anymore
Place of residence	in the womb	in a nursing home
"Meaningful life"	"does not yet have" Roe vs. Wade	"no longer has" Euthanasia Bills
Cost	too poor	too poor
Numbers	too many children	too many old folks
Marital Status	unmarried	widowed

5.3.3 Physician-Assisted Suicide

Assisted suicide means "To concur with the intention of another person to commit suicide and to help in carrying it out" (Pope John Paul II, 1995:66). In physician-assisted suicide, a doctor agrees with the patient's intent to end his or her life and helps to carry out the intention. Physician-assisted suicide is a form of euthanasia. It is either direct, as when, for example, a physician gives a patient a lethal injection so that he or she dies. It may also be indirect; in this case, a doctor provides a patient with a bottle of sleeping pills on which he or she overdoses and dies. In both cases, the doctor's intention is to help the patient kill himself or herself.

In many case, patients who ask the doctor to help end their lives are suffering from not only extreme physical pain but also emotional pain, such as depression. Such pain clouds one's reason and makes it difficult to think clearly or rationally. Psychologically, the request to end one's life is really a cry for help and love. The patient needs to be surrounded by the love and support of all those who should be close to him or her, such as parents, children, friends, doctors and nurses (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:2). In other words, one must lavish care on the patient, especially when he or she cannot be cured.

A doctor may not end the life of a patient with an incurable disease nor a terminally ill patient, even if he or she requests it, because such an act is a "an offense against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:2). Physician-assisted suicide is a violation of the commandment "You shall not

murder” (cf. **2.3** of the thesis). Saint Augustine (Pope John Paul II, 1995:66) says,

it is never licit to kill another: even if he should wish it, indeed if he request it because, hanging between life and death, he begs for help in freeing the soul struggling against the bonds of the body and longing to be released; nor is it licit even when a sick person is no longer able to live.

The reason that physician-assisted suicide is wrong is that human beings are made in the image of God (cf. **4.2** of the thesis). The *imago Dei*, the divine imprint in every human being, gives human life intrinsic or inherent value. Human beings, then, have a God-given inviolable dignity, a life, says Malcolm Muggeridge (1971:29), “which no man dare presume to put out.” It is also called “the sanctity of human life” (cf. **4.4** of the thesis).

“[W]hoever attacks human life, in some way attacks God himself” (Pope John Paul II, 1995:9). Euthanasia and assisted suicide are an attack on God in whose image human beings are made. A human being is a steward, not an owner, of his or her life, because human life belongs to God who created it. Scripture says, “*It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves*” (Psalm 100:3, NKJV). God is sovereign over human life and death. That is why no physician has a moral right to end the life of his or her patient (Orr, 1998:69)

In his *Epidemics*, Book I, Section II, the Greek physician Hippocrates (2000) wrote, “The physician must ... have two special objects in view with regard to disease, namely, to do good or to do no harm.” The latter part of the Greek phrase is translated into Latin as *primum non nocere*, which means, “first, do no harm.” It has become one of the principles of medical ethics. A physician’s primary role is to heal, not harm, a sick or dying patient. The Hippocratic Oath says, “I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion” (Hippocrates, 1923:299-301).

Traditionally, in the Western world, a physician's role was that of healer. But the Euthanasia Movement in the United States wants the physician to be a killer, that is, to aid or assist a patient in ending his or her life. Robert Orr (1998:69) comments,

Killing patients has been outside the bounds of medical care for hundreds of years. When the Hippocratic Oath first proscribed these practices, anti-euthanasia was a position held only by a minority of physicians. However, it gradually became the accepted medical professional standard – a long-standing, absolute prohibition of physicians' taking their patients' lives or helping them take their own lives. If the current generation of medical professionals makes this a possibility, it would change the very character of the practice of medicine. The physician would no longer be purely a healer but would be an executioner as well. This would seriously undermine the doctor-patient relationship and the trust that is so necessary to that relationship.

Physicians are healers, not killers. To make a physician into a killer is to "change the very character of the practice of medicine" (Orr, 1998: 69). In the United States, for example, "To destroy the boundary between healing and killing would mark a radical departure from longstanding legal and medical traditions of our country, posing a threat of unforeseeable magnitude to vulnerable members of our society" (United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 1991).

The 38th chapter of the Deuterocanonical or Apocrypha Book of Sirach teaches that the medical profession comes from God and that he heals the sick through the various skills of physicians. For example,

*Honour physicians for their services, for the Lord created them.
And he gave skill to human beings that he might be glorified in his marvellous works.
By them the physician heals and takes away pain....
Then give the physician his place, for the Lord created him; do not let him not leave you, for you need him.
There may come a time when recovery lies in the hands of physicians,
for they too pray to the Lord that he will grant them success in diagnosis and in healing, for the sake of preserving life.*

(vv., 1, 6, 7, 12-14)

The phrase “the Lord created them” (v. 1) refers to the profession of physicians or medical doctors (Beavin, 1971:569). Their skill is “for the sake of preserving life” (v. 14), not destroying it.

Legally, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide follow abortion (Pope John Paul II, 1995:4). What is at the heart of physician-assisted suicide is “a person’s right to choose.” The logic of legal reasoning in America is this: if a woman has a right to choose to abort her unborn child, then why does a man or woman - who is chronically or terminally ill - not have a right to choose to end his or her life? In the name of personal “freedom” and claiming it as a “right,” weak and vulnerable persons are killed by physicians in abortion and assisted suicide. In doing so, “the very nature of the medical profession is distorted and contradicted, and the dignity of those who practise it is degraded” (Pope John Paul II, 1995:4).

Jesus said, “I was sick, and you visited Me” (Matthew 25:36, NASB). The verb translated (*επισκεπτομαι*, *episkeptomai*) “visited,” meaning “to be concerned about,” “to care for” and “to give help” (Larson & Amundsen, 1998:97). The verb “was sometimes used to refer to a physician’s medical visitation of a patient” (Larson & Amundsen, 1998:97). In caring for the sick, one is caring for Christ in the sick. Biblically, then, one “visits” or cares for the sick or suffering, the mentally or physically disabled and the dying. Because killing might seem to be mistaken for caring in the medical profession, a rule of medical ethics should be *always care, never kill*, for killing is not caring (Arkes & Berke, 1992).

5.3.4 The American Medical Association’s (AMA) Position on Physician-Assisted Suicide

According to the American Medical Association (in Nair, 2005), “Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer.” If it were not, then patients who are, say, chronically or terminally ill might not know if the doctor is going to preserve or end their lives, comfort or kill them. Thomas Reardon (1998:516), a member of the American Medical Association, writes, “the power to assist in intentionally taking a life is

antithetical to the central mission of healing that guides medicine.” Hence, “it is unethical to ask a physician to actively take a human life” (Reardon, 1998:516). When all of a physician’s efforts to heal and prevent death become futile, he or she must not attempt to end the life of the patient, assisting him or her in committing suicide.

It is the AMA’s position that just because a physician cannot prevent death, does not thereby mean that he or she should in any way be the direct cause of it. The medications prescribed by physicians are meant to cure illness and, if not, at least comfort the patient in his or her suffering. Physician-assisted suicide morally changes the instruments of medicine into tools of death (McMurray *et al.*, 1992:2233). As a caregiver, a medical doctor shows compassion to a dying patient by comforting him or her. As a healer, a physician seeks to cure, not kill, his or her patient. According to the AMA, “the ethical objections to physician-assisted suicide are similar to those of euthanasia since both are essentially interventions to cause death” (McMurray *et al.*, 1992:2233).

5.3.5 Radical Autonomy: A Critique of Dr. Jack Kevorkian and the United States Supreme Court

On March 29, 1999, Jack Kevorkian was found guilty of second-degree murder for ending the life of Thomas Youk who had Lou Gehrig's disease. Kevorkian himself administered the lethal injection which killed Youk. Kevorkian received a ten to twenty-five years prison sentence. He had already been acquitted in three assisted suicide cases; the fourth case ended in a mistrial.

At a National Press Club Luncheon on July 29, 1996, Sonja Hillgren, the moderator, asked Jack Kevorkian: “Can you tell us your underlying philosophical belief?” He answered: “Absolute personal autonomy. I’m an absolute autonomist. Do and say whatever you want to do and say at any time you want to do or say it, as long as you do not harm or threaten anybody else’s person or property” (Beckwith, 1998:223). But physician-assisted suicide does harm to a person, killing him or her. To intend, either directly or indirectly, to end

the life of another innocent human being is morally wrong. It is murder. No one has a right under any circumstances to murder.

Kevorkian's underlying philosophical belief is "absolute personal autonomy." In other words, human being should be free to choose when, where and how to end their lives. For example, the Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (1918:70) says, "Reason, too, advises us to die, if we may, according to our taste; if this cannot be, she advises us to die according to our ability, and to seize upon whatever means shall offer itself for doing violence to ourselves." According to the philosophy of absolute autonomy, a person is the master of his or her own destiny, not God. Theologian R. C. Sproul (1983:26) says, "Autonomy declares that man is a law unto himself. The autonomous man creates his own value system, establishes his own norms, and is answerable and accountable to man and to man alone." "However," says Orr (1998: 68), "if autonomy is overriding, why shouldn't we honor requests for assisted death from anyone whether they are terminally ill or not?" In other words, anyone who wants to be killed may be killed simply by virtue of choosing to die. That, in the final analysis, is where autonomy leads.

The United States Supreme Court's view of personal autonomy is radical. It almost accords human autonomy with an absolute status. In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Court upheld the decision of *Roe v. Wade*, declaring, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life" (O'Connor *et al.*, 1992)

Philosophically, the Court's view of human liberty and autonomy is flawed. It totally subjectivizes and relativizes the truth. According to the Court, an individual creates his or her own reality. Merely by virtue of each person having a view or "concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life," it is a right view or concept. No one can be wrong, because each person's view or concept is right for him or her. This, in effect, denies that there is such a thing as objective moral truth, which is common to all human beings and can be known by them. Geisler and Turek (1998:114) comment,

there is a real right and wrong, and that real right and wrong is external to ourselves. Consequently, contrary to what the Court implied, we don't determine right from wrong, we discover it. Those who choose to define right and wrong according to their 'own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe' endanger themselves and the rest of us around them.

The United States Supreme Court's definition of liberty is based on the philosophical errors of subjectivism and relativism (cf. **3.0** of the thesis). It is absurd, because

no court in the land would have grounds to convict anyone of any crime – even murder! After all, by the Court's logic, thieves could be stealing because theft is simply an expression of 'their own concept of existence.' Racists could be discriminating because, as they 'define the universe,' only members of their own race should be treated fairly. And murderers could be killing because, by their own definition of 'the mystery of human life,' their victims are not human.

(Geisler & Turek, 1998:112-113)

The absurdity of the Court's definition of liberty can be seen in following fictional scenario: a thirty-three year old man has taken an overdose of barbiturates and is rushed to the hospital by the paramedics. If his stomach is pumped, he can be saved. But a nurse reads a note in his pocket which says,

If you find me before I die, please do not pump my stomach. I know exactly what I am doing. My girlfriend, Rebecca, has broken up with me and life no longer has any meaning. ... [L]ife's meaning and purpose is subjective, so you have no right to judge whether the reason for killing myself is serious or silly. Also ... each of us has a right to absolute personal autonomy. ... Planned Parenthood v. Casey, said that 'at the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.' So, according to my concept of existence, life only has meaning if Rebecca loves me. Rebecca doesn't love me. So life has no meaning to me. ... I have absolute autonomy to do whatever I want with my body. I choose to kill my body. If you pump my stomach, you violate my autonomy. If I survive, I will sue you for violating my Fourteenth Amendment right to absolute autonomy and to define my own

concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.

(Beckwith, 1998:227)

The Supreme Court contradicted its own definition of liberty, because the father of a pregnant woman is not allowed the “right to define” his “own concept of existence” by trying to stop the woman from having an abortion. The Court virtually granted to the pregnant woman absolute liberty to do whatever she wanted with her pregnancy: the choice either to accept it or to terminate it. But, as Geisler and Turek (1998:112) point out, “Absolute liberty cannot exist in a world where there are other people.” There are other people to take into consideration in asserting one’s own liberty. One cannot violate the rights of others in the name of so-called “freedom” or “liberty.”

In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the majority of the Supreme Court Justices contradicted themselves, presupposing a knowledge of objective moral truth. They imposed their will on the American people in mandating that abortion remain legal in the United States. In other words, for the Justices, it is an objective moral truth that abortion should remain legal. Geisler and Turek (1998:111-112) critique the inconsistency of the Court’s ruling, observing,

In their definition of ‘liberty,’ the Court reveals that their concept of morality is relative to each individual. In effect, there is no objective ‘right’ morality – it’s up to the woman to decide what is ‘right’ for her. Question: By what objective standard did the Court make that claim about morality? What was their absolute point of reference if everything is relative? In other words, if moralities are relative, as they claim, how could they imply it would be objectively wrong (i.e., immoral) to mandate their moral code on the entire country?

On October 27, 1997, the State of Oregon (Death and Dignity Act, 1997) legalized aid-in dying. In other words, a doctor may prescribe medications which will result in the death of a terminally ill patient. According to the March 6, 1996, filing and ruling of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco (*Compassion in Dying v. Washington*), a mentally competent adult

who is terminally ill has a constitutional right to commit suicide with a doctor's assistance (Reinhardt, 1996). However, on June 26, 1997, in a rather surprising decision, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Washington v. Glucksberg* that there is no constitutional right to assisted suicide and that states may protect their residents by banning it. The Supreme Court upheld the laws against assisted suicide in New York and Washington. Chief Justice William Rehnquist, writing for the Court, declared,

the State has an interest in protecting vulnerable groups – including the poor, the elderly, and disabled persons. ... The State's interest here goes beyond protecting the vulnerable from coercion; it extends to protecting disabled and terminally ill people from prejudice, negative and inaccurate stereotypes, and 'societal indifference.' The State's assisted suicide ban reflects and reinforces its policy that the lives of terminally ill, disabled, and elderly must be no less valued than the lives of the young and healthy....

(Rehnquist, 1997)

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor concurs with Rehnquist's opinion, saying, "The difficulty in defining terminal illness and the risk that a dying patient's request for assistance in ending his or her life might not be truly voluntary justifies the prohibitions on assisted suicide we uphold here" (O'Connor, 1997).

The Court appealed to the rejection of assisted suicide in the history of law in the United States, saying,

The history of the law's treatment of assisted suicide in this country has been and continues to be one of the rejection of nearly all efforts to permit it. That being the case, our decisions lead us to conclude that the asserted 'right' to assistance in committing suicide is not a fundamental liberty interest protected by the Due Process Clause.

(Rehnquist, 1997)

If assisted suicide were to become legal in all of the United States, one possible danger in American law in the future may be that the emphasis will shift from “the right to die” to “the duty to die.” At risk, then, will be the elderly, the senile, the chronically ill and those with various disabilities. A doctor may decide that such persons are not fit to live and that they must be put out of their misery.

5.3.6 Functionalism and Euthanasia of Elderly Persons

Elderly persons, such as those who are 70 and over, are particularly vulnerable to attacks on their worth as human beings by those who hold to a “quality of life” ethic. They do not believe in the sanctity of human life or intrinsic worth of the human person. To judge an elderly person’s value how useful he or she is to others is called “functionalism.” It is synonymous with the quality of life ethic and can lead to euthanasia. Charles Rice (1999:364) comments, “The euthanasia movement employs a functional definition of personhood: a human being is entitled to treatment as a person only to the extent that he can perform in some useful way.”

An elderly person is still fully human, even if he or she cannot perform all of the functions of a young person. However, according to functionalism, if an elderly person does not fully function as a young, healthy person, then the elderly person is not as complete a human being as a younger person. But this is a fallacy, because there is distinction

between what one is and what one does, between being and functioning, thus between ‘being a person’ and ‘functioning as a person.’ One cannot function as a person without being a person, but one can surely be a person without functioning as a person. In deep sleep, in coma, and in early infancy, nearly everyone will admit there are persons, but there are no specifically human functions such as reasoning, choice, or language. Functioning as a person is a sign and an effect of being a person. It is because of what we are, because of our nature or essence or being, that we can and do function in these ways.

(Kreeft, 1997)

Functionalism is a work-place mentality that defines and values people for what they do, not for who they are (Pope John Paul II, 1995:23). Kreeft (1997) observes, "Modern man is increasingly reducing his being to functions. We no longer ask 'Who is he?' but 'What does he do?' We think of a man as a fireman, not as a man fighting fires; of a woman as a teacher, not as a woman teaching." A work-place mentality, which values a person for his or her functions, is also replacing family love; because, in a family, a human being is accepted or loved for whom he or she is, namely, a person of unique value, a being, of special worth. In short, functionalism undermines the family value of unconditional love (Kreeft, 1997).

In the United States, there is an excessive, if not inordinate, emphasis on youth with its beauty and physical strength. Old age is often viewed negatively by many people as a time of decline of physical and mental strength. The "final stages of life – old age and death – are milestones with little honor and seem to take place almost in secret" (Whaley, 1982:336). Elderly persons "are oftentimes unjustly considered as unproductive if not directly an insupportable burden" (Pope John Paul II, 1988:48). They are often marginalized and ignored by the young. Such an attitude or mindset "forms the cultural context of euthanasia." (Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1998: 5).

For example, according to the quality of life ethic, elderly persons who suffer from a terminal illness or are crippled and confined to a wheelchair or bed, who cannot dress and feed themselves, are no longer useful to society. It is better for them to be put to death mercifully. As a quadriplegic for 24 years, Joni Eareckson Tada is confined to a wheelchair. She can neither feed herself, nor brush her teeth nor go to the bathroom without assistance. Tada (1993:9) writes,

Society's sensibilities are becoming dulled. We are now accepting a dangerous premise: that life lived in pain or in a wheelchair is not worth living, that you are better dead than disabled.... Instead of making it easier for people to die, let's make it easier for them to live.

Eventually, the mental and physical conditions of elderly human beings decline; however, it is a *non sequitur* to conclude that their lives no longer have any value (Pope John Paul II, 1995:64). On the contrary, they have indelible value, being made in God's image, and, as such, are and always shall remain persons of inestimable worth (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). Philosophically stated, human value is ontological, inhering in one's being; it is intrinsic, not extrinsic, derived from one's origins, who one is.

Morally, it is just as wrong for American medical doctors to put their patients to death as it was for Nazi physicians during the Holocaust. Because it is contrary to their profession as healers, American physicians should no more cooperate in euthanasia than did Nazi physicians. Therefore, no human authority – such as medical doctors, lawyers or judges – can take the place of God and set up standards of human value to determine whose life is worth living and whose is not.

There are two major assumptions to euthanasia, assisted suicide and physician-assisted suicide. First, it is better to be dead than to live with chronic pain or terminal illness. Second, there is no suffering after death. But there may, in fact, be more suffering awaiting a person after death. The choice to kill oneself or to allow a doctor or friend to assist in one's own death, may usher a person into even more agony.

5.3.7 A Christian Perspective on Old Age

In 1992, the dignity of elderly persons was emphasized in a meeting held by the United Nations in Vienna, Austria. The international community composed a document, which to this day remains an international point of reference on the dignity of older persons. For example, the documents says,

The human race is characterized by a long childhood and by a long old age. Throughout history this has enabled older persons to educate the younger and pass on values to them; this role has ensured man's survival and progress. The presence of the elderly in the family home, the neighbourhood and in all forms of social life still teaches an irreplaceable lesson of humanity. Not only by

his life, but indeed by his death, the older person teaches us all a lesson. Through grief the survivors come to understand that the dead do continue to participate in the human community, by the results of their labour, the works and institutions they leave behind them, and the memory of their words and deeds. This may encourage us to regard our own death with greater serenity and to grow more fully aware of the responsibilities toward future generations.

(Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, 1992)

Life does not end for human beings simply because they are old. In however limited a capacity, they must stay active, keep busy, even after they are retired. They can still make contributions to the church and society by teaching the young, transmitting the knowledge they have gained from reason and experience (Pope John Paul II, 1988: 48). Elderly persons, then, offer the younger generation the wisdom that comes from aging. Sirach 25:4-6 says,

What an attractive thing is judgment in gray-haired men, and for the aged to possess good counsel! How attractive is wisdom in the aged, and understanding and counsel in honorable men! Rich experience is the crown of the aged, and their boast is the fear of the Lord.

(in Metzger, 1977:160)

Cicero (Pope John Paul II, 1999a:12), the ancient Roman orator and political philosopher, writes, "the burden of old age is lighter for those who feel respected and loved by the young." Younger people have a responsibility to the older, "welcoming them, helping them and making good use of their qualities" (Pope John Paul II, 1999a:12). Instead of viewing them as unwanted burdens, the young should convey to the elderly, that their lives matter; they count for something. "[A] fully human civilization shows respect and love for the elderly, so that despite their diminishing strength they feel a vital part of society" (Pope John Paul II, 1999a:12).

In summary, an elderly human being has the right to life and that right cannot be lost, even if he or she becomes greatly weakened or incurably ill (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974:12).

5.3.8 Euthanasia as an Implicit Rejection of Meaning in Suffering

In the quality of life ethic, suffering has no meaning. Is that true? Is suffering meaningless? The answer is absolutely, unequivocally and categorically “no” (Vorster, 2004:136-137). Christianity teaches that human suffering has meaning (Vorster, 2004:137). The apostle Paul says, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body which is the church in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions” (Colossians 1:24, NASB). There are two different meanings to Christ's “sufferings” (παθημα, *pathema*) and “afflictions” (θλιψις, *thlipsis*). In the first, sense, the salvific sense, Christ's sufferings on the cross for the salvation of all human beings (past, present and future) are complete, perfect, never to be repeated. There is nothing deficient about the saving work of Christ on Calvary. No human being can add anything to it. He is the only redeemer!

In another sense, an ecclesiological sense, the sufferings of Christ are lacking in the members of his body, the church. In other words, there are still sufferings to be completed by Christ's members on earth, the church militant (Bible, 1899:228). “It is precisely *the Church ... which is the dimension* in which the redemptive suffering of Christ can be constantly completed by the suffering of man” (Pope John Paul II, 1984:24).

A Christian's suffering is redemptive not in itself but in its effects. A Christian's suffering, then, cannot save or redeem an unbeliever, because only Jesus' sufferings are salvific. In what sense, then, is a Christian's suffering redemptive? In the sense that another person may be led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by the way a Christian conducts himself or herself in suffering, such as his or her display of courage, patience or love for God instead of bitterness toward him.

Paul asks a rhetorical question, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (I Corinthians 6:15, NASB). Paul tells the Christians at Corinth: “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it” (I Corinthians 12:27, NASB). To the Christians at Rome, Paul says, “we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:5, NASB). Since a Christian is in Christ and Christ is in a Christian (cf. Romans 6:4; II Corinthians 5:17), then, if a Christian suffers, Christ also suffers. There is a deep, profound spiritual union – a mystical union – between the believer and Christ so that what happens to the one, in a sense, also happens to the other (Thrall, 1965:122-123).

Scripture says Jesus Christ is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15, KJV); or, he is able “to sympathize with our weaknesses” (NIV). To sympathize (συμπαθεω, *sympatheo*: from συμ, meaning “with” and παθεω, meaning “to suffer”) means “to suffer with” another person

to the extent of entering into his experience and feeling his heartache yourself. The use of the word here means more than a knowledge of human infirmity. It points to a knowledge that has in it a feeling for the other person by reason of a common experience with that person.

(Wuest, 1973:94)

The Greek word συμπαθεω is translated in the Latin Vulgate as *conpati*, which, in turn, is from *con*, meaning “with” or “together” and *pati*, meaning “to suffer.” In the most literal sense of the word, Jesus demonstrates his compassion for human beings, for compassion literally means to “suffer with” someone. Jesus suffers *with and in* a person who is suffering. Jesus understands human pain and suffering. More than that, he feels it. The reason that Christ feels the pain or suffering of Christians is that they are members of his mystical or spiritual body, the church. When Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul, was persecuting Christians, the glorified Christ appeared to him and asked, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4, NASB). To persecute, that is, attack or inflict pain on a Christian is to attack and inflict pain on Jesus Christ,

who is afflicted in the afflictions of his people (*The Book of Common Prayer: Canadian ed.*, 1959:54).

The apostle Paul, referring to Jesus Christ, says, “if ... we suffer with *Him* ... we may also be glorified with *Him*” (Romans 8:17, NASB). When Christians suffer, they are intimately or deeply joined to Christ in fellowship. Paul calls this “the fellowship of His [that is, Christ’s] sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). Fellowship (κοινωνία, *koinonia*) means “communion” or “common union” between Christ and Christians. The apostle Peter says, “you share the sufferings of Christ” (I Peter 4:13). It is for this reasons that

some Christians prefer to moderate their use of painkillers, in order to accept voluntarily at least a part of their sufferings and thus associate themselves in a conscious way with the sufferings of Christ crucified. (cf. Matthew 27:34).

(Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:3)

One does not deliberately seek to suffer. It is a natural human response to pain to take medication in order to relieve it. However, one may consciously decide to accept one’s suffering, being more deeply joined to the sufferings of Christ. A believer, then, is never alone in his or her pain or suffering, because Jesus suffers with and in that person. Therefore, Christ’s sufferings are not complete until his work in his human members of the church on earth is complete at his Second Coming (cf. Colossians 1:24).

Christianity does not teach that suffering in itself is good but “The sufferings of Christ created the good of the world’s redemption” (Pope John Paul II, 1984:24). Jesus accomplished salvation through his suffering and death on the cross (Pope John Paul II, 1984:21). He took bad conditions, namely, sin, suffering and death, and produced good from them. Because God is sovereign, in ultimate control of all things, including sin and death, he can use even bad conditions for a believer’s good. Scripture says, “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his

purpose" (Romans 8:28, RSV). Notice that Paul does not say that evil is good. In fact,

Suffering is in itself an experience of evil. But Christ has made suffering the firmest basis of the definitive good, namely the good of eternal salvation. By his suffering on the cross, Christ reached the very roots of evil, of sin and death. He conquered the author of evil, Satan, and his permanent rebellion against the Creator.

(Pope John Paul II, 1984:26)

There is another Christian meaning to suffering, which, if understood, sustains a person during it. Jesus Christ assumed human nature forever. Whatever Christ assumed or took upon himself (except sin, cf. Hebrews 4:15), he sanctified, that is, made holy, dedicated to God the Father. Since Jesus suffered, suffering has a meaning for Christians: It "clears the way for the grace which transforms human souls" (Pope John Paul II, 1984:27). God's grace can work in the Christian who is suffering, resulting in a continual transformation into the likeness of God. In suffering, as with every other aspect of the Christian life, one can become "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). Suffering, then, "draws a person interiorly close to Christ" (Pope John Paul II, 1984:27). In suffering, a Christian changes, "becomes a completely new person" (Pope John Paul II, 1984:27). Paradoxically, through the weakness of suffering a Christian

discovers a new dimension, as it were, of his entire life and vocation. This discovery is a particular confirmation of the spiritual greatness which in man surpasses the body in a way that is completely beyond compare. When the body is gravely ill, totally incapacitated, and the person is almost incapable of living and acting, all the more do interior maturity and spiritual greatness become evident, constituting a touching lesson to those who are healthy and normal.

(Pope John Paul II, 1984:27)

The Christian doctrine on human suffering has much in common with Viktor Frankl's teaching and the "school" of psychotherapy that he founded, namely, Logotherapy. The right kind of attitude toward suffering is an act, a good deed

for others to emulate. Frankl (1985a:126) quotes the Greek historian Plutarch who writes, "The measure of a man is the way he bears up under misfortune." Frankl (1967:128) also quotes the German poet and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who says, "There is no condition which cannot be ennobled either by a deed or by suffering." Therefore, "the right kind of suffering is in itself a deed, nay, the highest achievement which has been granted to man" (Frankl, 1967:128). However, in this last point, I disagree with Frankl. Although suffering is one of the great achievements of human beings, nevertheless, it is not the greatest, for Christianity teaches that the two greatest grace-filled achievements are love for God and love of one's neighbour (cf. Matthew 22:37-39; I Corinthians 13:13).

Suffering "always remains a mystery: we are conscious of the insufficiency and inadequacy of our explanations" (Pope John Paul II, 1984:13). God does not give an abstract theological answer to the sufferer's typically human question: "Why me?" (Pope John Paul II, 1984:26.) Rather, God points to his Son, Jesus Christ, and call believers to follow him (Pope John Paul II, 1984:26). The answer to human suffering is existential, which most often comes, not immediately, but

often takes time, even a long time, for this answer to begin to be interiorly perceived. For Christ does not answer directly and he does not answer in the abstract this human questioning about the meaning of suffering. Man hears Christ's saving answer as he himself gradually becomes a sharer in the suffering of Christ.

(Pope John Paul II, 1984:26)

According to Edith Weisskopf-Joelson (Frankl, 1967:84), former Professor of Psychology at Duke University, since suffering is inevitable, one must try to see some positive value in it, for doing so, "may help counteract certain unhealthy trends in the present-day culture of the United States, where the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading." Nursing theorist Joyce Travelbee (Frankl, 1969:124) asks, "[W]hat can be more demoralizing to an ill individual than to believe that his illness and suffering are meaningless?"

Frankl (1963:106) says, "If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering." How can life have meaning in suffering? Frankl (1967:15) explains, "Life can be made meaningful ... through *the stand we take* toward a fate we no longer can change (an incurable disease, an inoperable cancer, or the like)."

Terminally ill or chronically ill persons despair of their suffering when they do not see any meaning in it. Frankl (1985a:137) writes, "*despair is suffering without meaning.*" Despair makes their suffering unbearable; as a result, they want to commit suicide. However, Frankl (1967:56) says, "Man is ready and willing to shoulder any suffering as soon and as long as he can see a meaning in it."

Since human beings are endowed with free-will, then they must freely choose to see a meaning to their suffering or despair of suffering. What makes the difference between despair and meaning? The "attitude we choose toward suffering" (Frankl, 1967:24). Frankl (1969:131) comments, "meaning rests on the attitude the patient chooses toward suffering." Frankl (1986:44) calls such a choice "attitudinal values." He writes,

The opportunity to realize ... attitudinal values is ... always present whenever a person finds himself confronted by a destiny toward which he can act only by acceptance. The way in which he accepts, the way in which he bears his cross, what courage he manifests in suffering, what dignity he displays in doom and disaster, is the measure of his human fulfilment.

(Frankl, 1986:44)

Depending on one's choice, one can view one's suffering passively, as if he or she were a hopeless victim who can do nothing about it; or, one can take a stand toward one's suffering, responding positively to it, being challenged by it to develop oneself or mature, to fulfil oneself in spite of adversity. Frankl (1985a:125-126) comments,

Caught in a hopeless situation as its helpless victim, facing a fate that cannot be changed, man still may turn his predicament into an achievement and accomplishment at the human level. He thus

may bear witness to the human potential at its best, which is to turn tragedy into triumph.

Frankl's point is: Will I choose to become bitter or better by suffering? When a person's situation or circumstance changes for the worse, then his or her attitude must change for the better in order to accept it (Frankl, 1986:80). Therefore, the kind of person that one becomes in suffering is the result of "an inner decision," not the result of suffering itself (Frankl, 1963:105).

5.3.9 Summary: Finding a Meaning to Suffering is Better Than Choosing Euthanasia or Physician-Assisted Suicide

Life always retains a meaning for all human beings – regardless of whether they are young or old, regardless of their physical or mental condition, regardless of the severity or intensity of their suffering, regardless of whether they are terminally ill or chronically ill. Viktor Frankl (1967:129) says, "every life, in every situation and to the last breath, has a meaning, retains a meaning. This is equally true of the life of a sick person, even the mentally sick. The so-called life not worth living does not exist."

Frankl (1969:79) quotes the Jewish artist Yehuda Bacon who says, "Suffering... can have a meaning if it changes *you* for the better." Depending on the person's attitude, suffering can make one either bitter or better. The sufferer should determine "that suffering will not get the better of him, that it will not deprive him of his dignity as a human being, a dignity linked to awareness of the meaning of life" (Pope John Paul II, 1984:23). Frankl (1963:107) says that the sufferer "may remain brave, dignified and unselfish. Or in the bitter fight for self-preservation he may forget his human dignity and become no more than an animal." Therefore, a person's life has meaning, even in suffering.

5.4 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND THE JUST WAR THEORY

5.4.1 The Biblical Basis for the Just War Theory

In this section, the traditional and modern arguments for the just war theory shall be presented, which can be traced back to the views of Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. In the light of classical and modern arguments, a critique of President Bush's doctrine of the just war theory shall be presented, arguing that his justifications for going to war with Iraq, were, in fact, seriously flawed and, thus, do not meet the ethical standards for a just war. It shall also be argued that the war with Iraq teaches an important moral lesson to men and women in the 21st century, which is that leaders of government can invoke the just war theory to justify wars that are, in fact, unjust.

The Christian is a citizen of two worlds: the secular and the sacred, the temporal and the eternal, the earth and heaven (cf. Matthew 22:15-22). God himself is profoundly concerned about the secular or this-worldly dimension of life. Theologian and apologist R. C. Sproul (1986:39, 40) writes,

This world was the site and purpose of the Incarnation. The God of heaven so loved this world that He sent His Son to redeem it. This is the world God created. This is the world of God's redeeming. There is no other theater of God's redeeming action than this world. . . . [T]his is our Father's world and not a place to be despised or ignored.

There is a literal sense in which Christianity is a profane religion, because the word "profane," is derived from the Latin words *pro*, meaning "outside" and *fanus*, meaning "temple;" hence, "outside the temple." The term, applied to Christians, means that they should not confine their faith to a "church building." Rather, they are meant to take their faith outside it. *Fides viva*, a "vital or living faith," is meant to have an impact on the world, society (cf. Matthew 5:13-16). Christians apply their faith in order to change what is wrong with the world, to confront its difficulties and challenges and make it a better place in which to live. They reject an exclusively life-denying, other-worldly view of Christianity. In the words of C. S. Lewis (1960:118),

[L]ooking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

Christians should be involved in every sphere of secular life, such as politics, positions of government, international legal bodies, because the world belongs to God (cf. Psalm 24:1). In fact, "a faith that does not affect a person's culture is a faith 'not fully embraced, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived'" (Pope John Paul II, 1988:59). In short, like non-Christians and everyone else, Christians should be good citizens (cf. Romans 13:1-7).

The *locus classicus* on the Christian's relationship to human government is Romans 13:1-7. Human government is neither the result of an accidental process, a blind, mindless product of millions of years of evolution; nor is government an arbitrary invention of human beings. Rather, the origin of government is divine; it comes from God. The apostle Paul says that human government is "established (*τεταγμεναι*, *tetagmena*) by God" (Romans 13:1). The Greek verb translated "established" is related to the Greek word *τασσω* or *tasso*, "a military term, meaning 'draw up in order, arrange' ... 'assign, appoint'" (Earle, 1986:204). Hence "established" may also be translated "constituted," "instituted" or "appointed."

Since God is sovereign, he is in control of the civil or temporal order. He is in total control of all human governments and their rulers are in positions of authority, because God either put them there or allowed them to be there. The prophet Daniel says God "removes kings and establishes kings" (Daniel 2:21). Daniel says to King Nebuchadnezzar, "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory" (Daniel 2:37). Nebuchadnezzar became the King of Babylon because

God permitted the king to have that position of authority. Daniel says, “the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes” (Daniel 4:17; cf. vv. 25, 32; 5:21). Similarly, the Book of Sirach, a Deuterocanonical or book of the Apocrypha, says, “The government of the earth is in the hands of the Lord, and over it he will raise up the right man for the time” (in Metzger, 1977: 140; cf. Sirach 17:17; Wisdom 6:1-5). Therefore, human government is God’s design for the ordering of society. He has given human beings the freedom to order their own lives as a society, community or nation (Nygren, 1949:428).

Human governments or, in Paul’s words, “governing authorities,” have been endowed by God with *ratio*, “reason,” to create and enforce laws (cf. Romans 13:1). In the verse, twice Paul uses the Greek noun *ἐξουσία*, which, in turn, is from the verb *ἐξέσται* or *exesti*, meaning “it is permitted, it is lawful” (Earle, 1986:204). Authority, then, means “liberty or power to act” (Earle, 1986: 204). Greek scholar Ralph Earle (1986:204) says that Paul’s

primary emphasis is on the authority of government to rule. ... Governments are set to enforce law. Since most people will not be ruled by love, they must be ruled by law. That is inevitable in an imperfect world. So God has ordained that there should be ruling authorities to keep law and order.

Government has the divinely given right to use force, if necessary, to punish wrong-doers and to maintain order. In Paul’s word’s, “be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing” (Romans 13:4). There can be no government without force. Theologian R..C. Sproul (1986:201) says,

The most basic ingredient that serves as the foundation for any state is the legal right of coercion. Without the right of forcible law ..., the state can only make suggestions. Force is the legal means by which the state assures compliance to its laws.

5.4.2 St. Augustine's Doctrine of the Just War Theory

"You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13) does not apply to judicial killing by the state nor killing in war (Gordon, 1979: 193). "The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000:2263).

Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.) was the first to formulate the Christian version of the "just war" doctrine. He argues that the purpose of a just war is to re-establish peace and order in society, saying,

Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity, and waged only that God may by it deliver men from the necessity and preserve them in peace. For peace is not sought in order to the kindling of war, but war is waged in order that peace may be obtained. Therefore, even in waging war, cherish the spirit of a peacemaker, that, by conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace.... Let necessity, therefore, and not your will, slay the enemy who fights against you.

(Augustine, 2008b)

Elsewhere, Augustine (2008c) says, "it is the wrong-doing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars." However, "war should be waged only as a necessity" (Augustine, 2008b). Because of the sinful nature of the human person, individuals and nations are capable of abusing their power over others, making war inevitable and necessary. Augustine (2008d:19, 7) says to "lament the necessity of just wars." In other words, one cannot engage in war and not be moved by it emotionally. War, then, even a just war, is a

matter of grief to man because it is man's wrong-doing. Let every one, then, who thinks with pain on all these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is misery. And if any one either endures or thinks of them without mental pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself happy because he has lost human feeling.

(Augustine, 2008d)

The New Testament does not categorically and unequivocally condemn war. The Christian religion condemns war in general, that is, unjust wars, but not all wars are unjust. It is not wrong for men and women to defend their own country or another country against an unjust aggressor. When soldiers came to John the Baptist, they questioned him, saying, "And *what about* us, what shall we do?" John answered: "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). In other words, John did not tell the soldiers to throw away their weapons and quit serving their government. If war were wrong, would John have not made that very clear in his response to the soldiers? Hence, he did not prohibit military service (Augustine, 2008a).

According to Augustine, soldiers "... defend the public safety" (Augustine, 2008c). In today's language, soldiers defend their country or the nation to which they belong, protecting its citizens. Therefore, soldiers are not guilty of murder when, in serving their country, they take "away the life of an enemy in a just war" (The Roman Catechism, 1982:422)

Actually, soldiers, instead of being ungodly murderers, may be godly men and women. For example, in Acts 10, the Gentile Cornelius, who later became a Christian, was also a centurion, which comes from the Latin word *centum*, meaning "one hundred." It was the title of a Roman army officer who was in charge of one hundred soldiers (cf. Acts 21:32; 22:26). In fact, the centurion Cornelius, even before he became a Christian, was called "a devout man, and one who feared God" (Acts 10:2).

In the Gospel of Matthew, there is the account of a centurion's servant who was lying paralyzed and in great pain. The centurion approached Jesus to heal the servant (cf. Matthew 8:5-6). Jesus said, "I will come and heal him" (Matthew 8:7). But the centurion was humble, believing that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his home. The centurion believed that all Jesus had to do was speak and the servant would be healed (Matthew 8:8-9). If it were wrong to

defend one's country, in other words, to be a soldier, Jesus would have rebuked the centurion, possibly saying, "Leave the military profession because it is sinful" (Lewis, 1966:248). But that did not happen. Instead, as Augustine (2008c) says, "Christ gave due praise to his faith; He did not tell him to leave the service." Scripture praises warriors, such as Gideon, Barak and Samson. They "became mighty in war" and "put foreign armies to flight" (cf. Hebrews 11:32-34).

In both Catholic and Protestant traditions, military service is a noble, not evil, vocation. According to the Catholic view, "Those too who devote themselves to the military service of their country should regard themselves as the agents of security and freedom of peoples. As long as they fulfil this role properly, they are making a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace" (Anon., 1965b:79). According to the Lutheran view, "it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers" (cf. Melanchthon, 1921:37-95).

Because human government is instituted by God (cf. Romans 13:1-7), a private citizen may not kill an unjust aggressor (except in self-defence). It may be done only by those who are properly authorized by the government. Augustine (in Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 3) says, "A man who, without exercising public authority, kills an evil-doer, shall be judged guilty of murder, and all the more, since he has dared to usurp a power which God has not given him."

Similarly, a private citizen may not declare war, which may be done only by those who are properly authorized by the government. For example, when the apostle Peter used his sword to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant who went to arrest Jesus, he rebuked Peter, telling him to put away his sword (cf. Matthew 26:50-52). In his *Reply to Faustus Faustus the Manichaeon*, 22, 70, Augustine (2008c) explains why Peter was wrong: "To take the sword is to use weapons against a man's life, without the sanction of the constituted authority."

Therefore, not all warfare is wrong. In fact, some wars are morally right and, therefore, are just wars. When a government gives soldiers the authority to kill in war, that is, a just war, then they are not murderers. Hence, they do not violate the Fifth Commandment. Augustine (2008d:1, 21) writes,

[T]hey who have waged war in obedience to the divine command, or in conformity with His laws, have represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such persons have by no means violated the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.'

5.4.3 Thomas Aquinas' Development of the Just War Theory

After Augustine, the next significant theologian to address the just war theory was Thomas Aquinas (1225 -1274). He answered the question "Whether it is always sinful to wage war?" Aquinas lays down at least three conditions which must be met in order for a war to be just. First, only lawful authority, that is, the duly or properly constituted authority, can declare war, such as a king, queen or some other governing body.

The care of *bonum commune communitatis*, "the common good of the community," is committed to those in authority or, as Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 40, art. 1) says, "it is their business to watch over the common weal of the city, kingdom or province subject to them." Aquinas supports the just war theory by quoting a passage of Scripture from the *locus classicus* on the Christian's relationship to human government, saying,

according to the words of the Apostle (Rm. 13:4): 'He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil'; ... it is their business to have recourse to the sword of war in defending the common weal against external enemies.

(Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 40, art. 1)

Second, there must be a just cause for entering into war. In other words, the country or nation deserves to be attacked, because it continuously violates the rights of its subjects or is attacking another nation, seizing control of it. Third, a nation that declares and enters into war must have the right intention, such as the restoration of order in another country and the good of its citizens. Thus, to gain power over another nation and to have its possessions are wrong intentions for going to war (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 40, art. 1).

5.4.4 16th and 17th Century Developments of the Just War Theory

The views of Augustine and Aquinas on just war became the model upon which later just war thinkers expand. In the 16th and 17th centuries, two more conditions for a just war were added to Aquinas' three conditions. First, war must only be entered into as a last resort, after all efforts to settle a conflict peacefully have been exhausted. Second, war must be fought in a proper manner, that is, innocent citizens or non-combatants of an enemy nation should not be killed. Soldiers may not do anything they want to the enemy (Raymond, s.a.). Augustine (2008b) comments, "As violence is used towards him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or the captive."

5.4.5 Answering Objections to the Just War Theory

There are several objections to the just war theory. First, how can a just war be justified when Jesus said, "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44)? First, in all likelihood, Jesus' command pertains to relationships between citizens of a government or civilians. It was not meant to cover the relationships between governments. Jesus, then, is not telling the soldiers of a smaller nation who are being attacked by the soldiers of a more powerful nation, "Lay down your arms and allow enemy soldiers to kill your wives, children, neighbours and other innocent citizens."

Jacques Ellul (1970: 5) summarizes the position on war adopted by the Council of Arles in 314 A. D.: "to deny the state the right to go to war was to condemn it to extinction." Similarly, to deny a nation the right to defend itself against aggressors is to condemn it to extinction. A soldier, then, has a right to defend

the citizens of his own nation or another nation who are being attacked and killed by the enemy.

Presumably, in the command "Love your enemies," the enemy is not trying to kill you or someone else, because an individual has a right to defend himself herself and another person. This is in accordance with the Second Great Commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). Charles Hodge (1940b:365) writes,

the right of self-defense belongs to nations as well as to individuals. Nations are bound to protect the lives and property of their citizens. If these are assailed by force, force may be rightfully used in their protection. Nations also have the right to defend their own existence. If that be endangered by the conduct of other nations, they have the natural right of self-protection.

To protect its citizens, God has given human government, lawfully constituted, the authority to enforce laws and even, if necessary, kill those who are a threat to society (cf. Romans 13:4). How much more, then, does a government have the right to protect itself and its citizens by declaring war in self-defence (Hodge, 1940b:367)?

Second, how can a Christian go to war when Jesus taught his followers to make peace with their enemies, saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9)? Does this mean that when a nation unjustly attacks another, it should not defend itself? No! Jesus is saying that one should always strive for peace, not that there will always be peace.

The apostle Paul makes it clear that peace may not always be possible, saying, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (Romans 12:18). Leon Morris (1988:453) comments, "Paul is urging his readers to do all that is in their power to bring about and to preserve peace; but that does not remove the possibility that others will make this laudable endeavor impossible." The phrase "If possible" presupposes that peace with all people may not always be possible. There may be an exception to the rule. Morris (1988:453) explains why, "We do not live in an ideal world, but a world peopled by sinners. The

command to live peaceably is meant, not for an ideal environment, but for this sinful world, a world inhabited by people like us!"

The New Testament does not teach "peace at any price," meaning compromise the truth and overlook injustice so that there will not be any controversy or conflict. In his *Commentary on Romans*, Hodge (Morris, 1988:452) writes, "Paul's own example shows that he was far from thinking that either truth or principle was to be sacrificed for the preservation of peace." Biblical commentator F. A. Philippi (Murray 1984:139) says that it is an objective impossibility to be at peace with others, especially "where truth, right, and duty command resistance." John Murray (1984:140) writes, "we may never be at peace with sin and error. If peace means complicity with sin or error or if it encourages these, then peace must be sacrificed."

In the context of Romans 12:17-21, "Paul is concerned with the Christian's private conduct towards his enemies. The right and duty of the State to punish and control what is evil, is not in his mind. With this he deals in the next passage, 13:1-7" (Theissen, 1969:1136). The verses "Never pay back evil for evil" (Romans 12:17), "Never take your own revenge" (Romans 12:19) and "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21) do not mean that human beings should never go to war. Rather, the apostle Paul is referring to interpersonal relationships.

Scripture says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). If my neighbour is attacked, I have a moral duty to go to his or her aid, trying to defend him or her. I am morally wrong if I see my neighbour attacked and do nothing to defend him or her. For example, for an individual to allow a rape to occur when he or she could have intervened to stop it is evil, passive evil. Similarly, for someone to allow a murder to occur when he or she could have stopped it, is passive evil.

The principle of defending those who are attacked also applies internationally. The soldiers of an unjust or aggressor nation who invade another nation, murdering its citizens, including children, raping women and destroying its houses and towns, are not innocent, because such soldiers are participating in

the evil acts of an unjust government, especially its leaders. Since the soldiers are not innocent, they can be attacked and killed by the soldiers who are sent to defend the nation against further acts of aggression. For a stronger nation or nations to protect or fight for the citizens of smaller nation that is being unjustly attacked is not murder. To defend a weaker nation against the attacks of a stronger nation is not unjust; rather, it is just. To do nothing in response to the evil acts committed by the aggressor nation is itself evil, passive evil.

5.4.6 19th and 20th Century Developments of the Just War Theory

The just war theory was developed further in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th with treaties such as the Hague Conventions. Just war thinkers distinguish between two Latin terms: *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. *Jus ad bellum* means “that which is just or right in order to engage in war.” It deals with when it is appropriate to resort to war. *Jus in bello* means “that which is just or right in war,” the ethics of warfare itself.

Several articles in Hague Convention II (2008a) are particularly relevant to *jus in bello* or ethics in warfare. Article 4 teaches that prisoners of war must be treated humanely. Article 22 teaches that soldiers cannot do anything they want to the enemy in war. Hence, there are rules to fighting fairly. Article 23 teaches that soldiers may not use any means to kill the enemy (Hague Convention II (2008a). For example, killing the enemy by poisoning him or her is prohibited. It is also wrong, according to Article 23,

*To kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down arms, or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered at discretion;
To declare that no quarter will be given;
To employ arms, projectiles, or material of a nature to cause superfluous injury....
To destroy or seize the enemy's property, unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war....*

(Hague Convention II, 2008a)

Soldiers may not indiscriminately bomb any building in enemy territory. Article 25 says, "The attack or bombardment of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended, is prohibited" (Hague Convention II, 2008a). Similarly, a principle in moral theology or Christian ethics is that it is wrong to bomb or attack directly the civilian populations of the enemy nation in order to have the enemy surrender, that is, to "win" the war. The reason is that a good end (the surrender of an enemy nation) does not justify an evil means (killing innocent civilians of that nation). Innocent people within the aggressor nation should not be made to suffer for the evil deeds of their own government. "Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:80).

