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Karol Wojtyla's Conception of Love and Responsibility and Its Application to the Use of Contraception

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Abstract:

Wojtyla argues against the use of contraceptives for married couples. His view is that contraceptive sexual intercourse is reductive, does not fully respect the dignity of the other and does not fully express human spousal love. This paper investigates Karol Wojtyla's position and defends the possibility of exercising responsible human love whilst using contraceptives in the sexual life of married couples. I shall briefly consider the question of the effectiveness of contraception and Wojtyla's rejection of it. I hope to delve into Wojtyla's proposed method of birth control and the problems with it, I shall then advance reasons to justify the responsible use of contraception by married couples.

Keywords: Contraceptive technology, marital couples, marital intimacy, abstinence, marital continence, procreation, and family planning

1. Introduction

In an ideal world a contraceptive would provide complete protection against pregnancy, be entirely free of health risks and side effects, not involve any action during or immediately before intercourse, be completely reversible, not rely on the user's memory, and not involve the medical profession; and if it prevented the transmission of sexually transmitted disease. It is likely to take a very long time before this ideal becomes a reality".¹ Nonetheless it can be said that both methods, contraceptive and periodic continence are acts of responsibility to prevent conceiving children that the couple cannot take care of and I hold that some of the less harmful forms of contraception can be used alongside continence. If there was a perfect method of birth control, there would be no worry for prospective users, (Even though not equivalent, I shall use contraception and birth control interchangeably). A perfect contraceptive would be 100% effective, totally safe, available to everyone, inexpensive, completely without side effects, one that would not interfere with intercourse in a way and would require no advice or care from a clinician. This is the ideal. There is no such method today, and according to research experts, there are no likely prospects for the near future². Two considerations rise to the top as the most important in the minds of couples considering contraceptives – effectiveness and safety. For each method of birth control there is a rate of failure or an estimated number of pregnancies that can be expected if that method is used perfectly. Just as no contraceptive is 100% effective, no contraceptive is without risk. There are a variety of risks one might expose oneself to by using a method of contraceptives; even though some women are more likely than others to encounter problems with a specific method of birth control. When the phrase "it is a one in a million possibility" is used we usually mean to imply that it almost never happens. But for that one person who suffers a complication, it is now a 100% reality not a one in a million risk. Nevertheless, this phrase while it could not be used to totally allay the concern of a woman choosing a contraception it may help a woman compare the risk of the contraceptive to other voluntary risks to which she exposes herself, especially the risk of death from each pregnancy.

2. Wojtyla on Contraception

Wojtyla opposes the use of contraception in that contraceptive intercourse is violence to the order of nature (procreative), thereby also affecting the personal order (unitive); that these orders cannot be separated, for each depends upon the other. And that man/woman cannot triumph over nature by doing violence to it, but by understanding the laws which govern it, adapting himself/herself to its immanent purposes and making use of its latent possibilities.³ He holds that, in the order of love a man/woman can remain true to the person only in so far as he is true to nature. If he does violence to nature, he also violates the person by making it an object of sexual pleasure rather than an object of love.⁴ He maintains that when couple engage in a contraceptive act in marital relations, the character of the relationship between the partners changes automatically. The change is away from the unification in love towards the direction of mutual pleasure seeking, whereas it should be an expression of love with pleasure as an incidental accompaniment of the sexual

¹ Centre for Disease Control, 1983: 210

² Center for Disease Control, 1983:234

³ He acknowledges that people have difficulty in understanding and accepting the order of nature as an abstract value.

⁴Love and Responsibility, p.229.

act.⁵ According to him, erotic experiences, then, favour love in so far as they do not negate the value of the person and for that matter nature.

