The Tragedy Of Terry Schiavo’s Death
By Court-Appointed Starvation

To deliberately kill anyone by starvation is a tragedy of major proportion. Especially is that true in a country where life of the innocent used to be treasured. But the principle set forth in the Schiavo case is so far reaching and portends frightening things for the future and the sanctity of life.

Life had its beginning with God. When God made Adam, He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” and man became a living soul. He endowed man with a “soul” or spirit (Gen. 2:7). We have been blessed with God’s inspired revelation which makes known to us how we should live before Him and our fellowman.

God, through David, said, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 14:1). David goes on to say, “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God” (Ps. 14:2). A timely question for our present day is: “How many are there who understand and seek God?” This question comes to mind due to the rapid and distinct changes which are taking place in our society with respect to belief in God. The evidence that many are “fool[s]” is abundant and irrefutable. Ironclad evidence of this is seen in the court-ordered starvation by death of Terri Schiavo. This evidence is a case in point that only those who don’t believe in God could fail to see.

The story of Terri Schiavo’s condition over the past fifteen years has been told and retold hundreds of times. She suffered brain damage which resulted in her inability to care for herself. She remained in this condition until the courts decreed that she should die.
Her brain was

1. 

shall consider a few of those things which were not the case concerning her condition. We clearly seen in light of the facts of Terri’s condition which were not set forth; several things which starvation was very, very strong. This bias is able evidence. The bias on the part of those who wanted this woman, a creature of God, to die by in no sense of the term factual or based on religious Many things were said on this subject that were Terri’s Condition When Court-Ordered Death to help us keep going. Please convey to the brethren... (Thanks for your encouraging words and the contribution to Banner of Truth, and let you know that we appreciate what each of you are doing and standing up for... holidays to you and sister Naomi and all your family. Your brothers and sisters in Christ, the Chestnut Grove congregation” — Ralph L. Jarrell, WV.)

2. She was not “in a coma.” People in a coma are in a state of unconsciousness, and do not respond to stimuli. This was not Terri’s condition if we speak truthfully. Some obviously wished her to be in a coma, or to go a step further, dead.

3. She was not on a respirator. No. She breathed on her own as we all do, naturally. No one knows of even suggested that she had any breathing problems. She could have been killed by suffocation as well as by starvation, the method that was chosen.

4. She was not near death. For death to come it was necessary that she be killed by some means. There was no medical danger of death. To kill a totally innocent person because of a partially impaired physical and/or mental condition is evil and without justification, but to choose to kill one by starvation is unmotivated cruelty, a total disrespect for the sanctity of life.

5. Her heart was not kept beating by artificial means. There was no indication of a heart problem. Her heart was beating by natural means just like our hearts are kept beating.

The Importance of the Above Facts. Although some would like to so do, it is impossible to equate the condition of Terri Schiavo with one who is “brain-dead,” in a “coma,” or totally unconscious and without any medical evidence that such a one might regain a better state of life. This person was alive and living by natural means, only depending upon others for food and drink, and the assistance that many incapacitated people require in order to live.

For some years now, people have been allowed to die a natural death by withholding certain life support systems which kept the person alive by artificial means, and especially when the person had made it known that it was not his or her desire to be kept alive by that means. But food and

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Continued from Page 1

die or be killed by the cruel and inhuman means of starvation. It is our intention to consider the ramifications of this tragic act by a consideration of a number of things relating to the case. We encourage those who have any respect for the sanctity of life to consider these things seriously. Who knows who will be affected in time to come? Terri’s Condition When Court-Ordered Death By Starvation Was Commenced

Many things were said on this subject that were in no sense of the term factual or based on reliable evidence. The bias on the part of those who wanted this woman, a creature of God, to die by starvation was very, very strong. This bias is clearly seen in light of the facts of Terri’s condition which were not set forth; several things which were not the case concerning her condition. We shall consider a few of those things which were not the case.

1. She was not “brain-dead.” Her brain was impaired, yes. But dead? No. Those who made charges that she was “brain-dead” either spoke from lack of knowledge, or wanted to justify her being killed.

2. She was not “in a coma.” People in a coma are in a state of unconsciousness, and do not respond to stimuli. This was not Terri’s condition if we speak truthfully. Some obviously wished her to be in a coma, or to go a step further, dead.

