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Contemporary Issues – Block 2

1 December 2010

“End of Christian America?”

1. There is no exact reason why Christianity or religion as a whole is decreasing in American today. Yet, analyzing different trends in history and seeing the changes that this nation has gone through can help to understand why this decrease is occurring. As the country continues to develop there becomes new values and morals that are socially acceptable. With that, it has been found that going to church every weekend doesn't make you a better person, and more often people don't find themselves attending on a regular basis. People's schedules are becoming busier and busier as the years go on, and this is a major reason why people believe not attending church is justified.
2. *Will Christianity ever regain its influence in America?* That is hard to say because there is no true predictor of the future. In times of crisis many Americans find themselves attending church more often or seeking to “find themselves” and become born-again Christians. I believe that with the increasing amount of Spanish immigrants we see entering the country that their religious views and practices will begin to have a big impact on the Christianity in America.
3. *Men like Jefferson and Madison who were the forefathers of our nation, and also not deeply religious, created the constitution and were able to develop a strongly moral society. Is America losing sight in Christianity or are the morals of society changing?* There is no way that the morals of society today are anywhere near those in the beginning of the 20th century. The country has experienced major changes from the integration of African-Americans, to the development of the typical American teenager, all the way to the women's rights movement. The morals of society have changed, which causes the way that we act as citizens to change as well. The problem is that America is afraid of change because we don't know its outcome and how it will affect the daily routine we have all become so accustomed to.

Abortion Statistic Analysis

Abortions in Decline → Since 1973 Americans have seen a sharp increase in the number of abortions, but also a steady decline in more recent times. It was natural to see the low number of abortions in the early 70's because this option to women wasn't very publicized or



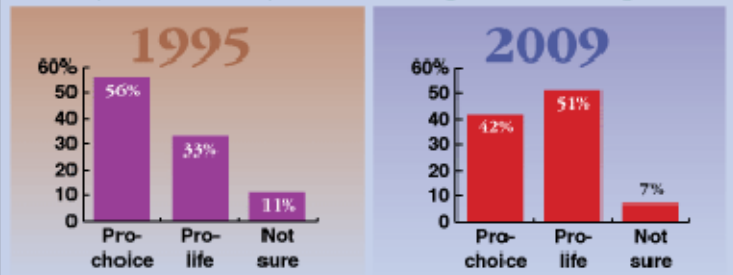
heard of. The Roe v. Wade decision allowing for the legalization of abortions and supporting pro-choice created an extreme increase in the number of abortions per year. However, since this supreme court decision the issue has become not only a topic of moral debate, but also political debate. The information and education on abortion has flooded the nation and resultantly has decreased the number of women agreeing to the abortion process. This contradicts the concern that the morality of the United States is on a decline as it is clear that less women are subjecting their bodies to this procedure. Not only is the decline a clear defiance in high morality, but it is also instilling Christian virtues in society.

Pro-life or Pro-choice? → Just within the last 14 years Americans have seen a drastic increase in the number of pro-life supporters on the issue of abortion. What used to be a dismal 33% in 1995 is now a much higher 51%, just barely creating a simple majority of the American public. Education and first-hand experience with the issue has created more defiance in America as a whole as well. Because of the relevancy on the topic that is now debated in major political elections for Presidency or mid-term elections it has also decreased the amount of people that are unsure on their stance on the topic.

More Americans Are Now Pro-Life

Since 1995, the ratio of pro-life versus pro-choice Americans has flip-flopped. More than half of all Americans now consider themselves pro-life, an 18-point increase from the mid-1990s. During the same period, the percentage of pro-choice Americans dropped below 50 percent.

Would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?



Source: Lydia Saad, "More Americans 'Pro-Life' Than 'Pro-Choice' for First Time," Gallup, May 2009

Most U.S. Abortions Occur in First Trimester

Nearly 90 percent of abortions in the United States occur in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy — or first trimester — with most of those taking place at nine weeks or less. Fewer than 2 percent occur after 20 weeks, the point where anti-abortion proponents say the fetus can feel pain.

