



CATHOLICS UNITED FOR LIFE

Spring 2015

Dear friends,

Ideas are powerful. Words are powerful—especially words like “rights.”

Rights appear to be a good. We want people to have the right to life or the right to religious freedoms. However, it is a godless sense of rights that introduced abortion as a national reality.

Rights as the secular version of the Ten Commandments create a whole new set of problems.

I encountered this in a funny way recently. As parents often do, my husband went in one direction and I in another to meet everyone’s needs. Our schedule had changed several times that week, and I realized I was completely confused about our youngest son’s sports practice. So I called the doctor’s office where my husband was (he did not have a cell phone).

“Could I just ask my husband if our son had practice today?” I asked the receptionist. She responded that she could “neither confirm nor deny” his presence there. I laughed and explained, “No, he is not even a patient there. He is just waiting to give someone a ride.” She put me on hold, only to come back saying that she could neither confirm nor deny that my husband was even there.

While this ended up being funny—I used to keep track of eight children’s schedules very well and now struggle to keep track of two—I have run into situations where it was not at all funny.

As I said, the right to privacy gave us abortion on demand. It has also separated the mentally ill from their families and parents from their children at the very moments when family is most needed. Professionals often take the place of family as advocates in crisis situations instead of those who truly know and love them.

Privacy has always been in the law. However, the legalities involved in federal acts such as HIPAA have made the general public’s need for absolute privacy override common sense and parental authority.

This newsletter deals with the very serious nature of the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child. While you read it, please consider your own ideas about rights, because ideas and words form culture, especially when communicating to young people.

Christ did not stand on a hill and declare, “Thou shalt have RIGHTS!” He called us to love God and our neighbor.

Do the rights being placed into law support human dignity? Do they protect and promote family as the building block of society?

Sincerely,

Mrs. Tamara Cesare
President, Catholics United for Life



Not too long ago, there were big headlines about 18-year-old Rachel who was suing her parents for child support—over \$5,000 in high school tuition fees, plus money for transportation and access to her college fund. The girl left home because she didn't like her parent's rules—she wanted the freedom of an adult and the financial support of a child.

The judge ruled against Rachel, citing the danger of setting a precedent of young people suing their parents. While it is comforting to know that we haven't come to a point yet in the legal system where children are allowed to make such demands, there are still many subtle ways in which parental authority is undermined.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many of the points in this document would have supported a minor child's "right" to make such decisions on his or her own.

The effects of this global policy are most obvious in the protection of children's "sexual rights." Children are often separated from their parents during doctor's visits to "protect" them from their parents' finding out about STDs or pregnancy testing or their contraceptive use. Counselors, in some states by law, affirm that parental morals concerning sexuality are outdated and incorrect.

With the authority of the UN's view on children's rights behind them, Planned Parenthood has a worldwide teen-to-teen strategy to promote "safe sex practices," and freedom of sexual expression among youth as young as 10 years old.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

In the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC), the UN argues for a global understanding of **autonomy as the source of children's dignity**, stating that the rights of the child, at any age, include:

- *freedom of views and expression*
- *free access to information "regardless of frontiers"*
- *"freedom of thought, conscience and religion"*
- *freedom of "association" and "assembly"*
- *and the right to privacy.*



There are obvious problems! And, taken to an extreme, this clearly contradicts the message that parents are responsible for their children, as we see in common-sense commercials that tell us to monitor internet use, to talk to our children about the dangers of smoking and drug abuse, and to protect them from predators and predatory ideas.

Think about this list of skills that a child is supposed to have mastered—such as good judgment in conscience, associations and information—in light of the headlines about young girls joining extreme terrorist groups and ending up in sexual bondage.

However, for a quarter of a century the UN has found the "autonomy" definition of rights to be useful for their own purposes, despite the horrendous dangers. These points are so broad that they will be interpreted by the ideals of whoever has the power to interpret them.

CONCERNS FROM A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The University College of Ghent in Belgium presented a meta-analysis of 290 scholarly articles on the UNCRC, which questioned some of the basic ideas behind the UN's approach to the subject. They divided the analysis into three points.