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**Readers’ Response**

“I want to thank you for Banner of Truth, Jan. 05, God’s Plan for Elders in the Church. … Walter, like you wrote Jan. 2001, without exception the greatest blessing ever promised to may be God that of salvation. I pray God will continue to bless you and your good wife with a long life to preach the gospel of Christ” — Raymond and Olga Thomas, IN.

“I would like for you to place my name back on your mailing list. A few years ago I was in the process of moving and forgot to tell you, or did and forgot to give you my forwarding address. I have used your material in sermon preparation and general research. Thanks and God Speed” — Gene Hill, LA.

“I enjoy your bulletin very much. Please send it to my daughter. Thank you” — Dorothy Roberts, TN.

“After reading the recent issue of ‘Banner of Truth’ having to do with a reprint of a ’93 issue as to what was taking place morally and as to God even back then, it gives one cold chills to realize how much farther we have gone down those paths since then. Frankly, I see no way it can turn around for I am convinced we are in the last days — if not, what does man have to do to stir up God’s wrath. I would like to know. All this is so upsetting I can hardly even type. All of it has to be laid at the feet of ACLU, whose goal is to destroy the American that was — plus liberal judges and politicians — who are no longer patriots. Murderers never pay for their crime; we the people make appeal lawyers even richer with appeal after appeal.” — Philippines.

“I am Tito N. Peralta, a gospel preacher. I got a copy of your paper, Banner of Truth, dated January 2003, ‘An Update on the False Religion of Islam.’ I also read the other articles. I like the paper because it teaches God’s truth and also exposes error. I love reading books and other reading material, especially authored by sound Christians. I am interested to receive your paper. So I ask you to please include my name on your mailing list. I hope you will consider my request. Thank you and regards” — Philippines. (We are happy to add your name. If I can find the time I will send you some back copies. In years gone by I have visited in the Philippines — Ed.)

“After reading the recent issue of ‘Banner of Truth’ having to do with a reprint of a ’93 issue as to what was taking place morally and as to God even back then, it gives one cold chills to realize how much farther we have gone down those paths since then. Frankly, I see no way it can turn around for I am convinced we are in the last days — if not, what does man have to do to stir up God’s wrath. I would like to know. All this is so upsetting I can hardly even type. All of it has to be laid at the feet of ACLU, whose goal is to destroy the American that was — plus liberal judges and politicians — who are no longer patriots. Murderers never pay for their crime; we the people make appeal lawyers even richer with appeal after appeal.” — Dorothy Roberts, TN.

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A Confused Reader’s Response

We welcome responses from readers of Banner of Truth. We are encouraged by the many positive ones we receive. Some responses are very critical, but we try to respond to those when we believe a response would be worthwhile to the critic and/or our readers. The following is from Daniel Ross, sent March 12, to me and a number of other people, including Olan Hicks. Daniel’s “response” had enclosed thirteen pages apparently written by someone else. We here reproduce some of Daniel’s comments as just as they came to us. The response follows:

This message is for Walter Pigg, and his banner of truth. It’s sad when people teach things like this. I get Mr. Pigg’s banner of truth every month, although he has a lot of good things in it, there also “man made ideas” and when you mix the two together, you get people to no longer attend the church. I have read statements about good hearted people “leave” the church, or was “kicked-out”. This is a sad thing, for mere men to take on a roll of God and rule his kingdom with serious accusations like this. Not only Walter, but there are others who teach things that can only come from Satan himself! It’s hard in this day and age to teach someone the Gospel message of Jesus, and to have a response of them to obey it and get themselves baptized into Christ, it’s another who takes on a roll of God, and say “I forgive you, but I don’t forgive your second wife” this is were man comes into play, this is where many good souls are lost, confused, and die in this state of belief. I can go on an on, but this one thing about MDR can cost someone their souls. This is not right. Jesus is not coming to break up the happy home, like some would have you believe.—Daniel Ross.

Dear Daniel,

Your letter of severe criticism has been received. In view of our communications in the past, my response may be of no benefit to you, but it could be helpful to our readers who have a desire to know what God’s word teaches on the subject of marriage and divorce. It makes no sense at all to try to find others who agree with one on a matter of error, is the turning against those who will not agree. Daniel, this is the very thing that has happened in your case. Don’t you realize that it is much more important for me to stand with the teaching of Christ than to agree with you in opposing His teaching? The unity which God desires of His servants is acceptable only on the basis of truth, or what God teaches. Yet, you have turned against me and made an absolutely false statement because I would not agree with you.

