

LifeDate

A quarterly journal of
life issue news and commentary
from National Lutherans For Life



Fall 2006

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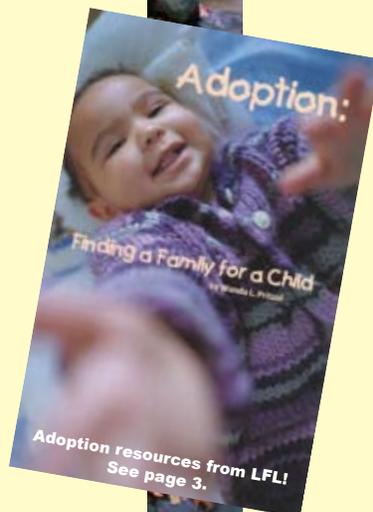
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Life Thoughts in the Church Year



Blessed to Be a Blessing

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb
Executive Director, Lutherans For Life

God blessed Abram—**“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you”**—to be a blessing, **“I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing”** (Genesis 12:2). “Blessed to be a blessing”—we use this pleasant-sounding phrase in a variety of settings. Recently a couple of children helped me understand its meaning a little more deeply.

Rob Bandy helped me. Rob is now with Jesus, but his mother talked about him at a plenary session during our national conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Rob came into this world with a rare genetic disorder that resulted in a multitude of severe mental and physical problems. (You can read more about Rob in the article his mother wrote on pages 12-13.)

Jamie Lamb helped me. I listened to Roberta with granddaughter Jamie asleep in my arms. She looked so beautiful. I remember thinking what a blessing it was that she wasn’t born with all the problems Rob had to deal with. But then Roberta talked about what a blessing Rob was because he had all those problems! God taught me some things through Rob and Jamie.



Rob Bandy with his mother Roberta; Jamie Lamb with Grandpa.



Blessings come from God. I guess we all understand that. Through Rob and Jamie, God made clearer to me that He also *defines* blessings. God decides what blessings are. We associate blessings with “good” things—the blessings of good health or a good marriage or a good job. But God doesn’t think that way. The great preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, once said, “The greatest earthly blessing that God can give to us is our health, with the exception of sickness.” Sometimes something “bad” happens, but God uses it as a blessing. I remember getting sick once when I was very, very busy. I thought, “God, I don’t need this now.” But the sickness made me slow down and rest which turned out to be a real blessing!

God blessed Abram. He blessed him with specific blessings and for a specific purpose. Through His lineage, Jesus, the Savior of the world, would come. God blessed Rob and Jamie with their unique blessings for their unique purposes. Rob was blessed to allow people to serve their Savior as they served him. Now his purpose according to God’s plan is

fulfilled. He abides in Heaven. Jamie’s purpose still unfolds as the Spirit of Jesus given in her baptism continues to bless. God’s blessings upon these children have nothing to do with “good” or “bad.” His blessing has to do with what was and what is best for His plan for their lives. God is the one who blesses and who decides what blessings are.

Being a blessing also comes from God. Abram was a blessing because of what God did through him as part of His plan of salvation. You may recall that God often had to work *in spite* of Abram! But it doesn’t matter how well we “get it” or how we look or how smart we are or whether we can talk or walk. God makes us a blessing to others. That’s why Rob was a blessing. God was at work in Rob’s life through his smiles and hugs and even in all the “bad” things that happened. His life is a witness to the power of God in Christ. God works in Jamie’s life and makes her a blessing. She is a blessing to my wife and me. She is a blessing to the thousands across the country whom I have “forced” to view her pictures in my PowerPoint™ presentations! The future will be full of opportunities in which God will be at work using Jamie as one of His many blessing dispensers.

A society that forgets God and the love He reveals in Christ loses this perspective entirely. They do not see blessings; they see “products of conception.” They see “burdens” and “mistakes” and no “quality” of life. God does not look at things this way. God does not see a “perfect child” or an “imperfect child.” God sees someone to bless and through whom He can be a blessing. Who do you see?

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A Real Family – A Tribute to Jennifer

by Diane E. Schroeder
President, National Lutherans For Life

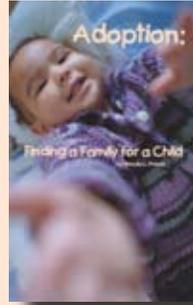
Adoption is not well understood in our culture. After we began adopting our children, I was always amazed at the people who would remark, “Someday maybe you’ll have your own children.” Somehow there seemed to be a dividing line between adopted families and biological families. Those that came together through adoption were not “real” families; the only “real” ones were those that had a genetic component.

What makes a family? Is it that you look like Uncle Joe or sing like Aunt Mary? Are you a “chip off the old block?” My first cousin, Jennifer, daughter of my Uncle Leif, came into our family through adoption. A total of three children are members of that family: two brothers (biological) and Jennifer (adopted). One brother moved away to another part of the state leaving Jennifer and her other brother and his wife to care for my aunt and uncle as they began to age. Then my uncle had a brain bleed and became incapacitated, eventually becoming unable to care for himself. Jennifer’s other brother was unable to handle the stress. He fled with his wife and three children to Arizona, leaving Jennifer alone to care for their father and mother. For several years, everyday, before and after her job, Jennifer would go to their house, bathe and toilet my uncle, and make sure he was cared for and comfortable. Jennifer would make sure that her parents were present at family gatherings, loading them into her car, along with my uncle’s wheel chair. When her father was dying, Jennifer whispered she would never leave him. Jennifer has taught me what it really means to be a family in difficult situations. To be *For Life* when it really gets tough!

