

8-1-1981

[Book Review of] *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* by Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, M.D.

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Recommended Citation

Haas, John M. (1981) "[Book Review of] *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* by Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, M.D.," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 48: No. 3, Article 15.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol48/iss3/15>

the more practical concerns of the book. In the second category are papers on the psychology of infanticide and an anthropological survey of the question in other cultures. In the third category, five papers may be said to dispute the ethics on infanticide but only one of these really goes to the heart of the matter in a philosophically acceptable manner. The essays of Jakobovitz and Donnelly really discuss the views of the Jewish and Christian traditions respectively and so will be unacceptable to those who do not share their religious premises. Leonard Weber makes a case for keeping the law the way it is on these matters, but the theoretical side of his essay is rather weak and undeveloped. Karen Meltzer's essay is important symbolically but is not in itself the rigorous work needed to defend her position. She is a young woman who was born with spina bifida and other problems. Having undergone numerous operations, she has since graduated magna cum laude from college and now works as a health care consultant.

Kluge's paper is the only critical piece that really develops a philosophically adequate position. Straightforwardly, he contends that infanticide is murder and ought to be treated as such, independently of the supposed quality of life of the infant. This conclusion, however, is marred by his seeming willingness to countenance some instances of infanticide, without again giving us any clear idea of which cases these might be.

Yet this question, which most authors simply don't handle and others handle badly, is crucial from both a practical and a theoretical standpoint. Its practical importance is obvious, but except for writers like Joseph Fletcher who disdain moral rules, its theoretical importance ought to be obvious as well. As Brandt himself has previously argued, we must evaluate moral rules in terms of their consistency and their capability to generate acceptable conclusions if they are generalized to all similar cases. Hence, the only proper way to evaluate proposals for infanticide would be to see where they would lead to if generalized. Few of the authors in this book, however, even try to answer this query. Those who do, present us with proposals that would, if generalized, lead to the mass elimination of severely retarded persons. If this is not an unacceptable conclusion to a moral policy proposal, then I simply do not know what such an unacceptable proposal would be.

— Richard Sherlock
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Whatever Happened to the Human Race?

Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, M.D.

Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, N.J., 1979, 256 pp.

Whatever Happened to the Human Race? is not a profound book, but it is interesting on several counts. Francis Schaeffer is an evangelical Protestant author who has formed a Christian community in L'Abri, Switzerland and gathered an appreciable worldwide following. He is not a particularly deep or innovative thinker, but he is capable of popularizing the thought of others. Schaeffer has teamed up with a pediatric surgeon, C. Everett Koop, to produce a popular polemic against the growing practices of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.

The book is interesting as a Protestant defense of moral positions almost exclusively associated with Roman Catholicism, such as the prohibition of abortion. But perhaps more interesting than the moral conclusions reached in the book are the arguments leading to them.

The first three chapters review the current state of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia in America, often linking the practices with the inhuman and genocidal policies of Nazi Germany. There is not much in these chapters which would be new to anyone already familiar with the better current theological, legal and ethical literature in the field of medical ethics. However, they do provide a good review and would indeed be helpful for those being introduced to these issues for the first time.

The book presents the loss of respect for human life in the 20th century as a terrible evil and asks how western civilization, with its roots in the teachings of Christ, could ever have experienced such decline. The causes for the modern malaise are attributed to the secular humanism and moral relativism which appear in the post-Reformation period.

The second half of the book addresses the philosophical and theological causes of the current decline in morality. Materialistic humanism, with its roots in the Enlightenment, is seen as the source of the anti-life attitudes of our day. After the world was emptied of God and seen as comprised only of matter thrown up by chance over countless eons without direction or purpose, then human life came to be regarded as devoid of any inherent worth, and simply a means to be used to achieve whatever goals those in power decided to pursue. When man is no longer viewed as created in the image of God, and consequently of inestimable worth, he becomes an object of manipulation and utility to be discarded if he no longer fits the purposes of others.

Schaeffer and Koop fault the Enlightenment for thinking that reason alone could find all the answers to life. They fault modern existentialism and the various cult movements for their rebellion against reason. In other words, moral abuses abound because of the misuse of reason. The 18th century enlightened rationalist who denied the existence of God and who believed reason could fathom all mysteries, inexorably becomes the 20th century cultist making an irrational leap of faith in anything to provide his life with purpose. A godless rationalism follows its set course to ultimate irrationalism.

One interesting point in the book is the contention by the authors that epistemology is at the heart of the contemporary problem. Thanks to the likes of Descartes, Hume and Kant, modern man is faced with an overwhelming skepticism about his ability to know objective reality and, by extension, objective morality. Consequently, the "basic problem with which all humanistic systems must wrestle (is) the problem of knowledge" (p. 134). Humanist philosophies, however, are unable to cope with the problem and inevitably come to regard the value of human life only in relative terms. According to the authors, only biblical Christianity with its teaching on creation can deal adequately with the epistemological question because man's "internal faculty of knowing was made by God to correspond to the world and its form which He made and which surrounds them" (p. 135).

The authors lament the denigration of reason in the modern world in matters which deal with the "big questions of meaning" and the substitution of empty experience or feeling. They insist not only on the ability of the mind to know reality, but also on the necessity to make use of reason to avoid moral relativism. "As soon as one removes the checking mechanism of the mind by which to measure things, everything can then be 'right' and anything can also be 'wrong'" (p. 149).