Your accusation that I “teach things that can only come from Satan,” implies that what Christ teaches on the subject of marriage is from Satan. You well know that I have pointed out to you what Christ said in Matthew 19:9: “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery….” If you want to suggest this teaching is from Satan, no one can stop you, but you will face the judgment. You say, “but this one thing about MDR can cost someone their souls!” You are dead right on that. But who will pay the loss of his or her soul? Those who respect the teaching or Christ, or those who go against Christ and His teaching? Is not Christ “the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him”?” You have transgressed and are abiding not in the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9). Neither the Father nor the Son are with you or anyone else in a marriage which is in violation of Christ’s teaching.

The fact that such an inhuman thing would be done should awaken everyone who has any faith in the God who created man to the reality of what is happening. But that such a major portion of our people have already come to the point that they see nothing wrong with this tragic case has taken me by complete surprise. I thought I had been fully aware of the immorality which has enveloped our society, but I see now that I was sadly mistaken.

“Killing by Euphemism” is the title of an article in National Review, Apr. 25, 2005. It was pointed out that words like “starvation” and “dehydration” were discouraged. This reminds us of the tactics of the increasing number of pro-abortion people in our country. They don’t use the word “murder” and never refer to the innocent boys and girls, human beings which are killed because they are unwanted. They will talk about a “fetus” as though it were nothing more than a gob of tissue to be discarded at the will of the mother. Why is this done? Is it not an effort to cover up the horrific nature of the crime? Those who wanted Terri Schiavo dead didn’t dare use the truth of the matter and refer to her premedi-tated death by inhuman starvation. Was this to lessen the appearance of the cruelty which was forced upon her?

Terri’s court-ordered death was described by some in the most hypocritical language that can be imagined. Can one imagine the horrifying death of this innocent woman being described as “lovely” or “beautiful” or a “death with dignity”? This was done when her lips were parched, her nose bleeding, and her skin losing all of its tone as in the case of death. Who but a cruel and ungodly person could see such an act of sheer brutality as lovely or beautiful?

I have wondered if people with such a warped mind as this would think it lovely and/or beautiful to see the brains suctioned from the skull of a God-created boy or girl? I would think so. If not, why not? At any rate, they do not believe it is wrong to do so.

Victim’s Consent Not Verified. If a person had, previous to any affidavit, verified that they pre-fereed being starved to death rather than being kept alive by a feeding tube [Who could imagine anyone wanting that!]? it would still have been wrong, but more understandable by some than by starvation.

In the Schiavo case there was nothing in writing to indicate that she would have wanted her life to end by removing all artificial life support, much less by being starved to death. The only evidence offered was nothing but hearsay. But there was also hearsay evidence that countered that. To believe a story by Michael Shiavo, Terri’s sorry, cheating husband who has fathered two children by another woman that he lives with, would be to me to believe the unbelievable. The story goes that seven years after Terri’s condition began, Michael offhandedly remembers that his wife had said that she would not want to live if a burden or if life was maintained by artificial means. Who can believe such a story? But even if it had been true, it would not have warranted death by starvation.
The judge chose to believe the words of the cheating husband, when his wife could not speak for herself, and when other evidence did not agree with the husband’s slimy story.

The Courts Order Death By Starvation. It is a fact that we should be law-abiding people. This is not to say, however, that all laws are what they ought to be. A law may approve or make legal that which is completely wrong in God’s sight. This has been seen in legalized abortion, homosexual marriage, and many other things which are at variance with God’s word. When commanded not to teach the gospel, “Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). This was putting God’s will first.

Some favored defying the law in Florida and reinserting the feeding tube. But if this could have been done, one life would have been continued for some period of time. While this involved only one life, if the courts allow the killing of one by starvation, the laws are corrupt and ungodly, and the number affected in the future will be countless. If our laws allow such brutality it is high time that our laws need to be changed. Someone suggested that the death certificate of Terri Schiavo should read that she was killed by court order. Another source suggested, “The Schiavo case was a tragedy not because the government failed to stop it from happening, but because it directed it to happen.” Our government should favor life over the death of the innocent. Judge Greer evidently decided that Terri’s life was not worth living, and therefore decreed her death by starvation. But did he actually have that much power? When judges wield the power to decree death by starvation they have too much power. It seems to me that it would make sense to elect judges as we do many other officials. This would give people the option of removing judges who legislate rather than adjudicate.

