



Born to Win

Is God Really There?

by Ronald L. Dart

Is God really there? Or are we just an accident in the universe, a product of blind chance? Is there no design other than that which natural law provides? Like stalactites and stalagmites...they grow in caves by the natural process of water seeping through rock and depositing calcium carbonate. They can create some *fascinating*, even *eerie* forms. I remember in one cave, a collection of these things in a corner looked enough like a pipe organ that someone had actually given the formation that name. Although a collection of these things may *look* roughly—very roughly—like a pipe organ in church, it's still nothing but calcium carbonate, formed over time by dripping water. And it makes no music.

Now, a real organ is designed. It is a work of art and craft *absolutely unique* among man's inventions; there's nothing quite like a great pipe organ. It has a purpose. It *follows* the laws of nature, but it was not *created by* the laws of nature. And that's an important distinction. But more than that, the organ is a creation designed *for creating*. It allows for creation to flow from the mind of a man through his fingers. And from those minds, and from those fingers, have come some of the greatest music ever written by man. Sebastian Bach's great fugues that are played on these great pipe organs are like nothing man has ever heard.

No one would ever argue that such a beautifully designed instrument was created by the laws of nature like stalactites and stalagmites. Nor would anyone ever try to create an organ that did not *obey* the laws of nature. It would be pointless, because it would allow nothing to be created that was worthwhile. You could look at it, and that would be about it...but then you can go into a cave and look at that one there. But man thinks nothing of arguing that he himself *was* created by the laws of nature, nor does he seem to tire of arguing that he does not need to *obey* the laws of nature. So man argues that everything from the universe to the amoeba to man evolved over time following the laws of nature. The argument is that the laws of nature are merely the properties of matter. Uh, whence comes the matter? Well, the matter just *is*; it originated out of nothing with a *big bang*.

Now, if you can believe all that, don't let me disturb you; because the alternative to that line of thought contains an idea that will boggle the mind. The alternative is that the whole thing—from the universe to the amoeba to man—was designed by an intelligence that had the power to make it happen. The idea that man is an accident of the universe, somehow brought into being by blind chance or natural law through evolution, is hateful; because it would mean that life has *no meaning at all*—no purpose at all, no point at all. And I'm reasonably sure that the persistent teaching of evolution down through the years has *eroded* the morality of our people that they are completely lost.

There's a kind of advanced utilitarianism that now guides the thinking of most people in the Western world. It could be defined, I think, as the spirit of the age. Most of us go our merry way and we have *no idea* that society in the Western world is increasingly guided, not by any idea of *truth*, but by a *philosophy*. Now, I'm not going to bore you with a discussion of philosophy, so you can relax on that front; but you should know that if there are no eternal truths, no divine revelation of right and wrong, then *all we have left* is philosophy. And philosophy is really our own opinion, our best guess, about what is right and what is wrong.

Utilitarianism is a seven-syllable word that simply asks the question: Is it useful? You know the word—utility. The SUV is a byword in our society today; you may even own one. An SUV is a “sports utility vehicle”, and the word utility means its “fitness for some purpose, or worth to some end” and that’s all. Philosophy has elevated utility to a religion by adding an -ism to the end and calling it Utilitarianism. Dr. Lawrence Hinman, in a series of lectures that are available on the web, lists what he calls the three “basic insights” of utilitarianism. First...

The purpose of morality is to make the world a better place. Morality is about producing good consequences, not having good intentions. We should do whatever will bring the most benefit (i.e., intrinsic value) to all of humanity.

Utilitarianism - Lawrence M. Hinman, Ph.D.

Now, that’s a really interesting combination when you think about it. For one thing, it’s seems sensible to say, “Hey, good intentions are not enough; we’ve got to have some good results out there.” But where this takes us may not be where you think. He then lays out the purpose of morality. What do we have morality for? Why do we *need* morality? He says:

The utilitarian has a very simple answer to the question of why morality exists at all: The purpose of morality is to guide people’s actions in such a way as to produce a better world. Consequently, the emphasis in utilitarianism is on consequences, not intentions.

