

Faith and Reason Together PART THREE

One Family, One Faith, One Trust

PUTTING GOD TO THE TEST: Always at issue, faith is the handed-down wisdom of generations; each Generation is the faith-repository of universal wisdom as well as the trustee of wisdom freshly acquired in the ongoing dialog of faith with new experience (reason).

Faith and reason are judge and jury in the meritorious casting of new law. The bench of decision is daily in session in every individual conscience; that law endures which consistently passes the person-to-person conscience-test of time. Law is established by the court of the [evolutionary method](#), "*cogitata perficiendo, cogitando sic perfecta*" [thinking is perfected in thoroughly thought-through thoughts.]

Law like faith and reason is dynamic, that is, it must speak to the contingencies of the times and adapt to cover necessities of new experience. The application of old law to new experience isn't always clear and certainly not always easy. Failure of faith to test reason and failure of reason to test faith puts God to the test.

The willful abortion of life is on its face wrong and categorically outlawed, but so is behavior whose cumulative effect is radical abortion. The great moral dilemma of the time is the excess appetite of human populations whose unbridled consumptive habits are having the effect of suffocating natural webs of life and the extinctions of web-life species critical to human existence.

The outcomes of pollution and exploitation are collapsing live food systems essential to human existence. The moral proportionality of web-life abortion has yet to be considered against the undisciplined interpretation of the Garden mandate to "increase and multiply." Excess of human multiplication (reproduction) has the impact of decreased multiplication of other life species; and the tragic waste and immorality of calculated warfare has yet to be included in this mortal moral calculus.

The court of human judgment has yet to convene on these critical issues: to what extent must human populations decrease so web-life can sustain a survivable increase? What are the moral means by which human increase can limit its excess?

These issues need to be dealt with, personally and publicly. The cumulative consensus of moral judgment in personal life is beginning to weigh in, and moral theology is not yet well enough developed to offer settled law. In the meantime, life goes on and people will make radical decisions that may fly in the face of unsettled law (conscience.) Excess human increase is the global moral dilemma at issue right now.

Linked to this moral dilemma are issues of gender, the moral justification of [same-sex partnerships](#), issues of family planning and birth control methods. The crises of conscience are new in every time — which calls for moral sensitivity — for no absolute adequately covers all situations.

The formation of personal, conscionable ethics is "situation-based," that is, based on the moral proportionality of outcomes of judgment and choice. The seriousness of outcome makes choices all the more difficult — but the responsibility of moral choice cannot be avoided, and best decisions must be made even when the greater good requires the repulsive acceptance of outcomes of lesser evil.

On this issue the eyes of beholders are conflicted and not in universal agreement. But God leaves to mortals the dilemma of decisions — the weighing of the greater good against the lesser evil. And so, public conflicts will continue, especially when choice might seem to allow one abortion to prevent another more consequential abortion. Even God is tortured by this dilemma. Choosing pregnancy is a moral issue of personal and public concern; let it be a "thoroughly thought-through choice." All life must be valued and nurtured; all are called to be faithful to life as life is faithful to all.