

Hugh Hefner and His True Legacy

Legacy has been defined as “something handed down from one generation to the next.” In this context, it is common to speak of a person’s “contribution to culture.” Doubtlessly, every person who lives an average life span contributes something (either positive or negative) “to culture.” The subject of this article (Hugh Hefner) certainly made his “contribution to culture,” but no spiritually minded person should envy his legacy, or his “contribution to culture!”

The Friday, Sept. 29, 2017 issue of the **Tampa Bay Times** contained an article about Hugh Hefner, who died at “the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles” on Wednesday, Sept. 27 at age 91. The article was entitled “A playboy for all seasons,” which was immediately followed by these words: “His culture-changing influence about sex stretched to Tampa Bay.” We might further add that thanks (?) to the sordid magazine he published, “His culture-changing influence about sex stretched” around the world — not just “to Tampa Bay,” which would be bad enough if it had been limited “to Tampa Bay!”

Reportedly, Hefner began publishing **Playboy** Magazine in 1953, which one writer stated conveyed the notion that “women exist for man’s pleasure,” and which served as “a vocal advocate for sexual liberation.” Thankfully, my information is second hand, for I never subscribed to Playboy, but like millions of others I saw copies of that magazine at countless check-out counters of otherwise respectable grocery stores. One did not have to go further than the front cover page to know what the magazine was all about. Professor Benjamin DeMott of Amherst College described Playboy’s philosophy in these words, “the whole man is reduced to his body parts.” Hefner has been described as “a vocal advocate for free speech, civil rights, and sexual liberation.” Well before the 1973 infamous Wade V Roe decision legalizing abortion, Hugh Hefner was an open advocate for abortion rights, and it is entirely conceivable that he influenced the Supreme Court decision that a woman’s “rights” include the decision to kill the living baby she is carrying in her womb. One writer described the culture, or legacy Hefner helped create as that of “emptying kids from parents and husbands from wives...” His legacy was that of addicting millions of men to pornography, and another writer well stated that “to see a man addicted to porn is to watch character formation in reverse.”

Hefner was described as “a vocal advocate for sexual liberation,” but “enslavement” is a more correct term. His influence led to the enslavement of millions of men to porn, and his unspoken philosophy that “women exist for man’s pleasure” leads to the exploitation of women, not their liberation. Whether or not he recognized the results of his actions, it is evident that he exploited women for professional and financial gain. It is little wonder therefore that Hefner has been variously described as “an abuser,” a “world class creep,” and “America’s most famous dirty old man.”

A **National Review** writer correctly stated that “the bitter fruit of Hefner’s life has helped poison American families.” This is what happens when men become addicted to porn, and Hefner’s Playboy publication contribution to the porn addiction of millions of men. I fully agree with these words of another commentator on Hefner’s life — “how

many men have grown to hate themselves for their psychological dependence on the saddest of habits” — referring to one’s addiction to porn.

Hefner claimed to have slept with over 1,000 women. He was a professional pornographer, one who profited “from objectifying women,” and not surprisingly his burial site is right next to that of Marilyn Monroe, “the woman who helped him launch Playboy Magazine.” No doubt, in life he was a millionaire many times over, but he has left it all behind, and now we have every reason to believe his soul is in the same place in the hadean realm as that of the “*certain rich man*” so vividly described in Luke 16:19-31. Hefner reveled in his “Playboy mansion,” but “mansion” is hardly the word to describe what the Bible would suggest as being the current location of his soul!

Hugh Hefner’s “legacy” is rotten to the core. However, Playboy Magazine could have never been launched were it not for the countless people (men especially) who chose to purchase, read, and revel in its filthy contents. So while we are speaking disparagingly of the culture- defiling legacy of Hefner’s life, let us not forget Paul’s inspired statement in Rom. 1:32, when after vividly describing the filthy conduct of the Gentile world, he then said, “*Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve (“have pleasure in them,” KJV) of those who practice them.*” Those who took “*pleasure*” in Hefner’s publication, and voiced their approval of the same by purchasing his magazine, are not without guilt. Either knowingly, or unknowingly, they assisted Hefner in his exploitation of women, and in his culture-changing influence, which has contributed to millions of aborted babies, unscriptural divorces, deserted children, broken hearts, broken lives, abused women, and lost souls. For the record, let it be noted that this writer found no pleasure in writing this article, for the fact is that Hefner’s soul was as valuable in the eyes of God as yours or mine, and if we strive to be like God, we will “*have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,*” Ezek.33:11. To the contrary, we should strive diligently to share with them the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, Rom. 1:16. Just think of what might have been Hugh Hefner’s legacy **if** someone had shared the gospel of Christ with him!

*** — B. Witherington