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Edward B. Hanify

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Research, Education, Acceptance: A Five Year Plan

Edward B. Hanify

A former president of the New England Law Institute, Mr. Hanify is trustee, secretary and director of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, and is chairman of the Human Life Foundation. A practicing attorney, he is a partner in the Massachusetts firm of Ropes and Gray.

May I preface a report on the work of the Human Life and Natural Family Planning Foundation with a few extremely pertinent acknowledgments.

First, our profound gratitude to His Eminence, the Archbishop of New York, Terence Cardinal Cooke. He has been accessible when the Foundation needed guidance, inspiring when it needed encouragement, and by timely intervention, personal advocacy and the example of his own generosity, produced the material resources which the Foundation has needed in recent years to survive.

In that expression of appreciation, we join the present and past presidents of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop John R. Quinn and Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, who have joined Cardinal Cooke in sustaining and encouraging us.

To Rev. Msgr. James T. McHugh, executive director of the Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, our abiding thankfulness for his unflagging zeal, his sagacious advice and his brave and consistent defense of human life on all fronts.

We must also bear in memory three towering figures who have been with us since our earliest days and are with us tonight in spirit.

Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle, retired Archbishop of Washington, dauntless champion of *Humanae Vitae*, was the brave center of the very storm which His Holiness predicted would beset the encyclical.

His innovative and practical genius was indispensable to the creation of this Foundation, his friendship and support its unfailing resource through all the years.

The eloquence of John Cardinal Wright, prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Clergy, kindled devotion to the cause of life in countless hearts and his example inspired many of us to follow that cause through the work of the Foundation. Although the reaches of the ocean have separated us physically, he has followed and assisted our

work with great practical loyalty to the project which he helped launch nearly a decade ago.

Bishop Andrew Grutka, original steward of the Bishops' Endowment Fund, in his administration of that Fund showed great prudence and resourcefulness and in his continuing interest in our work, very genuine assistance.

I cannot conclude these acknowledgments without making one additional point. The Foundation has been uniquely blessed with a superb and loyal staff, without whose devotion we would not be here tonight. Lawrence J. Kane, its executive director, has given the Foundation patient, imaginative, untiring leadership, which was always at its best when the future looked most dark. His genuine unselfishness and capacity for friendship, his tact, cheerfulness and indomitable spirit have made friends for us everywhere he went.

Monsignor Seli, whose vision created the Natural Family Planning Federation, has given this movement not only heroic devotion, but essential pastoral guidance, administrative wisdom and spiritual inspiration.

Mary Kay Williams has brought to us insight, sensitivity, diplomacy and capacity for lucid exposition and given our work a woman's unique graciousness and vitality.

These key individuals and the members of the staff they have gathered have given the foundation an indelible institutional profile of competency, fairness, balance and zeal.

One further most important acknowledgment!

In speaking directly of the work of the Human Life Foundation, I would not want to give the impression that the Foundation is not aware of the tremendous contributions which have been made to natural family planning in this country and in the world by many who are in this room tonight, and who have worked completely outside the sponsorship of this Foundation, with no formal ties to the Foundation. Those of us directly associated with the Foundation recognize that without your contribution and collaboration with our efforts, our organization would not have attained its present status. You have shared the trials and tribulations, the financial insecurity, the frequent misinterpretation that have beset the natural family planning movement for many years. We salute you tonight as our comrades and partners.

I do not propose at this time to try to summarize in any detail the works of the Foundation. You who brought them about know them better than I. Ten years ago you witnessed the heroic spectacle of the brave Pontiff of the Catholic Church lighting the great beacon light of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on the ramparts of a Western civilization which had largely adopted the brutal mechanical hedonism of the humanist manifestos.

The bishops of the United States lit the candle of our Foundation

in early 1969 from the great light of *Humanae Vitae*. They entrusted their generous endowment to the stewardship of an independent lay board whose mandate was to be responsive to the Pope's plea "that medical science succeed in providing a sufficiently secure basis for a regulation of birth founded on the observance of natural rhythms." As of this June, the Foundation will have expended approximately two million dollars. The resources at our disposal have included the generous original grant of the Catholic bishops of the United States, augmented in recent years by the responses of individual bishops to appeals from His Eminence, Cardinal Cooke and the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops; next in order of magnitude, substantial financial support from the Knights of Columbus and American charitable foundations with a moral law orientation; then the gifts of scores of thoughtful individuals throughout the country; and finally grants from agencies of our government for specific programs.

The resources of the Foundation have been expended with maximum prudence and effectiveness. Solid, unbiased research associated its name with the scientific advances of many of the great figures and projects in modern reproductive physiology. The national organization of local natural family planning services has now become its partner. The world-wide International Federation for Family Life Promotion was established and the protocol was underwritten for stringent scientific tests of the efficacy of two well-known methods of natural family planning. As a consequence, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare invested \$1,400,000 to implement the Foundation's research plan in this country, and the World Health Organization has invested one-half million dollars in the same research plan in Colombia. The Foundation's curriculum for training natural family planning teachers has formed the basis for a similar effort by the World Health Organization and constitutes a magnificent educational resource. The Foundation's bibliography of scientific materials was the pioneer work in the natural family planning field.