Changing Attitude Toward Human Life

The rapid change in society’s attitude toward the value and sanctity of life as reflected in the Schiavo case has been no less than flabbergasting to me. I remember some things relative to conditions and attitudes almost eighty years ago. Most people treasured life and mourned the loss of it. The practice of wantonly taking unwanted life was virtually unheard of among upright people. It is so different now.

I could hardly believe what I was hearing during the Schiavo case, that polls were indicating some 70 to 80 percent of people surveyed were in favor of “pulling the tube,” that is, killing Terri Schiavo by outright starvation. I know that polls are often not accurate, but if such polls are only halfway accurate, our society is now in its most troublesome times. Something which made this stark reality even worse was the fact that many people who claim to be religious or to believe in God were in favor of that tragic act of death by starvation.

The value of human life at its lowest level.

When more people believed in God there was much greater respect for God-given human life. Who would have thought we would see a time in our country when animal life is given more protection than human life?

There have been a couple of cases in our general area of people getting into trouble for starving horses and dogs. There are laws against cruel mistreatment of animals, but in the Schiavo case many have said, including the law, that there is nothing illegal about killing a person by starvation. How can this be explained other than by admitting that there is less respect for human life than for animal life?

Legal abortion, to be further discussed, is now in full swing. This allows on-demand killing of innocent boys and girls just because they are unwanted. Just today I heard on the news of a thirteenth year old girl in Florida who wants to get an abortion. The plan of salvation and ridicule the “five-steppers.” In both cases, it’s a simple matter of arithmetic.

As we have seen, and shall see again, these activities of the assembly are “acts of reverence paid to God”; that is, they are acts of worship. We’ve discussed three of these acts: Hearing (“the word [voice] of the Lord”; Cf. Is 28.14, 23; Neh 8.1-8) which is lead by one who Preaches (Ac 20.7, KJV) or Speaks (1 Cor 14.19); The Lord’s Supper (“re-membrance of me,” I. 11:25); and Singing (“to the Lord,” Eph 5.19). Each of these acts takes place in an Assembly gathered before God; and each act is uniquely “God-ward.” Not a single one of these acts is, shall I say, Spectator Worship. The New Testament knows nothing of an Assembly wherein one or more do these “acts of worship,” while an audience of appreciative (even if “educated”) spectators looks on. If ever there was a case of “joint participation (fellowship),” it is in The Assembly: there, each christian gathered, participates heart and soul, “in spirit and in truth” (Jno 4:24), in each act of reverence to the glory of God.

What about “giving” as an act of worship?

Now, let’s turn to the act of Giving. Every so often, you come across someone who thinks he has discovered that the act of Giving in the assembly is not an act of worship. Let’s see: That it is an act, surely no one would deny. I mean, it is something, in The Assembly, that you do. First, that an act of giving, an offering of a portion of one’s material goods, can ever qualify as an act of worship, is seen in Matthew 2:11. The record says when the wise men “were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” Surely, no one will dispute that these men from the East were giving a portion of their material goods; and that that very act of giving was indeed and an act of worship.

Second, as regards “giving” in The Assembly, consider carefully the context: We have an Assembly of “the whole church” coming together on the “first day of every week.” Among the various activities of that Assembly, each christian (“every one of you”) was to “lay by him in store as God hath prospered him” (I Cor 16.2). We have a specific act, done at a specific time, and in a specific setting or place (“in the assembly”). It was done with view toward and in consideration of how God “hath pros-pered” the giver.

This Assembly, by its nature, was “God-ward,” “gathering ‘before God.’” Wouldn’t then, this Divinely prescribed act, therefore be an “act of reverence paid to God”? Isn’t that precisely what Worship is? No, it doesn’t follow that anytime I take money from my pocket to give to a good cause or a needy person, I am, therefore, worshiping. Such “giving” falls under the purview of Christian Service, but, giving outside The Assembly is without that “to-God” quality which constitutes it an “act of worship” in The Assembly.

Prayer as an act of worship

The fifth, and final, “act of reverence paid to God” in The Assembly is Prayer. We pray “Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name” (Matt 6.9). Prayer, we see, by its nature, is an act of worship whenever or wherever it is done. And it is to be done in The Assembly (I Cor 14.15-17, II Tim 2.1, 8).

So much more could, and should, be said about The Assembly. I have no doubt that the picture of The Assembly painted by Paul in I Cor. 11:17-20 gives the lie to: ... the five acts of worship are done, may be divided on any basis; (3) The idea that women may lead the Assembly in its acts of prayer; or with regard to Giving or The Lord’s Supper; (4) The idea that one or more of these “acts of worship,” while an audience of appreciative (even if “educated”) spectators looks on.