Wojtyla, despite his rejection of contraceptive intercourse admits the need for fertility control when he said that, a couple who do not sometimes refrain from sexual intercourse may see their family increase excessively.⁶ Wojtyla proposes periodic continence as a method of regulating birth. According to him this is a method of regulating birth that demands control over erotic experiences. By this method, couples are to take advantage of the periods of biological infertility (of the woman's menstrual cycle) for the purpose of avoiding parenthood and have intercourse on those infertile days and abstain on those days that are fertile. He explains that, sexual intercourse performed in the context of periodic continence is not only an act of loving union but also an act which fully conserves its procreative meaning, because it is intentional, and therefore objectively embedded in the structure of procreative responsibility.

Birth control methods of one sort or another all have advantages and drawbacks. Today many people ask the fact that contraception and periodic continence both are used for the same rationale of avoiding pregnancy, and for that matter how can there be any moral difference between them? Does the method used really matter because the end and purpose are the same? Wojtyla would say that periodic continence is not a contraceptive, it is the ethical opposite. Is periodic continence the lesser of two evils or the worse of the two? There are insurmountable problems on both sides of the coin. Periodic continence would have been the ideal method, without health risks or side effects; the only truly effective form of fertility planning would be that which embodies a respect for the health of men and women. There is a claim by proponents that periodic continence, is free of side effects hence they are ethically acceptable in all cultural, ethnic and religious contexts and is free of moral concerns. It restores dignity to the woman; the woman is not reduced to a sterile object which may be used at will. Periodic continence may be taught to anyone and is easy to use. It places no economic burden on users. It is simple to learn and safe to practice and does not depend on the regularity of the cycles for effectiveness. It has no physical side effects, does not interfere with the conjugal act, does not involve distasteful procedures. When practiced well it is 98% effective in postponing pregnancy even among the poorest of the poor in developing countries. It is based on the simple recognition of natural signs of fertility that appear for a few days during the woman's fertile cycle. It is the ovulation method that influences the practice of periodic continence within the marriage.

The practice of this method requires the development of personal self-control. This is both an advantage and at the same time the biggest single disadvantage of periodic continence. I think that this method is the ideal but given the context of difficulty, contraception could be embraced alongside continence. There is no intention to say that the contraceptive act is completely neutral but there are some of the contraceptive methods that are not harmful to human life and this could be employed. I argue that as humans we can embrace contraception, not to justify our self-centeredness or sexual appetites, but rather to properly carry out our role as responsible human creatures in the married life of couples. Therefore, this paper is not in line with the justification some people give for the use of contraception that: we human persons are totally in control of all that there is in this universe including the ownership and control of our physical bodies; it also rejects the mentality that sees pregnancy and children as an imposition to be avoided rather than gifts to be received, loved and nurtured. People marry for variety of motives. The idea of begetting children may be very secondary, perhaps only tolerated rather than desired in the minds of many marrying couples. Wojtyla would say that marriage with the fixed intention of avoiding children under any circumstance is immoral and robbing the marriage of its primary purpose. I think I agree with Wojtyla on this. Another mentality that confronts us in the use of contraception is what is called the 'contraceptive mentality': there is no doubt that at first glance the contraceptive approach seems attractive and convenient it has a pleasure-seeking nature, it seems attractive and convenient this calls for responsible use of it only in the married life. I advance a number of reasons defending the possibility of exercising responsible human love whilst using contraceptives in the sexual life of married couples.

3. Reasons Why Contraception Should Be Permissible in Marriage

3.1. Ineffectiveness of Periodic Continence

This paper does not condemn periodic continence, but affirms it as long as the couple can exercise that discipline and self-control and keep at it. I also endorse the use of unnatural forms of simple contraceptive methods when a couple wishes to extend the naturally given infertile periods for good reasons, to limit the number of their children in order to care for them responsibly. First of all, Wojtyla works towards a positive task of a new interpretation of the moral life, he exalts the power of sensuality and the beauty of marital intimacy yet in practice his prescription brings disunity to this intimacy; his attempts to redefine the contraceptive mentality are contrary to the intimacy he seeks. He proposes periodic continence or natural family planning as the ideal or acceptable method which is more or less an obstacle to marital couple's intimacy as he himself acknowledges that:

"Marital continence (abstinence) is much more difficult than continence outside marriage because spouses grow accustomed to intercourse, as befits the state in which they have both consciously chosen. The mutual need of the two persons for each other expresses itself also in the need for sexual intercourse. This being so, the idea of refraining from intercourse inevitably runs into certain difficulties and objections."⁷

Periodic continence appeals to the love and discipline of the spouses and is not merely a scientific technique. The method is safe and avoids many of the dangers often associated with the pill. Periodic continence requires the joint

⁵Love and Responsibility, p.235.

⁶Love and Responsibility, p. 238.

⁷ Love and Responsibility, p. 237

cooperation of both spouses and does not put the burden of contraception on one especially the woman. There do seem to be many attractive aspects about periodic continence as discussed before, but I personally see no moral problem in using other simple forms of contraception as a means of exercising responsible parenthood. Nevertheless, it does not appear to be effective where discipline, training and high motivation are not present so that its effectiveness is somehow questionable. Love and intimacy are the reason for which people go into marriage, as much as possible, nothing should militate against that. The criteria of marital fertility and birth control presented in *Gaudium Et Spes*: mentions the danger to marriage when the intimacy is broken-off, namely that: "It is not rare for its faithfulness to be imperiled and its quality of fruitfulness ruined", so in that case "The upbringing of the children and the courage to accept new ones are both endangered". There is no intention to claim that the practice of contraception is a completely neutral act as observed before. Many advocates and users of it are explicit in pointing to the disvalues inherent in their use. One author, Morton Mintz,⁸ in his book: *The Pill* calls it the most dangerous drug ever unleashed among the general public. Although he is an advocate of contraception, Mintz condemns the pill because it subjects women to the risk of blood clots, paralysis and death when such risk is unnecessary. In as much as I agree with his view, nevertheless, there are risks even in everyday life too. There are risks everywhere; therefore, contraception should be looked at positively for it allows families to plan, thereby enhancing human flourishing and empowers humanity to be more autonomous in choosing the preparedness to have and space a family than left to chance.

3.2. Emancipation of Women, Empowerment and Education

Contraception has freed women from biological necessity of spending most of their life as bearers and nurturers of children. The ability to plan to limit the number of children has already contributed to the changing role of women in contemporary society. The availability of contraception comes with sexual freedom; that can help build marriages and also to build a home, a future for the community of family and also makes room for personal development and progress; nevertheless, this comes with a responsibility. It is hard for women to thrive economically, it's hard for her to participate politically, it's hard for her to have a voice if she cannot control how many children she has. The use of contraception is influenced by many factors; women's empowerment, women's decision making and their autonomy within the household is the most important factor affecting contraceptive use. Emancipation has many components, an indispensable one is the ability of a woman to decide for herself whether and when to become pregnant. In many countries birth control has an enormous positive impact on providing women greater control over their own fertility. Women often need contraception before their last child is beyond infancy. Contraception makes sexual activity possible without procreation, it has led to new sexual responsibilities and rights for both men and women. Women's autonomy with respect to family planning and fertility and the decision to use contraception is manifest only if women are aware and informed about contraceptive methods. Schooling increases knowledge about contraceptive methods which suggests that schooling contributes to the process of empowering women with the ability to obtain and utilize information for the purpose of making fertility related decisions. However, there has been a continuing opposition to the use of the contraceptive pill especially from some feminist groups who view the risks connected with the pill as unacceptable and unnecessary. One can conclude there will probably never be a form of contraception which is absolutely safe with no negative side effects and no inconveniences. The woman using the pill now must make a prudential judgement based on the available information. There are other forms of safe contraception which do not put such a burden on the woman. It is these forms of contraception that this paper believes can be used responsibly.

