

Forget Beethoven – *All* Human Life is Valuable

Recently, we have heard again the idea that Beethoven would today probably be aborted because of the guidelines of “unsuitability” of proceeding with the pregnancy, by which modern parents are able to choose the life or otherwise of their conceptions. Conceived in poverty by an alcoholic and a syphilitic, equivalent parents, today, would be advised to abort. It has now been claimed that the story is apocryphal, and in reality, Beethoven’s father was *not* syphilitic – as though that mattered; no doubt there *were* geniuses, born in the past, who under today’s regime would not be so lucky.

Whether present-day values and procedures are depriving us, or otherwise, of great geniuses (though they probably are) does not actually matter, since they clearly *are* depriving us (and, particularly, developing/Third World countries) of vast amounts of human life (and their victims, of *all* life). That life – those people – are just as valuable as great geniuses

It is very likely the case that people who are Humanist/materialist would claim that, indeed, they *do* value human life, but my guess is that it would emerge, if examined, that they only truly value *some* human life. Humanists believe in life in this world as all that there is, and this life/society as the end and objective of all. Consequently, they believe in “progress” towards some ideal, but one created by people, and featuring, and benefitting, people. Hence, value lies purely in those people whom it can be believed “give” something to humanity, or who – by their abilities and qualities - lead the human race onwards and upwards, towards ... But those who don’t (those of low intelligence, poor creativity, diminished physical ability, limited skills – and resources) are of little worth, indeed, those possessed of “defects” may well be considered “life unworthy of life”, particularly those who, when still in the womb, appear as though they are likely to become people of this kind. The recent paralympics has taught us that people who are physically limited may still be able to achieve much – but not *all* of them, I imagine, and one wonders what kind of valuing the others receive, in our materialist society.

The notion of valuing people, in any materialist/atheist context – the valuing of *some*, but not all - immediately raises telling issues as to exactly why, and for what reason, some people might be singled out as useful, but more importantly, by *who*, who would do the choosing; and very quickly the (never realised) Humanist utopia would turn into the (often experienced) totalitarian nightmare.

Valuing of people only works if *all* people are valued. Yes, can be very hard valuing some individuals who may do dreadful things to others, and to ourselves; but Christians have an advantage in this struggle: the realisation that this life/world/society is in no way an end in itself (conclusion, or objective), only a means to an end, a part of the whole.

September 2012