

ETHICS OF FETAL RESEARCH UNDER BIDEN

Too many Americans find it hard to get worked up about fetal research. Perhaps if they knew more about the moral implications of such practices, they would be more concerned. Once we treat the least among us as “material,” bad things happen. Consider the following.

In 2019, a jury awarded \$58 million in damages to ten plaintiffs after finding that the Biological Resource Center in Phoenix had deceived families into donating the body of a deceased family member. The families thought the body would be used for medical research. Instead, the bodies were dismembered and sold for profit.

FBI agents raided the facility in 2014 and found chopped up bodies in buckets, including feet, shoulders, legs, and spines. Freezers were packed with penises. They even found a torso with a different head sewn on, reminiscent of “Frankenstein.” The owner of the human chop shop, Stephen Gore, was convicted of deceiving the families who donated the bodies; he also broke the law by deceiving the buyers who were sold body parts with infectious diseases.

How could something like this happen? It’s actually not hard to understand. When we objectify human beings, treating them as inanimate objects, such practices logically follow.

The Catholic Church has a long and proud record of opposing attempts to dehumanize men, women, and children, ranging from denouncing pagan practices such as infanticide to Nazi eugenics. Their latest salvo is a shot at the Biden administration for lifting limits on human fetal research that were placed by the Trump administration.

Archbishop Joseph Naumann, chairman of the bishops’ conference

on Pro-Life Activities, released a statement on April 21 that was superb. "The bodies of children killed by abortion deserve the same respect as that of any other person. Our government has no right to treat innocent abortion victims as a commodity that can be scavenged for body parts to be used for research. It is unethical to promote and subsidize research that can lead to legitimizing the violence of abortion."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki was asked about this statement on April 27. She said the White House "respectfully disagrees," explaining that "it's important to invest in science and look for opportunities to cure diseases."

As expected, she never acknowledged the humanity of the unborn child. If she were to do so, the administration that she serves would have to rescind many executive orders and other policy prescriptions that service the pro-abortion industry. They would never do that—they have too much invested in the culture of death.

It's easy to ignore the humanity of the unborn if we call fetal tissue "material." That was the choice of words used by Planned Parenthood in the 70s. In the 80s, Newsweek described the dismembered body of an unborn baby extracted in a D&E abortion as "fetal material being pulled from a woman's vagina." In the same decade, Rachel Conrad Wahlberg, an abortion-rights advocate, contended that the unborn do not have an independent existence. Referring to the pregnant woman, she said, "It is hers. It is her *possession* (italic in the original)."

The same mindset marked the *Dred Scott* decision that legalized slavery. In the 1857 Supreme Court decision, the court affirmed public opinion by noting that black people were "articles of property and merchandise." Nearly 400 blacks were used as guinea pigs in the infamous Tuskegee experiment that began in 1932. For 40 years, rural sharecroppers who took part in the experiment never knew they had syphilis, nor were

treated for it. They were not seen as human beings with rights equal to that of others.

After World War I, prisoners in San Quentin received transplanted sex organs from rams, goats, and boars. Tuberculosis treatments were tested on other prisoners. Inmates of Stateville Correctional Center in Illinois were exposed to malaria in the hope that a cure could be found. The drug companies had a field day experimenting on the incarcerated, and did so without controversy right up until the 1970s.

Not only were prisoners seen as subhuman, so were mentally retarded children. From the mid-1950s to 1970, those housed at Willowbrook State School in Staten Island, New York were infected with hepatitis so that doctors could track the spread of the viral infection. More than 700 children were infected to see how they responded to a drug treatment.

After what Jews went through at the hands of Nazi physician Josef Mengele—he performed painful and often deadly experiments on twins—it led to the establishment of the Nuremberg Code, a guideline for conducting research on humans. The first stricture insists that the subject must provide consent before research can begin.

A child in his mother's womb can never give consent.

Archbishop Naumann got it right when he said “it is deeply offensive to millions of Americans for our tax dollars to be used for research that collaborates with an industry built on the taking of innocent lives.” Worse, this morally indefensible decision was rendered by our “devout Catholic” president.