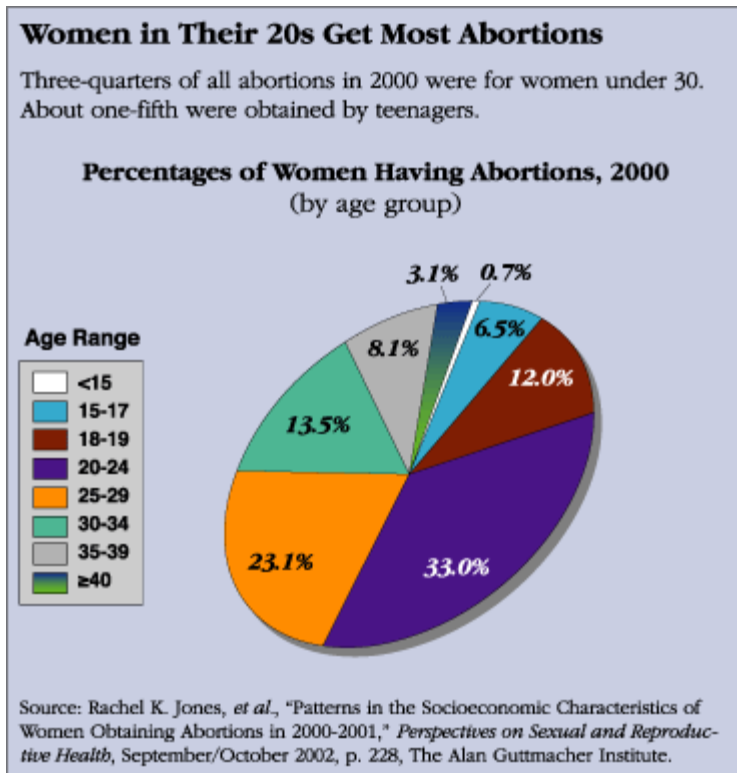
When Women Have Abortions, 2006



When the Abortions Occur → Not only are the numbers of abortions being performed on a steady decline, but the actual process of the surgery is being held within the first trimester of the woman's pregnancy. Research shows that the baby is able to feel the pain after the first 20 weeks of developing in the mother's womb. As of May 2006 only 1.5% of abortions that were performed had this process done after this time period. That small percentage means that the other 98.5% of the abortions had been done during the first trimester when the fetus is only beginning to develop.

Woman who are choosing to take part in this procedure are acting responsibly and doing so before pain is supposed to be felt in the fetus. While having an abortion is against Christian values, the moral values of doing so during the first trimester, I would argue, is an example of high morals and beliefs.

When Women get their Abortions → Most people cohere irresponsible women with abortions because they cannot take leadership for their actions. This graph shows that over half of the woman that



received abortions in the year 2000 was between the ages of 18 and 30. Often times a woman of this age is figuring out who they are and what they want to do with the rest of their life, and if they are not settled down in a stable situation a baby is not always a good addition to the picture. While many think that the woman are being irresponsible for having the abortion, from this graph it can be inferred that the woman are seeking this option because they know that they cannot afford and care for the baby once it enters the world and may not be mentally stable to handle taking care of another life. Not only are these woman acting in a way to better their own financial future and stability, they are acting to secure what would be the child's future life.

Economic Status Effects Abortions → As the abortion rates have been on a decline in more recent years, there still remains a high number of women that receive this procedure compared to other economic groups. Between 1994 and 2000 there has been an increase with the amount of woman living below the poverty level that are seeking abortions whereas those who are more wealthy are choosing the pro-life route. It would be interesting to see where the numbers are today in 2010, but this increase can be due to the fact that birthing a child is extremely expensive and caring for them is just as hard. These numbers correlate directly with the majority age that woman are receiving abortions (ages 18-30). This data shows that women are choosing this option because they feel that it is in their own and the child's best interest for a chance of a great and prosperous life.

Abortion Rates Higher for Low-Income Women

Abortion rates have been increasing dramatically among low-income women while declining among wealthier women.

Woman's Economic Status	Abortion Rate (No. of abortions per 1,000 women)	
	1994	2000
Income below poverty level	36	44
Income up to twice poverty level	31	38
Income two to three times poverty level	25	21
Income more than triple poverty level	16	10

Source: Rachel K. Jones, *et al.*, "Patterns in the Socioeconomic Characteristics of Women Obtaining Abortions in 2000-2001," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, September/October 2002, pp. 226-235, The Alan Guttmacher Institute.

Summary → I don't think that the abortion issue will ever dissolve from society completely because there is always going to be people who do not have the mental stability to go through the birthing process, or there had been unfortunate circumstances, such as rape, that helped to determine their pro-choice decision in the first place. However, the amount of people that stand by their pro-life belief does not correspond with some of the statements made in the *End of a Christian America* article. Most strongly religious or Catholics believe that pro-life is the only choice available to woman, yet the decrease in the American people's religious faith is on a decline. This opposition shows that in order to have a moral society the nation does not have to be devoutly Christian. What is moral to one individual may be immoral to another and the beliefs change as time goes on.