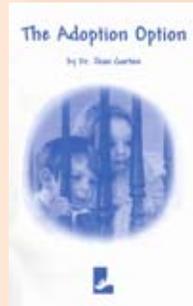
So what forms a “real” family? Unconditional love, servanthood, faithfulness, selflessness; these are the marks of a “real” family. These bonds are not created through any genetic obligation, but rather through caring for and loving each other through both good times and difficult situations. So whether you are part of a biological, adoptive, or blended family, care for each other as Christ cares for you. Through His death on the cross you have become part of God’s family and have been given equal status with Christ as the Father’s adopted children.

“For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves” Ephesians 1:4-6 NIV.

Adoption Resources from LFL!



Adoption: Finding a Family for a Child – In this booklet, Wanda L. Pritzel, Director of Operations for Lutheran Family Service of Iowa, explores the available adoption opportunities including: adopting an older child; adopting internationally; adopting an infant; adopting an embryo. She also discusses adoption resources and includes a list of “What Can We Do?” suggestions. Item 503B. **\$0.25 ea.**



The Adoption Option – Dr. Jean Garton explores the often forgotten option of adoption. “Adoption isn’t easy . . . Yet, [compared with] the other options—aborting the child or raising the child as a single parent—adoption is the most child-centered. It is a healthy, realistic, and sensible choice for all the parties involved.” Item 500B. **\$1.00 ea.**



The Servanthood of Adoption – Adoption is not always seen in a good light. The perception is that adoption is abandonment, a bad choice that is not very loving. There is a need to shed some good light on adoption by looking at adoption in the light of Biblical servanthood. Item 501T. **\$0.25 ea.**

Our Mission . . . To witness to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God. LFL has 15 state federations, 148 local chapters, and 167 Life Ministry Coordinators in the United States.

Our Vision . . . To be a powerful, Biblical, pro-life voice and resource to Lutherans and, through them, transform society.

Our Philosophy . . . Lutherans For Life believes that the Church is compelled by God’s Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless. The crisis of our times is the repudiation of Biblical truth manifested in the wanton destruction of innocent human life through legalized abortion-on-demand and the growing threat to the lives of others through legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia. Therefore, as Lutherans For Life, we will strive to give witness, from a Biblical perspective, to the Church and society on these and other related issues such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living.

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A Teen's Desperate Call for Help

by Grace Kern,
Director of Word of Hope, 888-217-8679

They call our hotline (888-217-8679) desperately looking for help. "My friend told me to call you before I go for an abortion. Can you help? I am really scared of what my parents will say. They have enough problems already without this. It will kill them if they find out I am pregnant."

We receive a few hundred calls a month; one-third are pregnancy related, and many are from teenagers. When faced with an unplanned pregnancy, teens need to realize that the decisions they make are permanent and will affect them for the rest of their lives. Abortion may seem like the only choice, and the easiest way out, but abortion is permanent. There is no bringing back a dead baby.

Rachel (not her real name) was 16 when she became pregnant. Too embarrassed and afraid to go to her parents, she turned to her high school guidance counselor for advice. She wrote this letter from a correctional facility:

Dear Grace,

My dad is a Pastor and we are a very religious family. When I became pregnant I didn't want to disappoint my parents or bring shame to our family. I love and care about them so much. Instead, I went to my school counselor. He was very sympathetic and understanding. He said there was no need to worry my family about my pregnancy. He also explained how hard having a child would be on me and that I wouldn't be able to do what I wanted to do at school. I was an A student and involved in basketball, hoping to get a scholarship for college. He said that the child would suffer because I was much too young to be a parent. He said the best thing for me to do was to abort the fetus so no one would be hurt. There was no suggestion of talking to my parents, or about carrying the baby to term, or even to consider adoption.

I felt as though I had no other choice. I did not care about the boy I was with. I really didn't even know him very well. It was my first time having sex and never thought I could get pregnant. I felt so confused about having an abortion, but I'd think back to what the school counselor had told me, and it seemed he was right. I just didn't want anyone to know what I did. Now, I still can't believe what I did. I know God must be angry with me because I have done a horrible thing. When I hear that people get the

death sentence for murder I think I should be right in line with them getting the same punishment. I sit here in my cell wondering how this all happened. I have one more year here but in my heart I know I deserve more. Grace can you help me? Someone said you help people like me. Will you write to me?

Thanks, Rachel

For five years after the abortion, Rachel was on a destructive path as her parents watched helplessly not knowing what was wrong with her or how to help. Rachel's traumatic reaction to her abortion experience included suicide attempts, alcoholism, drugs, and finally an arrest and conviction for drug dealing.

Sadly, Rachel's story is not unique. In the U.S., one out of every three abortion patients is a teenager—for whom the possibility of developing psychological and emotional problems after an abortion is substantially higher than for more mature women. Teens are more likely to experience intense feelings of guilt, depression, and isolation. This major, traumatic, experience occurs at a time when their defense mechanisms are not fully developed, which leaves them more susceptible to events and circumstances that can profoundly damage their view of the world, other people, and themselves.

