

Pro-Life or Pro-Choice;

What's in a Name?

An essay by

Joshua Michail

6 February, 2012

Are you 'pro-life' or 'pro-choice'? Clearly the opposite of life is death. Or, in the case of inanimate objects it is simply not being alive. But, for the sake of discussion let's not be concerned with things that are not capable of living in the first place. To be honest, the issue of what is life is not the primary concern of this essay. Rather, the bigger issue is politics. Naturally, when a group of people have a political agenda they want to make their movement appealing.

The context of the subject here is the right to choose to have a medical procedure, specifically the abortion of a pregnancy. The self-labeled 'pro-life' movement seeks to deny this right, while the 'pro-choice' movement seeks to protect the right. But, what is in a name? Honestly, a lot. In fact, names, in regards to movements and so forth, are very often carefully selected to manipulate the public opinion. So why are the opposing camps on the issue of abortion both called “pro-” choice or life?

What is the opposite of 'pro-life'? Is it 'anti-life', or in other words 'pro-death'? Well, it is necessarily implied, in only the most banal and mischievous possible use. But that is wrong. The use of 'pro-life' is a calculated one, intended to demonize the opposition by implication. The camp that is opposite the 'pro-life' camp is not in favor of death, or against life. They are the 'pro-choice' movement. A reasonable person ought to feel compelled to admit the absurdity in wrongly equating the pro-choice movement with being 'pro-death'. But, this is the sort of misleading tactics so shamelessly employed by the sort of people who see the population as a means to an end, a set of pawns, or even dupes. A name does not define a movement. It is, rather, the positions of the movement in the context of the issue on which they are concerned which matters most.

But what about the opposite of 'pro-choice', what is that? Is it 'anti-choice'? The answer is yes. Unlike the other way around, this is an unqualified yes. The 'pro-life' movement seeks to usurp the rights of women to choose whether to carry their pregnancy to natural birth, or not. The 'pro-life' camp not only attempts to get the voting public on their side, but they also lobby legislators to enact laws. The agenda being to outlaw the choice. They want to get laws that remove the option of abortion. This is a denial of choice. It is an infringement on liberty.

Considering that in the United States we believe in freedom, choice is a part of our culture. Liberty is, in a very real sense, a cultural ideal, it is a concept that is deeply embedded in the American psyche. So what does abortion have to do with this? It is a choice. The idea is that the law ought to, permit a woman to choose, for herself at any given time whether she wants to abort her pregnancy or to give birth. For most of our nation's history this has been the case. But, more recently the movement that opposes this basic right has been quite successful in their efforts to criminalize, to outlaw, abortions. An effort to remove the choice and force all women to the same outcome for their pregnancies.

So why do they call themselves 'pro-life'? Despite the expected spin, one could reasonably suggest it's because they realized that most people would be less supportive if they called themselves what they really are, 'anti-choice'. They would likely have so very little support if they were too honest. No one wants to identify themselves as being an 'anti-choice' advocate. A fascinating fact, one ought to consider, is that most so-called “pro-life” supporters also favor death penalties. It seems a bit difficult to take as sincere about their implied foundational belief of “Life is sacred”. How can any sensible person accept the idea that life is precious and yet also endorse the deliberate and needless ending of people's lives? These same people, are mostly, all in agreement in their opposition to euthanasia – the assisted suicide of terminally ill patients who suffer horribly from an illness, from which, they have no hope of recovering. Further, the majority of the mendaciously named “pro-life” movement are quite satisfied to instruct desperately poor women that they not only have no choice in adding hungry mouths they can't feed to their familial responsibilities, but that they also will work tirelessly to deny any assistance to them after they've produced the unfortunate child.

The bulk of the irritating and loud voices shrilly demanding that women are denied the liberty necessary to plan their families also remain unmoved by the fact that nearly all abortions done when laws prohibit them are done in entirely unsavory and usually extraordinarily dangerous locations and ways. The coat-hanger abortion is no joke, before abortions were legal, desperate women with no access to professional medical services for the procedure actually used coat-hangers. More often than not, women doing this back alley, self-procedure died, that's hardly “pro-life”. But, even worse still is the issue of the motivation for the anti-choice movement, what they are trying to do and the government.

The first amendment to the US constitution prohibits the government from supporting, much less enforcing, religious ideology. These people, the religiously motivated imposers against liberty and well-being, care more about trying to add more souls to the collection of the lord. Ironically, obviously, they don't see the abortion as a fast-track to what they consider the ideal state of being – dead in this world and residing with their god. They don't care about the overpopulation of humanity on Earth, nor the fact that one billion humans are starving to death already. They also don't give a damn that the bible, from which they claim to get their religion and thus their anti-abortion position, does not say anything against abortion. These tools, and they are just that, believe entirely in the sanctity of a church add-on unsupported by the holy book. The anti-abortion position was contrived based on the idea of out-breeding other religions, to crowd out the unwashed masses of heathens outside their faith. Now the anti-choice movement seeks to have laws enacted that would criminalize abortion of pregnancies. The motivation, by a large majority, for the anti-choice movement is the Christian religion. More specifically, fundamentalist or conservative Christianity. This makes the euphemistically and deceptively named “pro-life” movement fundamentally un-American.