

PREYING ON YOUTH IS BIG BUSINESS

Two major attacks on young people are being launched by those whose only interest is making money off of them. To be specific, the push to legalize marijuana and the push to normalize transgenderism are the two biggest current threats to the health and well-being of young men and women in America.

It is worth noting that the social teachings of the Catholic Church clearly give preferential treatment to a market-based economy over a state-run economy, but there is nothing in those teachings that endorses a laissez-faire position. The Church understands the necessity of balancing economic interests with social interests, holding those in the business community to high moral standards. That voice desperately needs to be respected today.

Those making big money off of marijuana don't care what happens to young people. There is a wealth of information on how much more potent today's brand of this drug is compared to decades ago, leading to serious cases of psychosis. The degree of brain damage varies by the user, but no one doubts that it impairs mental acuity and is downright dangerous when users get behind the wheel.

According to Dr. Ken Finn, one of the nation's leading experts on drug use, "Poison control calls are skyrocketing across the country in states that have both medical and recreational [marijuana] programs, particularly in the *zero to five age group* (our italics)." Worse, five states had marijuana legalization on the ballot in November.

Marijuana advocates argue that legalization is necessary because too many African Americans and Hispanics were

selectively punished in the past for using the drug. But that is not what is driving the push to legalize the drug.

Ben Cort is the author of a book on this subject. He understands what's really going on. "Multinational corporate interests" are leading the way. "The idea here is absolutely not social justice, nor any sort of reform in a meaningful way. The intent here is to get richer."

Former House Speaker John Boehner, who in 2015 said he was "unalterably opposed to the legalization of marijuana," did a 180 three years later when he left the Congress and became the poster boy for legalization.

To show how low he could go, he even partnered with Kathleen Sebelius, the former Health and Human Services czar under Obama. She was the one who declared war on Catholic non-profits, seeking to force them to purchase abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. But that didn't make any difference to Boehner, who likes to tout his Catholic credentials. In fact, he got so caught up in making big bucks off of legalizing marijuana that he got into a legal dispute over his alleged failure to share profits with the man who hired him to lead the company.

Like the marijuana industry, the transgender industry is booming. Last year it posted sales of nearly \$2 billion and is expected to reach \$5 billion by the end of the decade. Planned Parenthood is making a fortune by ripping off sexually confused young people; it is the second-largest provider of hormonal injections in America.

To understand what sex-reassignment surgery does, consider what one of the most prominent defenders of this surgery has to say about it.

The Cleveland Clinic performs metoidioplasty, phalloplasty, scrotoplasty and chest surgery for troubled girls seeking to transition to the opposite sex. Metoidioplasty uses tissue from

an enlarged clitoris so it can form a small penis. Phalloplasty uses a large section of skin and tissue from female body parts (e.g., her arm), and then it is rolled to form a shaft so it can be attached to her groin. Scrotoplasty involves the creation of a new scrotum—parts are taken from the female's labia majora—and are then used to make a scrotum-like sac.

Unfortunately, the Cleveland Clinic gives false information to these disturbed young girls. For example, it says that metoidioplasty “is a surgery sometimes requested by people assigned female at birth.” This is factually incorrect: no one is ever “assigned” one's sex—it is determined by the father, the outcome of which is typically recorded by a healthcare professional.

It is also wrong to say, “This surgery helps to align their physical bodies with who they really are.” In fact, everyone knows who they really are when they are born. What the cutting and splicing does is to artificially create body parts. All the surgery in the world can never alter one's chromosomal makeup, and the Cleveland Clinic knows this is true. But there is a lot of cash on the table, and that is dispositive.

It would be a mistake to think the Cleveland Clinic is the exception to the rule. Harvard Medical School, and many other distinguished medical entities, are trumpeting the wonders of transgenderism. They know better, making their role all the more troubling.

Preying on young men and women, whether it be by poisoning their minds with drugs or deforming their bodies with surgery, is morally offensive. Indeed, it is child abuse. That the prime motivating force is to get rich makes those who are benefiting from such exploitation even more contemptible.