Article 27 teaches that buildings "devoted to religion, art, science, charity, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected" may not be attacked, unless they are also used for military purposes. Article 28 teaches that it is wrong to destroy completely a town in enemy territory after the soldiers in it are defeated and captured (Hague Convention II, 2008a).

According to Hague Convention III (2008b), there must be advanced warning of war in the form of a notice of a declaration. Article 1 says, "The Contracting Powers recognize that hostilities between themselves must not commence without previous and explicit warning, in the form either of a reasoned declaration of war or of an ultimatum with conditional declaration of war" (Hague Convention III, 2008b).

As a result of the Nazi atrocities of World War II, the Nuremberg Trials further refined the just war theory. They established an International Military Tribunal (from 1945 to 1946) for the trial and punishment of war criminals, either individually or members of organizations. In Section 2, Article 6, the three general categories of crimes, which are subject to trials by the International Military Tribunal are

(a) CRIMES AGAINST PEACE: namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing;

(b) WAR CRIMES: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;

(c) CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated. Leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan.

(Hague Convention III, 2008b)

The Charter of the United Nations (1945) recognizes the just war theory in declaring that each nation has a right to self-defence. Chapter 7, Article 51 says, "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security" (Charter of the United Nations, 1945).

In today's world with its development of weapons of mass destruction, such as atom bombs and other forms of nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, "The horror and perversity of war is immediately magnified.... For acts of war involving these weapons can inflict massive and indiscriminate destruction" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b: 80). Such weapons can kill millions of human beings and destroy large parts of the earth itself. Thus, "it is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which

have been violated” (Pope John XXIII, 1963:127). Therefore, total modern warfare between nations, that is, another World War, is the defeat of humanity.

5.4.7 Summary of the Just War Theory

To date, there are six ethical principles associated with the just war theory. First, only the legitimate authority has the right to declare war. Second, a just war should be entered into only as a last resort, after all diplomatic attempts to resolve international conflict peacefully have been exhausted. Third, the war must be entered into with the right intention, namely, to restore peace. The right thing, namely, having grounds for a just war, cannot be done for the wrong reason. The desire for vengeance or retaliation or more power over another nation is the wrong motive for entering into war. Fourth, there must be a reasonable or proportionate chance of “winning” the war. For the leaders of a government to declare and engage in war, knowing that their nation may suffer massive casualties or even possibly lose, is neither wise nor a sign of good leadership. Fifth, it is wrong to target civilians or non-combatants in war. The innocent people in an enemy nation should not be killed because their government is at war. A casualty of war, however, is they might be killed as an unintended effect of bombing a military target. Sixth, indiscriminate destruction of the enemy nation’s property and land is morally wrong. Seventh, looting, torture and murder of prisoners of war are forbidden by international law.

5.4.8 The Bush Doctrine of Preemptive War

The United States’ War with Iraq is called “preemptive war” (Snauwaert, 2004:122-123), which is not so much defensive as it is offense war, which is when a nation “... finds it necessary to take the initiative in the application of force....” (Macksey, 1912:108). Hodge (1940b:366) writes;

A war may be defensive and yet in one sense aggressive. In other words, self-defence may dictate and render necessary the first assault. A man is not bound to wait until a murderer actually strikes his blow. It is enough that he sees undeniable manifestations of a hostile purpose. So a nation is not bound to wait until its territories are actually invaded and its citizens murdered, before it appeals to arms. It is enough that there is

clear evidence on the part of another nation of an intention to commence hostilities.

In the just war tradition, then, there is justification for preemptive war, which, essentially, is attacking a country or nation before it attacks first, if the other country poses an “immediate and imminent” danger. “Immediate” refers to the proximity of danger, such as mobilization of military artillery and troops near a country’s border. “Imminent” refers to the probability or strong likelihood that a military strike is about to happen (Vaughn, 2008:449).

President Bush and members of his administration, such as Vice-President Richard Cheney, then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, repeatedly told the American public that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (including chemical and biological weapons) and posed an imminent threat to the national security of the United States. However, no threat could be seen. The administration simply kept repeating the same message, which itself seems to have been a tactic to scare the American people into approving the war with Iraq (Greenwald, 2004:3-8).

Another justification for the going to war with Iraq was that the Bush Administration believed that Al Qaeda terrorists were responsible for the attacks on September 11, 2001. The administration was quick to link Saddam Hussein with Osama Bin Laden for planning and carrying out those terrorist attacks. The administration also believed that Hussein was harbouring the terrorist organization in Iraq. However, the problem was that neither the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A) nor the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I) had proof to support the administration’s position (Greenwald, 2004:10-11). George Tenet, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency, sent analysts to Iraq for a year and a half to investigate clear, definite ties between Bin Laden and Hussein and did not find any (Greenwald, 2004:23). Although Bin Laden and Hussein were both Muslims, “There was scant evidence that Iraq supported Al Qaeda, in part because the radical Muslim political philosophy of Al Qaeda views Saddam Hussein’s secular state as an enemy” (Thompson, 2003:125).

On February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell delivered a speech to the United Nations Security Council, arguing that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and that, in effect, he was a threat to the United States and, potentially, to the international community. He was implicitly or indirectly building a case for the United States to go to war with Iraq. This can be seen from several inaccurate statements in his presentation. First, referring to information gathered by United States Intelligence, Powell (2003) said, "We have first hand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and on rails." Second, "There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more. And he has the ability to dispense these lethal poisons and diseases in ways that can cause massive death and destruction" (Powell, 2003). U.S. Intelligence did, in fact, have doubts about Hussein being in possession of biological weapons. Third,

Our conservative estimate is that Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent. That is enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets. Even the low end of 100 tons of agent would enable Saddam Hussein to cause mass casualties across more than 100 square miles of territory, an area nearly five times the size of Manhattan.

(Powell, 2003)

The arguments put forth by Powell were erroneous, to say the least. "[T]here was no evidence that Iraq had a nuclear weapon or missiles capable of striking the United States" (Thompson, 2003:125). In fact, after several thorough investigations by United Nations inspectors, no weapons of mass destruction had been found. Therefore, on March 19, 2003, unilaterally, without the consent of the United Nations Security Council, the United States launched a war with Iraq without having any empirical proof that it, in fact, had a stockpile of nuclear weapons.

In the ensuing months of the war, the Bush administration had sent United States weapons inspectors to Iraq, insisting that, without a doubt, Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. On the one hand, it was a fact that they were

there, according to the administration; on the other, it was a belief that the weapons would eventually be discovered (Greenwald, 2004:28-30). This being so, as chief United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix (in Gwertzman, 2003) rightly observed, "It is somewhat puzzling ... that you can have 100 percent certainty about the weapons of mass destruction and zero certainty about where they are." President Bush (2003) said,

I'm not surprised if we begin to uncover the weapons program of Saddam Hussein -- because he had a weapons program. I will leave the details of your question to the experts, but one thing we know is that he had a weapons program. We also know he spent years trying to hide the weapons program. And over time the truth will come out.

The truth has, indeed, come out: President Bush and his administration were wrong. The United States went to war with Iraq for the wrong reason.

The war with Iraq really was not preemptive, because preemptive war requires a palpable threat, empirically verifiable evidence, that would justify President Bush's declaration and engagement of war with Iraq. However, the Bush administration had no such evidence. Actually, the administration engaged in preventive war, in which case "there is a potential threat rather than an imminent one" (Snauwaert, 2004:129). Iraq posed a danger, a possible threat, to the United States, which does not justify preemptive war. In this sense, the war with Iraq was not just.

Undoubtedly, Saddam Hussein was a dictator and killed thousands of his own people. He needed to be removed from power. However, it does not follow that the United States had to go to war with Iraq. A just war principle is that war should be entered into only as a last resort, after all diplomatic attempts to resolve international conflict peacefully have been exhausted. Charles Hodge (1940b:366) observes, "A nation ... is bound to exercise great forbearance, and to adopt every other available means of redressing wrongs, before it plunges itself and others into all the demoralizing miseries of war." Similarly, the Second Vatican Council (1965b:79) says, "As long as the danger of war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international

level, governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defense once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted.”

However, the Bush administration did not follow the just war principle of entering into war only as a last resort. “The principle of last resort places a strong moral restraint on war and is consistent with the overarching goal of a just peace” (Snauwaert, 2004:131). With France, Russia, Germany and other nations, the United States could have worked with the United Nations Security Council to continue weapons inspections of Iraq to disarm it (Thompson, 2003:125). Bush did not exhaust all reasonable attempts to avoid war. On the contrary, he appeared to have been “bent” on going to war with Iraq.

The Bush administration was increasingly becoming impatient with the United Nations inspectors and could have waited for concrete evidence before going to war. Dale T. Snauwaert (2004:132), who writes on the ethics of war and peace, observes,

[T]he choice of the use of force in Iraq, the military invasion, was not a last resort. As the subsequent lack of evidence of weapons of mass destruction indicates, the situation was not one of immanent danger or emergency. Diplomacy and inspections could have achieved the goal of countering the purported threat.

“War is not always inevitable. It is always a defeat for humanity. International law, honest dialogue, solidarity between States, the noble exercise of diplomacy: these are methods worthy of individuals and nations in resolving their differences” (Pope John Paul II, 2003:4). Instead of the force of reason prevailing, resulting in diplomacy and peace, President Bush insisted on the reasons for force, resulting in war with Iraq (Pope John Paul II, 1982:13). In international conflicts, war should be eliminated with words (negotiations) rather than begun with weapons (Burt, 2008). In the final analysis, instead of using words to settle differences with Saddam Hussein, Bush used weapons, resulting in the deaths of thousands of American soldiers and, possibly, even more innocent Iraqi non-combatants or civilians.

5.4.9 Possible Causes of War

War is an abnormality, not what God originally intended for human beings. It is sociological alienation, the worst form of conflict between humans, resulting in mass casualties, death. The ultimate reason that human beings go to war is the Fall, which resulted in an ontological defect in human nature, a negative change in the very being of the primordial couple, Adam and Eve, which, in turn, is transmitted to their successors, the human race. Theologically, the change is called *peccatum originale*, "original sin." Thus, "the human will is unsteady and wounded by sin" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:78). Theologian Bernard Ramm (1985:2) says that sin refers to "the tragic fracturing that can happen to the human psyche as well as the tragic fracturings in the life of a nation and those superfracturings in international relationships" (Ramm, 1985:2). The "superfracturings" can result in wars. Sin, then, not only pertains to personal vices but also the "vices of governments" (Ramm, 1985:2).

Although not accepting the Christian doctrine of original sin, Frankl (1967:110) writes about the dual nature of the human person who is capable of both good and evil nobility and misery, saying, "What ... is man? ... He is a being who continuously decides what he is: a being who equally harbors the potential to descend to the level of an animal or to ascend to the life of a saint" (Frankl, 1967:110). The human person is "the being that has invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz, and also the being who entered those gas chambers upright, the Lord's Prayer or the *Shema Yisrael* on his lips" (Frankl, 1967:35). Frankl's words apply to the both the *imago Dei*, the image of God in the human person, accounting for his or her goodness, and original sin, accounting for a human being's evil deeds.

Because there is a sinful inclination or bent in human nature toward sin, humans are prone to war; "the threat of war hangs over them" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:78). For this reason, "the achievement of peace requires a constant mastering of passions and the vigilance of lawful authority" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:78). As a corrective to war, peace must be an on-going process, requiring international effort, especially diplomacy.

God is a perfectly integrated being, without any conflict in his attributes. Scriptures says, "God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (I Corinthians 14:33, NIV). Since human beings are made in his image (cf. Genesis 1:26-27), they reflect God's harmony in their being, although finitely and imperfectly. Nevertheless, "Peace results from that order structured into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:78).

Scripture says, "The work of righteousness will be peace" (Isaiah 32:17a, NKJV). In other words, peace is a work of justice, the right ordering in personal, national and international relationships. "If you want peace, work for justice" (Pope Paul VI, 1972). Peace is based on and follows from justice. St. Augustine (2008d:19, 13) called peace *tranquillitas ordinis*, the "tranquillity of order." For example, when the citizens of a nation are oppressed, robbed, murdered, by their own government or by the soldiers of another, more powerful government, society is out of order, lacks peace. If the injustices cannot be corrected by diplomacy, another nation must intervene to restore the peace by going to war against the aggressor. Scripture says, "Rescue the weak and needy; deliver *them* out of the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:4).

Biblically, there is only one human race, because humankind is one in origin (cf. Acts 17:26). The Supreme Being, God, created, in general, the human race, and, in particular, the first couple, from whom humankind descended. As creator of the human person, God is, in a sense, the father of every human being (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7); in another sense, all human beings are brothers and sisters, because all are made in "the image of God," having the same human nature. Thus, human beings constitute one human family.

Peace is based not only on justice but also respect for all human beings. As brothers and sisters who share a common human nature, respect should be accorded to peoples of all nations and faiths. "Hence peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide" (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:78).

5.5 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

5.5.1 Introduction

The Fifth Commandment (cf. Exodus 20:13) does not apply to capital punishment, since it is not murder, which is the deliberate (intentional) and direct (not accidental) killing of an innocent human being. The end or goal of the Fifth Commandment is the protection and security of society, which is precisely one of the main reasons for the death penalty (The Roman Catechism, 1982:421).

The arguments for and against capital punishment are evenly balanced. Each side tends to offset the arguments of the other. To support the death penalty is to respect the sanctity (sacredness) and worth of human life. To oppose it is also to respect the sanctity of life, because state laws enforcing it devalue the worth of life (Culbertson, 1984:192). Hence, both positions presuppose the sanctity and inviolability of human life.

In the Old Testament, capital punishment was often practiced under the Law of Moses, according to which a person could be put to death for several offenses, such as adultery (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22); prostitution or harlotry (Leviticus 21:9; Deuteronomy 22:20-21); incest (Deuteronomy 27:20 ff.); sodomy and bestiality (Leviticus 18:22 ff.; 20:13 ff.); idolatry (Exodus 20:3-5; Deuteronomy 13:1-10; 17:2-7); false prophecy in the name of God (Deuteronomy 18:20-22); working on the Sabbath (Exodus 31:14-15; 35:2); striking, cursing or rebelling against a parent (Exodus 20:12 ff.; 21:17; Leviticus 19:3; 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18 ff.); sorcery (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:27); cursing God (Exodus 22:28); disobeying religious authority (Deuteronomy 17:8-13) and murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:13, Numbers 35:16 ff.; Deuteronomy 19:11 ff.). However, since Christians live under the moral laws of a new dispensation, the New Testament, and since the moral laws of the New do not permit anyone to be put to death for the moral offenses in the Law of Moses, then neither does the New Testament permit anyone to be put to death for the crime of murder (Robinson, 2007).

5.5.2 Genesis 9:6 and the Noahic Covenant

But the problem with the argument against capital punishment is that God instituted it before the Law of Moses in the Noahic Covenant (cf. Genesis 8:20 – 9:17). It was then reaffirmed in the Mosaic law (cf. Exodus 21:12). Scripture says, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Genesis 9:6, NASB). This verse teaches that God has delegated to human governments the authority or right to execute murderers. Martin Luther (in Baker, 1985:30) comments on Genesis 9:6, “Here ... God shares His power with man and grants him power over life and death among men, provided that the person is guilty of shedding blood.”

To form the foundation of a civilized society, God institutes human government and gives it the right to take the life of a murderer to erect, as it were, a barrier against unauthorized killing (Baker, 1985:33). Hodge (1940b:363) comments on Genesis 9:6,

That this is of perpetual obligation is clear, because it was given to Noah, the second head of the human race. It was, therefore, not intended for any particular age or nation. It is the announcement of a general principle of justice; a revelation of the will of God. Moreover the reason assigned for the law is a permanent reason. Man was created in the image of God; and, therefore, whoso sheds his blood, by man shall his blood be shed. This reason has as much force at one time or place as at any other.

Genesis 9:6 is within the broader context of the Noahic Covenant, which is universal in scope. The verse, then, is morally relevant not only for Old Testament times but also for all time (Eidsmoe, 1984:196). This is evident from several phrases in the context of Genesis 9. The Noahic Covenant applies to Noah’s time and to “your descendants after you” (Genesis 9:9, NASB). The universality of the covenant can be seen in the phrases “between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh” (Genesis 9:15, NASB) and “the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth” (Genesis 9:16, NASB). Theologian William H. Baker (1985:31) says,

Noah stood at the head of a new order of mankind. Though his story is preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures, he was not a Hebrew himself. In fact, he is the direct progenitor of all the human races and nations. What involves him, therefore, involves mankind in general, certainly not Israel alone.

The universality of the covenant is supported by at least two other factors. The first is the natural cycles of the seasons of the year (cf. Genesis 8:22). Second, the rainbow continues to serve as a continuing pledge of the covenant (Baker, 1985:32). Sproul (1988:77) comments,

In the Hebrew text the words 'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed' are not a future prediction. They are a categorical imperative. They indicate that in the covenant that God made with Noah following the Flood, God established a law requiring the execution of those who are guilty of murder in the first degree.

Since Genesis 9:6 is in the context of the Noahic Covenant and since the covenant is permanently binding, then its teaching on capital punishment is still morally binding, which means that a government has the right to carry out the death penalty on murderers. This right was neither surpassed nor cancelled by the New Testament.

5.5.3 The Meaning of "the Sword" in Romans 13:4

Similarly, the apostle Paul teaches that God has delegated to human governments the authority to establish laws for the proper ordering of society, to punish crime and, if necessary, to impose the death penalty (cf. Romans 13:1-7). For example, Paul writes,

Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

(Romans 13:3-4, NASB)

“Another kind of lawful slaying belongs to the civil authorities, to whom is entrusted power of life and death, by the legal and judicious exercise of which they punish the guilty and protect the innocent” (The Roman Catechism, 1982:421). During Paul’s time, the “sword” (μαχαίρα, *machaira*), in general, was a symbol of the government’s authority and, specifically, the authority to carry out the death penalty (cf. Romans 13:4). The apostle James was put to death by a sword (cf. Acts 12:1-2). Hodge (1940b:364) comments on Romans 13:4,

The sword was worn as the symbol of the power of capital punishment ... '[B]earing the sword' by a magistrate was the emblem of the power over life and death. The same Apostle said (Acts xxv. 11): 'If I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die;' which clearly implies that, in his judgment, there were offenses, for which the appropriate penalty is death.

5.5.4 Thomas Aquinas’ Teaching on Capital Punishment

Although separated by centuries and different Christian theological persuasions, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) agrees with Hodge (1797-1878). According to Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 40, art. 1), human government was established by God for the common good, to safeguard the well-being of its citizens, namely, by restraining evil and punishing crime. Those who hold positions in government

have recourse to the sword in defending that common weal against internal disturbances, when they punish evil-doers, according to the words of the Apostle (Rm. 13:4): 'He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.'

(Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 40, art. 1)

Aquinas quotes the apostle Paul to demonstrate from the authority of God’s word that the government has the authority from God to impose the death penalty. Elsewhere, Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 2) writes, “if a man be dangerous and infectious to the community, on account of some sin, it is praiseworthy and advantageous that he be killed in order to safeguard the

common good, since 'a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump' (1 Cor. 5:6)." The reason, then, a government may put a murderer to death is to safeguard the common good of the community.

Citizens of a particular government may not take the law into their "own hands" and kill, without a trial, a man or woman whom they think is guilty of murder, which is vigilantism. On the contrary, "the care of the common good is entrusted to persons of rank having public authority: wherefore they alone, and not private individuals, can lawfully put evildoers to death" (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 3).

5.5.5 Modern Views of Capital Punishment

In modern times, from the 1960s to today, there has been a shift in emphasis (not a change in biblical doctrine) in the United States on imposing the death penalty. Many Christians call for an end to it, because, its abolition definitely agrees "with the example of Jesus, who both taught and practiced the forgiveness of injustice" (United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 1980). For example, Jesus asked forgiveness for his killers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34, NKJV).

The Polish philosopher-theologian Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II, is an outspoken critic of the death penalty. Contrary to many pro-life Christians in the United States who do believe that abortion is wrong and capital punishment is right, Wojtyla advocates a consistent pro-life ethic. In other words, if it is wrong to put an unborn human baby to death by abortion, then it should also be wrong to put an adult to death by capital punishment. Pope John Paul II (1997:5) writes, "No punishment can suppress the inalienable dignity of those who have committed evil. The door to repentance and rehabilitation must always remain open." Because criminals, even those convicted of murder, are not animals but persons, they should be given "the chance to reform" (Pope John Paul II, 1995: 27).

He admits that the death penalty may legitimately be used to defend society, saying, "The primary purpose of the punishment which society inflicts is 'to redress the disorder caused by the offence'" (Pope John Paul II, 1995:56). However, the state should "not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society" (Pope John Paul II, 1995:56). However, because "of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent" (Pope John Paul II, 1995:56). Thus, the modern penal system is "ever more in line with human dignity and thus, in the end, with God's plan for man and society" (Pope John Paul II, 1995:56). John Paul II prefers non-lethal means of punishment to the death penalty (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000:2267).

The Pope's position is carefully worded. Because capital punishment is biblical (cf. Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4), he does not say that legitimate authority cannot carry out the death penalty. However, because of the sophistication of the modern penal system, it is virtually unnecessary for the state to do so. Thus, theoretically, he admits the legitimacy of the death penalty but, practically, he excludes it.

In order to be humane, in keeping with behaviour befitting human beings, punishment is not only for the good society but also for the good of the criminal himself or herself. "Punishment ... has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000:2266). Punishment, then, is not only retributive, "paying back" to the person the wrong he or she has done but also remedial, reforming a criminal (Barclay, 1973:69).

Capital punishment is not in keeping with Christian love (*αγαπη*) or *agape* love, which is not merely an emotion but a choice to seek "the other person's good," even a murderer's good (Barclay, 1973:69). The ultimate goal of incarceration or imprisonment is to correct the murderer, make him or her more human, a better person. Barclay (1973:70) says, "Obviously, you do not seek a man's

highest good by sending him to ... the electric chair,” or, for that matter, giving him or her a lethal injection, as is done in the United States.

5.5.6 Augustine’s Teaching on Capital Punishment

Augustine teaches that murder is wrong, a violation of the commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). However, he admits that it is not murder for representatives of a government, those “to whom authority is delegated” (Augustine, 2008d:1, 21), to end the life of a man or woman found guilty of murder. In such case, they are responsible for carrying out the death sentence, because they represent “in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government” (Augustine, 2008d). Therefore, Augustine teaches that capital punishment is biblical. Nevertheless, he pleads for mercy on the murderer, so that he or she will not be executed, saying,

Man is what God made; sinner is what man made himself to be. So do not condemn people to death, or while you are attacking the sin you will destroy the man. Do not condemn to death, and there will be someone to repent. Do not have a person put to death, and you will have someone who can repent. Do not have a person put to death, and you will have someone who can be reformed.

(in Rotelle, 1990:312)

Justice is giving to another what he or she merits, deserves. However, mercy is giving to another what he or she does not deserve. Strict justice says, “The murderer should be put to death.” But mercy says, “Spare the murderer.” The psalmist says, “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (Psalm 103:10; cf. 143:2). If God dealt with human beings according to strict justice, no one could be saved. In short, “mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13, NAB). “Judgment” (κρισις, *krisis*) may also be translated “justice.”

5.5.7 Exceptions to Capital Punishment in the Bible Itself

Scripture does not always mandate capital punishment for murderers. In other words, the death penalty was not carried out on a person in every recorded instance of murder. Under the Old Testament, just because a person was accused of murder, did not automatically mean he was immediately executed. Rather, he was given “due process of law” (cf. Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 17). “The issue was not simply whether the accused was guilty, but whether he also had a fair chance to prove his innocence” (VanNess, 2000:21). Before a person could be executed, his or her guilt had to be proven by not only one, but two or three witnesses (cf. Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Numbers 35:30).

Some notable persons in the Old Testament were either directly or indirectly involved in committing murders but did not receive the death penalty. Cain murdered his brother Abel (cf. Genesis 4:8). But God did not put Cain to death for his crime (vv. 8-10). To be sure, the Lord punished Cain by banishing him from the land (vv. 12-16). But God did not allow Cain to be killed by another human being (vv. 14-15). The Lord protected Cain by placing some kind of “mark” on him so that he would not be put to death (v. 15). In short, God had mercy on Cain.

Moses murdered an Egyptian and hid his body in the sand (cf. Exodus 2:11-15). Moses deserved the death penalty for killing the Egyptian. “Moses then feared that word of this murder was already widespread and would reach Pharaoh” (Hannah, 1985:110). He wanted to execute Moses who but he fled to the land of Midian (Exodus 2:15). He did not receive the authority from the Egyptian government to kill a man. Moses was not yet the prince and judge of his people. Hence, he acted on his own authority. Forty years later, he received his commission to be the leader of God’s people (cf. Acts 7:30). By the grace of God, a man who was a murderer became the great leader of the Jewish people.