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Now, you don’t have to have a PhD to realize that philosophy is offering you an *alternative* to religion—an alternative to God, if you will. Now, did you notice any problems with this idea as presented? Not that difficult, really, but there is a problem. It’s the absence of an answer to the question: Why? Why should I concern myself with what brings the most benefit to humanity if it costs me more than I want to pay? Why can’t I just do what benefits *me* the most? What works for *me*? Now mind you, we’re talking about a philosophy; we’re not talking about religion here. And I’m asking the questions that philosophy will pose for me. Okay, sure. I need to be concerned about consequences to me; why should I care about the consequences *in Africa*, except as they might later affect me? And further, what may be the biggest “What if...” question of all: What if this thing has consequences that I cannot possibly foresee?

Most of us learned at an early age the law of unintended consequences. We thought we had it all figured out. We thought this will work. We thought no one will ever catch us at this. And we pull something off, and then suddenly we find out that there were consequences connected with it we had no idea what they would be. No one can *possibly* see *all* the consequences of the things we do. Hence, the value of *revealed* law. But philosophy leaves no room for that, for it doesn’t recognize God as revelator. Then Dr. Hinman gives us what he calls the “fundamental imperative of utilitarianism”. It is this:

Always act in the way that will produce the greatest overall amount of good in the world.

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But this raises two important questions that philosophy does not answer. *Why* should I act in the way that would produce the greatest amount of good *in the world*? And how on earth can I *possibly* know what that is? Hinman goes on to make his point. He said,

[...] utilitarianism is a demanding moral position that often asks us to put aside self-interest for the sake of the whole. Utilitarianism is a *morally demanding* position for two reasons: It always asks us to do the most, to maximize utility, not to do the minimum. It asks us to set aside personal interest.

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But you see, utilitarianism gives us *no reason* to set aside personal interest—to make sacrifices for the benefit of all. Why, then, should we give it a second thought?

So how about my question? What reason do we have to set aside personal interests—to make sacrifices for the benefit, not just of our neighborhood, but for the greatest amount of good in the whole world? Well, Dr. Hinman goes on to explain. He said,

Utilitarianism offers us a powerful vision of the moral life, one that promises to reduce or eliminate moral disagreement. If we can agree that the purpose of morality is to make the world a better place; and if we can scientifically assess various possible courses of action to determine which will have the greatest positive effect on the world; then we can provide a scientific answer to the question of what we ought to do.

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In other words, right and wrong can be reduced to scientific calculations. He didn't actually point out to you, though, that little If/Then statement—that those are two *big ifs*: *if* we can agree, and *if* we can scientifically assess. But then he acknowledges two great questions—two *giant* questions. He asks, “Who does the calculating?”, and “Who is included?” in the calculation. Well, in pre-war Afghanistan, it was the Taliban who did the calculating. Now presumably, the Taliban thought they knew what was best for their country as a whole; they knew what was best for their society. They *imposed* that calculation on the society without regard to the cost in personal liberty. But isn't this what utilitarianism asks us to do—to lay aside our personal things, to lay aside our personal needs and wants, and to do what is best for *the whole world*? Well, the Taliban thought they knew what was best.

On the second question, “Who is included?”, Hinman suggests this:

When we consider the issue of consequences, we must ask who is included within that circle.

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And then he lays out...really, what is fascinating—five interesting divisions. First...

Those in our own group (group egoism). Those in our own country (nationalism). Those who share our skin color (racism). All human beings (humanism or speciesism?).

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And I've actually heard that talked about, on the news with talking heads. And the fifth category?

All sentient beings. Classical utilitarianism has often claimed that we should acknowledge the pain and suffering of animals and not restrict the calculus just to human beings.