When it comes to sexual responsibility, women note that they are still the ones expected to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy and asked to bear the risks associated with contraceptive use. As most women view it, this state of affairs is an iniquitous one that needs to be remedied. Men no less than women are morally obligated to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, (because the baby is not only the "woman's problem") and if there are to be definite health risks associated with adequate contraception, these risks should be shared between the male and female partners. And so, the fact that almost all contraceptives are female contraceptives has tended to place the responsibility for contraception on women. If men as well as women were to use contraceptives, women especially would be spared the most burden. It will be the concern of a man and a woman equally responsible for, as well as equally free to bear and beget; or not to bear or beget children in a way that serves the best interests of themselves and society. Likewise, when it comes to sexual rights, some women wonder whether contraception has really increased their ability to make un-coerced choices about when to have a sexual affair, with whom and under what circumstance. With widespread use of contraceptives, there comes the presumption that women are to be more available for sexual intercourse than ever before.⁹ It is no wonder that many women regard contraceptive technology as a double edge sword. Often women have chosen to use contraceptives to free themselves from the burden of unwanted pregnancies, but sometimes individual men have forced women to use contraceptives to serve not women's interests but theirs. Nevertheless, this paper hopes that the use of contraception could come to signal not sexual promiscuity, but sexual responsibility, a willingness for men and women to consider the full meaning and consequences of sexual intercourse before they engage in it.

3.3. Contraception and Biological Laws

Correspondingly, Wojtyla believes that the artificial contraceptive methods are not morally neutral. He affirms that human beings are not allowed to do violence to the biological laws in nature themselves by interfering with the intrinsic relationship of intercourse to procreation. However, this assumes that biological laws have a mind and

⁸ Mintz 1970 p.10

⁹ Lawrence J. Kaplan and Rosemarie Tong, 1990:100

intentionality of their own, which humans' intentionality must obey without possibility of interfering with them. This non-intervention argument positing a sort of: let nature take its course principle is a fundamentally mistaken interpretation of both the created world and humans' role in it. Humans are agents of reason and so we exercise some autonomy which other beings do not have. This means that humans have a unique role in affecting probabilities. Human choices, norms and relationships involve how to affect probabilities and so it is not about choosing not to intervene in natural processes. For example, a doctor's medical practice involves medical interventions which generally affects probabilities; of healing, survival, failure and death. More to the point human beings always interfere with natural processes and so the moral question of whether to interrupt nature's course or not, does not hold; but which actions are in accord with the meaning of human life and dignity. It is not about conforming to nature but transforming it. Thus, knowledge of the natural world, for example reproductive processes, ecological systems, medical diagnoses, technological advancement and so on; are an imperative for responsible ethics.

Additionally, it also involves clarifying the values implicit in interventions in nature and stipulating which transformations are ultimately conducive to human flourishing and which are not; it involves a responsible moral discernment. And so, it is impossible to argue that the natural capacity humans have to influence the essentially statistical basis of the laws of nature should not be exercised. Accordingly, human beings can indeed regularly intervene into natural processes and this also includes the biological processes of human sexuality. It is proper to man to use what is given in physical nature in a way that can develop it to its full significance with a view to the good of the whole person. This intervention of man into physiological processes, is an intervention ordained to the essential values of marriage, to the good of children.

3.4. Contraception as a Sort of a Work-Implement/Tool

Furthermore, God's purposeful nature is still directed by the very laws and regularities biological science uncovers. And God's design is what is discernible with the results of evolution and biology itself. If what is in nature must also be identified as part of God's design, then it means that behaviours that are conducive to our flourishing are either part of God's design or a deviation from that design. And so, if some practices are consistent with our dynamic evolving nature, then we have good reason to think that we should engage in that behavior and that's part of God's design. Consistent with the evolution of the human species, tool-making is a central activity of our success. From the flint-chipped cutting tools to agriculture, we have invented devices to address certain physical needs to enhance our flourishing. In that wise, contraception is one such tool and cannot easily be dismissed. Inventing and using contraception is part of technology to solve problems that prove advantageous to our being. And so, contraception is a product of tool-making which is consistent with our rational nature or an extension of our rational and bodily natures. and this I believe is also consistent with God's purposes. Even though it may be argued that not all uses of tools or technology are good enough, nevertheless, inventing tools is an open ended intention of God's intended natural purpose to address and solve problems that may arise and contraception is one such useful tool, this study argues that it can be used by discerning couples responsibly.

