Who killed the innocent - Michael Griffin or Dr. David Gunn?

by Paul J. Hill

It was business as usual in Jerusalem's Temple. The usual din was unexpectedly interrupted by a soul-gripping cry. Uncloaked zeal and holy anger drove the man from table to table as people fled from Him in terror. Was Christ's zeal similar to the zeal that drove Moses to defend the Israelite from his merciless beating? How many battle cries have been bellowed forth in a dim, but identifiable, resemblance of the cry of the Savior? And what has this to do with the death of David Gunn?

An essential distinction

An important distinction must be made when considering any act to protect our unborn children. Distinguish between the wisdom of using force to defend the unborn and the justice of doing so. Some say forceful action is unwise as it harms the pro-life cause. It is best to suspend judgment on any given forceful act to defend life until all the facts are in.

The wisdom of using force to protect life will depend on many variables. Individual discretion is needed to determine when any given defensive act would be wise. However, the justice of using force to defend the unborn is apparent if we don't forget that the object is to defend unborn babies from a violent death.

Don't forget the babies

Your conclusions on this matter will be largely determined by where your true sympathies lie, with the doctor or with the preborn children.

If next to Dr. Gunn's dead body were to be spread the gruesome remains of the thousands he killed, the mere space needed would be staggering. If you leave the babies out of your analysis when considering the death of Gunn, you leave out the overwhelming evidence that justifies it.

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The Biblical basis for defensive action

In order to determine if we may use force to protect the unborn, we must ask and resolve two questions. The first question is, *"What responsibility does the individual have toward his neighbor if his neighbor's life is about to be taken by force?"* The answer to the question is, *"You must take all action necessary to protect innocent life."*

The Bible clearly teaches that we may protect our own lives from unjust harm with deadly force if necessary: "If the thief is caught while breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account." Exodus 22:2.

The Scriptures also clearly teach that as we may defend our own lives with force, we should also do so for our neighbor. The second great commandment is to love "your neighbor as yourself," Luke 10:27.

Surely Rahab protected the innocent lives of her neighbors when she hid the Israelite spies, Joshua 2:1-24. The Hebrew midwives also defended the lives of the Jewish boys, Exodus 1:15-22. The disciples protected the innocent life of Paul from imminent death in Acts 9:23-25. They helped him escape Damascus by lowering him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

In each of the situations referred to above, whatever action was necessary to protect life was taken. In Exodus 22:2, deadly force was justified when used in defense of the innocent. In the case of the midwives, deadly force was not necessary.

The second question that must be asked is, *"May we use force to protect unborn children from imminent death even if the government forbids us to do so?"* The answer to this question is found in Acts 5:29b. When the State or any other authority requires one to do what is contrary to God's law, the child of God "must obey God rather than men." This was clearly the opinion and practice of Peter and the Apostles.

The Hebrew midwives were greatly blessed by God for defending innocent life though the civil authorities forbade them to do so. Moses also illegally used deadly force to defend the innocent, "and when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian," Acts 7:24. He did so even though no one had appointed him a ruler or judge, Acts 7:27. In this context, Stephen clearly extols Moses for delivering the oppressed Hebrew from the Egyptian. His point is to condemn the Jews for rejecting the deliverance of Moses and Christ, but Hebrews 11:25-26 clearly refers to the act of Moses as an act of self-denial.

Acts 9:23-25 and II Corinthians 11:32-33 tell us the Jews joined with local civil authorities in seeking the death of Paul in Damascus. The disciples certainly broke common local laws forbidding individuals to breach the walls of a city when they let Paul down in a basket. Clearly such laws forbidding the breach of the walls were designed to prevent robbery and murder. In breaking these laws, Paul and his disciples, while breaking a good law, were actually protecting innocent life from imminent death. Thus, laws designed to protect life may be violated if the violation does in fact protect innocent life. Individuals may, therefore, use force to deter a mass murderer who wantonly begins to kill innocent school children. Using the same logic, we may also use force against mass murderers who wantonly kill preschool and preborn children. We should do so even if some horribly unjust law presumes to declare it to be wrong to do so.

If we should defend born children, we should also defend unborn children. If we should defend born and unborn children from harm, we should also do so even if our government forbids us to do so. As Rahab, Moses, the Hebrew midwives and Paul all broke the law to do *whatever was necessary* to protect innocent life, so may we.

Just who are we to protect?

There is no question that deadly force should be used to protect innocent life. The question is, *whose life is innocent* — those who kill our children or the children who are being killed? The government believes those who kill our children should be protected. We believe the unborn should be protected. The question then for us is, should we protect innocent life from harm if the government forbids us to do so?

The Golden Rule clearly and irrefutably answers the question in this way: "Therefore whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them; for this is the Law and the Prophets," Matthew 7:12.

If someone was about to tear your limbs from your body, what would you do? If you could defend yourself with force, would you? If you couldn't defend yourself with effective force, would you want someone else to do so? If so, Christ teaches that you should treat others similarly.