King David, one of the ancestors of Jesus, committed adultery with Uriah the Hittite’s wife (cf. II Samuel 11:2-5). To cover up the adulterous affair and the fact of Uriah’s wife’s pregnancy by David, he had Uriah killed (cf. II Samuel 11:14-17). David had Uriah placed at the front of the battle line where the

fiercest fighting was, “so that he may be struck down and die” (II Samuel 11:15). Uriah’s death was premeditated murder. The prophet Nathan makes it clear that God considered David a murderer, saying, “You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword” and “have killed him” (II Samuel 12:9). The prophet also made it clear that David deserved to die (cf. II Samuel 12:5-7). But he confessed his sin and God had mercy on the king, forgiving him and sparing him from death. “Nathan said to David. ‘The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die’” (II Samuel 12:13). He begged God for mercy, saying, “Have mercy on me, O God” (Psalm 51:1, NIV) and “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God” (Psalm 51:14, NASB). David repented of his sin, becoming a changed person. Therefore, according to Genesis 9:6, David deserved to be executed but was not. Instead, he became one of the greatest kings in the history of Israel. Scripture even says that he was a man after God’s own heart (cf. Acts 13:22).

Saul of Tarsus was an accessory to the death of Stephen (cf. Acts 7:58-8:1). He may have been involved in the murder of Christians (cf. Acts 9:1; 22:4). But he repented after hearing the words of the glorified Lord, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). Saul was converted to faith in Jesus the Christ, becoming the great apostle Paul, writing more epistles than any other author in the New Testament.

The New Testament permits capital punishment but it does not command that a murderer be executed. The state has the authority, that is, reserves the right, to impose the death penalty (cf. Romans 13:4) but that does not thereby mean it must do so.

5.5.8 Legal Errors in Sentencing a Person to Death

According to Chuck Colson (2009), a former prisoner himself, and former chief counsel for President Richard Nixon, if states resort to capital punishment it “should be used *only* when there is *no doubt* of the defendant’s guilt.” But that is precisely the problem with many courts of law in the United States: Prisoners have been wrongfully convicted and put to death, because judges and juries

have erred in their verdicts. Richard C. Dieter (1997) argues against the death penalty, saying,

The danger that innocent people will be executed because of errors in the criminal justice system is getting worse. A total of 69 people have been released from death row since 1973 after evidence of their innocence emerged. Twenty-one condemned inmates have been released since 1993, including seven from the state of Illinois alone. Many of these cases were discovered not because of the normal appeals process, but rather as a result of new scientific techniques, investigations by journalists, and the dedicated work of expert attorneys, not available to the typical death row inmate.

If the defendant's guilt for the crime of murder cannot be established "beyond a reasonable doubt," then a man or woman might be put to death for a crime he or she did not commit. In fact, former Illinois Governor George Ryan suspended the death penalty in his state, because several men were executed only to discover later that they were, in fact, innocent (Colson, 2009).

There are several reasons that a person accused of murder can be wrongly convicted and put to death. First, because of the heightened publicity surrounding a murder case, "jurors may be swept up in the communal outrage about the crime as conveyed by the media, making them more likely to ignore legitimate doubts raised by the defense" (Dieter, 1997). Second, upon appealing a case, judges might ignore evidence for the convicted person's innocence, unless it is virtually irrefutable. Third, if a case of murder becomes widely publicized by the media, such as the rape and murder of a woman or the murder of a child, police can be pressured by the public to "solve" the case by producing a suspect; prosecutors can be quick to find him or her guilty. Fourth, in many murder cases, if there is no eyewitness testimony, an individual may be convicted on the basis of circumstantial evidence (which may later be overturned by DNA evidence). The accused may even be wrongly identified as the assailant. Fifth, upon being apprehended and taken into custody, a suspect may confess to the crime of murder, because of police tactics of pressure and manipulation (such as long periods of time in interrogation, with the psychological effect of "wearing down" the suspect), thus virtually forcing a

confession of guilt. Sixth, if a defendant cannot afford an attorney and one is appointed by the state, the amount of money spent on the case is limited by the state. Thus, the attorney often cannot invest the money needed to present a good defense. Because the defendant is economically disadvantaged, he or she may be wrongly convicted of murder and sentenced to death (Dieter, 1997).

5.5.9 The International Community and Capital Punishment

The various documents and treaties of the international community both recognize the legitimacy and call for the abolition of the death penalty. For example, Article 6, Section 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) says, "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime."

In international human rights law, States may retain the death penalty for "the most serious crimes." According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the following crimes do not constitute "the most serious crimes" and, thus, are not legitimate reasons for the death penalty: economic crimes, including embezzlement by officials; political crimes, such as treason and spying; robbery; abduction not resulting in death; sexual offenses, such as, adultery, prostitution, homosexual acts and religious offenses, such as apostasy (International Standards on the Death Penalty, 2006).

However, Article 6, Section 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) recognizes that "Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence. Amnesty, pardon or commutation of the sentence of death may be granted in all cases." According to Article 6, Section 6, it is more in keeping with a civilized society to call for "the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party to the present Covenant" (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966).

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person." If "Everyone," that is, every human being has "the right to life," then a murderer must also have the right to life, because he or she is a human being. This line of reasoning supports a consistent ethic of the worth or dignity of human life, much like a consistent pro-life ethic. The death penalty, then, is a denial of a person's right to life.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Resolution 1999/61 (1999), calls upon states or countries, still resorting to capital punishment, "To establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty." In international law, there is a general trend toward abolishing the death penalty (International Standards on the Death Penalty, 2006). For example, even lethal injection, which, supposedly, is a peaceful method of ending a person's life, is rejected for the reason that it is not humane, befitting the dignity of a human being.

On 15 December, 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 44/128 (Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1989), which reads, in part, "abolition of the death penalty contributes to enhancement of human dignity and progressive development of human rights." The death penalty is, to apply the words of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." An animal which cannot be domesticated or tamed and kills its owner or another human being may be put to death, because its behaviour is savage. However, a human being, even a murderer, is not an animal, however savage his or her behaviour may be. Hence, it is wrong to treat a human person as if he or she were an animal, putting him or her to death. That is why the death penalty is called "inhuman" or "inhumane." At least 42 countries have regarded it as such and have prohibited it in their constitutions (International Standards on the Death Penalty, 2006).

In American law, there is a debate over the legitimacy of the death penalty due to different interpretations of the Fifth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. Christian legal scholars, such as Charles E. Rice (1999:112-114), who support capital punishment appeal to the Fifth Amendment, which reads, in part, "No person shall ... be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.... (Bill of Rights, 1789). The Amendment seems to permit the death penalty. However, United States Supreme Court Justices William Brennan (1956 – 1990) and Thurgood Marshall (1967 – 1991) have opposed the death penalty. In his dissenting opinion in *Gregg v. Georgia*, Brennan (1976) writes,

[T]he punishment of death, for whatever crime and under all circumstances, is 'cruel and unusual' in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution. ... I emphasize only that foremost among the 'moral concepts' ... inherent in the Clause is the primary moral principle that the State, even as it punishes, must treat its citizens in a manner consistent with their intrinsic worth as human beings – a punishment must not be so severe as to be degrading to human dignity. ... [I]n comparison to all other punishments today ..., the deliberate extinguishment of human life by the State is uniquely degrading to human dignity. ... The calculated killing of a human being by the State involves, by its very nature, a denial of the executed person's humanity. ... An executed person has indeed 'lost the right to have rights.' ... The fatal constitutional infirmity in the punishment of death is that it treats members of the human race as nonhumans, as objects to be toyed with and discarded. [It is] thus inconsistent with the fundamental premise of the Clause that even the vilest criminal remains a human being possessed of common human dignity.

In *Gregg v. Georgia*, Marshall (1976) says, "The death penalty ... is an excessive penalty forbidden by the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. I respectfully dissent from the Court's judgment upholding the sentences of death imposed upon the petitioners in these cases."

Thus, both Justices appeal to the prohibition against "cruel and unusual punishments" in the Eighth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendments (Bill of Rights, 1789). Rice (1999:113), however, disagrees, with their opinions, observing that the Fifth and Eighth Amendments were adopted on the same

day, 4 March, 1789, and that the framers of the Amendments would not have contradicted the Fifth Amendment with the Eighth.

The fact remains: Many innocent human beings have been wrongfully executed in the United States, thus denying them the right to life. Thompson (2003:93) rightly observes, "The United States, with its tradition of racism, its record of support for military dictatorships, and as one of the few Western nations that practices capital punishment, is hardly immune to the charge of human rights violations." The death penalty, along with other human rights abuses in America, needs to change, if it really believes in the Pledge of Allegiance, which ends with the words "with liberty and justice for all."

The knowledge of moral truths is not the exclusive property of Christians. It is also accessible to non-Christians, for God the Logos, the Word, is the Light by whom natural, unregenerate human reason is illuminated (cf. John 1:9). Perhaps God has allowed the international community to teach Christians who support capital punishment to have mercy on men and women who have been tried and convicted of the crime of murder, abolishing the death penalty. The alternative to it could be a life sentence in a maximum security prison with little or no chance of parole. The sentence may serve a four-fold purpose. First, it protects citizens from further harm and maintains public order. Second, it can serve to correct the criminal's behaviour, changing his or her life for the better. Third, it may bring about his or her conversion to the Faith. Fourth, the family will have the satisfaction of knowing that the murderer will not be released from prison to repeat his or her crime.

5.6 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND SUICIDE

5.6.1 The Ultimate Act Against Oneself

Does the commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) apply to suicide? Augustine (2008d: 1, 20) writes, “[T]he law, rightly interpreted, even prohibits suicide, where it says, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’” He goes on to say, “a man may not kill himself, since in the commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ there is no ... exception made in favor of any one, and least of all in favor of him on whom the command is laid!” (Augustine, 2008d.) Henry Bettenson’s (1972:1, 20) translation of Augustine says, “we take the command ‘You shall not kill’ as applying to human beings, that is, other persons and oneself. For to kill oneself is to kill a human being.”

There are several accounts of suicide in the Bible: Abimelech (cf. Judges 9:50-56), Saul (cf. I Samuel 31:1-6), Ahithophel (cf. II Samuel 17:23), Zimri (cf. I Kings 16:18-19) and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 27:3-10). In each context, suicide is neither condoned nor approved by the biblical authors. However, It appears that the Bible does condone suicide in the case of Samson (cf. Judges 16:26-27). That this was a commonly accepted opinion in Aquinas’ (1225 – 1274) day is evident from the following objection: “Samson killed himself, as related in Judges 16, and yet he is numbered among the saints (Heb. 11). Therefore it is lawful for a man to kill himself” (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5).

But did Samson commit suicide or did he sacrifice in an act of war for his people? He was one of Israel’s judges, a leader of God’s people in their war against the Philistines. He did not kill himself as a private individual in despair, because he had been captured and tortured by the Philistines. Rather, his act was a display of courage, killing the enemy knowing that he, too, would probably die.

In Samson's case, there is a crucial difference between suicide and self-sacrifice. The act of suicide is, ultimately, for oneself, directly inwardly. Samson, however, gave his life for others, namely, the Israelites. Similarly, as the Good Shepherd, Jesus the Christ laid down his life for the sheep, that is, for other human beings (cf. John 10:11, 17). He commends this kind of self-sacrificial act, saying, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, NIV). Samson

asked God for permission to die, praying, 'Let me die with the Philistines' (Jud. 16:30). God granted his request, 'so that the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life' (v. 30). Paul also was willing to be 'accursed from Christ for my brethren' (Rom. 9:3). The soldier who falls on a hand grenade to save his buddies is not taking his life by suicide; he is giving his life for others. Likewise, Christ did not commit suicide when He came to 'give His life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45).

(Geisler & Howe, 1992:151)

5.6.2 Commentary on Thomas Aquinas' Teaching on Suicide

According to Thomas Aquinas, there are three reasons that suicide is wrong. "First, because everything naturally loves itself, the result being that everything naturally keeps itself in being, and resists corruptions so far as it can. Wherefore suicide is contrary to the inclination of nature, and to charity whereby every man should love himself" (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5). In short, suicide is "contrary to the natural law and to charity" (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5).

Suicide is contrary to the natural moral law of self-love, which God implanted in human nature. Jesus teaches the Second Great Commandment, which is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39, NASB; cf. Leviticus 19:18), implying that self-love is a fact, a "given" in human experience. It is natural or normal for human beings to love themselves (Geisler, 1971:152). Jesus teaches that there is a proper self-love, which is not the same as egotistical, self-centred love. Geisler (1971:152) says, "Indeed, man is so constructed that it is *unnecessary* to command self-love. Men do it without

having to be commanded to do it. In any event, proper self-love is approved by Scripture.” God designed human nature, put it in the very constitution (make-up) of human beings, to love themselves. Therefore, one who loves his or her neighbour will not murder him or her. One who loves oneself will not commit suicide, which is self-murder (Geisler, 1971:238). “[I]n this respect suicide is a sin in relation to oneself” (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5).

Why should a person love himself or herself? Self-love is proper because the human beings are made in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). Even after the Fall, notwithstanding the fact that human beings have a sinful nature, the image of God remains intact in them. “[T]he image of God is effaced but not erased in fallen man. It has been distorted but not destroyed” (Geisler, 1971:154). If sin were to destroy the image of God in human beings, then they would no longer be human. The image of God means that human beings are God-like. Suicide is killing God in effigy, destroying the image of God in humans.

There is a basic goodness in all human beings, which has not been destroyed by sin, for “everything created by God is good” (I Timothy 4:4) and “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27). A human being is neither totally good nor totally bad (Geisler, 1971:150-151). Sin or evil is “a corruption or privation of some of the good in a perfectly good nature which God originally created” (Geisler, 1971:153-154). There is still some bad in the best human beings and some good in the worst of them. Since there is a basic goodness in human beings, even after the Fall, then one should love the good within oneself.

Self love issues in self-preservation. However, suicide is a violation of the natural law of self-preservation (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:1). Humans by nature *will* to be. Something within them, a natural instinct, which God implants in their nature, gravitates toward being. Suicide is against the basic human drive to be, to live. The apostle Paul said, “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it” (Ephesians 5:29, NKJV). Thomas Aquinas (1966:222) comments, “The flesh, when considered in itself, is not held in contempt, but everyone naturally wants it to exist and nourishes it for this end. ... [W]e naturally desire our fulfillment and well-being.” Excessive self-

love is egotism, the love of self to the exclusion of the love of God and others. Paul is referring to a balanced or proper self-love. This is what Augustine (1887:1, 25) says in his book *On Christian Doctrine*,

Man, therefore, ought to be taught the due measure of loving, that is, in what measure he may love himself so as to be of service to himself. For that he does love himself, and does desire to do good to himself, nobody but a fool would doubt. He is to be taught, too, in what measure to love his body, so as to care for it wisely and within due limits. For it is equally manifest that he loves his body also, and desires to keep it safe and sound.

Suicide is an act of self-destruction, not self-love; an act against, not for, oneself. Paul told the Philippian jailer who was about to commit suicide: "Do yourself no harm" (Acts 16:28). Self-love is expressed in proper acts of self-interest and self-preservation. Geisler (1971:238) says, "True self-love will never desire to eliminate the self it loves."

The second reason suicide is wrong is that "every part, as such, belongs to the whole. Now every man is part of the community, and so, as such, he belongs to the community. Hence by killing himself he injures the community" (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5). In other words, suicide is "a flight from the duties of justice and charity owed to one's neighbor, to various communities or to the whole of society" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:1). Suicide is a failure of love and justice, because it is just to fulfil one's obligations to others. One does not live simply for oneself but for others, to love them and, thus, to help them. The suicidal person is obligated to love his family, whether that is his wife, children, parents, brothers or sisters. There is always someone for him or her to love, such as a neighbour and/or a friend.

Suicide is wrong for a third reason, which, according to Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5), is that

life is God's gift to man, and is subject to His power, who kills and makes to live. Hence whoever takes his own life, sins against God ... and ... usurps to himself judgment of a matter not entrusted to him. For it belongs to God alone to pronounce sentence of death and life, according to Dt. 32:39, 'I will kill and I will make to live.'

Because life is, ultimately, a gift from God, human beings receive their lives; they are not self-made creatures. They do not own themselves. Rather, they belong to God. Hence, they are stewards or caretakers of their lives, responsible to God for what they do with them (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:2280).

God is sovereign, which means he has ultimate control of a person's life, from the moment of conception to time of death. However, suicide is a rejection of God's sovereignty and plan for a person's life (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980:1). It is an attempt to usurp God's power, claiming ultimate control over what rightfully belongs to the Creator alone, namely, the power over death. Life and death are God's prerogative, his exclusive right over his own human creatures. He says, "See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me. It is I who put to death and give life" (Deuteronomy 32:39, NASB; cf. I Samuel 2:6; I Kings 5:7). He gives human life and takes it. No person has control over the moment of his or her birth. Nor does one have control over the day of his or her death, except by violating God's will in committing suicide. It is, in the final analysis, playing God or attempting to be one's own god. Love for God involves taking care of oneself. However, "Suicide is contrary to love for ... God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:2281).

5.6.3 Developing Fortitude: Becoming Brave in Facing Life's Difficulties

Suicide is not to be regarded as an act of bravery. On the contrary, suicide may be a failure of courage, a cowardly act. In the words of Augustine (2008d:1, 22),

[T]hey who have laid violent hands on themselves are perhaps to be admired for their greatness of soul, though they cannot be applauded for the soundness of their judgment. However, if you look at the matter more closely, you will scarcely call it greatness of soul, which prompts a man to kill himself rather than bear up against some hardships of fortune.... Is it not rather proof of a feeble mind, to be unable to bear ... the pains of bodily servitude.... And is not that to be pronounced the greater mind, which rather faces than flees the ills of life.

It is not fortitude, inner strength, that prompts a person to take his or her life in order to avoid suffering. Rather, unwilling to bear a particular misfortune, a person commits suicide, suggesting a weakness of spirit (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5).

Suicide may be an escape from reality, a flight from the harsh realities of life, such as physical, emotional, mental and spiritual suffering. Suicide is an easy way out of one's problems, because it is easier to give up than continue to face them. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NASB). Jesus is calling all believers to be courageous in facing their troubles; knowing that because he overcame the world, they will one day do the same.

5.6.4 Biblical Examples of Thought-Action Fusion

There are various causes of depression, such as genetic predisposition, social or environmental influences, too much stress and undergoing difficult changes in one's life (Minirth & Meier, 1978:95-128). A deeply depressed person may think about committing suicide. In cognitive behavioural therapy, thought-action fusion refers to the assumption or fear that just because a person thinks about something, he or she likely to act out the thought (Purdon & Clark, 2005:40). For example, one might think about committing suicide when one's problems seem overwhelming, when there seems to be no way out of them. This, however, does not mean one must carry through with the thought.

There were some notable men in Scripture who, being depressed, wanted to die. Job's depression was mainly due to loss, namely, the death of his children (Minirth, 2004:28). He cursed the day of his birth, wishing that he had died at birth (cf. Job 3:1-19). He included himself with those "who long for death, but there is none" (Job 3:21, NASB). Job longed for death, saying, "Oh that my request might come to pass, and that God would grant my longing! Would that God were willing to crush me; that He would loose His hand and cut me off!" (Job 6:8-9, NASB). If he could, Job said that he would choose death rather than continue in pain (cf. Job 7:15).

Jeremiah's depression was linked to two possible causes. First, he experienced a sense of failure or self-worth, because, in spite of his preaching, his own people did not repent. Second, he felt a sense of loss at the impending destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (Dyer, 1985:1155). He cursed the day of his birth, wishing that he had died in his mother's womb (cf. Jeremiah 20:14-18).

Moses' depression may have been related to too much stress (Minirth, Meier *et al.*, 1991:81). He had felt too much of an emotional load in leading God's people (cf. Numbers 11:10-15). His burden was so heavy that he prayed "please kill me at once, if I have found favor in Your sight" (Numbers 11:15, NASB).

Elijah's depression may be linked to fatigue. In I Kings 19, he "became depressed when he overextended himself physically and emotionally" (Minirth & Meier, 1978:114-115). As a result, he "requested for himself that he might die, and said, 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life'" (I Kings 19:4, NASB).

Jonah's depression may have been caused by anger, because he was upset with God that he did not destroy the Assyrians, especially the city of Nineveh (Minirth, 2004:28-29). As a result, he prayed, "O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life" (Jonah 4:3, NASB; cf. v. 8).

The fallacy of thought-action fusion is just because a person thinks about dying, does not mean that he or she will commit suicide. In moments of depression, Job, Jeremiah, Moses and Jonah wanted to die. However, none of them followed through with the thought (even the longing for death) and took his own life. Upon closer examination, each of the biblical characters implicitly recognized the sovereignty of God. For example, Elijah "requested" to die and Jonah asked God to "take" his life. In other words, Elijah and Jonah (along with the others) knew that God was the Lord of life and death, both giving human life and, according to his plan, taking it. That was why they did not take their own lives.

The apostle Paul went into despair over some desperate situation in Asia (cf. II Corinthians 1:8-10). It was so life-threatening that he thought he was going to die. He said, "we despaired even of life" (II Corinthians 1:8, NASB). The verb "despaired" in Greek is *εξαπορευω* (*exaporeo*) is derived from the preposition *εκ* (*ek*), meaning, "out of" and the verb *απορευω* (*aporeo*), meaning, "to be at a loss, in doubt, uncertain" (Arndt & Gingrich, 1979:97); hence, the word means "to be utterly at a loss" (Arndt & Gingrich, 1979:97). But no matter how severe Paul's problem was, he did not commit suicide. He realized that there was a purpose for his experience, namely, "so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (II Corinthians 1:9, NASB). The purpose of problems, no matter what kind or how severe, is for a person to trust in God, receiving strength from him to help cope with, if not overcome, them.

5.6.5 Was Paul Suicidal? A Response to Arthur J. Droge

Arthur J. Droge specializes in early Christian literature, focusing on topics such as suicide and martyrdom. According to him (O'Mathuna, 1998:389), the apostle Paul contemplated committing suicide in Philippians 1:21-23. He said,

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

"Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!" (v.22). Droge (O'Mathuna, 1998:390) says, "This should be taken to mean what is says, that the question of life or death was a matter of Paul's *own* volition, not a fate to be imposed on him by others." Droge (O'Mathuna, 1998:388) believes that if the apostle Paul were to become old and unable to complete his mission, then it would be possible for

him to “have committed suicide and ... with a clear conscience and with the expectation that he would pass into immortality, united with Christ.”

Droge’s view is contrary to Paul’s psychological traits and theological and moral teachings. He admits that he is “torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far” (v. 23). Aquinas (1969:70-71) comments,

[T]here are two impulses in man, the impulse of nature and that of grace; of nature, not to die ...; and the impulse of grace, which charity follows, is to love God and neighbour. This impulse to love God moves us to be with God; hence he says, my desire is to depart ... to be with Christ.

In Philippians 1:21-25, Paul is using a qualitative comparison, presupposing a hierarchy of values. In other words, to live in this world is good. However, in comparing this life with God in heaven, the latter is “better by far” (v. 23). This world, which is marked by sin and suffering, is imperfect. The next world, heaven, is perfect. That is why the apostle says, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (v. 21). Aquinas (1969:70) rightly observes,

For a person regards it a gain when he can improve the imperfect life he has; thus a sick person regards a healthy life a gain. Our life is Christ.... But here it is imperfect: ‘While we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord’ (2 Cor. 5:6). Therefore, when we die ..., our life, namely, Christ, with whom we are then present, is perfected in us.

The Law of Moses, the Torah, teaches a principle of the natural moral law (which is inscribed by God in human nature), namely, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18, NASB). The apostle Paul, a former Pharisee, had that principle deeply embedded in his mind (cf. Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14). “Rather than want to ... deliberately take his own life, Paul wants to be with Christ” (O’Mathuna, 1998:390). Nevertheless, even though to depart and be with Christ is far better than life in this world (cf. v. 23), the “love of neighbour moves us to desire his betterment; hence he says, *but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account...* [that is], my life is necessary for your benefit” (Aquinas, 1969:71). Paul, knowing the social ramifications of suicide, would not hurt those to whom he ministered by taking his own life.