In addition, a secret abortion disrupts family relationships. To protect their secret, teenagers try to hide feelings of depression, sadness, and even thoughts of suicide that might otherwise alert their parents to the problem. If they cannot repress these feelings, they may be disguised with more lies or transformed into anger and rebellion. This need for secrecy accentuates their feelings of shame and will often lead to withdrawal from family and into drugs, alcohol, and destructive relationships.

Kept in the dark, with no way to understand their child's disturbed behavior, parents are likely to become increasingly frustrated. In turn, parents are likely to fuel the distrust or rebellious nature of the teen because they "simply don't understand" what he or she is going through.

Along with the facts about abstinence, parenting, adoption, and abortion, it is important for parents to talk with their teens before a crisis. Teens need to know there is nothing they could ever do that could not be handled with God's help.

It is also important to know how your child's school handles situations like this as some school counselors and other officials may direct teens into an unwanted abortion.

Finally, our young people need to clearly hear the Gospel preached with passion. They know that God has claimed them in Christ, who loved them enough to suffer and die on the cross, so that they may have eternal life.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" Romans 8:1 NIV.

Adoption: FAQs

by Janette Clausen, LBSW, Director of Pregnancy Counseling and Adoptions, Lutheran Family Service of Iowa www.lfsiowa.org

A conversation about adoption may evoke a wide variety of strong feelings—a mix of happiness and joy along with pain, fear and grief. Through this format of questions and answers, I hope to give insight and increase understanding of the adoption process, which joins families together forever!

What is the Biblical basis for adoption?

Adoption is a concept that flows naturally out of our Christian beliefs and teachings. In the Old Testament, there are over 40 references to orphans or “fatherless,” and the importance of caring for them. Several New Testament teachings refer directly to the concept of adoption (i.e. Galatians 4:4-7). Adoption is an intentional act of God whereby He makes us members of His family, granting us all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of that relationship. We were born into sin and shame, but God claims us as His adopted children, calls us His own, cares for us, and gives us what we need to thrive. God’s love for us through our “adoption” into His family is reflected when birthparents choose to love their child so much that they are willing to put aside their own needs, and intentionally choose parents for him/her who are ready to provide the kind of life they want for their child, but are, for whatever reason, not in a position to provide. The adopting parents fully accept a child into their family through another act of love and grace, giving the child their unconditional love, time, nurture, and providing for all of the material needs of the child.

Are adopted children “loved less”?

Adoptive parents who have both biological and adoptive children indicate they love their child by adoption no less, and in the same way. Likewise, adopted children bond with their adoptive families, and with unconditional love, acceptance, and loving discipline, they flourish regardless of the genetic differences. Adopted children may experience regret that they are not genetically connected to adoptive parents, and adoptive parents may experience grief from time to time that the adopted child did not come from them genetically. Healthy families and strong attachment in parent-child relationships have more to do with emotional chemistry than biology.

Do adopted children become “problem children”?

While there are no guarantees for any parents or children, the odds are approximately the same for children whether born or adopted into their families. Challenges in parenting can come into any family, both by birth and by adoption.

Can birth parents “reclaim” their child?

The media has tended to sensationalize the few situations where this has occurred. These situations are typically the result of adoption laws not being followed, and many states’ laws have changed in the past decades to enable the child’s permanency with adoptive parents.

What fears do young women have about adoption?

- A fear that the child will grow up resentful about being adopted.
- A fear of not being able to “let go.”
- A fear that they will never see or hear anything about their child after an adoption.
- A fear that family members and/or friends may reject them for choosing adoption over parenting.

Careful planning and open communication between the birth and adopting families, along with mutually shared information and increasing trust, helps greatly to calm this fear for young women over time.

It is important for birthparents to focus on all the reasons they are planning an adoption, including the goals they have for their child and their own clear personal goals; or when the natural feelings of attachment and emotional connection threaten to overwhelm the decision-making process.

Openness in adoption is an option for many, where ongoing communication between the adopting family, the child, and birth family is carefully crafted during the pre-placement planning.

Fear of rejection is usually rooted in a lack of information or over-generalization. A counselor’s responsibility is to listen for these fears and balance them with facts and information, including the high success rate of healthy adoptions.

What about the birthfather?

By law, the rights of the birthfather are the same as the rights of the birthmother. For there to be an adoption, there must be a legal termination of the parental rights of both birthparents. If a birthfather is unknown or cannot be located, there are special provisions that must be followed to ensure that “diligent search” is conducted in order that his rights to parent the child are protected. The birthfather’s position in an adoption is very important. If the birthparents disagree about adoption, the concerns would be dealt with in court, with a judge making the ultimate decision.



What about the Lutheran Church and adoption?

Beginning in the late 1800's and throughout the early to mid 1900's, orphanages housed many children whose parents were presumed deceased from hunger and war. Lutheran churches throughout the country were leaders in building and managing orphanages for children in need, and many children were joined with adopting families through these homes. Today, a large number of our Lutheran service organizations claim their beginnings as a Lutheran orphanage. Orphan trains moved homeless children, from the crowded and unhealthy streets of the New England cities, out to the Midwest and western states where families were available to adopt them. The phrase "put up for adoption" which some still use today is rooted in this history, as children from the orphan trains were literally "put up" on a platform so potential families could see them and consider their adoption.

