



## Family Man



### Abortion in the Year 2050

By Michael Wayland

Earlier this year, The Family Man wrote about John Maxwell's ideas surrounding "breakthrough parenting". One of the principles was to find good role models for your kids. One reader decided to put the role model idea to a unique test. She decided to try to put kids in the position of being the role model, and see how they would advise hypothetical children of their own.

#### Role Model

So, what would you do if your daughter came home and said she had an unwanted pregnancy? That was the question asked to 8 th grade students by this teacher in the New York City Public Schools. We will call her Amy, so as to keep her true identity private. The 8th graders were directed to write as if they were parents advising their child in the year 2050.

Amy, a self proclaimed liberal, was teaching writing and expression using subjects that engaged the children's interests and minds. Since it was a creative writing class, Amy put some parameters around the assignment.

Says Amy, "I told them there would be different rules involved in the decision making regarding the pregnancy. I told them that it was the Year 2050 and there would be no more need for abortions because technology had developed an artificial womb to bring unborn fetuses to full term." From the point of conception forward, the living embryo could be removed and successfully incubated in the artificial womb. This effectively took abortion off the table.

#### The Right To Choose

The students were told that law in the year 2050 now limited them to three choices. The mother could choose to keep the child, (first choice), or give the child to the paternal family (second

choice), or else, give the child to the state, (third choice). The second and third choice meant that the child would come to term in the artificial womb.

The third choice, involving the State, was twofold. Once the government had the right to the child, the state would run tests of IQ and healthy development and would determine the child as an alpha or a beta. If the child was an alpha, very bright and skilled, it would use its skills to build revenue for the state, much like the prodigies reported in former Soviet Union or Cuba. If the child was deemed a beta, or less bright and skilled, the child would become a laborer to build revenue for the state.

### **How Would They Exercise Their Choice?**

The 8th graders were directed to write as parents advising their children on these choices. Effectively, they took on the role of a role model or advisor. “Interestingly enough, they all advised their hypothetical child to keep the baby”.

What were the kids thinking? “They were horrified that the child would ever become owned by the state” says Amy. The idea of their baby being assessed as an Alpha or a Beta was scary to them. The idea of the baby being owned by the government was even worse. Clearly it was their family’s baby.

At the same time however, the 8th graders “were also very upset that abortion was a decision that was gone” said Amy. “They uniformly perceived abortion as a woman’s right and really pushed back against the concept that if the child could be removed, then there was no longer a “right” to kill it”.

“I was surprised they weren't happy with the invention of the artificial womb as an answer to the needs of a woman's body” said Amy. The children preferred to abort their child even when the embryo could be removed and incubated with no effects on a woman’s body and no violation of their “privacy”. No one would ever know that they had even been pregnant.

### **Changing World Views**

So what did this teacher learn from her students? It became clear to her that for these New York eighth graders, abortion was not just a “right” to privacy or to determine what a woman wants to do with her body. Says Amy, “I found that the responses indicated that the killing of a child is not just an issue of women's body rights but the right to do away with a *consequence*.” These kids grew up with the knowledge that they can engage in premarital sex with impunity. If they get pregnant or cause a pregnancy, they just make the issue go away with an abortion.

As a liberal, Amy says “I have always supported women's rights with their bodies but was glad to never have the need to choose. I myself could never have made that choice without likening it to murder.”

“I found this exercise in being one’s own hypothetical role model or advisor very interesting” said Amy. “Children need a lot of wise input from various sources; teachers, coaches, family friends. We as parents and educators need to screen these inputs, just as much as access them. As an educator, I wanted the children’s own reasoning to be involved. Children need to engage in critical thinking about their decisions.”

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