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The Whole Church Assembled Together

Is the concept of the “whole church...come to-gether in one place” (I Cor. 14:23), a mere First Cen-
tury happenstance, or an integral and permanent part of christianity which must today be imitated by those seeking to please God? Some have averred that such an assembly is merely a New Testament incidental and not part of an unchangeable pattern. I disagree.

Plotting the Course

When plotting a problem on a piece of graph pa-
per we take particular interest when several lines intersect the same point. The same thing is true with ideas, doctrines or practices. For example, when I hear mention of the notion that non-christians are not amenable to (under) the Law of Christ, the New Testament; and that the commandments of God do not exceed the mercy of God; and that repentance is not retroactive; I then strongly suspect that the real topic under discussion is that of Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage. And I conclude that the one rais ing such patently erroneous ideas is trying to find, for himself or someone close to him, some way to make right what the Bible says is wrong (Matt. 19:9).

If the Gospel and the New Testament are the same thing, and if the Gospel is to be preached to “every creature” (Mk. 16:15), and if the “law speaketh to those who are under the law” (Rom. 3:19), then it’s pretty clear that the New Testament is addressed to every single solitary soul in this world; and they are thereby amenable to it. Our merciful God, through His “grace...instruct[s] us, to the intent that, deny ing worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righ teously and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12). God’s mercy is not a mere emotion. It is mani fested through and appropriated by man living in harmony with the Word. Apparently some of Corinthian brethren had to, among other things, give up their homosexual partners and practices in order to become christians (I Cor. 6:11, “and such were some of you”). The inspired Paul now nothing of this non-repentive reformation scheme.

Would that Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage were the only source of innovation and division to day. Some of the more popular innovations among us today also appear to have a point of intersection. Instrumental Music has reared its head once again; there are Soloos, Choirs, Choruses, special music; there is the Divided Assembly (divided by age, gender; and in one case, even by academic degrees); we are regularly seeing women used as worship leaders in mixed assemblies (Preaching, Praying, Translat ing, leading in taking the Lord’s Supper and the Of ferings); there are Skits and Dramatic Presentations, et al.

Each of these innovations intersect at the concept of The Assembly. The Assembly is truly under assa ult. Brother Calvin Warpula flat out says, “The New Testament speaks of Christians ‘coming to get her’ but not of ‘worship services.’” The idea that “worship services” have special rules not binding on other Christian assemblies is a human tradition....

Essential Elements of the Assembly

With this article, we will have completed our study of that continuous, connected composite of The Assembly as seen in First Corinthians 11:17 — 16:9. We’ve noted: “The People of It” (“whole church as sembled together”) [14:23]; men and women [34-35]; “The Nature of It” (“worship God...God is among us”) [22]; “speak...to God” [28]; Cf. “all here present before God” [Ac 10:33]; “The Place of It” (“together...into one place” [1 Co 11:20]); in other words, the people in The Assembly were there to worship God and thereby be edified (“teaching and admonishing one another...singing...to the Lord” [Col 3:16]; “church received edifying” [I Cor 14:5]). We should also note “The Time of It” (“the first day of every week” [16.2, RSV]).

What are People to Do in the Assembly?

Now, as to The Activities of It: A careful consider ation of our text will show five separate and dis tinct acts. I say this with the complete awareness that there are those among us who literally scoff at the notion of any acts of worship, much less five specific ones. The are the same people who scoff at abortion. Since she is under state supervision, the state opposed the action, but a judge rules that she should have the abortion anyway. In various places now a child can get an abortion without the parents even being notified.

The Background Of This Lack Of Respect For Human Life

On Monday, January 22, 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-2 in favor of abortion. To God-fear ing, morally conscious people this is a black day in our history. That the long-held sanctity of life would be so challenged and repudiated by the highest court of the land struck many with great dismay. At that time a majority of people did not favor the legalizing of abortion. This is a case where the highest court of the land is legislating rather than adjudicating.

With the passing of time more people have come to favor abortion. It seems in some cases that those who favor this practice of cold bloodedly murder ing infants, whom God created, have consciences with a bit of life left yet. I say this because of their preferred use of the term “pro choice” rather than the cold facts suggested by such words as: “mur der,” “killing,” or even “abortion.” A conscience which is not troubled greatly by the gory facts of “partial birth abortion,” must indeed be “seared.” In this case the innocent child is only inches and/or minutes away from living a life by natural means. God’s mercy is not a mere emotion. It is manifesting earthly lusts, we should live soberly and righ teously and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12).