Why do some people seem to consider abortion as a preferred alternative to adoption? (i.e. "I could never give up my baby for adoption," yet the same person can somehow justify abortion.)

When women consider abortion over adoption for an unplanned pregnancy, they are most likely making an assumption that there is less emotional pain involved with having an abortion. They may feel they would not bond with an embryo or fetus, but in carrying the baby to term and giving birth, there would be an emotional bond. They may view abortion as a means of merely terminating an untimely pregnancy; in making an adoption plan, they view it as giving up a beautiful baby after giving it life. Recognizing the facts of a developing embryo and unborn child may help her understand that there is a new human being (a little boy or little girl) from the moment of conception.

When Lutherans For Life focused on adoption for Life Sunday a few years ago, we heard feedback that a congregation did not want to promote adoption as it would interfere with their pregnancy counseling in which they encouraged the moms to keep the baby. Was this a valid reason not to promote adoption?

A birthparent could choose adoption for the wrong reasons, and can also chose to parent for the wrong reasons. There are many parents who are parents just because they found themselves in pregnancy, not because they are committed to parenting, or are prepared to offer their best as a parent.

At Lutheran Family Service of Iowa, we believe we cannot "steer" the client into a specific way of thinking, but

can enable them to make a competent choice by thoroughly exploring both parenting and adoption as viable options. Birthparents need to make the best decision possible based on their own unique thoughts, feelings, and circumstances—not guilt or pressure.

A ministry to single young moms may well feel they cannot effectively offer both options, but hopefully they would carefully listen to the reasons a birthparent may be concerned about premature or forced parenting, and offer referral and networking with adoption agencies to provide information and services to birthparents who want to consider adoption as a possible way forward.

What about singles adopting?

We certainly recognize and value the unique and important roles that both a mother and a father play in the life of a child. We also recognize the importance of a permanent and loving home for a child versus years of uncertainty in foster care. If we weigh the consequences of a child not having a loving permanent home, we can only conclude that Christian single parents may well "fit the bill" for many children. Single parents who have a strong support system and positive role models of the opposite sex can provide stable, loving homes for an adopted child. However, many older children who have experienced years of traumatic abuse from their families of origin would be best suited to a family with both a mom and a dad who have had parenting experience and have the maturity to manage challenging behaviors.

What age group of children is most in need of adoption? Numbers?

Today in the United States, over 500,000 children are in foster care, and over 125,000 of these children are waiting for adoptive families. More than half are eight years old or older, and some have special emotional needs. Some are part of a sibling group who need to stay together. Most are children who have lived the early part of their childhood in chaotic and difficult situations. These children are legally free to be adopted, having had their legal ties to their birth families terminated. The only reason they are still in foster care is that no family or individual has come forward to adopt them.

What about the financial cost of adoption? Is financial assistance available?

It is helpful if adoptive families understand what they are paying for and to explore what help might be available. When a family pays a domestic adoption fee, they are paying for the counseling services necessary to support the birthparents to make a decision between parenting and adoption, and to



follow through on a healthy adoption experience if adoption is chosen. Fees related to the legal process of terminating parental rights for the birth mom and birth dad are also usually included. These fees (and what they cover) vary greatly from agency to agency. When families pay an international adoption fee, the costs are usually higher and are related to legal fees, dossier (required documentation and paperwork) preparation, translation fees, orphanage needs, and travel costs.

There are resources to offset adoption costs, including tax credits, employer benefits, and lower interest loans. When families adopt children currently waiting in the U.S. foster care system, the cost can be minimal, as the state may provide full coverage of legal fees, and may even establish an ongoing subsidy based on the child's needs.

What should one look for when choosing an agency to help with adoption?

When a prospective adoptive family is pursuing an adoption, they will likely struggle with feeling vulnerable. Prospective adoptive parents would benefit from choosing an agency they trust and feel comfortable with. Adoptive prospects should understand and agree with the agency adoption policies and procedures. Before committing to an agency, they should ask questions about the fees and payment procedure, the agency's philosophy on adoption and care for birth parents, and availability of agency staff support through the years if open adoption is considered. It is also always good to talk to other families that have adopted through the agency.



Do you find most Lutheran congregations support the promotion of adoption?

There is bit of a double standard regarding adoption that runs through our society which can also be seen in our Lutheran congregations. That is that adoption is celebrated as "wonderful" for the adopting couple, while the birthparents typically struggle with a shaming societal message of "how could you do this?" In a healthy adoption, there is gratitude and honor of the role each of the members of the adoption triad (adoptee, birthparent, and adoptive parent) plays. When parishioners take the time to realize and understand the complexities of an adoption situation, they are helping the whole adoption cause in society, honoring each person involved as an individual with unique thoughts, feelings, and needs.

Adoption is both complex and beautiful. It involves loss, letting go of what was supposed to be, and resolution of these losses leading to healthy new attachments and valued life-long relationships. It has been said that adoption is rarely a "first choice" for any of the parties involved. However, because

it is not the "first choice" does not mean it is second best! Adoption can be a beautiful solution for a child who needs a stable, loving home; for birthparents who want the best for their child which they are not able to provide; and for adopting parents who are ready in every way to parent but are unable to give birth to a child.

