Superiority Complex Infects Decision-Making

By Michael Kniss
Opinion Editor

Tuesday was Election Day, which means that we are less than a year away from what promises to be not only an important, but also an exciting presidential race. As George W. Bush prepares for his bid at a second term and Democrats wait patiently to see which candidate will survive the primaries, it is time that we, as concerned students, begin to discuss the issues that will come to the forefront of national politics.

I know that even at EMU there are strong opinions about issues such as abortion, taxes, health care, education, military spending, social security, and welfare; the list could go on. As not only the opinion editor of this newspaper, but also as an interested student, I ask you to share your thoughts with this campus.

Let’s start discussing some of these difficult topics, tackling them as a student body. We need to be informed about the many perspectives and sides to these issues that will very likely decide our futures.

One of the most controversial issues in current politics, especially within the Christian (and Mennonite) Church, is abortion. As Ben Weaver wrote in the Oct. 9, 2003 edition of the Weather Vane, the current republican administration is very close to signing a bill that will make partial birth abortions illegal. This looming bill has once again sparked the battle between the pro-life and pro-choice contingencies. Both groups have serious lobbying power in Washington and represent millions of people across the nation. Thus, whether it should be or not, abortion is central to many political campaigns.

I am an avid pro-lifer. I believe that abortion is wrong in almost any case imaginable (especially partial/after birth abortion). This is not because I see life as beginning with conception, but rather because I believe that the promise, or potential, for life is a wonderful gift that should not be tampered with. I value the divine spark that will flourish into humanity’s child. Still, it is not my decision to decide whether a woman gives birth or not. Neither is it the decision of the president, Congress, or the Supreme Court. It might not even be the decision of Christianity, or whatever religious belief a woman, or couple, follows.

Americans suffer from a unique superiority complex. This disease infects us all with the belief that we know what is best for everyone else. We use religious race, ethnocentrism, and patriarchal ideology to impose personal beliefs on others. I see abortion as the prime example of this. Currently, many people are calling on the federal government to outlaw abortion in all of its guises. If this were to become reality, it would mean that a male-dominated Congress, led by a male president, and approved by a male-dominated Supreme Court would decide what a woman can or can not do to her own body. The decision should not lie in the hands of a disproportionately male, white, and Protestant federal government.

Abortion is a complex issue, so controversial that a presiding government should not have the power to rule on it. That decisive power should lie in the hands, first and foremost, of the mothers-to-be. Women, hopefully along with their partner fathers-to-be, should make the decision about abortion, taking into account the promised life of the child (“baby’s rights” — we were all in that state of being at some point), the beliefs and love of other family and community members, and cultural/religious ties and beliefs. Religion is an important aspect in this discussion, but falls into the third category for consideration because it is not the church’s job to make the decision either (just as it is not the government’s). The church, or religion, should play a major role in influencing, or encouraging, a woman and couple to make a certain choice, but should not force that choice upon them.

Americans, and specifically American males, must realize that they (we) do not hold a monopoly on morality. They (we) need to stop forcing our beliefs on others. Thus, feminism has a lot to contribute to this discussion. The feminist movement is not an organization of angry women. It is a rational collection of concerned mothers, lawyers, politicians, doctors, teachers, social workers, church leaders, etc., who seek an American community based on equality and respect. They ask Americans to respect their wishes and their control of their own bodies. It is not at all too much to ask.

I am an avid pro-lifer, and would readily end abortion, and the need for it, if it was my responsibility to do so. It is not. Nor is it yours, or anyone else’s. Abortion is a deeply personal issue, and the decision should be made, to support or reject it, by those individuals directly affected by each situation.