

## Welfare & The Pill – Part #2

June 18, 1964

**O**, the wrath that was heaped around my head last January when I dared suggest birth control pills be distributed to welfare recipients! And, on the suggestion of a local physician, too. The anonymous phone calls and the anonymous letters (mostly in anger) reminded me of a quotation from some time or other, “Not one man in ten dares say what he thinks; not one man in ten thousand dares put it in print and sign his name!”

In less than one week after making that suggestion, Associated Press came out with a story to the effect that there is a slowly, but steadily, developing trend in the United States to provide birth control services to welfare recipients at public expense. In the state’s May primary election, one gubernatorial candidate came out in support of the pills. Also, in May, Kanawha county government leaders, physicians and ministers overwhelmingly came out in favor of the birth control pill clinics which the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department plans to set up this summer as a means of fighting poverty. Just last week, the Methodist Conference went on record in favor of birth control clinics and the W. Va. Synod of the Presbyterian church recommended last Tuesday that the state supply birth control materials and information to welfare recipients on a voluntary basis.

For many years, birth control assistance has been available through the health departments of seven Southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. New York has recently become the 11th state to adopt such a program. The District of Columbia soon will follow suit. I’d say these examples of support are top arguments for the adoption of birth control pills for West Virginia welfare recipients. As the Presbyterian put it, the proposal would provide “a morally sound program of letting every child born in a family be a wanted child.” A woman who gives birth while receiving welfare assistance not only adds one more person to the relief rolls, but also contributes to conditions slowing her family’s return to self-sufficiency. It might be wise to remind you one more time that federal, state and local welfare now costs us \$40 billion a year which is \$4,700 for each of the 9.3 million families the government estimates are in need. President Johnson would add \$300 million to welfare programs or a little over \$30 per family. If we still have poverty in this country, it is not because we have been niggardly. If \$4,700 per family won’t solve the problem, \$30 more is not likely to! Birth Control pills might.