(1) Autonomy and participation rights as the new norm for policy



“...the new image of childhood requires an ‘unchildlike sense of autonomy.’”

Ghent analysis

The child is assumed to come into the world with a formed conscience and a natural desire for what is in his or her own best interests—with a moral and spiritual rudder built in. Parents are no longer parents, but just facilitators or caretakers in the process of maturation.

One expert's opinion was that “the child is expected to know her or his own life, needs and interests and to deal with them adequately, just like adults...”

“Honor thy father and mother” recognizes the deep need of the child to be fostered and protected. Common sense tells us that, without parental formation, children will be victimized. However, this policy attacks the very heart of Christianity as well. Children's consciences will be formed by random sources: media, politically-correct professionals, simple concupiscence and a culture that is expressly opposed to Christianity.

“[The Convention on the Rights of the Child] does not require any semblance of relationship, any belief in the innate worth of particular individuals, any engagement, any caring.”

Ghent analysis

(2) Children's rights vs. parental rights

The very clear concern is that “the rights of the child would undermine the parental responsibilities and would threaten the welfare of the children.” This “tension” is “embedded” in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, according to several international voices.

One expert lamented that the UN's approach creates in children an “implicit mistrust of their caregivers, and a legitimization of outside professionals to intervene.” This intervention would then be based on very subjective ideas of freedom.

Another expert worries that “antagonistic power relations between children and parents...functioned as a legitimacy for the state to take over parental responsibilities for the sake of the child.”

With the Convention on the Rights of the Child in place, the “sake of the child” takes on a whole new meaning by defining the child's right as autonomy as opposed to safety or security. Each professional must make huge decisions about children he or she doesn't know, based on very general guides of freedom and without connecting the possible consequences. For example, will an older person take advantage of a 12-year-old's freedoms to use her? From my experience with abortion centers, I would have to say—yes, people absolutely do take advantage of children.

(3) Globalization of children's rights

While the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child assigns “primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child” to the parents, it makes parental control conditional on adhering to these global principles of freedom. Education becomes the absolute goal on an industrialized level, leaving behind the parent as the primary educators and creating educational goals that are not only global, but also focused on godless principles.



“To control the practice of implementation, the UNCRC provides for a comprehensive system of monitoring.” And with comprehensive monitoring arises the concern that “anybody who challenges the new orthodoxies of children’s rights and therapeutic approaches is likely to find themselves [sic] accused of heresy.”

Ghent analysis

If I have learned one thing as a parent, it is that discipline and freedom have to be dealt with on a very individual basis. Children are better off in homes, not institutions. Ironically, this clamor for “rights” will be exactly what tramples on the child’s innate worth because relationship and caring are an integral part of childrearing that the UN doesn’t recognize.

This global call for “rights as autonomy” could seriously undermine the child’s basic right to safety, security and a proper human and spiritual formation.

A second concern with globalization is control.

The concern is that globalization ushers in the need for professionalization—professionals to manage the tension between children’s rights and parents’ rights.

These statements make me think of the German family whose children were violently removed from the home because they were homeschooled. The government stated that it does not want “parallel societies.” This sounds disturbingly



like parents being “accused of heresy” as feared. The tension between child and parent has now expanded to include how society believes the child should be raised, which I believe was the goal from the very beginning.

“Slightly provocative, one could even say that children’s rights have—paradoxically—become the bearer of a new movement of protecting children by controlling parenting.”

Ghent analysis



Parents teach self-giving; they take a child from being the center of the universe to being a contributing member of society – the opposite of the rights-driven message that sets autonomy as the measure of dignity while it is utterly unconcerned about the needs or dignity of the individual person.

The child is taught to act without regard for

- natural law
- moral guidelines
- parental authority

This is where

- a child’s personal dignity is lost
- children become victimized
- frightfully false ideals guide the next generation

Support CATHOLICS UNITED FOR LIFE
Promoting family, faith
and the Culture of Life!

Photos: Tamara Cesare

NEW HOPE, KENTUCKY 40052

For more information, or to order more copies of this newsletter, visit www.catholicsunitedforlife.org or call 1-800-764-8444.