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi, a Roman colony (cf. Acts 16:16-28), they were guarded by a jailer, who was a Roman soldier (cf. 16: 23-24). After he had discovered that Paul and Silas escaped, the jailer was about to commit suicide (cf. 16:26-27). Bruce (1983:337) comments, "For a man brought up to a Roman soldier's ideas of duty and discipline there was only one course open – suicide." But he was prevented from doing so when Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" (Acts 16:28, NIV). If suicide were morally neutral or permissible, Paul would not have dissuaded the jailer from committing suicide. By his intervention, Paul taught that suicide was wrong. This same Paul articulated the natural moral law principles of self-love and preservation, saying, "no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it" (Ephesians 5:29, NIV) or "nourishes and cherishes it" (NKJV).

The apostle Paul was heavenly-minded, wanting to be with God in heaven. However, the irony is that Paul accomplished a great deal in this world precisely because he thought so much about the next one. By aiming at heaven, he left a lasting mark on earth (cf. Lewis, 1960:118). Paul may rightly be considered one of the greatest disciples of Jesus Christ in the history of Christianity. It was neither Augustine of Hippo nor Thomas Aquinas who had the greatest impact on Western Civilization. It was neither Socrates, nor Plato nor Aristotle. After Jesus Christ himself, it was and is the apostle Paul (Bruce, 1977:469-474).

Typically, a suicidal person is in despair. However, Paul was optimistic, making such positive statements as "I can do all through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NASB). "Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57, NIV). "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14, NKJV). We "are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37, NIV). These are not the words of a defeated man! Even as difficult as life was for him at times as an apostle, Paul would not kill himself, because, as he himself said, "we do not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:1, NIV). One of his strong psychological traits was perseverance, not giving in to despair, nor giving up on life, having his mind set on completing his mission as an apostle.

Typically, a suicidal person has lost his or her reason to live. Such a person has no goal or goals for living. However, Jesus Christ is Paul's reason for living in this world, not escaping from it. Paul makes this point in several places in the New Testament, saying,

So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it" (II Corinthians 5:9, NIV)

⁷For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:7-8, NASB).

¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf (II Corinthians 5:14-15, NASB).

In I Corinthians 6, 12-20, Paul discusses Christ's relationship to Christians as embodied persons. Christians should dedicate their bodies to the Lord, not sexual immorality (vv. 13, 15-18). There are four reasons for God's concern for the human body. The first is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (v. 14a). If the human body had no value, if it were just an appendage to the soul and nothing more (a Platonic idea), then God the Father would not have raised the body of the Son of God from the dead. The second reason is the future resurrection of the bodies of Christians (v. 14b; cf. Philippians 3:20-21). The third is the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit, sanctifying or making the human body holy, set apart, dedicated to God (v. 19a; cf. I Corinthians 3:16-17). The fourth reason is redemption as possession. In other words, Jesus died on the cross to free Christians from their sins. He is their Lord. They are his people, belonging to him (Moody, 1981: 507-508). Hence, the apostle writes, "You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (I Corinthians 6:19b-20, NIV). Paul is not a radical autonomist, accepting the notion that Christians are masters of their own bodies, doing whatever with them whatever they want. Rather, Paul is a theonomist, teaching that Christians govern their moral lives by God's will. Therefore, Paul understands that one's body is not one's own to dispose of at one's will.

5.6.6 A Reason to Live and to Die

Because human beings are spirit-body entities, they have the internal capacity of what Frankl (1985b:38) calls "self-transcendence." In a state of self-forgetfulness, losing themselves and focusing outwardly or beyond themselves, human beings actually find themselves, discover their meaning in life. They might, for example, lose themselves "for the sake of something or somebody, for the sake of a cause or a fellowman, or 'for God's sake'" (Frankl, 1967:82). Self-transcendence aptly describes the lives of the apostle Paul, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela.

The apostle Paul had a reason to live and, if necessary, a reason to die. He would die either for someone, such as the Lord Jesus Christ or something worthwhile, such as the advancement of the Christian religion throughout the Roman Empire and, finally, the whole world. For example, Paul's disciples pleaded with him not to go to Jerusalem to appear stand trial before the Sanhedrin, fearing for the apostle's life (cf. Acts 21:12). However, he responded, "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, 'The Lord's will be done'" (Acts 21:13b-14, NIV).

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was not afraid to die for a worthwhile cause. King (1963) lived by the principle that "[T]here are some things so dear, some things so precious, some things so eternally true, that they are worth dying for." In almost prophetic words, on April 3, 1968, the night before King was murdered; actually, less than 24 hours before his death in Memphis Tennessee, he (King, 1968:7-8) said,

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not

fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

From reading King's closing words, one receives the impression that he knew that he would be killed. However, he was not suicidal, wanting to die. In fact, just the opposite: he loved life, saying, "Longevity has its place." Nevertheless, he knew that if he died, then it would be for a just cause, namely, the promotion of civil rights, stressing the equality of all human beings and their equal rights under the law of the United States of America.

Similarly, Nelson Mandela was a member of the African National Congress (ANC), a political movement which opposed South Africa's apartheid policies. Mandel consistently criticized apartheid. However, On June 11, 1964, he was sentenced to life in prison. At the opening statement of his trial, Mandela (1964) concluded,

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Those are the very words quoted by Mandela upon his release from prison on February 11, 1990, after serving 26 years (Mandela, 1990). He was not suicidal. Rather, he had a worthwhile cause to serve, namely, ending racial segregation with its political and economic discrimination against blacks in South Africa. He found something for which to live, which he considered greater than his own life. Therefore, he was also willing to die for it. One of Mandela's inspirations in his struggle against apartheid was noted at his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, mentioning "another outstanding Nobel Peace Prize winner, the late African-American statesman and internationalist, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr." (Mandela, 1993.)

In an act of self-transcendence, Lieutenant Colonel John Glenn risked his life as the first American astronaut to orbit the earth. He stresses the importance of self-transcendence, saying, "what is needed [today] is a 'basis of convictions and beliefs so strong that they [lift] individuals clear out of themselves and [cause] them to live, and die, for some aim nobler and better than themselves'...." (Frankl, 1967:18). The lives of Paul, King and Mandela cannot be fully appreciated by many men and women today who have neither a reason for living (not understanding why they are alive) nor for dying, because, for them, there is nothing of supreme importance for which they are willing to sacrifice their lives.

5.6.7 Viktor Frankl's Views on Suicide

The suicide statistics in the United States are alarming. "More than 32,000 people kill themselves each year" (Understanding Suicide -- Fact Sheet, 2008:1). "This is equivalent to 89 suicides per day... [and] one suicide every 16 minutes" (Suicide Facts at a Glance, 2008:1). Even more people attempt to do harm to themselves. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Understanding Suicide -- Fact Sheet, 2008:1): "More than 35,000 people with self-inflicted injuries are treated in emergency rooms each year." In general, suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The first leading cause is accidental death and the second is homicide (McIntosh, 2008:1). In the United States, according to suicide statistics for 2005, suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death; homicide is the fifteenth, which, in effect, means that *"More people kill themselves than kill each other"* (Suicide Facts and Statistics, 2008).

The existential vacuum is one reason a person commits suicide. The existential vacuum, according to psychiatrist Viktor E. Frankl (1967:71), is "the experience of a total lack, or loss, of an ultimate meaning to one's existence that would make life worthwhile." If the vacuum goes unchecked, if one does not see any meaning to life, not find any reason to live or anything or anyone to live for, then such a person may commit suicide or live in despair, which can lead to suicide.

As a psychiatrist, Frankl worked with many patients who were in despair and had contemplated or attempted suicide. From his work, he developed a school of psychotherapy, which is known as Logotherapy. It literally means "healing through meaning." In other words, if a person has a reason to live, if he or she faces each day with a goal or a sense of purpose in life, it is psychologically healthy.

Human beings are in search of meaning, which is a distinctively human phenomenon. In other words, humans are the only creatures who search for meaning to their lives. Animals do not worry about the meaning of their lives; only humans do (Frankl, 1985b: 30-31). Animals do not commit suicide out of despair; only humans do. The reason that humans search for meaning is that they are dominated, in Frankl's (1967: 121-122), by "the will to meaning," which is a "deep-seated striving and struggling for a higher and ultimate meaning to his existence." The will to meaning is "in greater or smaller degree present in all human beings" (Frankl, 1985a:80). However, it can be frustrated by symptoms of the existential vacuum, such the inordinate sexual pleasure, the desire for power, drug addiction and preoccupation with work (1967:125-126).

Frankl (1985b:15) says that many suicidal persons "have good jobs and are successful but want to kill themselves because they find life meaningless." Meaning is what keeps a person going. It gives a person a reason to stay alive. If a person has found meaning in life, Frankl (1985b:20) says,

he is prepared to suffer, to offer sacrifices, even, if need be, to give his life for the sake of it. Contrariwise, if there is no meaning he is inclined to take his life, and he is prepared to do so even if all his needs, to all appearances, have been satisfied.

When individuals suffering from the existential vacuum work hard and finally achieve success, they may ask themselves, "What has all my success been for?" (Frankl, 1985b:20-21.) Even if young people have good friends and family relationships, even if they are doing well academically, nevertheless, they can experience the existential vacuum, an abiding feeling of emptiness, of something missing from their lives, and commit suicide (Frankl, 1985b:20-21).

Frankl says that suicide is wrong, because it violates the unique, intrinsic, "unconditional value of each and every person. ... Just as life remains potentially meaningful under any conditions, even those which are the most miserable, so too does the value of each and every person stay with him or her" (Frankl, 1984:151). The individual, the specific person, the concrete here-and-now self, has a unique meaning to life, thus differing from person to person (Frankl, 1967:44). Frankl (1967:44) relates the uniqueness of the human person to his or her unique vocation or

mission in life, indicating that every man has a mission in life to carry out. Each human being is unique ... and thus neither expendable nor replaceable. In other words, he is a particular individual with his unique personal characteristics who experiences a unique historical context in a world which has special opportunities and obligations reserved for him alone.

Each human being, then, is *sui generis*, meaning "only one of a kind." Rabbi Hillel (Frankl, 1967: 89.) expresses this truth well, saying, "If I do not do this job – who will do it? And if I do not do this job right now – when shall I do it? But if I carry it out only for my own sake – what am I?" Hillel's first question ("If I do not do this job – who will do it?") suggests that "each man is unique and each man's life is singular; ... no man can be replaced and no man's life can be repeated" (Frankl, 1967:89). Hillel's second question ("And if I do not do this job right now – when shall I do it?") suggests that in every moment of a person's life, he or she has "a specific and particular meaning to fulfill" (Frankl, 1967:89-90). Hillel's third question ("But if I carry it out only for my own sake – what am I?") suggests the self-transcendence of human existence. In other words, a "man's life always points to something beyond himself; it is always directed toward a meaning to fulfill" (Frankl, 1967:90). Hillel teaches that one lives not only for one's own sake but also for something or someone else. Life is directed not only inwardly but also outwardly, toward giving oneself to others.

In summary, each person has a reason for being alive, a specific and unique mission to fulfill in life, which no one else can fulfill for him or her. However, it is up to each person to discover his or her reason for being. If one has not found it, but continues searching for it, waiting patiently in the process, he or she will

eventually see that life has a meaning; life is worth living. To apply the words of Jesus, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8, NIV). In Greek, the verbs "ask," "seek" and "knock" are present active indicative. In other words, keep asking, keep seeking and keep knocking," presupposing patience and perseverance in the search for meaning in life.

According to logotherapy, suicide is wrong, always and under all conditions. Frankl (1986:51) says in no uncertain terms that

suicide is never ethically justified. ... For suicide not only makes it impossible for a person to grow and to mature as a result of his own suffering (thus realizing attitudinal values), but it also makes it impossible for him ever to make up for the suffering he may have inflicted on someone else. it is our duty to convince the would-be suicide that taking one's own life is categorically contrary to reason, that life is meaningful to every human being under any circumstances.

Like Thomas Aquinas, Frankl teaches that the person who commits suicide harms not only himself (physically, in the destruction of one's body) but also others (psychologically or emotionally). Suicide, then, is not an isolated act, because it also has an impact on the person's family, friends and community of which he or she is a member. In fact, Frankl says that suicide is irrational. The suicidal person's reason is clouded by his or her emotions. He or she is not thinking clearly, because, by nature, rational human beings will to live.

5.6.8 Critique of Aquinas: Associating Suicide with Mortal Sin

Clearly thinking or rational human beings (those who are fully aware of what they are doing and do it anyway) are, indeed, responsible for their choices and, thus, their moral acts. The reason is that such acts are voluntary, from the Latin word *voluntas*, meaning "will." "Freedom makes man *responsible* for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary" (Catechism of the Catholic Church,

2000:1734). A voluntary act, then, is one which proceeds from the will. It is freely chosen. Moral acts are freely chosen

Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 64, art. 5) says, "suicide is always a mortal sin" As the last mortal sin, suicide kills the soul, that is, cuts off communion with God for all eternity. In short, the person who commits suicide is in hell. However, Aquinas' view is dated, limited by the perspective of his time. From the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology, more is known today than in Aquinas' day about the emotional state of a person who kills himself or herself and the condition of free choice.

Though the act of killing oneself is still objectively wrong, there are mitigating factors involved in judging the culpability (guilt or blameworthiness) of a person who commits suicide. Those factors reduce, if not completely eliminate, a person's responsibility. For example, "Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000:2282). A person who commits suicide may be suffering not only from extreme physical pain but also emotional pain, such as depression. Such pain clouds one's reason, making it difficult, if not impossible, to think clearly or rationally.

Other mitigating factors are "ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000:1735). If human freedom is diminished due to such factors, then so is human responsibility; if human freedom is eliminated due to them, then so is human responsibility. It cannot automatically be assumed that a person who commits suicide has committed a mortal sin and is, therefore, going to hell.

5.6.9 Hopelessness and Despair as Factors Leading to Suicide

Hope is mentally healthy. It can even prevent depression and despair. The biblical poet asks, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?" (Psalm 42:5a, 11; 43:5, NIV). The poet was suffering from depression, which may be related to a chemical imbalance or a spiritual problem, both of

which can lead to despair. The psalmist answers his own question: "Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:5b-6a, NIV). Hope is looking to the future with optimism, believing that things will be better than they are now.

Hope, then, is oriented toward the future. Scripture says, "[H]ope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it" (Romans 8:24-25, NASB). Every person who is suffering from some difficulty or trial needs something to hold on to, something to which he or she can look forward. Psychologist Gary Collins (1980:53) says, "Hope brings relief from suffering, based on a belief that things will be better in the future. Hope helps us avoid despair." The prophet Jeremiah gives a message of hope to the exiled Jews in Babylon, saying, "For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). In fact, every person needs to believe that there is still "hope and a future" for him or her.

Frankl (1963:146) illustrates the need for hope by his own experience in a concentration camp,

When we spoke about attempts to give a man in camp mental courage, we said that he had to be shown something to look forward to in the future. He had to be reminded that life still waited for him, that a human being waited for his return.

The human person is a psychosomatic unity, an intertwining of mind and body. In other words, the human soul (or spirit or mind) affects the body and, conversely, the human body affects the soul (or spirit or mind). Frankl (1963:117) says, "The prisoner who had lost faith in the future – his future – was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay." As a result of the loss of hope in the concentration camps, many prisoners became sick and died.

Depression as temporary feeling of sadness is a common human experience and, thus, relatively normal. It is different from major depressive disorder (also called "clinical depression"), in which a person experiences a change of mood and physical symptoms, such as fatigue, a loss of energy and sleeping disturbances (Hall-Flavin, 2007). According to the National Institute of Mental Health, "Major depressive disorder affects approximately 14.8 million American adults ... age 18 and older in a given year" (The Numbers Count, 2009). "Depression is the leading cause of suicide ... in the United States" (Minirth, Meier *et al.*, 1991:79).

Hopelessness is related to depression. In a sense, hopelessness is the beginning of hell on earth. Perhaps that is why above the entrance to Dante's Inferno (Hell) is the inscription: "Abandon all hope, you who enter here" (Alleggeri, 1998). Clinical psychologist A. T. Beck (1967:58) says, "In our studies we have found that suicidal wishes had a higher correlation with hopelessness than with any other symptom of depression." Hopelessness may lead to despair, which is giving up on life, believing that one's life is ruined, beyond all help. It may be that a person thinks he or she has wrecked his or her life so badly that there is no possible remedy for it. Despair, ultimately, leads to suicide. In order to have meaning in one's life, one must have hope. It gives a person the will to live. What oxygen is to the lungs hope is to the meaning of life. The person who loses hope loses meaning. The one who has hope has meaning.

Hope is a kind of "elasticity" of the human spirit. With each disappointment, a person's spirit "stretches" and, along with it, his or her capacity to endure suffering. It is the defiant power of the human spirit. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1978:298), a survivor of eight years of concentration camps in Russia or the Soviet Union, writes, "All that the downtrodden can do is go on hoping. After every disappointment they must find fresh reason for hope." For Solzhenitsyn, hope was necessary for survival. He often had to find new reasons for hope in order to survive the concentration camps.

Every person has the potential to hope in something or someone. It is a spiritual part of human nature. To be human is to hope. Neither cats nor dogs nor birds hope but humans do. Hope is rational. In other words, it is normal for human beings to find reasons to go on hoping, to find reasons to stay alive, during the most difficult or trying times of life.

Solzhenitsyn (1978:ix) says, "The fighters' spiritual strength rises to the greatest height and to a supreme degree of tension when their situation is most helpless." Hope is developed from oppositions to one's aims or from obstacles which stand in the way of pursuing one's goals. Hope is also developed from the temptation to give up when everything seems hopeless. Through exercising the virtue of hope, it becomes an inner, spiritual strength, which helps one to cope with adverse conditions (spiritual, mental or physical), which either can or cannot be changed.

Every human being, then, needs a reason to live and, ultimately, a reason to die. But that reason can never be suicide, for it is contrary to the human drive to live. Adolescents cannot find true meaning in the excessive accumulation of wealth and possessions. Not can they find it in being the smartest or most popular person in high school. Rather, young people find a deeper meaning to life in transcending themselves, that is, reaching out to another human being in love, dedicating themselves to a worthwhile cause, helping and serving others, all of which involves knowing, loving and serving God.

5.7 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND ITS RELATION TO GENOCIDE AND TERRORISM

5.7.1 Adolf Hitler's Mass Murder of Jews and Other Races

Etymologically, genocide literally means "killing a tribe or race." It involves the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent groups of people, whole or in part (cf. Stravinskis, 1991:434; Thompson, 2003:118). For example, a government can kill a group of people because of the particular race to which they belong and call it "ethnic cleansing" (Vaughn, 2008:491), which is another term for genocide.

Groups of human beings, whole or in part, can also be killed because of their religion, nationality or ideology.

One of the major causes of genocide is racism. Before discussing racism, what does "race" itself mean? It refers to being members of the same human species. In this sense, all human beings are members of the same family, the human family. Race also refers to the specific differences between human beings, such as the nation to which they belong, blood-related descendents of a particular group of people (e.g., Jews, Poles, Greeks and Italians) and distinguishing physical traits or characteristics (e.g., facial features). The notion of race, then, testifies to both the unity and diversity of humankind (Brennan, 1983:91).

However, racism begins with imposing a hierarchy of worth on the differences which separate groups of humans from one another, thus making one group of superior to another. Racism may mean, for example, because John Doe belongs to Irish or German or Polish stock, his ethnic group is superior to all others. Again, it may mean that because John Doe belongs to the white or Caucasian race, his race is superior to black, red or yellow races (Brennan, 1983:92).

One can believe in evolution and the equality of all human beings. However, a distorted notion of evolution has led (in the past) and can lead to the belief in racial superiority. For example, Adolf Hitler did not believe that all human beings are equal in nature, possessing the same inherent dignity. Rather, he held that the Aryan race (a supposed master race of non-Jewish Caucasians) was superior to all other races. Arthur Keith (1947:230), an evolutionary anthropologist, wrote, "The German Fuehrer ... consciously sought to make the practice of Germany conform to the theory of evolution." Hitler's belief in racial inferiority opened the way for him to dehumanize and destroy millions of human beings, regarding them as less than, or not fully, human, on the lowest end of the hierarchy of races (Brennan, 1983:92). In May, 1923, Hitler (Brennan, 1983:92) said, "The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but not human." Keith (1947:10) wrote, "The leader of Germany is an evolutionist, not only in theory, but, as millions know to their cost, in the rigor of its practice."

The subtitle of Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* is telling: "The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life." By "Races," Darwin meant animal races. However, he himself believed in racial superiority, especially white racial superiority. For example, in a letter to W. Graham, dated July 3, 1881, Darwin (1887) wrote,

I could show fight on natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilization than you seem inclined to admit. Remember what risk the nations of Europe ran, not so many centuries ago of being overwhelmed by the Turks, and how ridiculous such an idea now is! The more civilized so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence. Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world.

In short, Darwin himself applied his evolutionary view of natural selection, the survival of the fittest, to human races. Paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould (1977:127), referring to the publication of Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, said, "Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory."

Hitler was profoundly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy, because the former usually misinterpreted the latter's writings. There are several differences between the two. Nietzsche was not anti-Semitic, for he broke ties with his friend the composer Richard Wagner over his anti-Semitism. Nor was Nietzsche a racist. Unlike Hitler, Nietzsche did not believe in German nationalism. In fact, Nietzsche "held no high opinion of the German people" (Shirer, 1960:99). In *Ecce Homo*, he remarked that the Germans "have no conception how vile they are" (Shirer, 1960:99). He concluded that "wheresoever Germany penetrated, she ruins culture" (Shirer, 1960:99).

Nevertheless, Nietzsche did influence Hitler's thinking. He was a devoted disciple of Nietzsche. "Hitler often visited the Nietzsche museum in Weimar and publicized his veneration for the philosopher by posing for photographs of himself staring in rapture at the bust of the great man" (Shirer, 1960:100). By Hitler's order, every soldier in the German army received Nietzsche's book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. "A Nazi could proudly quote him [Nietzsche] on almost

every conceivable subject, and did" (Shirer, 1960:100). Hitler believed that he fulfilled

Nietzsche's prophecy of the coming elite who would rule the world and from whom the superman would spring. In The Will to Power he exclaims: 'A daring and ruler race is building itself up.... The aim should be to prepare a transvaluation of values for a particularly strong kind of man, most highly gifted in intellect and will. This man and the elite around him will become the 'lords of the earth.'

(Shirer, 1960:100-101)

Nietzsche thought that the supreme leader was above the morals of ordinary men. So did Hitler. In short, Nietzsche's philosophy was used by Hitler for his own evil purposes.

5.7.2 The Biblical Origins of Anti-Semitism

During biblical times, Haman, the Prime Minister of King Ahasuerus, the King of Persia, planned to carry out genocide on the Jewish people (ca. 486-465 B.C.). Scripture says,

Then Haman said to King Xerxes, 'There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business.'
So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 'Keep the money,' the king said to Haman, 'and do with the people as you please.'
Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and little children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

(Esther 3:8-11, 13, NIV)

Haman, the Prime Minister, planned to annihilate the Jews because their religion and customs were different from the Persians. Arthur Lichtenberger (1954:848) observes,

Whenever a minority group is sufficiently different from the people around it, it is suspect. Then if there is an individual or a group who make these rumors articulate, multiply them, spread them, persecution follows. This was Haman's method.

Haman's anti-Semitism "had poisoned the bloodstream of the entire empire" (Anderson, 1954:867). At first, Haman was a Jew-hater, called "the enemy of the Jews" (3:10). Three times Scripture mentions that the Persians "hated" the Jews (9:1, 5, 16). Racial hatred spreads. It becomes contagious. Through Haman's influence, his political power and words, he created an atmosphere of anti-Semitism or a universal hatred of the Jews in the empire. Scripture says, "the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them" (9:1, NIV).

Esther, a Jew, became the Queen of Persia. (cf. 2:5-10, 17-18). She revealed Haman's plot to kill her people to the king, saying, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request; for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated" (7:3-4, NASB; cf. v. 6). The verbs "destroyed," "killed" and "annihilated" are morally equivalent to genocide. The king had Haman hanged for his plot to destroy the Jews (cf. 7:7-10).

5.7.3 Theological Reasons for Condemning Genocide

Genocide is mass murder and, thus, a violation of the commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). It opposes the right to life, insults human dignity and dishonours God (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:27). In Roman Catholic theology, "the extermination of a people, nation, or ethnic minority must be condemned as a mortal sin. One is morally bound to resist orders that command genocide" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000:2313).

