

The Hand of God

Del Meyer

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The Hand of God — A Journey from Death to Life by the Abortion Doctor Who Changed His Mind, by Bernard N. Nathanson, MD. Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, DC., 206 pp., \$25, ISBN: 0-89526-463-3.

Dr. Bernard Nathanson, co-founder in 1969 of the National Abortion Rights Action League, helped make abortion legal. As director of New York City's Center for Reproductive and Sexual Health, the world's largest abortion clinic, and the nation's most prominent abortionist, he presided over 60,000 abortions.

His encounters with abortion began with the pregnancy of his intended, Ruth. His father demanded marriage but sent him five hundred Canadian dollars for an abortion in Catholic Montreal. The subsequent search for the abortionist, the hemorrhage, and the resolution are quite graphic. But when he impregnated a woman during his training, he insisted on an abortion and coolly informed her that since "I was the most skilled practitioner of the art, I myself would do the abortion. And I did."

Asked if perhaps for a fleeting moment or so he experienced a flicker of regret, a microgram of remorse, Nathanson states,

No and no. And that, dear reader, is the mentality of the abortionist: another job well done. . . . What I felt in my starved, impoverished soul must have been closely akin to the swelling satisfaction of Adolf Eichmann, as he saw his tightly scheduled trains bearing Jews to the extermination camps leaving and arriving exactly on time, to keep the extermination machine moving with celebrated Teutonic efficiency. . . . I have aborted the unborn children of my friends, colleagues, casual acquaintances, even teachers. There was never a shred of self-doubt, never a wavering of the supreme confidence that I was doing a major service to those who sought me out. . .

He left the clinic in 1972 continuing his obstetric and gynecology practice as he had always done. At this time he had the space to feel the hand of God. A marvelous new technology being developed was the ultrasound. He began to observe the fetal heart, see the human fetus, measure it, observe it, watch it and indeed bond with and love it. A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* some ten years ago reported that when ten pregnant women came to an abortion clinic and were shown ultrasound pictures of the fetus before the abortion,

only one went through with the abortion. Nine left the clinic pregnant. That is how powerful the bonding is. Nathanson found himself bonding with the unborn.

Nathanson wrote an article for the same Journal in 1974 stating that there was no longer any doubt in his mind that human life exists within the womb from the very onset of pregnancy. That life is interdependent for all of us. It is a continuous spectrum beginning in utero and ending in death—the bands of the spectrum are designated by words such as fetus, infant, child, adolescent and adult. We must courageously face the fact—finally—that human life is being taken in the process of abortion, an unmistakable interruption of a process which would otherwise have produced a citizen of the world. Denial of this reality is the crassest kind of moral evasiveness.

These fairly modest assertions, Nathanson states, brought the largest response to an article that the *NEJM* has ever received, even up until today. The *NEJM* didn't bother with the letters but sent them all, huge sacks of mail, to Nathanson. These were not fan letters. These were from the same physicians who excoriated him for being an abortionist four years earlier, but now, as the abortion pie had grown and they were pulling in the money right and left, they had changed their minds. He was overwhelmed by the vituperation, the phone calls, and the threats against his life and family.

Nathanson regrets the years he spent traveling all over the country lobbying legislatures and politicians to open up their laws (before *Roe v Wade*). He became a pariah in the medical profession and was known as the abortion king. His papers on abortion were eagerly received by the liberal press (and even the liberal medical press) but made him unpopular with many in his profession. His practice dwindled because doctors would not send patients to him. Now that he is pro-life, he feels exiled again by the medical establishment.

Although Nathanson alludes to physician assisted suicide, the lessons he draws are now being played out. For instance, Dutch physicians, having felt the power, have euthanized patients, half of whom have not requested the procedure. They are resisting all attempts to reassess the entire issue. Early reports from Oregon suggest that patients, the full extent not yet clear, are being euthanized who have not requested to be put to death.

Ultimately, Dr. Nathanson, the abortion doctor who changed his mind, underscores in *The Hand of God* the tragic lack of concern we have for our fellow human beings—whether they be unborn or terminally ill. They are being exterminated in numbers even Hitler or Stalin would never have dreamed possible.

This is a wake up call for our profession as well as for every American. Indeed, this book should be read by every human in the world. Ω