If you dispute this clear teaching of the Bible, you will have assumed the unbearable burden of having to prove the justice of using force to protect the born, but not the unborn. You can no more deny your responsibility to defend the unborn with force than you can deny the priest or Levite's responsibility to aid the wounded and dying traveler (Luke 10:30-36). The priest and the Levite must have tried to justify their neglect of the wounded man. Has human nature changed so drastically that we are no longer in danger of justifying our neglect of our neighbors?

Ethical basis for defensive action

In addition to defending the innocent from a brutal death, there are other reasons for using force in the abortion controversy. One of these reasons is found in Numbers 35:33. "So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it." Numbers 25 makes a similar point through the example of Phinehas.

Phinehas violently took the lives of two immoral persons in order to turn God's wrath away from the people. Numbers 25 tells us that the Israelites were playing the harlot with Moabite women. God's wrath in the form of a plague, therefore, turned against the people. As a result of the sins committed, Moses and the judges were weeping before the Tabernacle. As Moses and the leaders looked on, Zimri, the son of Salu, brazenly brought a Moabite woman named Cozbi by the weeping leaders. He led her past them and into a tent for immoral purposes. When a priest named Phinehas realized what was happening, he was filled with zealous jealousy. He then followed them to the tent and checked the plague by driving a spear through them both.

The startling truth is that this act was not done by a civil leader or after due legal process. Yet, this zealous act by an individual "made atonement for the sons of Israel." Though sin had fanned God's righteous anger to a searing blaze, the shedding of guilty blood had cooled

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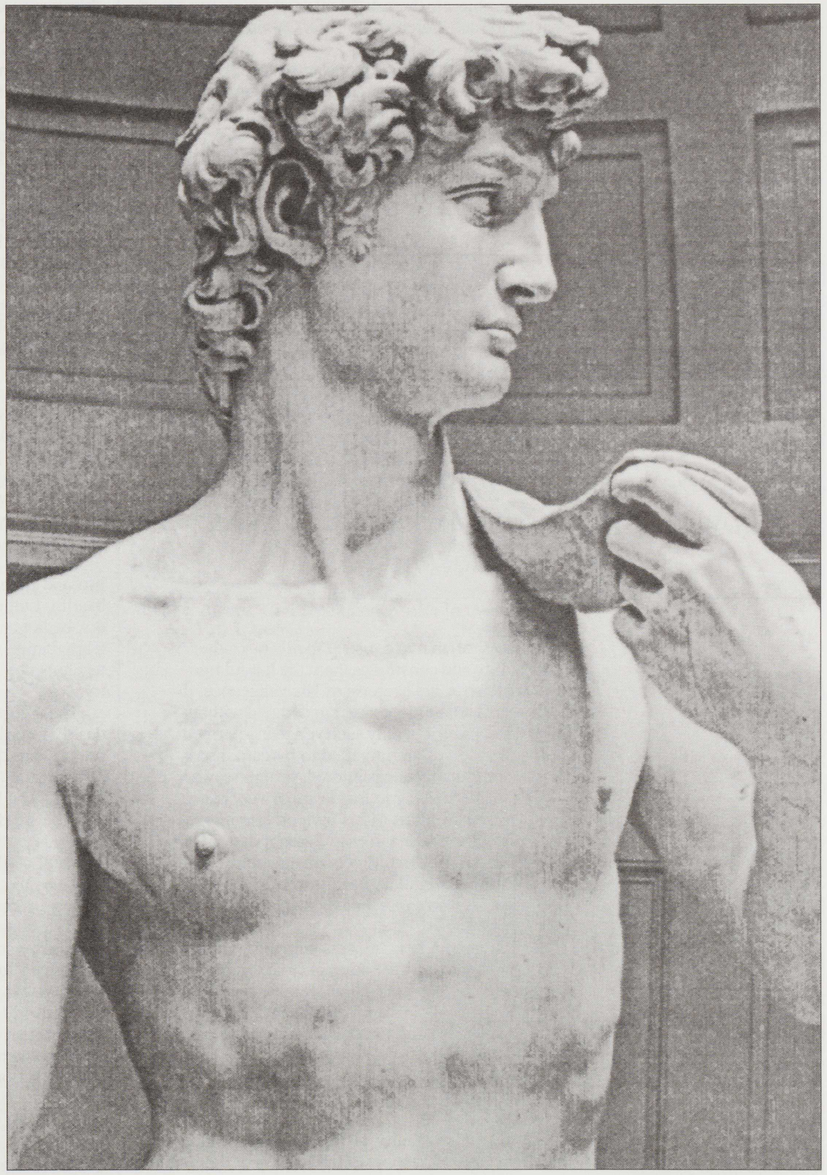

Michaelangelo's "David" as he contemplates the use of force against a giant by the name of Goliath.