

Claim that legal abortion influenced Columbine tragedy was unconscionable attempt to further a political cause

Dear Editor,

I have two daughters, 13 and 8. Our thoughts are with all of those who suffered at Columbine High. Almost two weeks after the massacre my daughters and I made a pilgrimage to Columbine. In the cold pouring rain and mud, we laid our teddy bear and our inadequate words as close to the building as we could. I looked at the building and cried. My 13 year-old consoled me. She knows I fear for her and her sister. I could not come to grips with the unspeakable terror and pain that engulfed those in that building that day.

Parents have a responsibility to be on top of all things at all times. Government has a role in helping families and it does take a village to raise a child. The system and the village must help single parents, parents who choose to work or must work or who are faced with a troubled or out of control child.

We must make gun owners accountable when children access their guns and prosecute violators of current gun laws to the maximum. All guns must have safety devices, be as traceable as vehicles, especially guns sold by private parties or at gun shows. Waiting periods and background checks must become routine. No law-abiding citizen or hunter needs a weapon of war. All assault and semi-automatic weapons must be illegal to manufacture, sell or possess. And, we will not teach our kids it is wrong to kill by imitating the wild west, strapping guns to the hips of most of our citizenry, including our teachers, coaches, school bus drivers, preachers, and soccer moms, especially since most murders are committed by someone known to the victim.

There's nothing wrong with children at school wearing "uniforms," i.e., jeans and white T-

shirts or sweaters. Year round school allows children to retain more and have less time on their hands. Teacher tenure may be out but a renewed respect for public education, higher teacher salaries, lower class size, and total parent involvement must be in.

We can boycott the movies and we must closely monitor our children's activities, especially with regard to the Internet, video games and their friends. Our children must be taught to recognize that ostracizing and teasing those who are different than themselves causes irreparable hurt and was in part responsible for the tragedy at Columbine. These are all reasonable measures to lesson the odds of this tragedy repeating itself.

However, there is blame that has yet to be placed. I am not a religious person, but I respect, and have taught my children to respect, those who say they find comfort in their faith. Yet, I am troubled by Christian fundamentalists who display intolerance for different religious beliefs or set of moral values, or those who are not religious, (as if that means we have no moral values) and intolerance of homosexuals as well as women who don't embrace the traditional female role only. I was a fundamentalist but those beliefs, centered around a white male God, nearly destroyed me. I could not live with the intolerance those set of beliefs glorified. My daughters have never set foot inside a place of organized religion, but they have a good sense of right and wrong and just as important, my daughters have learned the value of diversity and tolerance.

These boys may have been influenced by fundamentalist Christians who ostracize homosexuals by denying them basic human rights like the right to a job and a place to live. They may have

held no hope for themselves as they pondered the consequences of being labeled different. The truth is, God intended his earthly kingdom to equally treat "saint" and "sinner," (both children of his) and if the "saints" don't get that, they may find themselves headed to hell on judgment day.

Finally, it was crystal clear Diane Hocheaver and Leslie Hanks' letter to Colorado State legislators suggesting that legal abortion influenced the Columbine tragedy was an unconscionable attempt to further their political cause. Understandably, they left out the real and only truth that could possibly be construed as an influence on the tragedy at Columbine.

First, intelligent individuals know that women have a right to life and liberty, not just fetuses. They also know that Roe v. Wade "restored equal protection under the law to all life" by correctly and morally balancing the right to life and liberty of both. Further, there is nothing "pro-life" nor is reverence for life achieved by trumping a woman's right to life and liberty with that of a fetus from conception to birth. No

exceptions. Ever. There's nothing right, moral or "pro-life" about a public policy that forces women to self-abort or seek back alley medical care that would endanger their health and life while opposing birth control research and dissemination of birth control to all sexually active men and women who want it. It is a fact, that short of abstinence, correct and consistent use of birth control is the answer to reducing the number of unintended pregnancies.

Most importantly, I guarantee you that the shooters at Columbine High were not thinking about any woman's decision about when and how many children she will have. But they may have been thinking about anti-abortion extremists who kill abortion providers and clinic staff with guns and bombs, allegedly in the name of God, incited by the shortsighted, violent and morally wrong rhetoric of the movement, and who kill, as these young men did, without remorse.

Think about it.

Sincerely,
Peggy E. Loonan
Ft Collins