The second reason genocide is wrong is, in the words of The Declaration of Independence, "all men are created equal" (Jefferson, 1777). The Declaration does not mean all human beings are equal in exactly the same way, because humans are different "in color, size, intellect, moral development and social capacity" (Eidsmoe, 1987:365). Since human beings are unequal in a variety of respects, then in what sense are all human beings, without exception, equal? They are equal in that they all have the same nature, a human nature. Adler (1987:42) explains, "They are all human, all members of one species, called *homo sapiens*, and all have the same natural and thereby the same specific attributes that differentiate them from the members of all other species." The reason, then, that all human beings are equal is that they share in a common humanity (Adler, 1987:42). Therefore, "all men are created equal" means that all human beings are "by nature equal" (Adler, 1987:43). Adler continues: "Human equality consists in the fact that no human being is more or less human than another because all have the same specific nature by virtue of belonging to one and the same species" (Adler, 1987:43). The same dignity inheres equally in all human beings.

Stated biblically, genocide is wrong because all human beings are made in the image of God, regardless of their race, religion, whatever social or political group to which they belong or the fact that they are blood-related (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). Because all human beings are made in the image of God, all are essentially, by nature, equal. Sacred Scripture says God "made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Bruce (1983:358) comments,

All mankind was one in origin – all created by God and all descended from one common ancestor. This removed all imagined justification for the belief that Greeks were innately superior to barbarians, as it removes all imagined justification for parallel beliefs to-day. Neither in nature nor in grace ... is there any room for ideas of racial superiority.

Therefore, Scripture teaches the unity of the human race. All races descended from one source, that is, the primordial or first couple, man and woman, Adam and Eve. All racial prejudice is contrary to God's will (Earle, 1965:462).

Third, genocide violates the first principle of the natural law, which is, "Good is to be done and evil is to be avoided" or "Do good unto others, injure no one, render to every man his own" (Adler, 2003). Philosopher Mortimer J. Adler writes, "Now, of course, such a general principle is useless for organized society unless we can use it to specify various types of rights and wrongs. That is precisely what man-made, or positive, law tries to do" (Adler, 2003). Thus, the natural law says that genocide is wrong but positive law, such as international law, explains the various kinds of genocide (Adler, 2003). Genocide violates the natural law in that a rational person knows by nature, intuitively or immediately, with hardly any reflection, that it is wrong to exterminate millions of innocent human beings because of their race, religion or political association. Any and all persons working under a government which carries out the crime of genocide is guilty of murder.

5.7.4 The Fourth Crusade as an Example of Religious Terrorism: The Sack of Constantinople

Terrorism is broadly defined as (1) the "intentional indiscriminate use of force aimed at innocent non-combatants in order to generate fear thereby creating paralysis, disorder, and/or instability to achieve political ends (Snauwaert, 2004:128) and (2) "violence against non-combatants for political, religious or ideological ends" (Vaughn, 2008:495). Individuals, such as a man or woman acting alone, groups and states or governments can be terrorists (Snauwaert, 2004:128). There are several examples of terroristic acts, such as shooting and bombing non-combatants (innocent men, women and children); beheading them; kidnapping or holding them hostage and hijacking planes.

Sadly, religion has and does contribute to terrorism. The Crusades, wars fought in the name of Jesus Christ against Islam, were evil. To this day, they remain an embarrassment to the Roman Catholic Church. There were eight major Crusades. The First Crusade, under the authority of Pope Urban II, was from 1095 to 1101. The Second, under Pope Eugene III, was from 1145 to 1148. The Third Crusade, under Pope Gregory VIII, was from 1188 to 1192. The Fourth, under Pope Innocent III, was from 1207 to 1214. The Fifth Crusade, under

Pope Honorius III, was from 1217 to 1221. The Sixth, under King Frederick II, was from 1228 to 1229. The Seventh Crusade, under St. Louis of France and Pope Innocent IV, was from 1248 to 1254. The Eighth, under St. Louis of France and Charles Anjou, was from 1267 to 1270 (Stravinskias, 1991:277). Religiously, the purpose of the Crusades was to drive out the Muslims and keep them out of Palestine, the Holy Land. For their part, the popes wanted to make Palestine a Christian kingdom. But, ultimately, their attempts failed. The Christians were defeated. There is no exact figure of the number of casualties. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people died (Stravinskias, 1991:277).

In 1204, the merchants in Venice helped to finance the Fourth Crusade. The Crusaders were headed to Egypt. They took a detour through Constantinople. It was adorned with works of art from ancient Greece and masterpieces of exquisite craftsmanship. But in 1204, the Crusaders, especially those from Venice, pillaged the city of Constantinople, carrying off both sacred and secular treasures of art for their own towns and churches. Mark Galli (1997:6), editor of the *Christian History Magazine*, writes,

Mobs of soldiers rushed down the streets and through the houses. They snatched everything that glittered and destroyed whatever they could not carry – neither monasteries nor churches nor libraries were spared. Estates and hovels alike were entered and wrecked. They paused only to murder or to rape or to break open wine-cellars for refreshment. Nuns were ravished in their convents. Bleeding women and children lay dying in the streets. In Hagia Sophia, the most glorious church in Christendom, drunken soldiers tore down silk hangings and pulled the great silver iconostasis – which held sacred icons – to pieces. Sacred books and icons were trampled upon. While soldiers drank merrily from the altar vessels, a prostitute set herself on the patriarch's throne and sang a bawdy French song.

Alongside the already existing Greek Patriarchs in Antioch and Jerusalem, the Crusaders set up rival Latin or Roman Catholic Patriarchs (Bishops). With the approval of Pope Innocent III, a patriarch from Venice (Thomas Morosini) was installed on the throne of the Patriarch of Constantinople (Meyendorff, 1981:57).

The result was that the Greek Church was made subject to the Pope (Walker, 1970:223). Timothy Ware (1964: 69) comments,

What shocked the Greeks more than anything was the wanton and systematic sacrilege of the Crusades. How could men who had especially dedicated themselves to God's service treat the things of God in such a way? As the Byzantines watched the Crusaders tear to pieces the altar and icon screen in the Church of the Holy Wisdom, and set prostitutes on the Patriarch's throne, they must have felt that those who did such things were not Christians in the same sense as themselves.

Religious terrorism continues to afflict humanity. Catholics and Protestants have killed each other in Northern Ireland. Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims continue to kill each other in the Holy Land. Orthodox Serbian Christians have fought Catholic Croats and Bosnian Muslims in Yugoslavia (Thompson, 2003:121). Hindu Sikhs have fought with Muslims in India. Muslim extremists have killed in the name of Allah in Africa and the Middle East.

Secular humanists, who are atheists and agnostics, rightly observe that a lot of killing in the past and in the present happens in the name of Jesus, God, Yahweh and Allah. Philosopher Norman Geisler (1988:125) writes,

A student of history can readily see that religion has often stifled freedom of thought. This is true of Islam and of Christianity: both Protestant and Catholic. Religious wars, persecutions, the Ku Klux Klan, the Crusades, and the Inquisition have been a tragic testimony to the inhumanity perpetuated by religious people in the name of religion.

Religion, then, can be used to justify murder and intolerance. For a Muslim to bomb innocent civilians of any nation the name of Allah, is to commit murder. For pro-life Christians to gun down doctors who perform abortions, is to commit murder. Similarly, for Christians to bomb abortion clinics, is to commit acts of terrorism, murdering those with whom they disagree. "Authentic religion should critique any ideology that inculcates hatred and division or that absolutizes any value other than God" (Thompson, 2003:147). The attack on religious terrorists should be clearly distinguished from the attack on the religion to which the

terrorist belongs. Not all Muslims are terrorists. However, there are many Muslims who justify their own beliefs by proof-texting them, that is, taking them out of their original contexts in the Holy Books, such as the Bible, the Qur'an and the Jewish Scriptures. Wrenching a text from its context can be a pretext or cover-up to justify terrorism.

As an apologetic note, mass murder committed by Christians in the Crusades does not mean that the Christian religion itself is evil. However, the members of the church, the Christians who commit those murders, are evil. In other words, the teaching of Christianity, based on the New Testament, is one thing; the way Christians live is quite another. They do not always understand nor live up to the teachings of the New Testament. It does not teach Christians to murder Muslims. The Christian leaders of the Crusades were wrong. Nowhere do the official documents of the Christian church, namely, the New Testament, condone mass murder, genocide. What Christians do is not necessarily God's will. Murdering in the name of Christ is a contradiction to the teachings of Christ.

5.7.5 Unauthorized Killings, Radical Nationalism and Racism

There are certain general traits or characteristics of terrorists. The first is the unauthorized attacks of non-combatants or innocent civilians: men, women, children and unarmed soldiers. It is wrong for private citizens, such as individual terrorists and terroristic organizations, to take "matters in their own hands" and attack civilians or non-combatants, because the care of the common good of a country or nation is committed to the government (Aquinas, 1947:II-II, q. 40, art. 1). Only a duly constituted government has the divinely given right to use force (if necessary) to punish wrong-doers and to maintain order (cf. Romans 13:1-4). Hence, terrorist organizations are wrong to engage in war with anyone in one's country or state and another country. Only those who are the properly authorized by the government may declare and engage in war. It is wrong, in Augustine's (2008c:22, 70) words, "to use weapons against a man's life, without the sanction of the constituted authority."

The second is a form of radical nationalism. In its normal sense, nationalism or patriotism is the pride in belonging to a particular nation or country. It also involves the notion of loyalty, first, to one's nation and then a concern for other nations. An excessive or inordinate form of nationalism is "patriolatry," which is a form of idolatry. It is the unconditional loyalty to one's country, which, in effect, takes the place of one's loyalty to God. Pope John Paul II (2001:6) says,

Love for one's country is thus a value to be fostered, without narrow-mindedness but with love for the whole human family and with an effort to avoid those pathological manifestations which occur when the sense of belonging turns into self-exaltation, the rejection of diversity, and forms of nationalism, racism and xenophobia.

The third is racism. A normal notion of one's ethnicity or race, the people from whom one is descended and blood-related, gives a person a collective sense of identity, such as being Jewish, Italian, Irish and German. However, the excessive or inordinate notion that one's race is better or superior to all other races often promotes a contempt for other races and even attempts at subjugating, if not eliminating them, militarily; hence, the term "ethnic cleansing" (Pope John Paul II, 2001:6).

5.7.6 Freedom of Religion:-A Basic Human Right

Fourth, terrorists seek conversion by means of coercion, forcing others to accept the terrorists' views of truth, whether they are political or religious views or both. Pope John Paul II (2002:6) comments,

Terrorists hold that the truth in which they believe or the suffering that they have undergone are so absolute that their reaction in destroying even innocent lives is justified. Terrorism is often the outcome of that fanatic fundamentalism which springs from the conviction that one's own vision of the truth must be forced upon everyone else.

Forcing individuals and groups to accept the terrorists' religion is contrary to the human right to religious freedom, which is recognized by the international community. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) says,

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 18, Sections 1-3, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) declares,

1. *Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.*
2. *No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.*
3. *Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.*

Section 1 (a. 7) of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, called the "Helsinki Declaration" (1975), affirms the right to religious freedom, saying,

The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion....

Within this framework the participating States will recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.

The right to religious freedom is inherent in the very nature of the human person. It is evident from the universality of religious experience. The Latin phrase *homo religiosus*, “religious human,” describes the religious leanings of the human person. He or she seems to be incurably religious. Throughout the different cultures of the world, there is an aspiration in the human person to worship something, whether it is God, a god or gods. Religious freedom refers to the right to choose one’s own religion and to practice it (Second Vatican Council, 1965a:2). Frankl (1997:62) observes,

[[I]t is precisely the religious man who should respect the freedom of ... choice, because he is the one who believes man to be created free. And this freedom includes the possibility of saying no, for instance, by deliberately refusing to accept any religious Weltanschauung [world view].

Coercing the human will violates the dignity of the human person who is the image of God (Second Vatican Council, 1965b:27). Human dignity consists in self-determination, which is the act of the will to choose freely a course of action for himself or herself. This, in turn, means that a person is responsible or answerable for his or her choices. Moral acts, which are human acts, proceed from reason and free will. To be a human act, the act of faith must be freely chosen. In short, a person cannot be forced to believe against his or her own will. Philosopher Ralph McInerny (1996:35) writes,

An enforced voluntary act is a contradiction in terms. Words might be elicited and limbs move but unless these proceed from the will of the agent they are not his acts, they are not human, they are not the deeds of a person.

Hence, out of respect for a person’s freedom of choice, truth should not be imposed (by force); rather, it should be proposed, with the possibility of either accepting or rejecting it. In other words,

To try to impose on others by violent means what we consider to be the truth is an offence against human dignity, and ultimately an offence against God whose image that person bears. For this reason, what is usually referred to as fundamentalism is an attitude radically opposed to belief in God.

(Pope John Paul II, 2002:6)

Spreading the faith through violence is contrary to human reason and incompatible with the rational, inner harmonious, nature of God (Pope Benedict XVI, 2006). Around 1391, Manuel II Paleologus, Emperor of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire, objected to Muslims spreading the faith by means of violence. Manuel (Pope Benedict XVI, 2006) says,

God ... is not pleased by blood - and not acting reasonably (συν λογῶ) is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats.... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death.

John calls God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, the **λογος**, meaning "word" or "reason." Similarly, Paul refers to the rational orderliness of God's nature in the words, "God is not a God of disorder (**ακαταστασια**) but of peace" (I Corinthians 14:33, NIV). Since human beings are made in God's image (cf. Genesis 1:26-27), then they, too, should act **συν λογῶ**, "with reason" or according to reason.

It is a basic human right to spread one's faith or religion, according to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). In the Great Commission, Jesus teaches his disciples to spread the Christian religion throughout the world (cf. Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8). However, "He never authorizes imperialism, exploitation, coercion, threats, or any other means of illicit power over others" (Groothuis, 2003:46). In spreading the Gospel, Christians follow the example of Christ who "bore witness to the truth, but He refused to impose the truth by force on those who spoke against it. Not by force of blows does His rule assert its claims" (Second Vatican Council, 1965a:11).

If people are truly converted, then it will happen with words, not weapons; persuasion, not coercion (Groothuis, 2003:46). Christians, in Paul's words, "try to persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11, NIV). Persuade (**πειθω**, *peitho*) means to present rational arguments in order to change another person's mind (Stott,

1972:47). The Christian, then, attempts "to convince in order to convert." (Stott, 1972:47).

Usually, no one becomes a Christian because it is unreasonable, irrational or absurd. One becomes a Christian because it makes sense or is reasonable. Reasoning a person into accepting a religious viewpoint is different from forcing him or her to accept it. Any radical form of Christian evangelism is wrong, because it attempts to manipulate or force non-Christians into becoming Christians. Similarly, any radical form of Islam in which Muslims spread their faith by force and terroristic acts is wrong. It is also acting irrationally, contrary to the reasonable nature with which human persons have been endowed by God.

It is wrong for religiously controlled states, say, in Islamic countries, to deny their citizens the right to freedom of religion, to practice a religion which is different from the government under which they live. Likewise, it is wrong for a state church (committed to a particular Christian denomination), a secular government (which, religiously, is supposedly neutral) and an atheistic government (which denies and excludes God from its affairs) to attempt to deny or destroy the practice of religion by its citizens. *Dignitatis Humanae* says,

[A] wrong is done when government imposes upon its people, by force or fear or other means, the profession or repudiation of any religion, or when it hinders men from joining or leaving a religious community. All the more is it a violation of the will of God and of the sacred rights of the person and the family of nations when force is brought to bear in any way in order to destroy or repress religion, either in the whole of mankind or in a particular country or in a definite community.

(Second Vatican Council, 1965a:6)

5.7.7 Intolerance

Fifth, terrorist organizations are usually intolerant. They demand uniformity; they want their members to conform to their beliefs and practices. Unity in purpose and beliefs of an organization and religion is relatively normal. For example, to be a Muslim, one must believe in the doctrines of Islam, based on the Qur'an. To be a Christian, one must believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and

the authority of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God. However, uniformity (rather than unity) of an organization can be psychologically unhealthy, even dangerous, because it does not allow for differences and breeds intolerance, even fear of those whose religious beliefs and practices are different. Swanee Hunt (Frankl, 1997:10), the United States Ambassador to Austria, said that the concentration camps of the Nazis were “created to annihilate those who were different.”

Terrorists groups are threatened by tolerance, because they wrongly believe it means “anything goes.”. On the contrary, Viktor Frankl (1967:85) writes, “Tolerance does not mean that one accepts the belief of the other; but it does mean that one respects him as a human being, with the right and freedom of choosing his own way of believing and living.” The Second Vatican Council (1965b:28) rightly declares,

Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political and even religious matters. In fact, the more deeply we come to understand their ways of thinking through such courtesy and love, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them.

This love and good will, to be sure, must in no way render us indifferent to truth and goodness. Indeed love itself impels the disciples of Christ to speak the saving truth to all men. But it is necessary to distinguish between error, which always merits repudiation, and the person in error, who never loses the dignity of being a person even when he is flawed by false or inadequate religious notions.

Tolerance does not mean all religions are equally true any more than it means all philosophical or political ideas are true. Rather, it means that another “person has a right to his or her viewpoint despite the fact that others may think it is wrong” (Beckwith, 1993). For example, the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States protects a person’s right to freedom of religion, to choose one’s own faith. However, the Amendment is not an epistemological statement, meaning that all religions are equally true, that one is just as right as another. It does not follow that if one is convinced about the truth of one’s own religion that he or she will be intolerant of adherents of other religions. Groothuis (1991) explains,

Freedom of religion and speech does not necessitate that there can be no objectively true religion or morality. A free society guarantees your right to be right – and your right to be wrong! I can try to persuade you of the truth of my convictions without using coercion. In fact, I may take it as a moral absolute that I should not coerce those I believe to be absolutely wrong.

For example, a Christian may neither like nor agree with another person's viewpoints and religious beliefs. Nevertheless, it is wrong for a Christian to attack verbally or physically those who differ from him or her. People must be allowed to hold their own views, even if they are wrong.

5.7.8 Zeal without Knowledge

Sixth, applying Paul's words to terrorist groups, they usually have "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2, NKJV). Such zeal is both morally and religiously wrong. Zeal (*ζηλος*) in itself is a neutral quality, neither good nor bad; its ethical character depends on the object to which it is directed (Murray, 1984:48). If zeal or "enthusiasm" is directed toward something positive, such as helping others, then it is good (Morris, 1988: 378). Hence, Paul says, "It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good" (Galatians 4:18, NIV). However, if zeal is directed toward deliberately killing innocent human beings, then it is bad. In short, zeal "run riot can lead to disastrous results" (Morris, 1988:379). *ζηλον θεου*, "zeal for God" which is not properly formed, that is, nourished by truth, can be dangerous, both to oneself and to others. It can lead a person to persecute, even kill, others whose religion is different from one's own.

Saul of Tarsus, before he became the apostle Paul, was a zealot. He consented to the Sanhedrin's condemnation of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (cf. Acts 7:54-58), probably meaning that Saul publicly declared Stephen's name and the crime for which he was being put to death (Bruce, 1983:173). Saul "made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison" (Acts 8:3, NKJV). To make havoc (*λυμαινο*, *lumaino*) refers to tearing apart or ravaging "a body by a wild beast" (Bruce, 1983:175). In other words, Saul attacked Christians, doing bodily harm to them, "breathing out murderous threats against" (Acts 9:1, NIV) them.

After Saul became a Christian and received the name "Paul," he confessed that he was a misguided zealot, saying, "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions" (Galatians 1:14, NASB). As a Jew, Paul admits (cf. Philippians 3:6) that he had been so zealous that he tried to "wipe out" Christianity (Barclay, 1975:60). Even though Paul meant well, believing that he was doing God's will, the apostle later realized that he was wrong, admitting, "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief" (I Timothy 1:13, NIV). Ignorance (a subjective condition) means believing that what one is doing is right when, in fact, it is wrong (the objective condition). Zeal without truth is misguided, even if a person means well.

In the days of Jesus of Nazareth, there was what would be called today a terrorist group, namely, the "zealots" (**ζηλωτης**, *zealotes*). They were a radical Jewish religious-political sect, which would use "intrigue, violence, force and deception in achieving its liberating ends" (Bratt, 1976:1036). The zealots wanted to overthrow their Roman rulers. In Palestine, the zealots resisted using Greek language and "murdered government officials" (Bratt, 1976:1037).

Around 167 B. C., the Syrians, under the leadership of Antiochus Epiphanes, attempted to destroy the Jewish religion by imposing on the Jews Greek customs and religious practices. However, the priest Mattathias of Modin and his sons, being loyal to the Jewish religion, began a counter movement called the "Maccabean revolt." In I Maccabees 2:27, Mattathias gathered the Jews around him with the words, "Let every one who is *zealous for the law* (LXX, **ζελων τω νομω**) and supports the covenant come out with me!" (Metzger, 1977: 225). At first, they were joined by another religious group of Jews called the "Hasideans" (from the Hebrew word *hasidim*, meaning "pious ones;" cf. 2:42-48). Later, however, they opposed the Maccabean movement, because it was too political (Bible, 1970: 517).

Christians, followers of Jesus Christ, are not without their zealots. Simon, one of Jesus disciples, was a zealot (cf. Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). He may have been characterized for his fiery zeal, which, undoubtedly, Jesus kept in check (Morris, 1974:125). James and John, also Jesus' disciples, (cf. Mark 3:17), were sometimes zealous in the sense of beings dangerous to others. For example, when the Samaritans did not welcome Jesus into their village (cf. Luke 9:51-53), James and John wanted to destroy them, saying, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" (Luke 9:54, NIV). "But Jesus turned and rebuked them" (Luke 9:55, NIV).

5.7.9 Suicide Bombings

The seventh characteristic of terrorism is suicide bombings in which terrorists kill themselves and non-combatants for religious or political purposes or both. The suicide bomber is regarded as a hero, a martyr, for a particular political cause and even for God.

The suicide bomber, indoctrinated by a particular ideology, believes that what he or she doing is right and will be rewarded by God. However, believing something does not make it so. In short, belief does not create reality. No matter how sincere the suicide bomber's belief (the subjective factor of the moral act) that he or she will be rewarded by God, it does not make the act of killing innocent human beings (the objective factor of the moral act) morally right. In fact, it is murder! One can be sincere (the subjective factor of the moral act) and yet be sincerely wrong (the objective factor of the moral act). If an act is right by virtue of the fact that someone believes it to be so, then no one can be morally wrong, because the person performing it believes it is right, which, philosophically, is absurd. Intentions, beliefs and convictions, all of which are subjective factors, must be tested against the premise or moral realism, a knowledge of moral reality. The premise is that deliberately killing innocent human beings is murder (always, everywhere and at all times) a crime against humanity. If that premise were not granted, then the civilized world would be in danger of collapsing.

5.8 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND RELIGIOUS WARS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE *HEREM* PRINCIPLE

5.8.1 The Moral Corruption of the Canaanite Nations and Their Judgment by the Lord

Was God himself guilty of breaking his own commandment “You shall not murder”? It seems as though he were, for several times in the Old Testament he commanded the Israelites to kill certain groups of people. As Israel, God’s people, journeyed into the Promised Land, the problem facing them was inculturation, namely, adopting the religion and ethics of the Canaanites. The Lord commanded Israel not to adopt the immoral behavior and idolatrous practices of the surrounding nations (cf. Leviticus 18:20-30).

The Canaanites had become morally and religiously corrupt. For example, they worshiped Molech, the god of the Ammonites (cf. I Kings 11:7; II Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35); sacrificed their children to Molech, burning and murdering them (cf. II Kings 3:27; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10; Ezekiel 16:20-21); committed homosexual acts (cf. Genesis 19; Leviticus 20:13; Judges 19:22) and acts of bestiality (cf. Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15-16; Deuteronomy 27:21). The Canaanites worshiped not only Molech but also Baal and Ashtareth. Baal was the male rain and fertility god of the Canaanites. Ashtareth was the female rain and fertility goddess.

Canaanite religion often involved cultic prostitution. This means that in worshipping a fertility god or goddess, a man could have sex with a woman who is not his wife or with another man; or a woman could have sex with a man who is not her husband or with another woman. Extra-biblical or extra-canonical research has confirmed that

The Bible and the Canaanite texts at Ugarit use the words qadesh and qedesha which mean 'holy one' – the first masculine, the second feminine. At Ugarit these 'holy ones' were homosexual priests and priestesses who acted as prostitutes.

We find strong Hebrew reaction against this 'cultic prostitution' in passages such as Leviticus 19:29, 'Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore,' and Deuteronomy 23:17, 'There shall

be no whore (qedesha) of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite (qadesh) of the sons of Israel.' One of Josiah's reforms was 'to break down the houses of the sodomites' (2 Kings 23:7).

(Packer, Tenney & White, 1995:130)

In fact, in Canaanite locations, archaeologists have

uncovered temples with chambers where sexual activity took place. Also, many iconographic representations of the fertility goddess with exaggerated sexual features have been discovered. The influence of the fertility cult was widespread; it was combated fiercely in Israel as alien to the covenant faith....

