

Having examined MM's statistics [from the November 2008(1) conversation] and having found them to be persuasive, I can no longer claim, as I had previously, that the number of abortions increased during Republican administrations due to reduced social services. The statistics from her sources indicated that **there was no appreciable difference** in the number of abortions over 20 of the last 28 years when Republicans were in power. This indicates that Republican administrations have had no measurable impact on the number of abortions performed in this country. And that may be the very thing they wanted – so they can roll out the same issue every four years to distract us.

I voted as I did because I believe that cumulatively more human beings (those yet to be born, children, adults, military, etc.) will be saved as a result of an Obama presidency than would have been under a McCain presidency, given that the variation in the number of abortions has remained independent of the political party in power. I can think of no simpler way of explaining this. And the conversation about some lives being “innocent” doesn't cut it. All life is equally treasured by the One who created it.

Furthermore, for the first time, the Democratic platform actually acknowledged that there is a moral component to the abortion issue. This is growth. I find this hopeful. We can build on it.

Offensive wars and the death penalty are premeditated. “Shock and Awe” was a cynical tactic to do irreparable human and structural damage, to hurt as many people as possible, to take as many lives as possible, and to dishearten as many Iraqi civilians as possible in an effort to avenge a slight against George W. Bush's father and to provide as many jobs for Halliburton as possible. (Slight hyperbole!) To remain militarily engaged in Iraq only serves to perpetuate the evil and continues to erode our country's reputation overseas. Bush II, who ran on a right to life platform, manipulated the evidence to convince his own party, as well as the Democrats, Secretary Powell, the United Nations and the people of the world that our murderous intervention in Iraq was righteous. This was the same way he manipulated evidence to prove that human beings have no impact on global warming. Our President was not truthful. He was also not pro-life. The evidence – not opinions – indicates quite the contrary.

My disagreement on the suggested ethical hierarchy of war, abortion and capital punishment is based on the culpability of the actor and the innocence of the victim. No one can impute guilt to another person. An individual can only accept personal moral culpability if they can accuse themselves of committing a **seriously disordered act** with **sufficient reflection** and **full consent**. A decision to terminate a pregnancy is frequently made under severe duress. This mitigates individual moral responsibility. Wars of aggression and executions are premeditated and painstakingly planned over time. This heightens moral responsibility. I also disagree with the repetition of the word “innocent” as if this adds to the offense. I have already explained why. This is my problem with asserting that abortion, as awful a choice as it may be, is the defining ethical consideration when one votes.

I reverence life and I find it offensive that some would suggest that those who disagree with one set of **political solutions** are somehow less virtuous. It is not immoral to agree that something is wrong and then to disagree on the best way to rectify it. Clearly, electing Republicans has not made a difference. It was time for a change.