

## “A Culture of Life”

It was an outrageous sight to see the offer for free vasectomies and abortions outside a recent national political convention. It portrays sterility and death, two things opposed by biblical revelation. God loves life because He is the creator of life. And the institution of the family is found in the very beginning of humanity.

The Bible teaches the wonderful gift of life. This is because God is the giver of life. In Proverbs 8:27-31, we read that God delights in creating humanity. Men and women are objects of God love. Even after the fall, God was still the giver of life. John 1:14 tells us, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” If God hated life, why did He come to dwell among us? God loves life. And Jesus came to restore life, and to give life. And the Spirit, as acknowledged for centuries by the orthodox Church, is the Giver of life, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

But does it really matter that we turn away from God? As Eric Voegelin once warned, “The murder of God is not followed by the superman, but by the murder of man.” Indeed, when we witness the exultation of the slaughter of innocents, then we prove ourselves a culture of death.

The Bible also views human beings as made in the image of God. The worth of a person is not created by man but declared by God in Genesis 1. It is inherent and cannot be taken away by anyone. But any other account that disregards the image of God dehumanizes a person. A person’s worth will instead be based on ability, accomplishments, convenience, or productivity.

People who turn away from God do not turn away from all things holy. They replace the holy God with another object of worship. The god is now the autonomous self, which is really just the same exultation of the pagan gods of Roman and Greek society. Those gods were just bigger and stronger versions of people. They were creations made from the imagination. Yet, the only true and living God reveals, “These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you” (Ps. 50:21). God is not like us, because He is not made in our image. But we are made in His image.

The image of God requires us to recognize the dignity of another person. Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Our neighbors include the child in a mother’s womb, the one who is fearfully and wonderfully made in God’s image. To truly love our neighbor, then, is to love what God loves, which is life. To love our neighbor cultivates a culture of life.

Judson Marvel

Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA), Sierra Vista, AZ