3.5. The Contraceptive Revolution

The contraceptive revolution has not been without problems, there have been a number of significant debates in the area of contraception that can help to evaluate better the whole question of contraception as an illustration of the ethical and human possibilities and dilemmas brought about by the new biology. The debates have centered on a number of issues: the morality of using contraception, the safety and the side effects of contraceptive devices especially the pill and the problems connected with it, as well as the uses and the abuses of the power of contraceptive technology. Contraceptive technology is a limited human good. Technology itself cannot solve or even touch the deeper human questions and problems of life and death, loving concern or egoism. However, the human problems and possibilities facing individuals, spouses, nations and the world transcend the level of biological technologies or of all technologies combined. Accordingly, the problem of limiting population in the narrow terms of providing safe, cheap and effective contraceptives should not fail to recognize the many other aspects of the problem. This limited human good remains somewhat vague. The best example of the uncertainty in contraceptive advances has been the dangers and side effects associated with the pill. In my judgement, there will never be the perfect contraceptive in the sense of something that is perfect from every single perspective. At the very minimum all existing contraceptive technologies seem to have some limitations and imperfections about them. Contraception is a limited good which can be abused. While contraception has made it possible for people to practice responsible parenthood, it has also made it somewhat easier for others to engage in impersonal and irresponsible sexuality. Limited goods are always subject to such abuse. Another issue is that; contraceptive technology is susceptible to take over by the strong at the expense of the weak. The poor in the country, women in general and the poor nations of the world have all been victims of the contraceptive technology of the powerful. This assessment and understanding of contraceptive technology should provide us with a framework for judging the newer biological technologies envisaged to come in the future.

Notwithstanding the setbacks, there can be no doubt that technology has made great progress. Human beings have come from the discovery of the wheel to the animal drawn cart, to the steam engine, the automobile, the airplane and the rocket ships that landed human beings on the moon. Technological developments seem to be ever progressive in the sense that new developments build on older discoveries and constantly move forward as illustrated in the case of transportation. The changes brought by contraception have been enormous. On the level of families in all parts of the world, the procreation of offspring can now be controlled by the marriage partners. Contraception has given human beings

control over the procreative aspect of sexual relationships and have contributed greatly to significant societal changes. In other words, contraceptive technology in general has been a good for human beings. The effects of contraception in the matter of family planning and population control have been very beneficial. To free human beings from physical necessity and to give them greater control and responsibility; enabling them to enhance the reality of the human being. And so, despite all the odds described above, the very term responsible parenthood accepted by most people today, calls attention to the human good which has been brought into being by contraceptive technology. This is evident of the fact that, contraception can be used responsibly and can contribute to the wellbeing of spouses and families.

3.6. Purposes of Human Sexuality

Wojtyla's main arguments are represented as follows:

- P1. That human sexuality has two fundamental meanings: order of nature and the personal order
- P2. That according to the natural design these two meanings are inseparably connected
- P3. That man in his own initiative may not break this connection
- P4. He affirms that by contraception the connection between these two meanings is in fact broken
- Conclusion: Contraception does violence to nature and therefore immoral and against love and Responsibility;
- P1. It is wrong that pleasure is the purpose of sexual relations
- P2. Contraception can result in sexual relationships motivated purely by pleasure
- Conclusion: Therefore, contraception is immoral and against love and responsibility