It is true that God can take what seems like the worst of all circumstances and turn them into the best. A healthy adoption is a shining example of this miracle!

(Lutherans For Life has a number of adoption resources— see page 3. For more, go to: www.lutheransforlife.org.)

New "Get Real" Web Site Offers Pregnancy Education, Support

A few taps on the computer keyboard will lead teens and young adults to a new resource that offers pregnancy education and support. "Get Real with Yourself" is the theme of the program designed to direct young people to a web site (www.getrealwithyourself.com) that debuted this summer, offering what sponsors call a variety of "positive choices for a healthy pregnancy, birth, and outcome."

"There's a huge need to provide young people with information in a risk-free environment they are comfortable with," said Rev. Alan Erdman, president and chief executive officer of Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri (LFCS), which developed the program in partnership with Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) World Relief/Human Care. "The web site is a way the church can let young people know that we very much care about them and their situation and that there are positive choices they can consider for a healthy pregnancy, birth, and outcome."

The web site offers information on pregnancy, parenting, and adoption. It also features a toll-free, 24-hour hot line staffed by professionally trained LFCS social workers.

(LCMS press release, 7/18)

**Abortion Statistics for the United States:
1,287,000 abortions per year.
3,526 abortions per day.
147 abortions per hour.
1 abortion every 24 seconds.**

Abortions from 1973-2005 (using the 2003 estimate for 2004 and 2005): 45,888,300.

Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute.

“First, Do No Harm”

by Jennifer Lahl, national director of the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network in Oakland, California

Last October I wrote of the alleged killing of patients in Memorial Hospital down in New Orleans. Patients, who were too sick to be transported and were stranded in the hospital because of the dire situation post-hurricane Katrina, had been given lethal doses of morphine and Versed.

The cocktail combination was used to suppress respiration and sedate the patient to decrease their level of consciousness because of the anxiety caused from the deprivation of oxygen—“air hunger” it is called.

Charles C. Foti, Attorney General for Louisiana, called for a full investigation into the deaths of the patients left in the hospital after rumors starting flying that the patients had been euthanized versus dying of natural causes.

In late July, the Attorney General’s office charged Dr. Anna Pou and two nurses, Cheri Landry and Lori Budo, with second-degree murder.

A spokesperson for the Attorney General was clear that there was nothing merciful about the killing that occurred that day in Memorial Hospital.

Three days after the hurricane hit, it is reported that Dr. Pou told a nurse executive that patients who were unable to be evacuated would be given a lethal dose. The disaster plan was to kill those who were too sick to be evacuated.

The “they are going to die anyway” philosophy is so deeply rooted into the moral fabric of many that this seemed the solution to the dilemma at hand.

We see this attitude toward the weak and vulnerable in many of the bioethics issues. Physician-assisted suicide—they are going to die anyway, isn’t it compassionate to help them end their life? Embryonic stem cells—they are going to die anyway, shouldn’t we use these embryos to find cures for others? Death row inmates—they are going to die anyway, shouldn’t we use them and harvest their organs? Oops—we Westerners haven’t slipped that far yet!

It is very eerie for me to revisit this piece. Mainly because last October, right after I first wrote about this story, I found myself stuck in the middle of Hurricane Wilma down in Cancun, Mexico. Wilma was actually a stronger hurricane than Katrina but didn’t have the after effects of the flooding associated with the broken levees.

I spent five days with over 300 people in a government-approved shelter, with rising temperatures, limited food supply, no water or power, and no signs of hope of rescue.

Compound that experience with a 20-year career as a nurse, where the thought of intentionally killing a patient goes against every grain in my body, I am sharply aware of the realities facing Dr. Pou and these two nurses and the dif-

icult challenges they faced as health care providers during a time of horrific disaster.

But I hope that this indictment serves as a reminder to hospitals and health care professionals as they annually go through the JCAHO accreditation process.

Disasters do happen. We must be prepared for them when they do. And killing our patients is never an appropriate response to their care.

I much prefer the old fashion style of heroism, where the captain goes down with the ship. Those whom we trust our very lives with have an obligation to first, do no harm. The ultimate in patient abandonment is to end their life in possibly their greatest hour of need.

(LifeNews.com, 7/31)

Gallup Poll: Americans Back Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, Other Polls Disagree

A recent poll conducted by the Gallup Organization finds that Americans back both euthanasia and assisted suicide. However, the Gallup questions were favorably disposed to the grisly practices and other polls show opposite results.

The latest poll shows Americans back euthanasia by a 69-27 percent margin, which is down six points from the last poll and shows a drop in euthanasia support following Terri Schiavo’s euthanasia death last year. Some 64 percent of those polled said they agreed with assisted suicide while 31 percent opposed it. Other polls show vastly different results from Gallup’s new survey. An August 2005 Pew Research survey found only 44 percent of people “Favor making it legal for doctors to assist in suicide.” In that poll, Americans opposed assisted suicide by a 48-44 percent margin. A May 2005 Gallup Poll found a close 49-42 percent split in favor of assisted suicide, an October 2005 Fox News poll finds just 48 percent of Americans back assisted suicide and a November 2004 CBS News survey determined that Americans were split 46-45 percent on the issue.