Priceless Endowment Given

The research, teaching, organizational and educational activities of the Foundation have demonstrated that, in the words of *Humanae Vitae*, "a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to the fostering of authentic conjugal love." Those here tonight have given to the Foundation and kindred organizations working for natural family planning a priceless endowment — the selfless, uncompensated dedication of their personal and professional eminence and excellence in science, medicine, teaching, social sciences, the law, business, and above all, in the pastoral formation of right conscience. In the crisis of your time, in the historic clash of two opposing value systems strug-

gling for the souls of men — the moral law and the humanist frame — you were not sideline spectators. You were in the thick of the conflict. To a few in each generation is given the chance to struggle for principles affecting the very moral fiber of their society and the shape of things to come. You have had that opportunity.

We cannot lay the flattering unction to our souls, however, that the battle is over, and the field has been won. The hurricane winds of hostility would extinguish it. Let us face the facts; in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in three consecutive sentences, the Pope expressly declared illicit:

- “directly willed and procured abortion”
- “direct sterilization whether perpetual or temporary of the man or the woman,” and
- “every action which either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequence proposes whether as an end or as a means to render procreation impossible.”

Abortion, sterilization, and artificial contraception in the order of their malignity were linked together. There was no suggestion that, as the lesser evil, contraception could be chosen in lieu of the other alternatives.

Abortion, sterilization and artificial contraception are now the cornerstone of the program of our government, as well as our most influential private agencies, at home and abroad, for the curtailment of what is termed the “excessive fertility” of the poor, the underprivileged and disadvantaged. “Excessive fertility” is never spoken of as a problem associated with the rich or the privileged. Apparently, it is endemic to poverty. Famine, hardship, persecution did not eliminate what the modern technocrat would consider the “excessive fertility” of many of our own forebears. Grateful to them for the gift of life, we doubtless have what is now called a “natalist bias.”

Dr. R. T. Ravenholt, director of the Office of Population Bureau for Development Support, U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.), in testimony prepared for the Select Committee on Population of the House, on April 25, 1978, revealed that this government has spent *one billion dollars* through fiscal 1977 on projects for fertility control abroad, a large portion of which was spent under the auspices of organizations known as “*action intermediaries*,” the Pathfinder Fund, Population Council, Family Planning International Assistance and the Association for Voluntary Sterilization. According to Dr. Ravenholt, the Sterilization Association, by the end of 1977, had contributed to making sterilization the most popular means of fertility control in the world, effecting its use by 80 million couples. He also testified that our A.I.D. program financed the purchase and distribution of 600 million monthly cycles of oral contraceptives and

1.7 billion condoms to family planning programs in more than 100 countries. "The most important products of A.I.D.'s massive expenditure for contraceptive research programs have been improved means for female sterilization and simplified uterine aspiration equipment," according to Dr. Ravenholt.

The same testimony revealed that this *one billion dollar* A.I.D. *foreign* program has been roughly equivalent to the *one billion dollar* expenditure during the same time frame in the United States domestic family planning program aimed at what Dr. Ravenholt describes as "curbing excess fertility of less than 10 million poor couples living in the United States."

The United States' *one billion dollar* governmental domestic fertility control program, to a very substantial degree, has been under the *de facto* control of Planned Parenthood. The administrative regulations under the governing statute have been so framed that direct funding of natural family planning service agencies is not possible unless they join or make referrals to a consortium controlled by Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood, of course, openly avows its governing principle "that a combination of abortion and contraception remains the prime method of fertility regulation throughout the contemporary world."

If the concern of the government and large private foundations for the regulation of the alleged excessive fertility of the poor is genuine, why should natural family planning agencies not have the same role as "action intermediaries" in the use of public funds for their programs here and abroad as do the Planned Parenthood agencies?

What considerations entitle Planned Parenthood and its affiliates to support from government and large American foundations which do not apply to the Human Life and Natural Family Planning Foundation and its affiliates?

NFP Methods Cause No Harm

Natural family planning methods do not harm the human body, or mutilate it, or end human life. Why discriminate against them?

Why did the Ford Foundation, having ample access to our staff and the benefit of its collaboration, publish what purported to be a definitive work on fertility regulation and totally ignore the indisputable scientific credentials of natural family planning?

Why did the Center for Population Research of the National Institute of Child Health and Community Development (HEW) finance and publish a study by a Princeton group which probed whether Catholic women who receive monthly Communion observe the Church's prohibition of the use of artificial birth control? Why this intrusion, financed by our tax dollars, on the sacred religious practices and private sexual habits of Catholic women? Why did Planned Parenthood's

publication, "Family Planning Perspective" then publish this governmental study in an issue with the cover picture of a priest baptizing a Catholic child under the title, "*The Secularization of Catholic Birth Control Practices*"?