First of all, nature has in fact seen to it that in no small measure the procreative and unitive dimensions of the human sexuality are separable. They are separated in cases of sterility or during a woman's periods of infertility. If human nature itself separates the unitive and procreative dimensions why can't we separate these intentions also in a contraceptive act? In the use of contraception are spouses not involved in assisting nature in this regard? Secondly, it is worth noting that procreation is not the only form of fruitfulness or generativity. It has been noted that sexual activity has a plurality of meanings and outcomes beyond biological reproduction and the transmission of the genotype. These can be affirmed and celebrated within marriage. Contraception can facilitate these other meanings of sexual activity. And so, humans have attributed to such a distinctive sexual behavior meanings and values beyond those pertaining to passing on their genotype: early human societies throughout the world understood this and developed many ways of thoughtfully preventing unwanted conceptions. The option for contraception would give married life its unitive value and do so in service of its procreative function.

Another course for concern is in the circumstance when a couple conclude for good reasons that they are incapable of supporting more children physically, psychologically, socially, financially, economically; to the drastic case in which it is determined that a woman's health would be in danger if she conceived again; according to the moral theory of Wojtyla, the only avenue opened to this couple, is the use of periodic continence or a marital life of sexual abstinence. Relying upon the use of periodic continence to avoid pregnancy when its failure could lead to endangering health or even life itself causes fear and anxiety between such a couple. Calling upon married persons to live as celibates in the name of some daring virtue is equally unrealistic and places these persons in impossible circumstances. Wojtyla himself acknowledges that "marital continence (abstinence) is much more difficult than continence outside marriage because spouses grow accustomed to intercourse, as befits the state in which they have both consciously chosen" as said earlier. Vatican II made the following observation "where the intimacy of married life is broken off, it is not rare for the faithfulness to be imperiled and its quality of fruitfulness ruined".¹⁰

Consequently, using simple contraceptives that are not abortifacient in the practice of responsible parenthood is following through with a good intention formed by reason and an act chosen using the virtues of prudence, justice and charity. It is worth noting that, the abuse of a thing does not take away its legitimate use. Examples from daily life thrive: the fact that alcohol and other drugs are abused by several millions of people does not mean that their responsible use by the rest of us should be forbidden. If we were to accept the argument that it is the a priori intention of the person taking or using contraception in the practice of responsible parenthood that determines its lack of moral integrity, what about the willful, intended physical acts of temperature and mucus plotting to ensure sexual intercourse is not procreative in the practice of periodic continence? And so, the belief that periodic continence renders every sexual act open to procreation because spouses are 'not doing something physical' to prevent procreation is misleading.

3.7. Contraception and HIV

The young Karol Wojtyla was highly influenced by the culture and the situation in Poland between 1930-1950 where under Nazism and communism, there was no respect for human life and dignity and immorality was the order of the day. The horrific acts of genocide in Poland during the World War II and the extreme oppression of post-World War II communism profoundly influenced and shaped Wojtyla's world view on morality. This would seem to say that Wojtyla is operating with a conception that is essentially outdated and should not be applied to lawfully married couples. Wojtyla leaves little if any flexibility for married persons who are attempting to manage their fertility in a responsible manner. It is common knowledge that if one spouse is HIV positive, this virus can easily be transmitted to the other spouse through an act of sexual intercourse. Should they not be allowed to use the condom? Wojtyla does not give exceptions. I believe the

¹⁰ Gaudium Et Spes, section 51.

use of condom would in this case severely lessen that possibility and could provide protection for the other spouse who is not affected. So, they can in this case use condoms morally and responsibly than having unprotected sex.

