

Abortion counseling, practices discussed

"There is no abortion issue in my experience, there are only real people in real situations with real names," according to Rev. Larry Doerr who spoke during the second session of the abortion conference, "Beyond Conception."

"Often there is a subtle, anti sex punitive psychology that goes into abortion opinions," he said. He said that often these ideas extend to related matters such as birth-control and child care center support.

Doerr, a Protestant minister, said that he believed many past abortion laws were "class legislation," because those who could afford an abortion could always get one.

"Many abortion laws were in part directed against the poor, and in more recent times against the young," he said.

Doerr emphasized that he believes personal consideration of the decision whether to undergo an abortion has never been more anguished or thoughtful. "One thing I have not seen is a casualness about the issue," he said.

He commented that often when he counsels students, women are hesitant to consider the effect on themselves. "They say too often, 'if I consider myself I am selfish'—not true."

Doerr explained that he never tries to impose his personal beliefs on any of the students whom he counsels, but he tries to suggest some considerations for them to use in making the decision.

"The question of morality can only be realized in a particular situation and the total context around that situation," he said.

Doerr said he regards his personal conviction as pro-life defined in a total sense. He said that to him, life is a continuum from fullness of life on one end to no life at the other.

"There are no perfect choices," he reiterated. "There is no situation in which life in the total sense can be maximized."

Doerr said that making decisions on an individual basis as opposed to set rules is "not easier, not an escape—it's just a hell of a lot harder."

Doerr responded to one student's question about the availability of abortions, saying he could never condone an abortion decision made solely on the basis of "ease."

Doerr said that with the liberalization of abortion laws, most counselors have encountered less guilt feelings over a decision to have an abortion.

Registered nurse Matt Faier agreed. Faier is the manager and chief anesthesiologist at the Omaha clinic, "Women's Services," which provides abortion services.

"If a woman is not predisposed to mental instability, she is unlikely to experience it afterwards," he said.

Faier arrived at the symposium after encountering picket lines at the Omaha clinic. Drs. William G. Orr and Marvin Deitrich, who staff the clinic, both members of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine faculty, have filed an injunction against the limitations placed on abortions by the NU Board of Regents.

Faier noted that abortion has been established as a valid, safe medical procedure. He said Women's Services was opened to provide abortions for Nebraska residents, although many persons from out of state have visited the clinic.

The clinic has been open since Aug. 16, Faier said. Since that date, approximately 700 to 800 women have had appointments with clinic staffers. Not all of them have had abortions, he said.

All patients of the clinic must go through one of the professional counselors before an abortion can be obtained, he said. However it is up to the individual patient to determine the



Campus minister Larry Doerr spoke Wednesday about the individual decision of abortion.

degree of counseling she needs. "We don't force counseling down people's throats," Faier said.

Faier explained that the focus of the clinic is outpatient service with more than half of its offices devoted to it. Eventually Woman's Services hopes to expand to all areas of outpatient care for women, he said.

Faier revealed some approximate statistics of patients during the period Aug. 16 to Oct. 16. He said the youngest patients were 12-years-old while the oldest were in their middle 40's. During that time period, 555 people were serviced by the clinic.

Forty-four per cent of the women were under age 19, he said. Twenty-five per cent were between the ages of 20 and 23, he said.

Women more than 30 numbered 14 per cent of the total figure, Faier said.

He disclosed that two-thirds of the women were of Protestant faiths, while one-fourth were Catholic. Faier added that women who give no religion were not necessarily giving all of the data about themselves.

Eighteen per cent of the women were married, compared to 60 per cent who said they were single, he said. Faier said he suspected many of the married women claimed they were single, so their husbands would not have to approve the abortion decision, as is Nebraska law. "We don't check marriage licenses," he said.

Abortions performed at the clinic are done during the first trimester of pregnancy and abortions after that are done through the NU Medical Center hospital by Drs. Deitrich and Orr, he said.



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