

## Can Freedom Send You to Hell? - MabuhayRadio

Written by Atty. Lope Lindio

Tuesday, 16 September 2008 01:43 - Last Updated Tuesday, 16 September 2008 02:09

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The American people were roundly startled initially by the selection of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as Sen. John McCain's running mate. But political reality took command after the shock. Senator McCain's choice is his boldest tactical move, yet, to reverse the unfavorable trend of the campaign that used to be going favorably for Sen. Barack Obama. Her much-trumpeted pro-life or anti-abortion credential has been cited as a unique qualification to succeed a fallen President. Senator McCain is seeking to energize the Republican Party's hard-core evangelical support by this wedge issue of abortion, which worked to save the party's fortunes in past elections. It is a religious and emotionally-charged talking point certain to draw fanatical attention.

People are driven crazy when given a stark choice between supposedly either going to heaven or hell. On the other hand, the issues of the Democrats, are mundane matters, like universal insurance, scandals, national deficit, the war in Iraq, etc., which are neither holy nor sexy but about the boring life concerns of ordinary Americans.

Ever since I have been identified as a Democrat, well-meaning friends and strangers alike worry about my after life. They ask me pointblank if I approve of killing babies since the Democratic Party favors abortion. They mistook my embrace of the party's respect for freedom of choice, and its platform of letting women have absolute sovereignty and dominion over their own body, as approval of the procedure of abortion itself. That's how the GOPers have been framing the abortion debate by scaring you to death. The fact is the Democratic Party is just pro-choice or for giving women the freedom of deciding their own destiny, in contradistinction with the act of abortion, per se. Just about all the better-known Democrats, the Catholic Kennedys and Kerry, the Baptist Carter and Gore, the United Church of Christ member Obama, etc., and the unknowns, like myself, have declared in no uncertain terms, that they're against abortion for anyone over whom they have control at all or have any say in their personal decision process. Abortion will not even figure in their calculations if it came to a point where such a situation would present itself, because it runs counter to what they have been taught at home and in their churches.

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But, however, strongly, they are personally against abortion, they're not arrogant, and even humble, enough, not to impose their personal values on others. Being good Democrats, and in a democracy, they respect the right of women to decide what is good for themselves, including the decision to have or not have a child. If a woman is to be the equal of any man, she should be empowered and given full control over her own body.

But political considerations have cynically driven the Republicans into tricking them to give up that freedom and degrade their long and arduous journey from being a chattel to human being. It's a travesty if they would allow the GOP to turn their civil and human right into a religious bone of contention. The Republicans have been egregious and ingenious in framing the act of abortion that nobody wants as equivalent to exercising your freedom of choice.

In real life, the pro-lifers (anti-abortion) and pro-choicers are all moral people to begin with, holding all-American values. They have been drilled to respect life all their lives at home, in church, school, and in the community. But each side's perceptions of the other are often wrong or sadly misconstrued by the other. The former are against abortion and the later would allow the procedure upon demand. If only they can just discuss dispassionately their respective positions, they'll realize that their differences are more apparent than real.

The pro-lifers cannot believe that there is such a group of people who would approve the idea of stopping the full development of a fetus. They call this "murder" or mass "slaughter." The pro-choice activists on the other hand are upset that the pro-lifers are zealously trying to block women's access to abortion as a matter of choice. All they're trying to preserve is the constitutionally guaranteed right of women to decide what to do with their body. If the

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procedure sought to be banned were other than abortion for women but vasectomy or castration for men, for example, pro-choicers would not stop anyone who wish to have vasectomy or castration for himself. The distinction between abortion itself and the right to get it if so desired should be made in order to bridge the differences between these two contesting groups.

Actually most of the pro-choicers do not want abortion for themselves, their family, or their friends any more than the pro-life advocates. They will not recommend it to anyone seeking their advice. But they will not let the pro-lifers run other people's lives by denying a pregnant woman the right to have an abortion if for some reasons she needs it or it cannot be avoided.

The opposing camps' contrasting views on the abortion issue puts the political system of this country at a breaking point. Every two or four years when there's an election, the advocates on both sides use the issue as a club to make the politicians fall in line. They are put under a great pressure either to make illegal the individual right to choose freely under the constitution or give in to the demands of the zealots to ban it in order to accommodate their religious or moral sensitivities.

But these are concerns that should have been addressed early on by the parents and their chosen church during the woman's formative years. If they did a good parenting job, occasions for exercising the right to choose would not arise. Parents, for example, will not be confronted with a 17-year old daughter getting pregnant too early, and forced to grab a putative father, clean him up and make him look happy publicly acknowledging his authorship. It would just be a simple matter of deciding against such occasions according to the moral code of her parents and the church. Just because pro-lifers or anti abortion parents failed in raising up their daughters properly, it's not fair for them to take their parenting failings to the political arena and get the whole country divided because of their parental dereliction of duty.

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If only the pro-lifers understand that the pro-choicers also value life as much as they do, they'll not be too tough on them for their libertarian outlook of the problem. Maybe they can even get together and pool their resources to educate the people of the horrors of abortion itself and the beauty of individual freedom. When through their joint effort society gets enlightened, there will be a two-fold benefit. Abortion will cease to be the woman's way out of troubles and there will be no more crusaders for or against the right to have an abortion. # # #

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