(Craigie & Wilson, 1996:100)

In general, there were two principles for the Israelites to follow in order to determine when and how to wage war. The first principle applied to distant nations, those that were far away from the land of Canaan. When the Israelites approached a nation, offering it "terms of peace" and it accepts them, then there would be no war. If a nation did not accept the terms, then God gave Israel permission to wage war against it, killing the men, but sparing the lives of women, children and animals (cf. Deuteronomy 20:10-15). Old Testament scholar Walter C. Kaiser Jr. (Kaiser & Bruce, 1996:235) notes that "The divine permission did not give Israel the right to run roughshod over the population and abuse their human rights and dignity." In short, it was not absolutely necessary for the Israelites to annihilate the people who lived far away from the land of Canaan. The Torah or Law of Moses, in Aquinas's (1947:II-II, q. 105, art. 3) words, "enjoined that they should use moderation in pursuing the advantage of victory, by sparing women and children, and by not cutting down fruit-trees of that country."

However, another set of rules for warfare applied to the nearby nations surrounding the Israelites, that is, the cities of the land of Canaan. Aquinas (1947:II-II, q. 105, art. 3) writes, "in the neighboring cities which had been promised to them, all were ordered to be slain, on account of their former crimes, to punish which God sent the Israelites as executor of Divine justice: for

it is written (Dt. 9:5) 'because they have done wickedly, they are destroyed at thy coming in.'" When the Israelites waged war against the Canaanite cities, they were required to destroy everything that was alive. The Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites were living too close to the Israelites. Religiously and morally, the Canaanites were in opposition to everything for which the Israelites stood. The Lord did not want his people to adopt the sinful customs of the nations (cf. Leviticus 18:24). He says, "you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I shall drive out before you ... I have abhorred them" (Leviticus 20:23, NASB). The Lord wanted to preserve for himself a holy people who worshiped him alone. That is why he commanded the Israelites to destroy the seven pagan nations (cf. Deuteronomy 20:15-18; 7:1-2). "Absolute extermination of the idolaters was the only safeguard of the Hebrews" (Haley, 1989:264).

5.8.2 Cities Placed under *Herem* in the Book of Joshua

According to God's command, the city of Jericho was *herem*, a Hebrew noun translated "under the ban" (cf. Joshua 6:17-21, esp. v. 17). *Herem* is derived from the verb *haram*, meaning "to ban, devote, dedicate; to curse; to destroy utterly; to be doomed; to be exterminated" (Baker, Rake & Kemp, 1994: 2318). In other words, "anything which might endanger the religious life of the community was put out of harm's way by being prohibited to human use; to secure this effectively it must be utterly destroyed" (in Blair, 1970:234). Today, *herem* "corresponds to the radical excision of a cancer performed by a surgeon to prevent the spread of a malignancy throughout the body" (Purkiser, 1965:251). Persons, animals, things, even an entire city, were marked for destruction. Since God gave the Israelites victory over an enemy city or nation, the first-fruits of the loot or spoils of the land were given to him in sacrifice.

The Jews not only carried out the ban (*herem*) or total warfare but it was also a common practice by Semitic peoples in antiquity (Joyce, 1975:284). The nation of Assyria often completely destroyed a city or nation in war, killing men, women and children (cf. II Kings 19:11). The Ammonite and Moabite nations completely destroyed the Meunites (cf. II Chronicles 20:23). An archaeological inscription in the Moabite Stone of Mesha, King of Mesha (cf. II Kings 3:4),

confirms the ancient warfare practice of *herem*. The stone, recording the words of Mesha says,

And Chemosh said to me, 'Go, take Nebo from Israel!' So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all, seven thousand men, boys, women, girls, and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for (the god) Ashtar-Chemosh.'

(Prichard, 1969:320b)

Other Canaanite territories were placed under the “ban” or to be “utterly destroyed” by the Israelites: Ai (cf. Joshua 8:18-26); Makkedah (cf. Joshua 10:28); Lachish (cf. Joshua 10:32); Eglon (cf. Joshua 10:35); Debir (cf. Joshua 10:39); all the cities of the Negev and the Shephelah (cf. Joshua 10:40); Hazor, Madon, Shimron, Achshaph (cf. Joshua 11:11-14) and the Benjamites of Gibeah (cf. Judges 19:22-30; 20:43-48).

Achan, a soldier of the Israelite army, was put under the ban, because he did not carry out his military orders by completely destroying everything in Jericho (cf. Joshua 7:1). Achan's disobedience was a sin, which was punishable by death. Hence, Achan and his entire family were stoned to death; their possessions, together with the loot he had taken from Jericho, were burned (cf. 7:10-12, 15-26).

The morality of the Old Testament must be judged in the light of ancient Near Eastern practices, not by today's Western moral sensibilities (Craig, 2007). However, Jesus exhibited moral sensibilities toward children long before so-called Western moral sensibilities. There is a rather broad range of meanings for the children with whom Jesus had personal contact. The singular or *παιδιον* includes a young child, a little boy, a little girl, a male child just recently born, a more advanced child; the plural or *τα παιδια* includes infants, little ones (Thayer, 1977:473). In fact, Jesus had a special love for children. For example, when the apostles attempted to dismiss the children as either unworthy or irrelevant to Jesus' life and ministry, he gladly welcomed them. Knowing the psychological value of touch as a form of affirmation and acceptance, he placed

his hands of them and even held them (cf. Matthew 19:13-14; Mark 10:16). He affirmed their dignity as members of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matthew 18:1-5). Concerned for their spiritual and physical well-being, he also taught that they have guardian angels (cf. Matthew 18:10). Jesus, then, never showed any kind of aggression toward children. Nor would he, contrary to the Old Testament times, say to his enemies, "[H]appy is he ... who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks" (Psalm 137: 8, 9, NIV).

Nevertheless, separated by thousands of years of alleged moral progress, it seems relatively easy for moderns to judge the practice of *herem*, saying that it was morally wrong. Old Testament scholars Bright and Sizoo (1953:581) explain the meaning of *herem* in the Book of Joshua, saying,

Behind this seemingly cruel practice was the conviction that whatever contaminates the life and religion of the people, leading to inevitable compromise, was to be utterly destroyed. Sin is desperately contagious; it cannot go unpunished. No half measures are effective when you deal with evil. Just as a surgeon removes at any cost every diseased portion that may endanger the life of the patient, so evil which weakens the moral fiber of man must be ruthlessly eradicated. Almost instinctively our minds shrink from attributing such action to the command of God. But one must bear in mind the conditions under which the book of Joshua was written. Compromise with foreign gods and idolatry was a real peril. The religion of Yahweh had to be preserved and kept pure at all costs if the nation was to survive. Consequently no treatment was too drastic in order to safeguard it.

Herem also involved Israel's sanctification, dedication to the one true God. Moses said to Israel, "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6, NASB; cf. 14:2; 26:18). Since Yahweh, the Lord, was holy, separated from all spiritual defilement and moral impurity, Israel had to set itself apart from all spiritual defilement and moral impurity. Scripture says, "I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy" (Leviticus 11: 44, NIV). Catholic Biblical scholar P. P. Saydon (1975:241) wrote,

The fundamental meaning of herem is 'separation, seclusion' and, in a religious sense, the separation of a thing from ordinary use and its dedication to God. Hence the biblical notion of herem is 'a thing or person irrevocably withdrawn from common use and entirely devoted to God'. This general notion may be split up into two apparently opposite, though clearly related, notions. A thing may be devoted to God either because it is agreeable to him, or because it is dangerous to the religious life of the people and therefore disagreeable to him. The first meaning naturally involves the idea of consecration, the other that of destruction. What is irrevocably devoted to God, whether a man, animal or field, can neither be sold nor redeemed. If it is a thing consecrated to God, it goes to the priests for their maintenance or for the temple-service...; if it is harmful to the religious interests, it must be utterly destroyed.

5.8.3 Yahweh's Patience or Long-Suffering

Yahweh destroyed the Canaanites through the Israelite army, which obeyed God command. This does not make him arbitrary, capricious, killing without any reason. On the contrary, God had given the Canaanites plenty of time – over 400 years – to repent of their immoral ways. He said to Abram,

Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.

(Genesis 15:13-16, NIV)

When God spoke to Abram, he was living in the land of Canaan (cf. Genesis 13:12). God predicted that the Israelites would be in Egypt for roughly 400 years (cf. Genesis 15:13; cf. Acts 7:6; Exodus 12:40). In other words, they would be delivered in the "fourth generation" (Genesis 15:16). During patriarchal days, a generation was about one hundred years. The fourth generation would be about 400 years, at which the sin of the Amorites would be complete. Another term for the Amorites was the Canaanites (Willis, 1979:238).

The phrase “the sin of the Amorites has reached its full measure” (Genesis 15:16) is significant. The Hebrew adjective translated “full measure” may also be rendered “ripe” for punishment. In other words, the Canaanites had sinned against God for so long that they had defiled themselves and the land, thus proving that they were “no longer worthy to live upon it” (Willis, 1979:238; cf. Deuteronomy 9:5). The prophetic statement in Genesis 15:16 “indicated that God would not destroy the people of the land, including those who dwelt in Jericho, until their sins were such that their guilt merited their complete destruction in judgment” (Geisler & Howe, 1992:137). Kaiser (in Kaiser & Bruce, 1996:206) rightly noted,

God waited for centuries while the Amalekites and those other Canaanite groups slowly filled up their own ... condemnation by their sinful behavior. God never acted precipitously against them; his grace and mercy waited to see if they would repent and turn from their headlong plummet into self-destruction.

God, then, had given the Canaanites more than enough time to repent, but they did not. He tolerated their sins until the Israelites came out of the Egypt under Moses and conquered the land of Canaan under Joshua. As a just judgment for their sins, God destroyed them, ridding the land of Canaan of moral and spiritual evil (Bible, 1978:29).

5.8.4 The Killing of the Midianites and Amalekites

The Midianites led Israel astray from the worship of the one true God at Baal-Peor, where they worshiped the gods of the Midianites (cf. Numbers 25:1-9). Thus, the Lord commanded the Israelites to go to war with the Midianites (cf. Numbers 31:2). The Israelites defeated the Midianites and burned their cities (cf. Numbers 31:1-8, 10). The Midianite women and female children were captured. However, the male children were killed (cf. Numbers 31:17). Geisler and Howe (1992:110-111) explain why God commanded the Israelites to destroy the Midianites,

The abominable nature of the influence which the Midianites had upon Israel in leading them into idolatry merited the destructive judgment of God. God dealt severely and decisively with this cancer. The moral justification for this action is found in the fact that God has the right to give and take life. Since the wages of sin is death, and the Midianites engaged in a terrible sin, they justly reaped the consequences of God's vengeance.

Because God is absolutely just, he has a moral reason or justification for punishing sin, which is contrary to his absolutely holy nature (cf. Deuteronomy 32:4). The Israelites did not take matters into their own hands, as it were, and kill the Midianites. Rather, it was at God's direction that the Israelites attacked the Midianites. The prophet Moses said, "go against Midian to execute the Lord's vengeance on Midian" (Numbers 31:3, NASB; cf. Deuteronomy 32:35).

God had sent the prophet Samuel to King Saul with this message,

Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.'³ Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'

(I Samuel 15:2-3, NASB)

When the Israelites were traveling through the desert toward the land of Canaan, the Amalekites attacked the end of the line of marchers and killed them (cf. Deuteronomy 25:17-18; Numbers 14:39-45). Because the Amalekites "did not fear God," they murdered the Israelites (cf. Deuteronomy 25:18, NASB). However, in attacking God's chosen people, the Amalekites insulted the one, true living God (Kaiser & Bruce, 1996:207). As a result, "[T]he Lord said to Moses, 'Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven'" (Exodus 17:14, NASB). After the Israelites finally entered Canaan, God's prophet Moses commanded them to "blot out" the Amalekites (cf. Deuteronomy 25:19, NASB). Saul, the King of Israel, did not completely destroy the Amalekites, thus disobeying God's command (cf. I Samuel 15:7-9). They were "sinners," guilty of

murdering God's people (cf. 15:18). He wanted to preserve Israel from the corrupting influence of the surrounding nations. So Samuel put Agag, the King of the Amalekites, to death (cf. 15:32-33) and Saul was stripped of his kingship (cf. 15:26). Over four hundred years later, David fought the Amalekites and defeated them (cf. II Samuel 1:1). However, they were not completely destroyed until the days of Hezekiah, around three hundred years later (cf. II Chronicles 4:41-43).

5.8.5 Killing Children in War

Through the prophet Moses, God commanded the Israelites to kill the children of the enemy nation. Sihon, King of the Amorites, refused Moses' offer of peaceful passage through their territory (cf. Numbers 21:21-32). So the Israelites went to war against the Amorites and "utterly destroyed the men, women and children of every city" (Deuteronomy 2:34; cf. 3:6). The Israelites, under Joshua's leadership, went to war against the city of Jericho and "utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old" (Joshua 6:21; cf. Judges 21:10). Saul, the King of Israel, was told by the prophet Samuel to destroy utterly the Amalekites: "man and woman, child and infant" (I Samuel 15:3).

However, the Israelites did not always slaughter children in war (cf. Numbers 31:17-18; Deuteronomy 20:10-14). In fact, Kaiser (1996:235) warns that

it is wrong to universalize the provision of Deuteronomy 20:13, with its principle of herem, the involuntary dedication for total destruction of all those so marked out by God. The conditions of total destruction of all living things and possessions (except what could not burn, such as gold, silver or iron, which was to be put into the tabernacle or temple) applied only to the nation of Canaan. The only other peoples to be involved in the herem were the Amalekites, for the reasons announced in the Bible (1 Sam 15:2-3).

5.8.6 Possible Reasons for Killing the Canaanite Children

Scripture teaches that “God is love” (I John 4:8), “the Lord is good” (Psalm 100:5) and he is “the God of peace” (Romans 15:33). But if God is good, loving and a God of peace, then how could he command the Israelites to kill the Canaanite children. Why would he issue such a command? Religiously and morally, the Canaanites were corrupt. They “were the most morally depraved culture on earth at that time” (Deere, 1985: 276). Even one Canaanite “ – even a child left alive – had the potential of introducing an idolatry and immorality which would spread rapidly among the Israelites and bring about the destruction of God’s own people” (Deere, 1985:276). The complete extermination of the Canaanites is comparable to removing a cancer that could spread to all Israelite society, eventually destroying any good in it (Kaiser & Bruce, 1996:207). Thus, “it was impossible for pure faith and worship to be maintained in Israel except by the complete elimination of the Canaanites themselves, at least in those areas which the Hebrews were to occupy” (Archer, 1974:280).

The first possible reason for the killing of the Canaanite children was that God spared them from the spiritually and morally corrupting influence of their society. It “was an act of God’s mercy to their souls to take them into His holy presence from such an unholy environment” (Geisler & Howe, 1992:138). The death of the Canaanite children was, ultimately, a merciful act of God. “For if the child died before reaching the age of accountability it is likely that his or her eternal destiny would have been made secure in heaven” (Deere, 1985:276). Christian apologist Ronald A. Iwasko (1973:104) says,

If our earthly life were the totality of our existence, then the death of the innocent would be an unthinkable act for a righteous judge. But if for the righteous, as the Bible claims, there is life after death in an existence far superior to the earthly (as Paul claims in Philippians 1:21-23), then death for the innocent is righteous judgment indeed.

The second reason for killing the Canaanite children is the sovereignty of God. Is God guilty of murder in commanding the Israelites to kill the Canaanite children? His command to kill them seems to contradict his command "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13, NIV)? No! To say that every ethical prohibition in Scripture must apply to God as it does to humans is to confuse the Cause with the effect, the Creator with the creature, the Infinite with the finite. In other words, it confuses two radically different categories of being: God and humans. Ontologically, in terms of being, the *analogia entis*, the "analogy of being," means that there is a similarity or likeness between the Creator and creature, God and humans. However, the two categories of being are not identical, exactly the same. Hence, in Psalm 50:21, God said to his people who erred in creating him in their own image, "you thought I was altogether like you" (NIV) or "you thought that I was just like you" (NASB). On the contrary, although similar in many ways, there is also an infinite, qualitative difference between God and his creatures. That is why, the Lord, Yahweh, says to Israel,

'[M]y thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'

(Isaiah 55:8-9, NIV)

Because God is God, that is, the Ultimate, Sovereign, Infinitely Wise and All-Knowing Creator, he, according to his will and purpose, gives life to human beings and takes it from them. Both, ultimately, are under his control. Scripture says, "The Lord kills and makes alive; he brings down to Sheol and raises up" (I Samuel 2:11, NASB). The Lord "kills" is not a translation of the Hebrew word *ratsach*, which is used in Exodus 20:13 and translated "murder." Rather, "kills" is a translation of the Hebrew word *muth*. Yahweh, the Lord, says, "See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39, NASB; cf. II Kings 5:7). "I," the Lord says, "put to death," also translates the Hebrew word *muth* (Thomas, 1981: 1546). In other words, God does not murder; only humans do, because he is "not subject

to the same moral obligations and prohibitions” as humans are (Craig, 2007). For example,

I have no right to take an innocent life. For me to do so would be murder. But God has no such prohibition. He can give and take life as He chooses. We all recognize this when we accuse some authority who presumes to take life as ‘playing God.’ Human authorities arrogate to themselves rights which belong only to God.

(Craig, 2007)

Since God is sovereign, ultimately in control of all things, he can use both natural and supernatural occurrences to accomplish his will. He can either allow (his indirect will) or command (his direct or specific will) things to take place. God can use indirect or natural causes, such as hurricanes, famines, droughts or any kind of diseases, to accomplish his will. For example, after suffering several natural tragedies, especially the death of all his sons, daughters and grandchildren (cf. Job 1:13-19), Job responded by acknowledging the sovereignty of God, saying, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21, NASB). God’s will also can be accomplished directly by commanding the Israelites to kill the Canaanite children. Hence, in viewing the killing of the Canaanite children in the light of the sovereignty of God it is correct to assert, along with Thomas Aquinas (1947:I-II, q. 94, art. 5),

All men alike, both guilty and innocent, die the death of nature: which death of nature is inflicted by the power of God on account of original sin, according to 1 Kgs. 2:6 [1 Samuel 2:6]: ‘The Lord killeth and maketh alive.’ Consequently, by the command of God, death can be inflicted on any man; guilty or innocent, without any injustice whatever.

Therefore, “God is sovereign over life ... and can order (that is, command) its end according to His will and in view of the creature’s ultimate good” (Geisler & Howe, 1992:138). The *herem* principle, then, does not contradict the Fifth Commandment.

5.8.7 The Difference between Muslim and Christian Conceptions of God and Holy War

The Muslim concept of God is radically different from the Christian view of God. According to orthodox Muslim theology, God is absolute will. His will is expressed in what he does, he effects (Geisler, 1999:370). Pope Benedict XVI (2006) notes, "for Muslim teaching, God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality." In short, Muslims teach theological voluntarism, which means "Something is good because God wills it" (Geisler and Saleeb, 2002).

Philosophically, nature or essence refers to what something is, that is, the kind of being it is or properties inherent in the very being itself. "For traditional Islam, ... God does not have an essence, at least not a knowable one" (Geisler, 1999:371). If God does not have a will which reflects or conforms to his nature; or, if God does not have a nature, which is something that he is, such as God *is* love, God *is* good and God *is* truth, then he could will or choose otherwise. If God so willed, adultery could be right (Pope Benedict XVI, 2006). If God so willed, error could be truth. If God so willed, bad could be good. Is God good because he wills the good or does he will the good because he is good, the good conforming to what he is, his nature?

Christians teach theological essentialism, which means that there is a "nature or essence in God according to which he must act" (Geisler, 1999:371). In one sense essentialism agrees with Muslim voluntarism that ethical principles are an expression of God's will. However, in another sense, essentialism differs from voluntarism in that ethical principles "are rooted in his [God's] unchangeable nature. Thus, God cannot will anything that is contrary to his essentially good moral nature" (Geisler, 1999:218). Craig (2007) observes, "in Islam God's omnipotence trumps everything.... He is therefore utterly arbitrary in His dealing with mankind. By contrast, Christians hold that God's holy and loving nature determines what He commands."

The Holy Wars in the Old Testament are not right because they were an expression of God's power, commanded by an omnipotent being who does anything he wants to humans. On the contrary, "God's will is rational, not arbitrary, because it flows from his nature," which is good (Kreeft, 1999:43).

In at least two respects, the killing of the Canaanites is different from Islamic jihad. First, Geisler and Saleeb (2002) note that while orthodox Muslims can declare jihad today against infidels or unbelievers, "The Old Testament command was to kill only a specific group of people (the Canaanites) at a specific time (in Joshua's day)." Second, many orthodox Muslims use violence to spread their faith, dividing the world into broad categories: the House of Submission and the House of War." The House of Submission refers to territories which have been brought into submission to Allah. The House of War refers to territories which have not been bought into submission to Allah (Craig, 2007). "By contrast," Craig (2007) says,

the conquest of Canaan represented God's just judgement upon those peoples. The purpose was not at all to get them to convert to Judaism! War was not being used as an instrument of propagating the Jewish faith. Moreover, the slaughter of the Canaanites represented an unusual historical circumstance, not a regular means of behavior.

5.8.8 Understanding the *Herem* Principle in the Light of Progressive Revelation

An understanding of progressive revelation is necessary to interpret correctly the *herem* principle in the Old Testament. God did not reveal all his truth at once to the Jewish people. Rather, he only revealed what the people, at a particular time, could understand (cf. John 16:12). In other words, in the Scriptures, God's truth is progressively or gradually revealed to human beings as their capacity to understand it developed (Floyd, 1981: 7). "Although true, the books of the Old Testament ... contain some things which are incomplete and temporary" (Second Vatican Council, 1965c:15). The Old Testament is not false in its moral and doctrinal teachings. However, it is not all the truth which God willed to reveal to humankind (Archer, 1974:460). In short, the Old Testament, the Hebrew or Jewish Scriptures, is a true but incomplete revelation of God.

The revelation of God reached its climax with the completion of the writings of the New Testament (Griffith Thomas, 1957:17-18).

The apostle Paul says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). The Greek noun (τελος, *telos*) translated "end" may also be rendered "fulfilment" (Bible, 1985: 1882), "termination" (Wuest, 1961:369) or "goal" (Morris, 1988:380). In short, "Christ is the goal and the termination of the law at the same time" (Arndt, Bauer & Gingrich, 1979:819). Paul makes the same point elsewhere, saying, "the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Galatians 3:24-25, NASB). The Law was a "tutor" (παιδαγωγος, *paidagogos*), literally meaning, "child-leader." God "reared" or "brought up" the Jewish people with the Law of Moses, the Torah, the first five book of the Old Testament. God designed it to fulfil its purpose by leading his people to Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of the Law. Thomas Aquinas (1947:I-II, q. 107, art. 2) comments,

the New Law [Testament] is compared to the Old [Testament] as the perfect to the imperfect. Now everything perfect fulfils that which is lacking in the imperfect. And accordingly the New Law fulfils the Old by supplying that which was lacking in the Old Law.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches progressive revelation, saying, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2, NASB). The author of Hebrews contrasts God's revelation in the past with his revelation in the present (cf. 1:1a). The words "our fathers" refer to the Jewish people of the Old Testament. They received God's revelation from the prophets. The words "the prophets" refer to all of God's spokesmen throughout Old Testament history, not only the major and the minor prophets. "The prophets," then, represent the entire scope of Old Testament revelation.

The author uses two Greek adverbs to teach the gradual or progressive nature of revelation in the Old Testament (cf. 1:1b). The first (πολυμερως, *polymeros*) is translated "in many portions;" the second (πολυτροπως, *polytropos*), "in many ways." The phrase "In many portions" suggests that God's revelation in the past, in the Old Testament, was occasional and fragmentary, in pieces or

parts. Thus, Old Testament revelation was incomplete, lacking the fullness of truth (Hewitt, 1960:49).

God's final word, his definitive revelation to humankind, is his Son, Jesus Christ. Hence, "in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" (Hebrews 1:2a). Griffith Thomas (1977:21) writes,

In marked contrast to the Old Testament, Christ is described as the One in Whom God has spoken.... Instead of a fragmentary, His is a complete revelation; instead of being temporary, it is permanent; instead of being preparatory, it is final; and instead of coming through subordinates, it is embodied in One Who is supreme. Thus the revelation in Christ is seen to be superior to the Old Testament.... While both the Old Testament and the New are divine revelations, there is at once continuity and contrast.

The phrase "these last days" signifies the beginning of the last phase of human, which began with the incarnation (cf. I Peter 1:20; Hebrews 9:26; I Corinthians 10:11). Jesus commissioned his followers to put in writing his divine revelation, namely, the books which constitute the New Testament (cf. John 14:25-26; 16:12-14; 17:14, 20). Because Christ is the final word of God, then God's revelation before Jesus' coming is incomplete. In other words, the Old Testament needs both supplementation from and elaboration by the New Testament.

