

Shall I take it with food or with water?: RU-486 is risky and irresponsible

Five pills and a dead baby. All in the comfort of your living room.

The Clinton Food and Drug Administration on September 28 took the abhorrent step of approving the abortion pill, RU-486, for distribution in the United States. This drug serves as a non-surgical method of abortion.

RU-486 is perhaps the first drug approved whose sole purpose is to destroy life, not preserve and prolong it. The passivity with which its release was greeted in the U.S. shows just how far this country has fallen into the pits of moral putrescence.

Abortion is a matter of life and death. In choosing to have an abortion, the mother chooses to end the life of her child. It is both sickening and frightening that we permit such a choice to be made simply by popping a few pills, let alone made at all.

The RU-486 Cocktail, as the abortion pill is known, comprises two drugs. The first, three mifepristone pills, blocks the production of progesterone. This causes the uterine lining—including the developing baby—to break down and be eliminated in a manner similar to the normal menstrual process.

The second drug, two misoprostol pills, is taken in a doctor's office two days after the initial mifepristone ingestion. Misoprostol induces uterine contractions. Two weeks after these pills are taken, the would-be mother returns to the doctor(?) to ensure that her

developing baby has been destroyed and eliminated from her body.

The ramifications of this new horror are great. Outright, it is a victory for anti-life zealots. It is also a victory for Bill Clinton, who has been trying to bring the drug to the U.S. from France since the first few days, literally, of his presidency. And it is a financial victory for tiny Danco Laboratories LLC, which has the rights to produce mifepristone under the brand name Mifeprex. But there are serious reasons to be wary of this drug, and they fall in the areas of morality and women's health.

All methods of abortion are repulsive and horrifying. No method is preferable over any other. Though some may cite the abortion cocktail as a safer alternative to surgical methods, it is not. Regardless, the author both deplores abortions performed in any way and has no intention of endorsing one method over any other.

"Health of the mother" is a catch phrase widely quoted by anti-life zealots as a reason for abortion. With Mifeprex, the health of the mother is indeed a serious concern. Since studies began in the U.S. in 1994, 10,000 young lives have been snuffed out in trials by the drug cocktail—a number of lives more than six times the number of students breathing at Davidson College.

To anti-life zealots, FDA regulators, and

would-be mothers, this murder of innocent, developing life is referred to as "success." But this "success" comes at an additional price to would-be mothers. In the trials, one out of every 100 users ended up in the hospital. Two percent of users suffered bleeding bad enough to require surgery. One user nearly bled to death. And there is evidence suggesting that the drugs can adversely affect future pregnancies, causing miscarriages and malformation in future children. It is true that these are small numbers, but if you are willing to write off 10,000 lives, you're probably also willing to dismiss this comparatively smaller group as well, in the name of freedom of choice.

Morally, the impact of RU-486 is quite troubling. A decision as dire as the one to stop a life growing inside of you ought to be one that a woman struggles with before making that final, revered, sacred "choice." The ability to pop a few pills as a quick fix, i.e. a quick end of a life, erases most of the gravity in the decision. If liberal politicians want to ensure that women have a right to choose the ultimate fate of the child they carry, the choice should at least be a difficult one.

With these pills, human life is cheapened a little bit more. Citing *National Review* associate editor Kathryn Jean Lopez, who refutes the point that using RU-486 is morally on par with having a miscarriage, this drug cocktail

may effectively erase the distinction between "a passive act of nature and an active choice to end [a] pregnancy."

Mifepristone's effects were discovered by accident. It was originally developed in Germany as part of a cancer treatment, and it was found that a side effect was pregnancy termination. At this discovery, the German manufacturer stopped production, citing an air of Holocaust-era medical policies. The French then picked up where the Germans left off, and they began distribution to numerous European nations.

Misoprostol is approved in the U.S., under the brand name Cytotec, for use in treating ulcers. Its side effect is uterine contractions. Searle, the marketer of Cytotec, has objected to its product being used in abortions.

RU-486 will be available in November for doctors to give to women seeking abortions, who will take the pills home and kill their growing babies while sitting in the privacy of their living rooms. This is selfish and cowardly. Congressman J.C. Watts, Republican of Oklahoma, has wisely said that integrity is what you have when no one is looking. When women ingest RU-486, no one is looking, and these women effectively prove that they have no integrity.

Khoury Ashooh '03

Christians must condemn deviation from biblical teaching as sinful

I suppose I should begin by saying that I am a Christian. Maybe many of you are going to stop reading right now. But it is part of who I am and a large factor in the way I see the world, and it is with that viewpoint that I read Rev. Andy Baxter's article on homosexuality this past weekend.

When I began to read the article, I had no idea who had written it; I hadn't bothered to check the byline. But when I came to the end and discovered that a pastor had written it, I was both shocked and dismayed.

As a Christian, I ascribe to belief that the Bible is God's Word to be taken as truth. I understand that this is partly an act of faith, and one that not everyone can take. And it is with this understanding that I realize why everyone is not able to see homosexuality as immoral.