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And right there Hinman answered a question that had been troubling me. I couldn't figure out why the animal rights people were willing to sacrifice the rights of people to save the lives of dumb animals. I don't get it. We're willing to take fetuses, and take tissue from these fetuses to do stem cell research—we don't have any problem with doing research on unborn children—but we can't use animals in research to learn how to heal humans of diseases. Sorry, I'm at a dead loss on that one.

By now you may have tumbled to what lies behind a great deal of the public debate these days. When Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity rail against “liberals”, they're using a three-syllable word to describe the seven-syllable idea: utilitarianism. And the utilitarian ideal underlies both liberalism and humanism. And it follows naturally, *and necessarily*, from a belief in evolution that there is no designer but nature; and we have to figure out for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. In fact, once you accept evolution, and once you move God out of the equation and think, “No, no. There's no creator. We just happen to be here, and there is *no* higher authority; there is *no* higher power”... Well, then we are left, indeed, to figure out for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. And what follows on the heels of that idea is that we must *suppress individualism* for the greater good. But individual humans are *messy* creatures. Human beings have this nasty tendency to do what feels good. We also tend to do things based upon the *visible* consequences in *our own* lives. We are able to think about our neighbor and his good up to a point; but just how much am I willing to give up for Uzbekistan? Am I willing to scrap my SUV and drag my family around a little Yugo to make life better for people in Rwanda? Now, since we won't make decisions for the good of the greatest number of people *on our own*, we have to be saved as humanity from ourselves by the wise and caring hand of government. And this leads just as naturally to one more -ism: totalitarianism.

So what's the alternative to this pernicious state of affairs? Oh, that's simple. The answer is the God who is *there*—the designer of everything from the universe, to the amoeba, to man; the revealer of right and wrong by means of Divine Law. After all, we aren't departing *entirely* from utilitarian principles. What we are doing is asking *God* to define the utility of an action, asking *God* to tell us what is good and what is bad, asking *God* to tell us where we're going to get in trouble and where we're not. Utilitarianism is concerned not with intents, it said, but consequences. Now, much of Divine Law has the same purpose; but with Divine Law, we have a creator of the universe—a creator of *the laws* of the universe—telling us what acts might have dire consequences without our having to learn it the hard way. And Divine Law can call on us to make personal sacrifices for the greater good without our serving someone else's *political* ambition. Those sacrifices are made personally and willingly and not coerced by the hand of government.

There's a category of liberal thought that I call “OPM” liberalism—OPM meaning “Other People's Money”. They are willing to coerce the individual to give to causes *they* deem worthy. Utilitarianism is willing to sacrifice the individual to make the world a better place...according to *his* vision of a better world. Jesus Christ was willing to sacrifice himself to make each of us a better man, to reconcile each of us to the God from whom we had been alienated. He is making the world a better place by changing the heart, one man at a time.

You remember the three basic insights of utilitarianism? The purpose of morality is to make the world a better place. Second, morality is about producing good *consequences*, not having good intentions. And third, we should do whatever will bring the most benefit to all of humanity. But Jesus Christ is making the world a better place by changing the *intentions* of man. For, you see, if the heart is changed then there is no need for coercion. Growing out of the hearts of men whose hearts have turned toward God comes a better world from intent. Without a creator and the revealer of Divine Law, we are *utterly adrift* in a world that is going to provide us with more ethical and moral dilemmas than we will *ever* deal with.

By now, it's probably already occurred to you; but let me point out that abortion rights are a utilitarian calculation. The existence of too many children keeps the world from being a better place. Population control is *good* for the world; but human beings being what they are, they are going to get pregnant. So we have a calculation to make. If we can't control the intentions of people to where they don't *intend* to get pregnant in the first place...well, we have to control the outcome. We have to take care of the objective of this whole thing. So abortion becomes *crucial* if you're trying to do what's best for the whole world, and to make the world a better place. If you don't understand the utilitarian calculus in this, you will never be able to figure out the *intensity* with which the abortion rights movement pursues its goals *worldwide*.

