



Blaise

MACLEAN

Opinion Shaper

Editorial

avoided real issues of abortion

When this newspaper lambasted the recent 'Show The Truth' pro-life protest, a response was necessary. This was a protest consisting of a graphic photographic display of aborted children.

The newspaper argued that abortion, being legal, is a moral issue for individual decision. The pictures were shocking and, because they left no room for discussion, were an unacceptable form of protest.

In a democracy the media's duty is to be broadly informative on important issues. This enables the public to understand issues and to participate. The media seems afraid to disseminate the strongest arguments of the Pro-Life movement for fear they might convince not only the public but themselves.

The media comforts itself by asserting abortion is a moral issue (it's not) and that, in a society where it is "wrong" to question anyone else's moral choices, gruesome displays of aborted babies ought to be curtailed.

Yet the public is denied the facts or the forum to engage in the discussion the editorial said the protest lacked. Most people believe abortions cannot occur after the second trimester. Wrong. No law in Canada regulates when an abortion can be

performed. A baby on the way down the birth canal can legally be aborted. Most of us know of children born one, two, even three months premature. They could have been aborted. Are they human or not?

Some said the pictures looked like babies, not fetuses. Why? Because the medical associates "fetus" with tadpole-like blobs. The protesters provided a more accurate illustration of Canadian law than what the press permits us to see. The pictures give rise to issues and questions that the media's version never generate. So, really, who prevents the debate?

Abortion is not a moral issue. The humanity of an unborn child is not a question of opinion ... it is a question of fact. And, if it is a human, then what?

To illustrate: Suppose I decide to buy another Airedale Terrier. When I go to pick up the dog, however, the breeder delivers a baseball. I complain but he disagrees; in his opinion it is an Airedale. He is entitled to hold any opinion he wants (until it affects others), but just because he thinks it's a dog doesn't make it so. A baseball has none of the characteristics of an Airedale ... it does not eat everything; it does not want its stomach scratched and it won't protect my house.

So too for the unborn child ... it is intellectual cowardice to define the issue of its humanity as a matter of opinion. Yet, not only does the media avoid the debate, it slams those trying to bring it forward.

The demonstration depicted accurately what Canada's abortion laws permit. It raised questions that the media, the fashionable, and the pro-choice movement are determined to suppress: whether abortion, in fact, kills a human. The protesters bypassed the media in the only possible way; by going directly to the public. Truthfully, they did the media's job.

Blaise MacLean is one of 13 Opinion Shapers selected by This Week to bring you a wide-range of views and thoughts for 1998.