If I did not believe in the Bible as God's word to us in how we should live our lives, I do not believe I would be able to find anything wrong in homosexuality. I believe that two homosexuals are capable of loving each other every bit as much as a heterosexual couple. The love can be just as strong and just as long lasting. But that, unfortunately, does not mean it's right, at least not according to the Christian God.

And it was on this point I was the most alarmed at Rev. Baxter's article. He said, "I disagree . . . that homosexuality is a sin."

My expectation of Christian pastors is that they see the Bible as truth and present that truth to the people. They are called (as are all Christians) to see the things differently than the world sees them, even when it seems no one else agrees. And homosexuality is one of those sticky topics that is really hard to speak out against; it is easier to accept the way the world sees it. But the following verses are why I, as a Christian, have to identify homosexuality as a sin, and why I was so surprised to see Rev. Baxter make the statement he did:

I Corinthians 6:9-12: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the drunkards nor slander-

ers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is permissible. Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything."

Romans 1:24-27, 32: "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served and created things rather than the creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because

of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the penalty for their perversion. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

Leviticus 18:22: "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, that is detestable."

As I know Christians are often accused of pulling things out of context, I have tried to provide some context with each of the references. But I think it is made clear that homosexuality, according to God, IS a sin.

However, I do not believe that it is a sin any worse than any other sin. It is clearly stated in the Bible that all sins are equal in the eyes of God. If I take the Lord's name in vain I have sinned just as much as someone leading a homosexual life. It takes no more or no less effort for God to forgive my sin than the homosexual's.

The difference, though, is that homosexuals are accepted in society. It is not seen as a sin, because it is "natural." If God made them that way, then why shouldn't they do it? Well, many people are born with a propensity for being alcoholics. Is it all right, then, for them to practice alcoholism, merely because they were born that way? I think society clearly says no, it is not ok. Why then do we

use that argument for homosexuality?

Do I believe someone can be a homosexual and still be a Christian? Yes, of course. As I stated above, it is no worse a sin than any other. But it is still a sin, and we are called to flee from sin. Jesus prevented the adulteress from being stoned by pointing out that those holding stones had sinned themselves. But he also said to the woman, "Go, and sin no more."

I do not believe leaving a life of homosexuality would be easy, but I do believe it is possible. The God I know would not call something a sin and then not offer help to those who wanted to leave a life involving that sin.

Love the sinner, hate the sin is the mantra repeated over and over by the Christian community. But does the Christian community as a whole really practice this? Unfortunately, no. We tend to be pegged as gay bashers or other colorful names. As Christians, we need to embrace homosexuals themselves, but not their ways of life. Like any other, more societal accepted sin, it needs to be discouraged in the church. But we need to accept

homosexuals as members of our churches and communities, not make them outcasts. That is no way to show "Christian love."

As is obvious, I have pulled my arguments from the Bible. It is the only place you will find argument against homosexuality, and the only place from which I expected a pastor to pull his arguments. But since he did not do this, I felt compelled to offer it. I feel that the world as a whole has a misconstrued notion of how Christians view homosexuality, as often their views are not at all based on scriptures or based on only select scripture.

I said it before, I will say it again. I don't believe homosexuals are any more sinful than I am. I do believe they are capable of amazingly powerful love. But I do believe that it is a sin, and the only reason I believe this is because I believe the Bible is God's word and the truth. If you do not believe that, you have no grounds for thinking homosexuality is immoral. We look at the world from different viewpoints, and that is alright. But I invite you to look at it from mine.

Susan Vear '02

Rubber bullets and sparking the fire

As the drama in the West Bank unfolds with familiar scenes of Palestinian youths slinging stones and hurling Molotov cocktails at green-clad Israeli troops crouched clutching their Uzis . . .

. . . take it all in with a grain of salt.

The American press is competitive, unfettered by censorship, and (arguably) overall one of the best sources of unbiased information worldwide. Unfortunately, like all things, it is still flawed, and tragically so when it comes to the games Israelis and Palestinians play.

This imperfection is all the more reason for caution in writing this article. I consulted beforehand with multiple sources, all of whom requested my objectivity in analyzing the situation. One noted that information in Western media, particularly in the United States, tends to be skewed toward the Israeli side. "If you make one point," she said. She paused. "If you make only one point, make sure people know that news articles don't capture the whole situation." As per her

request, instead of rehashing news reports, I will address two aspects of media coverage—objectivity and analysis—both of which are lacking in the coverage of the current crisis.

Our media's flawed objectivity is more an undercurrent than a Zionist conspiracy theory as some pro-Palestinian observers believe. It is unintended but inexcusably present. For example, on Monday the Charlotte Observer carried New York Times and AP reports under its own headline, "Rage flares in Mid-east." Despite the fact that it is a poor headline ("Mid-east" is not a word, and if it were, it would conservatively encompass three time zones—where was this rage?), it portrays the Palestinians negatively. "The Palestinians are at it again," we think. "The Israelis are trying to keep the peace, and in the face of it, all this Palestinian rage. They just won't be reasonable." It connotes a classic, intifada-esque case of Palestinian rioting, trading

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