Why, in recent hearings before the Select Committee on Population of the House, was so much attention paid to the probable attitude of the Church in Latin America to the A.I.D. population control program?

Why the pointed inquiries by certain members of the Committee as to whether priests in South America ignore or teach the principles of *Humanae Vitae*?

Why the planned convocation scheduled for August, 1979 of 100 parliamentarians from different countries "to investigate institutional and governmental barriers to better and widespread dissemination of family planning"?

In these developments, one sees a curious combination of attitudes — an ill-concealed prejudice against natural family planning mingled with a preoccupation with eliminating the possible barriers *Humanae Vitae* creates, to the total adoption of artificial contraception, sterilization and abortion as means of fertility control. I suggest the explanation lies in a very profound difference of view as to the nature of man; a conflict between value systems whose outcome will determine the shape and permanence of our society.

Natural family planning has its inspiration in a view of man as a creature of God responsible to his Creator for the use of his faculties, and with a rational nature capable of determining that use.

Contraception, sterilization and abortion have their foundation in the much proclaimed right of complete control over one's own body. They proceed on the basis that the generality of men and women are so devoid of any capacity for self-discipline or self-knowledge in the domain of human sexuality, that the only way they can regulate their birth rate is through the use of pills, devices or the surgical instrument.

Inasmuch as it is in the apparent self-interest of the "haves" to prevent the proliferation of the "have nots," the technocratic overlords of fertility control deluge the world with the medication of contraception, the mutilation of sterilization and the feticide of abortion. Their objective is to obtain rapid dramatic reductions in birth rates, of the kind that can be submitted to congressional appropriation committees in charts and graphs.

Observing these activities, one can say with Jefferson: "Indeed, I tremble for my country when I remember God is just." It is one thing to say that these programs reflect the current mores of the American people as reflected in the votes of their elected representatives. However, there is no evidence that the American people vested in these programs a monopoly power which may be exercised to exclude natural family planning from its appropriate place in the rational reg-

ulation of births in this country and the world!

With the conviction that the Foundation has by now established that the natural method has claims for recognition which can no longer be slighted or ignored, we turn to the future.

What of the Future?

We now face the challenge of bringing the requisite instructional and educational materials to millions of married couples who are potential users of natural methods, under auspices which insure the competency of teachers, the quality of the instruction, and with record-keeping which carefully preserves the results of the more widespread use of these methods. This requires a substantial increase in our material resources in order to underwrite the large expenditures required in this effort, and sufficient advance assurance of the availability of the requisite funds to permit intelligent planning.

There are, of course, other problems than the basic, ever present, financial problem. As any movement grows in strength and prestige, it must have the best possible human relations between the veteran pioneers and new recruits. If there are different methodologies available in natural family planning programs — and there are — the advocates of one must be respectful of, and attentive to, the claims of the other. Thus far the Foundation itself has abstained from exclusive commitment to any particular methodology in the delivery of natural family planning service, not because of hostility or skepticism to a particular school or approach, but because it seemed prudent for the present not to make such an irrevocable commitment.

Then there is the problem of the misuse of both method and research. Obviously when Paul VI and Pius XII called on men of science to engage in research in the area of the regulation of births by observance of natural rhythms, they could not have intended that the results of that research and its practical implementation be withdrawn from application in the lives of men. However, the same research that produced the beneficent effects of nuclear energy also unleashed its destructive power. Hence, the natural family methods can be perverted by their mixed use with artificial and mechanical contraceptives, and can be made available to the unmarried as well as the married. The Foundation has steadfastly and successfully insisted on the adoption by governmental and private entities of a definition of natural family planning which seeks to prevent the recognition and the practice of these perverted uses of the natural methods. It can be expected that with the modern tendency for unmarried people to live together, and with the high incidence of teenage pregnancy, governmental pressures will develop on natural family planning service units in the field to force these abuses upon them. That is why separate independent funding for these units is more essential than ever. That is

why a strong national organization, watchful of these trends on the national level, able to monitor them and counteract them, is more vital than ever. It would be tragic if the good work already done with such dedication and effort and over so many years were not used, and remained locked in the closet with limited access by a few. It would be worse still if it were perverted to be the tool of a contraceptive, abortifacient consortium financed by government and the great foundations, as a means of encouraging fornication and as their antidote to teenage pregnancy.

What has been accomplished thus far has been the fruit of good will of the many who for many years have selflessly given their lives to this cause without hope of remuneration and with no aspiration for individual recognition. May that spirit continue! To paraphrase one of the great Fathers of the Church, may we have unity of purpose as to the essentials of our cause, diversity of constructive views as to its accidentals, and in everything, charity.

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