Both political parties have some who favor abor tion, but the liberal party is the one which is overwhelmingly in favor of abortion, though they usually call it “freedom to choose.” The very fact that a major political party would go all out for supporting abortion in order to get political support shows just how far our country has gone in the past several decades. God-given life is coming to mean less and less. This is frightening, especially when we consider what has happened in other countries. A case in point of politicians resorting to the willful taking of life, as in “power to choose,” we call attention to recent words of Howard Dean, Democratic National Committee Chairman. From an article in The Paducah Sun, Apr. 17, 2005, in which Dean says the Schiavo case will be used against the Republicans in coming elections. Note the following from the article by Siobhan McDonough of AP.

“This is going to be an issue in 2006 because we’re going to have an ad with a picture of (House Major ity Leader) Tom DeLay saying, ‘Do you want this guy to decide whether your die or not? Or is that going to be up your love ones?’” Dean said in West Hollywood, Calif. Dean, answering questions at an Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality event on Friday, went on to say, The issue is: Are we going to live in a theocracy where the higher powers tell us what to do? Or are we going to be allowed to consult our own high powers when we make very difficult decisions?”

The definition of “theocracy” by Webster is: “1. a form of government in which God or a deity is recognized as the supreme ruler.” Deans makes his point very clear. “Our own high powers” which Dean supports is the high power of men with God left out of the picture. He can’t respect the power of God and uphold the taking of life as in the Schiavo case, or in abortion, any more than he can support the Gay and Lesbian group to whom he was speaking. With God out, evil is free to move in, and it does.
Our current President, George Bush, is sometimes criticized for invoking the name of God as he speaks publicly. Just think of the implication of such criticism. Is this not valid evidence that such critics prefer an atheistic person as their leader? No too many years ago virtually everyone would have preferred a leader who believed in God.

In some political circles those who still believe in God are referred to as “the religious right,” or “the radical religious right.” They are criticized and blamed for many things. The problem with the liberal people seems to be that these people believing in God conflicts with their advocacy of such ungodly things as abortion and homosexuality.

The Conflict Between Pure Secularism And Belief In God And His Principles

For several years now there has been a very pronounced effort to completely secularize our society. When such a state occurs it is then that belief in God and His principles have faded away. This battle is raging in several areas, all of which are important.

We have just noted what is happening in the political world. We've never seen such a push in the direction of completely divorcing ourselves from God and His principles that used to be respected by the majority of people, whether they pretended to be religious or not.

The mention of God and acts of respect for Him in our schools are now taboo. All manner of immoral things can be discussed, but not God. Prayer is strictly out, and evil is in.

In our civil society ungodly people are being heard from far and wide. They are against the use of God’s name. There are those who oppose the holiday of Christmas. The Bible doesn’t teach us to observe Christmas, but those who oppose it do so because it is in the minds of many a connection with Christ, and this the critics detest strongly.

A great many of our schools of higher learning are now filled with professors who disdain belief in God and do not hesitate to try to recruit others to follow their ungodly ways.

Opposition to God is now found in religion, even the religions which claim to be of the Christian religion. We do not include in this group those referred to above as “the religious right.” These religions where outright opposition to God’s will is found are the very liberal ones. In these one will find the upholding of homosexuality, and in some cases abortion.

In Paul’s charge to the elders of the church at Ephesus he said, “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). In first century John said, “many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 Jno. 4:1). Paul writes to Timothy, saying “some shall depart from the faith,” and “they shall turn away their ears from the truth” (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:4). Christ said “Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15). Peter warns of false prophets (2 Pet. 2:1).

The very fact that we are warned of false teachers is proof that there would be those who oppose God. When error is taught rather than truth God is being opposed. That can be clearly seen in some of the religion of today. There are those in religion, even among those who claim to be Christians, who stand against God in various ways. A classic example are those who uphold homosexuality, even the so-called marriage of such. No sin is more clearly condemned in God’s word than that of homosexuality. Those who stand for such are opposing God and encouraging the secularism which rejects God. And, to make it even worse, they are doing it in name of God and/or religion.