The book seems to argue the need for a moderate realist epistemology to serve as the foundation of a sound moral system. The authors may be unfamiliar with

moderate realist philosophy, but it is the epistemology attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas and which has been extensively employed and developed within the Catholic tradition. It has been suggested that the decline of this philosophical school has contributed significantly to the growing moral relativism in the Catholic Church. Schaeffer seems to be saying the same thing in the Protestant context.

As Evangelicals, however, the authors seem unaware of the fact that the Protestant revolt in the 16th century was a major factor in the decline of philosophy, theology and morality which they find so distressing. They complain of man's rejection of any source of authority outside himself; yet the rejection of any authority except the Bible interpreted according to the *individual conscience* was a significant element of much of the Protestant revolt.

In true Evangelical fashion, the one source of authority for the authors is the Bible which is *the* "reliable source of information about the universe and mankind" (p. 151). Yet the Bible never directly addresses many of the moral issues which so concern Schaeffer and Koop, and its teachings can be interpreted in almost innumerable ways — as evidenced by the great diversity of teaching and practice found in Protestant Christianity. What is needed is a living voice of divine authority to address contemporary issues facing modern man in a way which is thoroughly consonant with the divine teachings of the Scriptures. The Catholic Church offers this through her apostolic magisterium.

Although the authors deplore the denigration of reason in the modern world, they refuse to see the roots of this disparagement in the Protestant revolt. Martin Luther called reason the devil's whore and insisted it be offered up as the evening sacrifice, and the Protestant churches have traditionally placed greater emphasis on inner experience as constitutive of redeeming faith rather than assent to propositional truths. Yet Schaeffer has a "Catholic sense" when he regrets that "experience is the important thing (for modern theology), not propositions about reality, about God, about salvation and all the rest" (p. 147). The Bible, according to Schaeffer, is "God's propositional communication to mankind" (p. 152) about the nature of reality and man's proper response to it. The interpreter of these propositions for modern man, however, becomes Francis Schaeffer rather than the Catholic Church.

Whatever Happened to the Human Race? is a strong, heartfelt plea to show greater reverence for God's inestimable gift of life. But the book is much more homiletical than scholarly. There are very few good footnotes. There is no bibliography. Facts and figures are cited with no references, and some seem questionable. Difficult moral questions are glossed over. The book insists on the absolute inviolability of innocent human life and, using the genetic argument, insists that a person exists from the moment of conception. The difficulties raised by the possibility of twinning and recombination are never mentioned. And one wonders how, as Protestants who presumably accept birth control, they would deal with the abortifacient properties of the pill and the IUD.

Other difficult questions are dealt with in a superficial manner. There is a very unclear discussion of the ordinary/extraordinary means of extending life. The distinction seems to be rejected as morally irrelevant, and yet the authors later say that a doctor "can withdraw the extraordinary means (from a dying person) and let nature take its course" (p. 91). In discussing the care of defective newborns, the authors argue that all conceivable means should be used to preserve their lives. However, they never provide guidelines for determining what should be done when there simply are not the resources available to treat every child with heroic measures. The authors simply do not present carefully reasoned analyses of difficult conflict situations, but rather offer generalized exhortations to respect life.

A curious aspect of the book is its use of terms. "Sociological," for example, becomes a pejorative word and is used synonymously with "relativistic." A conference sponsored by Harvard Divinity School is comprised of "a purely secular

group of people." Moral terms which have developed rather specific meanings, such as "passive euthanasia," are used quite loosely.

Another curious aspect of this book dealing generally with issues of medical ethics is the considerable time spent defending the historical accuracy of Scripture, as though that had some bearing on the authenticity and veracity of its moral teaching. Because it can be proven that the ancient Israelites piled 12 rocks on the bank of the Jordan on a particular occasion, it simply does not necessarily follow that the moral teachings contained in the Old Testament are true (even though that be the case). The claim is uncritically made that the Bible contains all the answers to our moral questions. The question is how it contains those answers. It is to be hoped that no one today would wage a holy war of total annihilation of God's enemies as was enjoined in the Old Testament.

Whatever Happened to the Human Race? is useful, but it has its limitations. It could best be used to acquaint the layman, and in particular the Protestant layman, with the moral questions surrounding the "life issues" and with some of the philosophies which have contributed so much to contemporary attitudes. It is also interesting to note the basis for agreement between Catholics and Evangelicals expressed in this book. However, it must be said that the book is not of great value from a scholarly point of view.

— John M. Haas
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Medical Treatment of the Dying: Moral Issues

Michael D. Bayles and Dallas M. High, Editors

G. K. Hall and Co., 70 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111, 1978. 168 pp., \$13.95.

Six of eight papers which compose this book were presented to faculty from the graduate and medical schools at the University of Kentucky, 1974. As with so many recent publications in the general area of bio- or medical ethics, *Medical Treatment of the Dying* is directed to a multidisciplinary audience and presupposes "no technical background in any field." However, it may be worth cautioning the reader that seven or eight authors are professors of philosophy or philosophy of medicine, and one a professor of neurology. This reliance on philosophers and the general topic of the book seem to have been the only controls on selection and organization of the content of the papers. There is no particular order or connection among the papers except that the editors do identify four themes running throughout: patient/physician relation, concepts and criteria of death and dying, the quality of life issue, and euthanasia and the termination of life-prolonging treatment. These four, of course, would emerge in any collection of articles under a similar title. Can we justify another book (hardbound at that) predicated on this shotgun approach? The oral presentations may well have stimulated "fruitful interchange" in 1974, but I question the usefulness of the published version for the professional and the educated public of the 80's.

The individual papers do touch on many significant issues. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr.'s paper, "Rights and Responsibilities of Patients and Physicians," is especially notable. Engelhardt traces briefly the history of Western medicine and