

Tuesday (16Feb82), my continuing-education clergy seminar in our home's library spent an hour discussing the tragic drunk-driving death of 17-year-old Darby Flynn, killed by the boy (the driver) sitting next to her --drunk boy, playing chicken. As the funeral preacher is in the group, we got into theology and ministry vis-a-vis the tragedy; but this think-sheet does not get into that.

My letter (herewith, 24Feb82 CAPE COD NEWS ed.p.) is purely secular--a rarity for me. I am trying to address, in as arrow-like a way as I can, a public issue of rising worry: Cape Cod, in or out of the tourist season, is a slaughterhouse of drunk-driving deaths, most of the deaths being of innocent (i.e., non-drunk) persons.

While my letter is not theological, it is concerned with a political issue having a philosophy-of-religion base. As follows: Anything is religious which deals with (1) the nature of human nature and relationships, (2) the nature of nature (*natura naturans*, i.e., the nature of Reality), (3) the nature of human relations with Reality, and/or (4) the inferences, from all the above, as to how we are to live, dream, fear, help, hope.

The letter sharpens down to (1), above: what picture of humanity is under attack in what I have written? Here it is:

1. In all circumstances, males and females are equal.
2. Legislation should never treat one sex as in any way inferior to the other sex.
3. Any proposals for legislative discrimination on a sexual base are ignorant at best, evil at worst.

My letter will doubtless be considered "nutty, cranky, or both" because it violates the above tabus, as follows (in order, as above):

1. The "in all circumstances" dogma is a faith unsustainable by fact. E.g., males are short-run more powerful and long-run less powerful.
2. ERA or any other legislation should be realistic about biological and biopsychological factors--contra unisex.
3. My proposal in the letter frankly accepts an indubitable fact, viz., female superiority (more common sense and emotional balance) in the situation of young glands calling to young glands in car-driving.

SEXISM: If my proposal were based on female inferiority, it would make more "sense" to a lot of folks. Tough luck for sexism.

WITNESS: We are called to try to corrode false faiths (in this case, unisex) even when it makes us look like fools.

Letters

Teen driving

To the editor:

Grief and desperation over the car death of a 17-year-old has riveted our community's attention. Responses divide into Why? and What can be done about it?

As to the latter question, what I've read and heard seems tired and stale. We need fresh thinking, and this letter risks it. And I do mean risks: Many will think my suggestion nutty, cranky, or both.

Here's my situation-description and solution-proposal:

Almost all teen car accidents involve a chemical compound of three fluids-- gasoline, alcohol, and testosterone--+ young women. The male hormone tends to go wild in the presence of young women, but is otherwise no more dangerous to reason and common sense than are the female hormones with or without the presence of young men.

Possible solutions:

1. Remove the gasoline. No license to drive for males in their teens, or perhaps even through their 20's.
2. Remove the alcohol. Impractical: Our society is too permissive to stand for the degree of control this solution would entail; e.g., it would be necessary to punish parents whose children are found with alcohol in or even around them.
3. Remove the girls. Are you kidding? So it's not practical to remove the girls. Too difficult to supervise, in addition to being inhuman.
4. Remove the testosterone. Car licenses for girls only.
5. Here's your answer, folks. Mark all licenses of young males thus: "This license invalid when young women are in the car." The boys can drive when young members of the opposite sex are not in the car; when young women are in the car, some woman must drive.

My solution of the problem is neat, psychologically sound, and enforceable by all the legal sanctions applicable to driving without a license. I'd be delighted if someone were to come up with a better solution meeting these three criteria.