The devil works in devious ways. Paul says of him, “we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). In Ephesians 6:11 Paul speaks of the “wiles
Fifth Annual Banner of Truth Lectures
Murray, KY, June 27-30, 2005
Theme: Lessons from Prophets of Old for Modern Man
Sponsored by: Dexter & Hickory Grove Churches of Christ
Location: Curris Center, M.S.U. Campus, Third Floor Theater

Monday, June 27
10:00 a.m. Alan Adams — “In The Beginning God Created” — Genesis 1:1
11:00 a.m. Richard Adams — “The Eyes of Both of Them Were Opened” — Genesis 3:7
1:30 p.m. Garland Robinson — “Stand Still And See The Salvation Of The Lord” — Ex. 14:13
2:30 p.m. Walter W. Pigg — “The Lord Rained Fire And Brimstone” — Genesis 19:24
3:30 p.m. Paul Curless — “But They Have Rejected Me” — I Samuel 1:7
7:00 p.m. Roger Campbell — “Arise, Go Nineveh, that Great City” — Jonah 1:2
8:00 p.m. Garland Robinson — “And The People Sat Down To Eat And To Drink” — Ex. 32:6

Tuesday, June 28
10:00 a.m. Ken Burleson — “The Feet Of Him That Bringeth Good Tidings” — Isaiah 52:7
11:00 a.m. David Lemmons — “The House Of Israel; All Came To Pass” — Joshua 21:45
1:30 p.m. Robert Alexander — “Life And Good; And Death And Evil” — Deut. 30:15
2:30 p.m. Roger Campbell — “I Will Make Of Thee A Great Nation” — Genesis 12:3
3:30 p.m. Roger Scully — “Ye Shall Not Surely Die” — Genesis 3:4
7:00 p.m. Ken Burleson — “Art Thou He That Troubleshoot Israel?” — I Kings 18:17
8:00 p.m. Leon Cole — “Prophecy Not Unto Us Right Things” — Isaiah 30:10

Wednesday, June 29
10:00 a.m. Leon Cole — “The Lord Had Respect Unto Abel” — Genesis 4:4
11:00 a.m. Lindon Ferguson — “To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice” — I Samuel 15:22
1:30 p.m. Michael Willey — “Gave Thanks Before His God, As He Did Aforetime” — Dan. 6:10
2:30 p.m. David Lemmons — “Out Of Zion Shall Go Forth The Law” — Isaiah 2:2
3:30 p.m. Jeff Bates — “A Virgin Shall Conceive, And Bear A Son” — Isaiah 7:14
7:00 p.m. Alan Adams — “And They Stood Every Man In His Place” — Judges 7:21
8:00 p.m. Roger Scully — “My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge” — Hosea 4:6

Thursday, June 30
10:00 a.m. Guyton Montgomery — “Offered Strange Fire Before The Lord” — Leviticus 10:1
11:00 a.m. Rick Knoll — “Turned Not Aside To Right Hand Or To The Left” — 2 Kings 22:2
1:30 p.m. Jimmy Bates — “In The Plains Of Ono” — Nehemiah 6:2
2:30 p.m. Joe Spangler — “And Shall Cleave Unto His Wife” — Genesis 2:24
3:30 p.m. Gilbert Gough — “Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed?” — Amos 3:3
7:00 p.m. Joe Spangler — “Joseph Was A Goodly Person, And Well Favored” — Genesis 39:6
8:00 p.m. Richard Guili — “Fear God, And Keep His Commandments” — Ecclesiastes 12:13

"The Feet Of Him That Bringeth Good Tidings" — Isaiah 52:7

"The Eyes of Both of Them Were Opened" — Genesis 3:7

"Stand Still And See The Salvation Of The Lord" — Ex. 14:13

"The Lord Rained Fire And Brimstone" — Genesis 19:24

"But They Have Rejected Me" — I Samuel 1:7

"Arise, Go Nineveh, that Great City" — Jonah 1:2

"And The People Sat Down To Eat And To Drink" — Ex. 32:6

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"To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice" — I Samuel 15:22

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"And Shall Cleave Unto His Wife" — Genesis 2:24

"Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed?" — Amos 3:3

"Joseph Was A Goodly Person, And Well Favored" — Genesis 39:6

"Fear God, And Keep His Commandments" — Ecclesiastes 12:13

of the devil.” What could be more effective with some than to appeal to them through a religion which claims to be of God, but is in reality op-posed to God, as they show by actions?

When a child is born into the world today, the influence brought to bear upon it to believe in secu-larism rather than God will be stronger than any that we have known.