If the exegete or interpreter of Scripture does not understand the principle of progressive revelation, then he or she is liable to find contradictions between the Old and New Testaments. Augustine of Hippo (Ramm, 1970:104) writes, "distinguish the times and you will harmonize scripture." He means that one must interpret Scripture in the context of progressive revelation. Such an interpretive framework "answers many of the objections offered against the customs and practices of the people under the earlier and less perfect periods of revelation" (Wiley, 1940:27).

5.8.9 Evaluating the *Herem* Principle in the Light of Modern Western Cultural Sensitivities

During Old Testament days, out of all the peoples of the earth, Israel was God's chosen people. The Jewish nation was a theocracy, meaning that the government with its laws, moral teachings, and worship were revealed by God. Israel, then, was a nation ruled by God through his prophets, priests, judges and kings. This is critical to understanding the *herem* principle.

The Book of Joshua – with its accounts of the total destruction of the Canaanites – was written, by conservative estimates; between 1400-1370 B.C. Ancient rules for warfare in the Old Testament differ from those of the 20th and 21st centuries A.D. Hence, it is easy to judge the wars of the ancient Jewish people in the light of modern Western morality. However, Joyce (1975:284) rightly observes,

Their actions and customs reflect the harsh moral codes of the primitive times in which they lived. After all, they had just begun the long journey that would lead to the perfect law of Christ.

Likewise, theologian John L. McKenzie (Joyce, 1975:283) says,

[I]n Joshua and Judges we have monuments of the most primitive faith of Israel, primitive both in the sense that it is early and in the sense that it is less developed. The books should be read as the first stages in Israel's religious adventure of faith, to read them in any other way is to evaluate them by a false standard.

When the Book of Joshua and the other books of the Pentateuch and Old Testament were written, God's revelation to Israel was partial, incomplete. However, New Testament doctrine and ethics are more advanced than the Old, because more light or knowledge from God is revealed in the New than in the Old. Therefore, a higher ethic is required of Christians than the Jewish people in Joshua's time.

It must be borne in mind that when God commands the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites, it was “a special circumstance carried out only during the initial conquering of the land. It [was] not a general rule to be applied in every armed conflict” (Ferguson, 1996). Under normal circumstances, when the Israelites won a war, they were allowed to loot their enemies’ possessions. However, when the Israelites defeated certain Canaanite cities, the Lord prohibited Israelites from taking any of the loot from the cities (cf. Joshua 6:18-19, 21; Deuteronomy 7:25-26; 13:15-17; I Samuel 15:3, 9-11). Thus, the ban or *herem* principle “imposed a moral restraint against the looting and excesses which were the normal more terrible accompaniments of the warfare of the times” (Blair, 1970:234). Thus, the killing “represented an unusual historical circumstance, not a regular means of behavior” (Craig, 2007).

The *herem* principle does not contradict God’s commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13), because, in ancient Israel, “murder” (Hebrew, *rasah*) did not apply to killing in war, especially when the killing was at the command of God (Iwasko, 1973:107). Special conditions prevailed during Moses’ and Joshua’s time. For example, God’s covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai established the Jewish nation as a theocracy, “a unique combination of what is now called ‘church’ and ‘state.’ Membership in the people is both political and religious, and thus ‘citizens’ are under obligation to be faithful in observing the covenant” (Dennis & Gruden, 2008:391). God commanded the Israelites to kill the Canaanites in order to establish a theocracy in the land of Canaan. As a theocracy, God ruled his own people, the nation of Israel, by means of prophets, priests, judges and kings.

God’s command to annihilate the Canaanite cities was unique, unusual, because no other nation in the world is a theocracy in the strictly biblical sense (Vorster, 2004:213-219). Human governments today are different from the Israelite government in Old Testament times. “Christians are not to carry out this kind of warfare, because the people of God are no longer identified with a particular nation-state” (Dennis & Gruden, 2008:391). Therefore, “The change in the form of God’s kingdom means that many passages that applied to Israel” do not apply today (Clouse, 1984:1153). In short, the *herem* principle is not God’s will for today.

5.9 SUMMARY: A CRITIQUE OF THE NOTIONS OF TRUTH AND MORALITY IN THE DEMOCRACY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

5.9.1 The Loss of the Sense of the Sanctity of Human Life in the USA

Scripture says, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants" (Deuteronomy 30:19, NASB). Ethically, the passage is applied by Pope John Paul II (1995:28, 50) to contrast two kinds of cultures: "'the culture of life' and 'the culture of death.'" The United States is becoming a homicidal nation, "a culture of death," with its laws allowing its citizens to choose death over life. Many Americans seem to be divided into two groups in a struggle for life and death, which is, essentially, a clash between two cultures or two world views.

Many physicians or doctors who once took an oath to preserve human life are now also destroying it, either directly by administering a lethal dose of medicine to kill a terminally ill patient or indirectly by providing the patient with the medicine or other medical means to destroy himself or herself. Doctors have killed millions of unborn human beings in their mothers' wombs.

"Each man, woman, and child is of great value ... because of his or her origin" (Schaeffer & Koop, 1983:113). In other words, each is created or made in the image of God "rather than as a collection of molecules with no unique value" (Schaeffer & Koop, 1983: 133). Irenaeus of Lyons (Pope John Paul II, 1995:34) describes the sublime dignity of human person, saying, "Man, living man, is the glory of God." Schaeffer and Koop (1983:133) write, "People are special and human life is sacred, whether or not we admit it. Every life is precious and worthwhile in itself – not only to us human beings but also to God."

However, as the United States is becoming a more secularized nation, it is losing the sense of the dignity and sanctity of human life, related to the traditional Judeo-Christian teaching that humans are made in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:5-6). Thus, with the eclipse of God, comes the

eclipse of the sacredness of being human. Hence, there is nothing transcendent (spiritual or God-like) about the human person.

However, to lose sight of the sanctity of human life is also to lose sight of the meaning of one's own humanity. In fact, holding to a belief in the sanctity of human life is indispensable in standing against the onslaught of attacks against the intrinsic dignity of the human person. Schaeffer and Koop (1983:132) comment,

Without the uniqueness and inherent dignity of each human being, no matter how old or young, sick or well, resting on the fact that each person is made in the image of God, there is no sufficient foundation to build on as we resist the loss of humanness in our generation.

In killing another innocent human being, one is not merely killing a highly evolved animal, another member of the same species, but an image-bearer of God, one who has inestimable value (Schaeffer & Koop, 1983:113).

5.9.2 The Moral Poverty of the United States

Materially, America is one of the most wealthy nations in the world. But morally, it is one of the poorest nations in the world, because it does not recognize that an unborn child is a human being. Mother Teresa (1982) stood before the intellectuals at Harvard University and said,

[T]oday [it is] unbelievable that the mother herself murders her own child, afraid of having to feed one more child, afraid to educate one more child. The child must die. This is one of the greatest poverties. A nation, people, family that allows that, that accepts that, they are the poorest of the poor.

Mother Teresa was booed by the audience at Harvard for her remarks about abortion. In her acceptance speech for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, after referring to her Sisters' and her own fight against poverty and suffering in Eastern countries, Mother Teresa (1979) said, "I found the poverty of the West

so much more difficult to remove.” She was not merely referring to physical poverty but also moral and spiritual poverty.

5.9.3 Democracy: Characteristics of a Democratic Society

Freedom is a prerequisite of a democratic society. In other words, for a government to be of the people, by the people and for the people, its citizens must be free. In being free, they also have the right to vote “in elections for lawmakers and government officials” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002:1) and, without any violence or political manipulation, replace them in peaceful elections (Pope John Paul II, 1991:46). As citizens in a democracy, men and women are responsible for making positive contributions to their society “in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas,” thus making it a better place in which to live (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002:1). In a democratic society, its citizens advocate and defend such values as “public order and peace, freedom and equality, respect for human life and for the environment, justice and solidarity” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002:1).

In matters of taste, such as cuisine, social manners and customs, styles in dress, and artistic styles, there should be tolerance of cultural diversity and a legitimate pluralism within a democratic society (Adler, 1990:2-3, 138, 141). Matters of taste also pertain to many positive laws, which are created by legislative bodies, because they involve “contingent circumstances of a particular society at a particular time” (Adler, 1990:140). Hence, “We should not expect all societies to adopt the same rules of positive law” (Adler, 1990:140).

In a democratic society, tolerance is a virtue, allowing for a healthy sense of pluralism in which different views compete for acceptance in the marketplace of free ideas. Tolerance promotes pluralism, which, rightly understood, does not mean that all ideas are equally true nor does it mean that all lifestyles are equally right. Even if a tolerant person does not agree with the views of others, he or she recognizes their political right to be free to express them.

A simplistic notion of democracy in the United States is that one point of view is just as true as another, resulting in an erroneous notion of pluralism; one lifestyle is just as right as another, resulting in moral relativism (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002:2). Many Americans accept a philosophical error, namely, "It is wrong to judge the beliefs of others." In philosophy, a judgment is something that the human mind does; specifically, it is an act of the mind that either affirms or denies the existence of something, a state of affairs. For example, "The sky is blue" or "The sky is not blue;" "All human beings are equal" or "All human beings are not equal" and "Abortion is right" or "Abortion is wrong" (Centore, 2008). The statement "It is wrong to judge the beliefs of others" is self-defeating, because the statement itself judges (says it is wrong) the beliefs of another, namely, the person who judges the beliefs of others. In short, it is a judgment against judging.

In the USA, there is another simplistic view, which is "There are no objective values." An objective value is something that is really morally good or really morally bad, independent of what the individual thinks or feels. The statement "There are no objective values" is self-defeating or self-refuting, because the very denial of objective value presupposes that there is value in making that denial. In other words, the person values, believes that it is really good or really right, for him or her to deny all objective values (Geisler, 1999:540).

5.9.4 Freedom Based on Truth

As a democracy, the United States prizes or highly values freedom, and rightly so. However, a proper understanding of freedom is based truth, especially a correct anthropology. Pope John Paul II (1993:86) says, "Freedom ... is rooted in the truth about man" that is, the human person. Knowing the truth is a condition for true freedom, as Jesus says, "[Y]ou shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32, NKJV). Freedom is so connected to truth that "there can be no freedom apart from or in opposition to the truth" (Pope John Paul II, 1993:96). Without truth or in opposition to truth, a person only has an "illusory freedom" (Pope John Paul II, 1979:12). To choose freely against the truth is to erode or slowly lose one's freedom (Dulles, 1995).

A person, then, is not free “from” the truth but always and only free “in” the truth (Pope John Paul II, 1993:64). Thus, “only the freedom which submits to the Truth leads the human person to his true good” (in Pope John Paul II, 1993:84). Moral and political freedom, rightly understood, is related to reality, objective truth. Theologically, stated, freedom is based on God’s order or design of reality. However, freedom divorced from reality results in disorder, both in the human person and society. Nevertheless, as was made clear in **5.7.6** in the thesis, even the Christian notion of truth cannot be imposed on others. Rather, it should be proposed to them, so that they may either assent to it, dissent from it, remain neutral or even indifferent toward it.

5.9.5 Democratic Tyranny

The moral value of a democracy “is not automatic, but depends on conformity to the moral law to which it, like every other form of human behaviour, must be subject” (Pope John Paul II, 1995:70). This moral principle applies to the United States of America. Although it has condemned tyrannical governments, which murder and deny the human rights, it is in danger of a tyranny of its own, namely, “democratic tyranny.” Theologian Joyce Little (1995:163) says,

The United States of America has often been portrayed as a beacon of light in a dark world of tyranny – and to a large extent that has been true over the past two hundred years. But the United States in particular and the West in general are in grave danger of succumbing to the forces of tyranny themselves. A new notion of freedom as the right to do whatever one wishes now endangers our societies, leading to the rejection of all authority, the assertion of the right to define good and evil for ourselves.

Democratic tyranny is based on a denial – either implicit or explicit – of objective truth and morality. In other words, “an objective truth shared by all is de facto unattainable,” there is no such thing as real right and wrong (Pope John Paul II, 1995:69). For example, in American democracy, truth and morality can be determined by a majority vote. For example, Congress, the legislative branch of government, makes law for the nation if and when its two chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate, both pass a law by majority

votes. Similarly, the highest judicial branch of government, the Supreme Court, makes laws by a majority vote of the Justices. However,

Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends.

(Pope John Paul II, 1991:46)

Democracy based on ethical relativism, a denial of absolute moral values, can be a form of tyranny, the tyranny of the majority, the majority of people rules over the minority, what the majority wants is more important than what is morally right. In short, the might of the majority triumphs over the truth of the minority. For example, many legislators or law-makers in the USA create laws which undermine the sanctity of life and, thus, pave the way for the legal justification of killing innocent human beings in abortion, infanticide and euthanasia in its forms of assisted and physician-assisted suicide. Such legislation is contrary to a true democracy, which is "based on the true and solid foundation of non-negotiable ethical principles [moral absolutes], which are the underpinning of life in society" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002:3). The non-negotiable ethical principle, which has become negotiable in the USA is an innocent person's inalienable right to life, from the moment of conception to the time of death. Pope John Paul II (1995:70), a critic of democratic relativism, writes,

It is true that history has known cases where crimes have been committed in the name of 'truth.' But equally grave crimes and radical denials of freedom have also been committed and are still being committed in the name of 'ethical relativism.' When a parliamentary or social majority decrees that it is legal, at least under certain conditions, to kill unborn human life, is it not really making a 'tyrannical' decision with regard to the weakest and most defenceless of human beings? Everyone's conscience rightly rejects those crimes against humanity ... [in the 20th century]. But would these crimes cease to be crimes if, instead of being committed by unscrupulous tyrants, they were legitimated by popular consensus?

A true democracy (a government of the people, by the people and for the people) is based on a correct anthropology, a true understanding of the human person, his or her dignity or worth and the inalienable right to innocent human life which issues from that dignity (Pope John Paul II, 1991:46). The commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13) presupposes the right to life, which, in turn, presupposes the sanctity of human life.

A democracy which rejects moral absolutes, objective, universal moral values can become a form of totalitarianism, which is precisely what democratic governments condemn (Pope John Paul II, 1991:46). Theologian Avery Dulles (1995) explains why,

[T]he human person, as the visible image of the invisible God, is by nature the subject of rights that no individual, group, class, nation, or state may violate. Where the transcendent source of human dignity is denied, the way lies open for totalitarianism and other forms of despotism, in which naked power takes over, so that the interests of a particular person or group are imposed on the rest of society.

Instead of a State dictatorship, the collective power of majority, the will of the people becomes the tyrant, trampling upon the inalienable rights of the minority, with no regard for objective truth and morality. The "will of the people," which is so often invoked in American democracy, becomes, to borrow a phrase from Friedrich Nietzsche, "the will to power." In other words, "might (the collective power of the majority) makes right." However, the "will of the people" must conform to the truth, to what is morally right, not to what most people want.

5.9.6 The Primary Duty of a Democracy

The primary duty of a democracy is recognizing every person's dignity, respecting his or her human rights and protecting every innocent individual's inalienable right to life, especially the weakest and most vulnerable individuals (Pope John Paul II, 1995:101). As a democracy, the United States of America should promote a sensitivity to and respect for the unborn child, the terminally ill and elderly persons. Since human civilization is an on-going process, there still

is hope for America to reject its acceptance of a quality of life ethic and return to an acceptance of the sanctity of human life ethic. Mother Teresa (1994b) said,

America can become a sign of peace for the world. From here, a sign of care for the weakest of the weak – the unborn child – must go out to the world. If you become a burning light of justice and peace in the world, then really you will be true to what the founders of this country stood for.

5.9.7 Roe. v. Wade: An American Tragedy

Former President Ronald Reagan (1984:18) rightly observed, “We cannot diminish the value of one category of human life – the unborn – without diminishing the value of all human life.” This, however, is precisely what *Roe v. Wade* did in 1973. It was an attack on the premise of a civilized nation, which, in principle, allows the weakest and most vulnerable members of the human species to live. Mother Teresa (1994b) asks, “if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?” She wrote (Mother Teresa, 1994a) to the Supreme Court of the United States,

*no one in the world who prizes liberty and human rights can feel anything but a strong kinship with America. Yours is the one great nation in all of history that was founded on the precept of equal rights and respect for all humankind, for the poorest and weakest of us as well as the richest and strongest....
Yet there has been one infinitely tragic and destructive departure from those American ideals in recent memory. It was this Court's own decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) to exclude the unborn child from the human family. You ruled that a mother, in consultation with her doctor, has broad discretion, guaranteed against infringement by the United States Constitution, to choose to destroy her unborn child.*

The legalization of abortion in 1973 also contributed to undermining respect for the sanctity of human life. But in order for a society to be civilized fully, there must be respect for human life. It helps promote peace and safety among people. On March 20, 1997, Congressman Henry J. Hyde (Mirek, 2007), formerly representing the 6th District of Illinois, said,

Most of the familiar translations of the Bible render the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' A more accurate translation of the Hebrew text would read, 'Thou shalt not do murder' which is to say, 'Thou shalt not take a life wantonly for the purposes of convenience or problem solving or economic benefit, nor trade a human life for any lesser value.' The commandment in the Decalogue against doing murder is not sectarian dogma; its parallel is found in every moral code in human history. Why? Because it's been understood for millennia that the prohibition against wanton killing is the foundation of civilization. There can be no civilized life in a society that sanctions wanton killing. There can be no civil society when the law makes the weak, the defenseless and the inconvenient expendable. There can be no real democracy if the law denies the sanctity of every human life. The founders of our Republic knew this. That's why they pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor to the proposition that every human being has an inalienable right to life.

A civilized society should not pass laws for medical doctors to kill a woman's child by abortion, nor should it allow medical doctors to kill terminally adults, to allow citizens to kill themselves, to allow pregnant women, in the privacy of their homes, to take abortifacient medication (RU-486) to kill their own children, to allow medical doctors to kill a baby that is partially born (partial-birth abortion). Mother Teresa (1994a) reminded the Supreme Court that

The Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany ... ruled that 'the unborn child is entitled to its rights to life independently of acceptance by its mother; this is an elementary and inalienable right that emanates from the dignity of the human being.' Germany in 1993 was able to recognize the sanctity of human life. You must weep that your own government, at present, seems blind to this truth.

It is the firm conviction of many Americans, as it is for people in all parts of the world, that children in the 21st century should be able to grow up in a better America than the one of the 20th century, a "kinder, gentler nation," a "civilization of love." One of the ways that can be accomplished is by a constitutional amendment recognizing every human being's inalienable right to life from the moment of conception to the moment of death. Therefore, it is

urgently necessary, for the future of society and the development of a sound democracy, to rediscover those essential and innate human and moral values which flow from the very truth of the human being and express and safeguard the dignity of the person: values which no individual, no majority and no State can

ever create, modify or destroy, but must only acknowledge, respect and promote.

(Pope John Paul II, 1995:71)

5.9.8 Patriotism and Criticising One's Country

In summarizing this chapter, the author has criticized several unethical laws and policies of the United States of America. However, this is not to be understood as a lack of love for one's country. The author is, in fact, patriotic. Basically, there are two notions of patriotism in the USA: the one is rational and the other is irrational. Misguided patriotism supports -- right or wrong -- the laws and policies of America. However, blind, mindless or uncritical acceptance of whatever a government says or does is not patriotism. Rather, it is "patriolatry," which is a form of idolatry, putting government in the place of God. (Geisler, 1989a:241).

A patriot loves his or her country while at the same time carefully watching and evaluating it. When it is right, a patriot supports and praises it. However, when it is wrong, a patriot criticizes it, seeking to correct and change it for the better (Eidsmoe, 1984:41). Even the prophet Isaiah criticizes his own government for enacting unjust laws (cf. Isaiah 10:1). Therefore, it is patriotic to criticize one's government when its policies are wrong or it passes unjust laws. Former Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas (in Whitehead & Schaeffer, 1985: 33) rightly said,

From our earliest history, we have insisted that each of us is and must be free to criticize the government, however brashly; even to advocate overthrow of the government itself. We have insisted upon freedom of speech and of the press and, as the First Amendment to the Constitution puts it, upon "the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

6.0 CONCLUSION

Throughout the thesis, I have given a biblical and philosophical interpretation of Exodus 20:13 in the light of contemporary moral issues relating to life and death in the USA. Each chapter of the thesis builds upon and is a logical development of the previous chapter. I have elaborated on and defended the proposition stated in the Introduction to the thesis, namely, while all murder is killing, not all killing is murder (cf. **2.3.1**). For example, I have shown that killing in self-defence is not murder (cf. **2.4** and **2.5**); hence, demonstrating that all killing is not murder.

I have defended the central theoretical argument of my thesis, which is that only the Fifth Commandment, properly interpreted, and applied to current moral issues, can protect and promote the sanctity and inviolability of innocent human life. In making my argument, I have given several critiques of other secular ethical systems which attempt to undermine or deny an innocent person's right to life, which is presupposed in Exodus 20:13.

Throughout the thesis, I have maintained that the prohibition against murder is a moral absolute, applying to all times, in all places and for all people (cf. **3.0**). In **2.0**, I explained the meaning of *rasah* in Exodus 20:13 and in the total context of sacred Scripture as "the deliberate and direct act of killing an innocent human being" (cf. **2.3.1** and **2.4.2**). In the most philosophical section of the thesis (cf. **3.0**), I defended the proposition that there are moral absolutes (cf. **3.6.1** and **3.6.2**) and that their ontological source and epistemological basis is the Judeo-Christian God revealed in sacred Scripture (cf. **3.8.1** and **3.8.2**). Even post-modernist attempts to deny moral absolutes are self-defeating, because they usually affirm some kind of moral absolute in the process of denying absolutes (cf. **3.6.5** to **3.6.9**).

I have defended an innocent person's right to life theologically, based on God's moral principles revealed in sacred Scripture (cf. **4.0**); anthropologically, based on the natural moral law inscribed by God in the human person (cf. Romans 2:14-15); internationally, based on the legal recognition of that right by the nations of the world, especially the United Nations (cf. **5.1.4**).

In chapter **5**, the longest chapter and heart of the thesis, I built upon the biblical, philosophical, ethical and anthropological principles established in chapters **2**, **3** and **4**. In **5.2**, I made the critical distinction between direct and indirect abortion, arguing that while the former is prohibited because of the sanctity and inviolability of innocent human life, the latter is morally permissible. In **5.3**, I demonstrated the same moral point in arguing against direct euthanasia.

I argued for the biblical basis for the just war theory (cf. **5.4**), while showing that President's Bush's declaration of war with Iraq failed to meet the just war criteria. I also demonstrated that the Bush Administration was immoral in manipulating the American public to believe that the United States must go to war with Iraq (cf. **5.4.8**).

In **5.5**, I pointed out that although there is a biblical basis for capital punishment (cf. Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:1-7), there are also good reasons for abolishing it (cf. **5.5.7**). I also argued that because of the sophistication of the modern penal system in the United States, the death penalty is practically unnecessary (cf. **5.5.5**).

In **5.6**, I argued against the notion of radical autonomy in favour of the sovereignty of God, maintaining that no person, under any circumstance, may deliberately choose to end his or her own life. I showed that by virtue of both creation and recreation or redemption, human life belongs to God alone who gives and takes it according to his will.

I have shown how the Fifth Commandment applies to genocide (cf. **5.7.1** to **5.7.3**), concluding that it is mass murder and, thus, a violation of the commandment "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13; cf. **5.7.3**). The Commandment also pertains to all forms of terrorism in which innocent non-combatants are murdered for religious and ideological reasons (cf. **5.7.4** to **5.7.6**).

Finally, I argued that the *herem* principle (cf. **5.8**) was not inconsistent with the sanctity of human life, for the same reason stated in **5.6**, namely, God is sovereign over life, giving and taking it according to his good will. I pointed out

that the principle applied only to the special circumstances of establishing the nation of Israel as a theocracy in the land of Canaan. Thus, the *herem* principle no longer applies to today and must be interpreted in the light of progressive revelation or it will be misunderstood.

In defending the prohibition against murder in Exodus 20:13 throughout the dissertation, I have also defended the biblical notion of the human person as the *imago Dei* (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). This is the anthropological basis for the ethical prohibition in Exodus 20:13. It applies to modern moral issues, such as abortion (5.2), euthanasia (5.3), war (5.4), capital punishment (5.5), suicide (5.6) genocide and terrorism (5.8). No human being, then, under any circumstance, may deliberately and directly kill an innocent human being, which is murder. It was true in Moses' day (cf. Exodus 20:13), from the beginning of humankind (I John 3:12) and will be true for the remainder of human history.

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