3.8. Contraception and the Morality of the Means

Wojtyla, as well as users of periodic continence as a method of birth control; argue that contraception differs from it morally. Periodic continence according to them affirms the good of the human person; because it affirms the proper order in divine providence of respecting the rights of the Creator in the creative process. The couples control themselves according to nature as God has created it. In the practice of periodic continence, the natural orders unite in ultimate communion. Will this motive expressed above be the same for a prostitute who uses the periodic continence in her trade? There have been cases whereby prostitutes resorted to this method because they had serious allergy to the contraceptive methods. Is it a worthy course? Is it the morality of the means / choice of method or the morality of the motive? Should we be concerned about the choice of the method to fertility control or the motive behind the motivation that needs critical examination? Let us consider another scenario whereby a married couple decides to use periodic continence (as much as their jobs will allow them to meet) because they are so pre-occupied with themselves and their career and will not want to have children and the woman particularly does not want to get pregnant. Is that a morally acceptable choice? Will the moral outlook outlined above about periodic continence be applicable to them? (Wojtyla himself argues against the fact couples should not go into marriage if they would not bear children at all by choice). It is not just the method that makes it reprehensible or irreprehensible but the motivation; because the method or means may be acceptable but the end morally questionable. Therefore, to morally and responsibly employ the use of contraception, it is helpful to question why it is desired. If the pursuit of it is motivated by lust and greed, then these desires need to be pruned. So, it is possible to use both methods for the wrong motive or intention. Consequently, we can exercise responsible human love whilst using contraception if we can control the motivations of the heart.

3.9. Chastity Safeguards Responsible Use of Contraception in Marriage

Chastity is very important for living any vocation: to use contraception responsibly, married people must appreciate more fully the virtue of chastity which is not merely continence, but a decisive affirmation on the part of the will in love; which leads a couple to respect the mystery of sex and ordain it to faithfulness and personal dedication. Chastity can preserve faithfulness and avoid 'contraceptive mentality' in a marital relationship and enable the couple to resort to the use of contraception responsibly.

3.10. Morality of Contraceptive-Abortifacients

Moreover, we can exercise responsible human love whilst using contraceptives in the sexual life of married couples as long as the methods employed do not destroy life or harm the mother, the baby or the couple's relationship. In other words, we should not employ contraceptive methods that harm or destroy human life. Subscribers to contraceptives have a responsibility to know the effects and potential effects of all forms of contraception they may use. The fundamental question that needs to be tackled is whether a particular form of birth control functions purely as a contraceptive or whether it has abortive potential. If a particular method of contraception terminates or potentially terminates life, we must be concerned. Certain fertility control methods have lesser health effects even though we may have cause to worry about their effectiveness. This paper opposes abortion and morning after pills which are purposely abortive and should be universally judged as such; it also opposes sterilization, because it is more or less a form of mutilation; it also opposes the IUDs as well as all the various types and brands of the birth control pills available today; this is because they function similarly with potentially abortive effects. They each have three basic mechanisms of action. The first mechanism is primary, while the last two are backup mechanisms in case the first fails. These three functions are:

- To prevent ovulation
- To thicken cervical fluid, impeding the progress of the sperm
- To weaken the uterine lining inhibiting implantation of any fertilized egg.

It functions in such a way that; should the first two mechanisms fail; it creates an environment less conducive for the survival of a fertilized egg. By weakening the wall of the endometrium, the mucus membrane that lines the uterus, a fertilized egg is less likely to attach to the mother and is more likely to be aborted" (Ferguson and Upsdell 1999:200). This is a very rare occurrence, but it is evident from this that not all the methods employed in an attempt to avoid procreation have the same status from a moral standpoint. Most couples use these drugs and do so completely unaware of the abortive potential; though not intentionally or maliciously attempting to abort; those who use such forms of birth control pills risk an early spontaneous abortion. However, with knowledge of these risks comes a greater accountability and responsibility on the part of the user. There are very good and acceptable reasons for employing contraception; nevertheless, the following questions may be a guide:

- What is the basic desire of the heart in using contraception?
- Do all forms of contraceptive methods uphold human life?
- Do I have enough knowledge of the effects and modes of action of the method I want to employ? Is it purely contraceptive or otherwise?