But the ethical dilemmas that grow out of this are *staggering*. I ran across an article on the web; it was on *This Is London*. It was a story about what the doctors are beginning to run into in abortion clinics in England. Let me quote from it:

Leading doctors today called for a major overhaul to avoid babies being born alive after abortions. Pregnancy expert Professor Stuart Campbell has demanded rules should be tightened after it was revealed that at least nine babies are known to have survived terminations in recent years. He said injections that were supposed to end their lives in the womb failed to do so — and he called for stricter regulations to be enforced on the methods of abortion.

Live Babies Being Born After Abortions - This Is London / Evening Standard

Oh, yes, we're going to kill these babies. We've got to be *sure* we do it right. Continuing to quote:

Professor Campbell said that all abortions carried out after 18 weeks of pregnancy should include an injection, followed by drugs, to induce labour and a stillborn child. Some consultants only give the injection in abortions after 22 weeks. Others, he claims, do not use it at all.

Live Babies Being Born After Abortions - This Is London / Evening Standard

Now, why is all of this a problem? Well, what's happening is babies are being born *who can move*. Continuing to quote:

Professor Campbell, who worked as an obstetrician at St George's Hospital-Tooting, and pioneered 4D scanning of babies in the womb at the Create Health Centre for Reproduction and Advanced Technology in London, said: "It is really unfair on the nurses and the parents to see the baby making some sort of movement after birth."

Live Babies Being Born After Abortions - This Is London / Evening Standard

So here's our calculation. We have to be fair to the nurses and the patients. There is no need for this child to live or be taken care of. He said,

"If after 18 weeks you just induce labour (without an injection first) a large number would be born with a heartbeat and most of them will survive with a heartbeat and will make movements. Certainly from 18 weeks they should inject the heart to stop it from beating, but not everyone does this. Guidance should be given by the Royal College."

Live Babies Being Born After Abortions - This Is London / Evening Standard

Guidance, indeed. Why worry about the injection? Why not just hit the little fellas in the head with a hammer? You can take care of it; if you want to *kill* the baby, that is one of the easiest things in the world to do. Ah, but of course, that would probably make the nurses *uncomfortable*. “One baby”...I’m quoting from the article:

One baby with Down’s Syndrome was to be aborted at a hospital in the home counties but lived. It was transferred to St George’s Hospital, where it received neonatal intensive care and survived. It is believed to have been adopted. Next week a motion is being tabled at the British Medical Association conference that babies should be entitled to all the intensive care that babies born prematurely receive. Consultant obstetrician-Jim Thornton said in the past babies were born alive after abortion more regularly but “people didn’t make a fuss and pretended not to realise the baby was born alive”.

Live Babies Being Born After Abortions - This Is London / Evening Standard

You realize where we’re going with all of this? There are some of these fetuses in the womb that are just not useful. The world just doesn’t need them. Their parents just don’t need them. And so we are willing to *sacrifice* these children for the good of the world—or maybe for the good of England, or the good of America, or for the good of the family. But a sacrifice is still a sacrifice. The ancients sacrificed their children, burning them in the fire to a god named Moloch. We sacrifice our children to...no god at all, I guess, except the world. Professor Thornton said,

“Once it is born, you can’t kill the baby but the law doesn’t say anything about to what degree you resuscitate it. The way it is dealt with is by sensible doctors and sensible nurses keeping it under their hat and allowing the baby to pass away peacefully.” Professor Campbell does not believe that a baby born in this way should be kept alive at all costs. [...]

Live Babies Being Born After Abortions - This Is London / Evening Standard

You see where this is going? Abortion must not be allowed to result in a live birth. They’ve got to be sure that they killed the baby.

Going back to the utilitarianism projection, Dr. Hinman concluded:

Utilitarianism is most appropriate for policy decisions, as long as a strong notion of fundamental human rights guarantees that it will not violate rights of small minorities.

Utilitarianism - Lawrence M. Hinman, Ph.D.

Ah, well, but who is to see to it that we have this “strong notion of fundamental human rights”? Isn’t that a matter of *intention*? You see, the real problem with utilitarianism is this: God really *is* there.