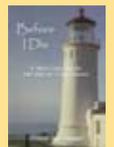
(LifeNews.com, 6/20)

End-of-Life Booklets

The Basics on Advance Directives: “Thy Will Be Done” – This booklet has basic information about Living Wills and other advance directives. By Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb. *Item 807B. \$0.25 each.*

Before I Die - A Practical Guide for End-of-Life Issues – Noted author and licensed marriage and family therapist, Elizabeth Skoglund, shares principles for the Christian at life’s end along with words of encouragement. *Item 809B. \$2.00 each.*

Ventilators, Feeding Tubes, and Other End-of-Life Questions – This booklet answers tough questions for individuals, families, and pastors. By Karen Rehder, M.D. and Linda Bartlett. *Item 800B. \$0.25 each.*



The Eliminators – Eugenics by Default

by Charles Colson

British medical researchers recently announced plans to use cutting-edge science to eliminate a condition my family is familiar with: autism. Actually, they are not “curing” autism or even making life better for autistic people. Their plan is to eliminate autism by eliminating autistic people.

There is no in utero test for autism as there is for Down syndrome . . . that testing, combined with abortion-on-demand, has made people with Down syndrome an endangered population. By some estimates, 90 percent of these people—who, if allowed to live, can live happy and healthy lives—are aborted.

In the absence of such a test for autism, researchers at University College Hospital London are settling for what they call a “close enough” solution. They have applied for permission to use pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD, to screen out male embryos in families with a history of autism.

Their “logic” is that since 90 percent of all autistic people are males, their testing would allow families with autistic children “to have a daughter free from the condition.” Of course, they would have also killed males who were not autistic. Talk about wholesale gender cleansing.

The critics are not convinced. Simone Aspis of the British Council of Disabled People drew the what-should-be-obvious inference: “Screening for autism would create a society where only perfection is valued.” In the brave new world of the researchers, it is reasonable to fear “that anyone who is different in any way will not be accepted.”

Here in the states, bioethicist Ben Mitchell said that “if unborn children are being eliminated for a genetic disposition to autism, no one is safe . . . Today autism, tomorrow intelligence below 70 I.Q., the next day male pattern baldness. When will this madness stop?”

The only way to avoid this is to understand that we have no business deciding “who should live and who should die.” And that’s exactly where proposals like this are leading us.

Once a disability is “diagnosed” in utero, women are subject to enormous pressures to have an abortion. According to a recent Business Week article, there’s even a name for women who refuse to have an abortion in these circum-



stances: “genetic outlaws.”

Despite all the rhetoric about “alleviating suffering,” the bottom line in targeting the disabled in utero is the bottom line. As Business Week puts it, “the social cost of accommodating [their] birth is increasingly being seen as exceeding [their] worth.”

Oh my! This utilitarian view of life inevitably leads us exactly where the Nazis were creating a master race. Can’t we see it?

My heart goes out to parents who are raising autistic children. I know what they face because my daughter is raising a 15-year-old autistic son. But I also know firsthand the joy and blessing these children can bring into our lives. The answer is not to play God and keep them from being born—rather we need to help them and their parents. That’s what “alleviating suffering” really means.

(From “Breakpoint,” 8/3/06, reprinted with permission of Prison Fellowship, www.breakpoint.org.)

“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’;
and there was light.” Genesis 1:3

Let There Be . . . and There Was

After millions (when I was in school) and now billions of years, totally by chance, everything we see came into being. Those who actually believe in evolution have a tremendous amount of faith in that theory. After all, the science of mathematics says that $0 + 0 = 0$. From somewhere, that first tiny molecule, that first “thing” had to come. How is it possible that something can evolve from nothing?

Thank God for His word, and this phrase—oft repeated in Genesis One—which again reminds us of the power of God and the power of His word. God said, “Let there be . . . and there was. It just came into existence—whole, complete, perfect. No tweaking or adjusting was needed after the thing was brought into being. There it was.

How often do we not wish our words carried similar power? Sure would save a lot of time writing sermons, and devotions. To be able to get up in the morning and say, “Let there be a series of six devotions on . . .” and there was. Or, “Let the dishes be done.” “Let the lawn be mowed.” “Let the garden be weeded.” Our words and our thoughts carry no such power or ability. Is it not foolish of us to suppose that our word or the word of humanity, is superior to that of God’s word?

God said, “Let there be . . . and there was.”

God still says, “Let there be” . . . and there is.

(E-mail devotion, 7/5/06, www.redeemerclc.org/devotional.html)

For a downloadable and reproducible bulletin insert (PDF) on the Missouri Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative go to:
www.lutheransforlife.org/Missouri_Initiative.htm.

New/updated—full color—resources from LFL!