Some Encouraging Signs
Of Respect For The Sanctity Of Life
The last national election showed that the ma-jority of voters are not yet ready to accept secular-isim over belief in God and His principles. While that is encouraging, the fact that in the presiden-tial election fifty million voted in favor of secular-isim is frightening. In the presidential election people were given a clear choice, and it is of great concern that almost half the voters demonstrated their lack of faith in God by voting for things which are clearly opposed by God. If this election had been held fifty years ago with the same issues con-sidered, those on the side of belief in God would have by major proportions overwhelmed those who favor secularism.

Many of the writers in newspapers and maga-zines spoke plainly in their opposition to the court-appointed killing of Terri Schiavo. On the other hand, indications are that the larger papers have taken a more liberal stance upholding “pulling the tube.”

One writer points out that a dozen or more of those of a liberal persuasion voiced their opposi-tion to the death by starvation. This is somewhat puzzling since most of the liberals are in favor of abortion. Many abortion advocates are in favor of taking the brains from the skull of an innocent baby just moments from a natural birth. Surely, one who favors such a barbaric act certainly has no respect for human life; it must be, then, the manner in which Terri Schiavo was killed that they oppose. But if one doesn’t believe in the sanctity of life, what difference would it make as to how “the deed is done”?

The outpouring of support to save Terri Schiavo’s life was encouraging. Even children showing support were willing to be handcuffed by police. There is hope that this tragic deed will awaken people to what we are really facing, if this trend continues. Many people must not have stopped to think just what this killing of an inno-cent, helpless individual signifies. For some time now there have been discussions of the practice of euthanasia. Most people that I know are op-posed to this method of killing people. Euthana-sia, some times called “mercy killing” is defined as a “painless death.” No one knows that the cruel starvation of Terri Schiavo was painless. But we do know that the taking of her life was an arbi-trary decision made by her cheating husband and the courts. It was the killing of one who was not wanted to be alive but to be dead.

AdDED to the tragedy of this was the fact that Terry Schiavo’s parents wanted to take their daughter and care for her and let her live. But no. The courts said she must die.
As we look back into religious history we see a people who for the greater part did not know God. They were already away from God. Their concern was not the doing of the will of the one true God. With God’s chosen people, the children of Israel, it was a matter of them turning away from God time after time. If God’s chosen people would do that, why should we think it strange if those who claim to be believe in God today should do the same thing? As we noted earlier, one source said that in 2001 twenty-eight percent of the people had no religion. They are away from God to be sure.

A great concern of mine is that those who profess to be New Testament Christians are showing powerful signs of turning away or forgetting God, when it comes to human life and its sanctity.

Some may say: “Why be so pessimistic? Christians are always going to value human life highly.” The signs that I see are based on what I’ve seen in my almost eighty years. I have seen great changes in our society in the area of morality. In addition to this, I have seen the changes which have come about within the Lord’s church in the fifty-one years that I have been preaching. Some of my brethren have veered away from belief in the distinctiveness of the Lord’s church. Some believe people may be saved outside the body of Christ, never having been baptized for remission of sins and to put on Christ. God’s law on marriage and divorce and remarriage has been cast aside and ignored. The true Christian lifestyle has become out of date with a great many. Materialism has stolen the spiritual hearts of many.

As Faithful Christians, What Should We Do?

We can help change the future if we so desire. We cannot make a perfect society, but we can have an influence for good. The church was born in the first century into the midst of an evil and godless society, even worse than what we see now. But in face of great trials and difficulties it made a difference.

We must seriously recognize the sanctity of life. Life is sacred, it is from God. “And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness”[emp. added] (Gen.1:26). “So God created man in his own image.” (v. 27). Someone has suggested that man in his nature was intended to be the highest representation of God possible, short of the incarnation of Christ. One act portends for the future, unless there is a drastic change. The lives of untold millions are hanging in the balance. Will they be allowed to live or will they be condemned to die?

The sordid disrespect for God-given life took its greatest advance in our lives when our Supreme Court in early 1973 legalized infanticide. The innocent blood of untold millions has flowed since that infamous day. The majority of people did not approve of unlimited abortion then, and certainly would not have approved the killing of those outside the womb by starvation as in the Schiavo case. But as is the case with evil acts, when one act is accepted it is much easier to accept another which is even more evil. This is the progressive nature of evil.

People generally have certainly not sought God’s authority to justify these kinds of killing. What few efforts have been made to show that God’s word authorizes such they have been few and far between. It is rather a matter of unconcern and rejection of such authority, which allows people to do all manner of evil. This is the way of secularism.