In light of my deliberations in this study, the Scientists have not yet produced the perfect contraception, nevertheless, I come to the conclusion that there is a possibility of exercising responsible human love whilst using simple contraceptives in the sexual life of married couples.

4. Conclusion

The need to and the ways to separate sexual intercourse from human reproduction are probably as old as human history. Contraception is fundamental to a woman's ability to achieve equality and realize her full social, economic and intellectual potential. How successful has this been? There are also much greater magnitude of the health and life threats resulting from pregnancy and child birth. Health care providers have the professional and ethical duty to have a proper updated knowledge of the benefits and risks; for example, the possible, side –effects and contraindications of the whole spectrum of contraceptive methods in order to provide adequate and comprehensive reproductive health. The rise in abortion may be traceable to the failure of contraceptive practice because of their inherent limitation or the carelessness of the users. It is not accurate to speak simply of the effectiveness of contraception for avoiding pregnancy. Some of these means do not prevent a pregnancy but rather bring one to an early halt through an unwanted unnoticed abortion. If even one abortion ever occurs in the whole history of the use of contraception, then these contraceptives should never be used and prescribers and users could be said to be guilty of abortion. I recognize there are currently differing viewpoints regarding whether some contraceptives especially the pill and its various formulations cause abortion. The current scientific knowledge does not establish a definitive causal link between the routine use of these pills and abortion; neither are there data to deny a post-conceptual effect. Some have argued that this abortifacient effect is indirect and theoretical. But once it was only a theory that plant life grew better in rich fertile soil than in thin eroded soil. It was certainly a theory good farmer believed and acted on. Nevertheless, a theoretical yet unproven risk should carry the same weight and be disclosed in the same fashion as a known, proven risk. Because this issue cannot be resolved with our current understanding, this thesis calls upon researchers to further investigate the mechanism of action of these pills. The theoretical risks serve the very important function of defining future research directions. Additionally, because the possibility of the abortive effect cannot be ruled out, prescribers of the pill as birth control should consider informing patients of this potential effect. This will be a prelude among other factors, that would facilitate a confident unquestionable trend that will boost couples responsible use of contraceptives without fear of possible termination of early human life.

5. Recommendations

In order to contribute to this important ongoing debate on the morality of contraception I recommend at the end of this thesis that; both couples must share decisions relating to procreation as equals through dialogue and a sign of being loving and sensitive towards one another as life givers. Artificial methods do not facilitate intimate communication between spouses, the burden of responsibility primarily is on the woman.

Secondly, the right to freedom and the right to information require that the effects of contraceptive substance or device be communicated to the persons who will use or prescribe or provide that substance or device. How effectively is this technical description communicated to a less-educated woman who subscribes to the service in the deprived areas?

Thirdly, the following are some challenges of ethical concern which are raising crucial moral issues in family planning: the abortifacient effect of certain contraceptives, the adverse effects of contraceptives; this problem of 'side effects' in contraception raises serious ethical issues, the right of each person to good health places an obligation on researchers, promoters to work out a way through these setbacks of contraceptive use. The obligation to respect the right to good health ought to require the elimination from contraceptive technology of any substance or device which threatens life. Accordingly, manufacturers who develop the contraceptive formulations that turns out to be entirely or partly abortifacient have the moral mandate to ensure that their product is unlikely to harm or take life. The methods examined are those involved in the clinical practice of family planning. Millions of otherwise healthy people use fertility control methods; their safety is a particularly important issue. With several possible fertility control methods available to most people, the relative effectiveness of the methods becomes a crucial factor in decision making.

Lastly, although abortion is viewed by the advocates of women reproductive rights as an integral component of a woman's right to reproductive health, the fact remains that the availability and the provision of quality services in the area of contraception can forestall or minimize the need for abortion. For it is argued that the health hazards and the failure rates attributed to the available contraceptive methods are good reasons to prefer abortion as a method of choice.

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