Adoption: Finding a Family for a Child – Adoption. We think of it immediately when we hear of friends or family members who are experiencing infertility. What a wonderful solution! Yes, but it is so much more. Adoption is not just about finding a child for a family who can't have a child. Consider it the other way around: *adoption is about finding a family for a child who doesn't have a family.* Hundreds of thousands of children are waiting to be adopted. Consider the opportunity that exists for us to loudly proclaim our belief in the value of life by joining these children to permanent, loving families through adoption! In this booklet, Wanda L. Pritzel, Director of Operations for Lutheran Family Service of Iowa, explores the available adoption opportunities including: adopting an older child; adopting internationally; adopting an infant; adopting an embryo. She also discusses adoption resources and includes a list of "What Can We Do?" suggestions. *Item 503B. \$0.25 ea.*

What is Real Love? – Real love is God's love (1 Corinthians 13)! It is love we can discover through Christ and strive to put into practice in our relationships with others. Through His love, we can say, "I love you, wife, husband, boyfriend, girlfriend, mom, dad"—the way God does. *Item 603A. \$0.25 ea.*

Speak Up For Life - "Speak Up!" That's what Lutherans For Life encourages God's people to do! It is tragically true that too often the Church, as a whole, has failed to speak up For Life or has done so weakly. It is also especially disappointing since God Himself has never been silent when it comes to life. This booklet takes a look at life issues based on *Luther's Small Catechism*—and is sized to insert right into the catechism itself! Does the catechism have anything to say about life? Yes! *Item 212B. \$0.35 ea.*

Is Abortion Allowed in Cases of Rape or Incest? – Dr. Jean Garton, co-founder and President emeritus of Lutherans For Life, takes a look at abortion in cases of rape and incest through this brief study of 2 Kings 4:16. Section headings include *The Child of Rape, The Godless Act of Rape, Abortion vs. Love, Incest, and When Love Begins.* *Item 132T. \$0.25 ea.*

Tips for Teens On How to Say "No" – Topics include: making a commitment, things to avoid, planning ahead, dating someone with the same values, breaking off a relationship, waiting to date, dating someone your own age, and being friends first. *Item 602T. \$0.25 ea.*

More Power! For Men Only – "Within a man's grasp is an incredible amount of power." That power can be used for good or bad for a woman, children, or the family. "It's a choice." This brochure encourages men to seek God's power to build up rather than tear down. *Item 606T. \$0.25 ea.*

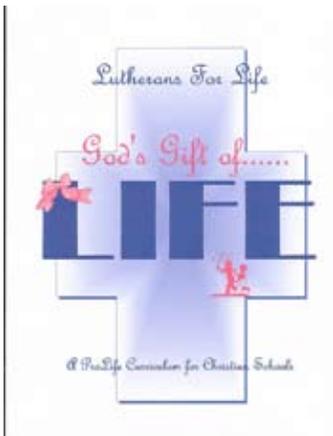


ORDERING INFORMATION - Payment Policy: Please **DO NOT PREPAY**. An invoice will be sent with each order. Postage and handling will be added to your total order. Please send payment after receiving your order and invoice. Orders may be placed online (by credit card), by mail, phone, fax, or e-mail. Orders are sent via USPS or UPS. For UPS delivery a street address is required.

Iowa Orders Only - Iowa orders will include sales tax.

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For Life Curricula



God's Gift of Life – A graded video and printed curriculum for elementary Lutheran schools (K-Grade 8). Neatly packaged in a three-ring binder, the packet includes a three-part video divided into separate presentations (PS/K, 1-3, 4-6) (each section is 5-7 minutes) plus four days of printed lesson plans and activities for K-Grade 8. Teacher materials and chapel ideas are included.

Item 700C. **\$25.00 ea.**

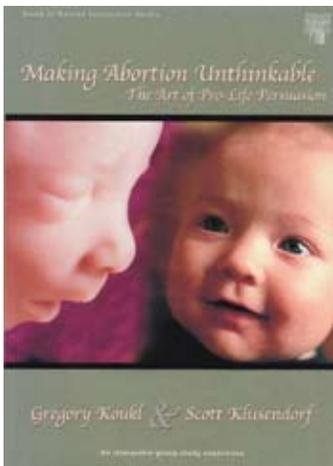
Note: This item will be shipped and billed separately from our Lutherans For Life of Michigan State Federation.



True to Life: A Curriculum for Christian Schools – For Pre-K through 6th grade. Using a Bible-based approach, life issues are taught in the light of God's Word. The materials are color-coded by grade for ease of use. Each grade has five lessons that

cover various life issues in age-appropriate ways. Teachers will find ideas that are positive and pro-active for teaching the sanctity of human life in an easy-to-use format.

Item 702C. **\$29.95 ea.**

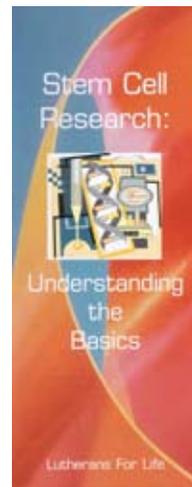


Making Abortion Unthinkable: The Art of Pro-Life Persuasion (Video & CD-ROM) with Gregory Koukl and Scott Klusendorf. This interactive resource, produced by Stand to Reason, is an engaging, easy-to-follow, well-reasoned, "plug and play" seminar with all you need to train a group in the art of pro-life persuasion. You get five one-hour interactive training segments on video plus comprehensive student and teacher manuals

in PDF format on CD-ROM. It includes discussion, role-playing, tactical tips, self-assessment and more—everything needed to equip your group to defend the pro-life position. The scientific and philosophical cases against abortion are covered thoroughly. You'll also learn how to answer the objections pro-abortionists use. Gregory Koukl was a well-received speaker at the 2003 National Lutherans For Life Conference.

Item 104AV. **\$49.95 ea.**

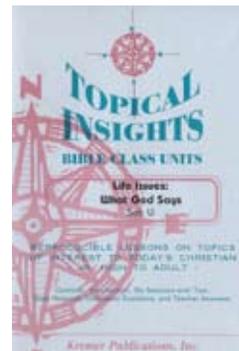
Stem Cell Research and Cloning Resources



Stem Cell Research: Understanding the Basics - It is important for the Christian to understand that God's Word does have something to say about embryonic stem cell research (ESCR). To understand how God's Word applies to this controversial issue, however, a basic understanding of the biology involved is necessary first. So welcome to Embryonic Stem Cell Biology 101! Item 1000T. **\$0.30 ea.**

Cloning: Understanding the Basics

The cloning of Dolly the sheep is old news. Now there is talk about cloning humans to "replace" a dead child or to provide body parts for transplant. There is even a cult that sees cloning as the means to eternal life. The vast majority of people are opposed to such cloning. But what about cloning human embryos to obtain stem cells in order to treat disease? Item 1001T. **\$0.30 ea.**



Life Issues: What God Says – Today's society is becoming more and more at odds with God when dealing with things as sacred as life itself. To many, life is a disposable commodity that can be done away with when it becomes unmanageable or an inconvenience. *Life Issues: What God Says* presents—in six sessions—to junior high and adults, useful information regarding many of the most pressing issues facing Christians today, along

with a healthy dose of Scripture to let us know in no uncertain terms just where God stands on each topic. The six sessions include: *A Look at Motive; What and When is Human Life; Life Protection Before Birth; Improving the Species: Genetic Engineering, Cloning, and Stem Cell research; Care Near the End of Life; Making a Difference*. Each session includes ample text, discussion questions, Bible research, and a detailed teacher guide. The entire course comes on a CD-ROM in PDF format making it easy to reproduce as many times as desired. (**Note:** It is NOT legal to purchase one copy and pass the CD on from church to church, etc.) Item 1005BS. **\$21.95 ea.**

A Life Not Like Any Other

On February 3, 1970, a child was born. He was unlike any other child born that day.

by Roberta Bandy

I can only imagine the many times each of us has looked with awe at a new life or held one in our arms. Seemingly perfectly formed, we look with wonder and dream of all the possibilities! Many new parents talk about counting the fingers and toes—carefully checking all the outward signs of normalcy. With all accounted for, the parent breathes a sigh of relief—and hopefully gives thanks.

But there are other parents whose only sigh is that which comes after many tears. What they see on the outside is *not* normal and for them there is *no* immediate relief—and sadly many never learn to give thanks.

This is the story of such a life.

On February 3, 1970, a child was born. He was unlike any other child born that day. It wasn't the look of his face or his size, though both of these were different from the norm. It was the very essence of his being—his chromosomes were malformed. Only five other children at that time had been identified with this rare condition. According to doctors, the chances of having such a child were one in five million.

Shortly after conception he began to develop differently from others. His differences were rare indeed. After a normal beginning, his 21st chromosome became affected missing a piece of crucial information for future normal development. He was born blind in his right eye. None of his bones were aligned properly with his joints. His head was held in place only by muscle and tendon. Doctor's predicted slow growth, severe mental retardation and a short life expectancy—their prediction was that he would live to his early teens—at best.

In the years that followed his birth he had grand mal seizures, chronic upper respiratory infections, scoliosis, and kyphosis of the spine. In the eyes of the world he was a "mistake" of nature, an accident. He was viewed by many doctors as defective because they would never be able to fix what in their eyes was wrong with him; others saw him only as a problem for society.

We saw him as our son. His name was Rob. He was our first-born, a child who was "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God and who was in need of love and care, not unlike any other child born that day. He loved flowers, cats, Grover from

Sesame Street, music, playing in water, church, hugs, and dancing. He lived for 29 years, twice his life expectancy. He was eventually the brother of four siblings.

Rob changed all of our lives because of his courage, his love of life, his smile, his determination, his love of music, and his victory over his earthly limitations. He opened our eyes to fully see the ordinary as extraordinary. We came to appreciate that eyes that see, tongues that speak, and limbs that move are amazing gifts. Those of us who shared Rob's life valued the fullness of our lives while measuring our talents against *his* gifts. He strengthened our faith and challenged us to think outside the worldview we had for our lives. The world would lure us toward beauty, power, and intelligence. Having none of these, Rob's life would show us the shallowness of these distractions and lead us to deep things: duty, humility, self-sacrifice, grace, and peace.

How, you might ask, could one so limited do this? If I were writing an earthly resume of Rob's accomplishments I would have to say that he was included in numerous medical genetics research studies. His case study was included in a genetic conference in Paris in 1976. He was the subject of two television documentaries. He was included in a national film seen by President Ford and his advisor on mental retardation. People pursuing higher degrees wrote numerous special education papers about him. Safety measures were increased after his near-drowning accident at his school. Engineers developing artificial language equipment used Rob's shortcomings to better understand and create resources that benefited others with language barriers (though Rob never

benefited himself). His needs motivated us as his parents to become involved in legislative affairs that would benefit thousands of children and their families. He was the subject of an essay that his sister wrote to get into the National Honor Society. In it she wrote,

"Only by gaining an understanding of my brother, could I appreciate how important loyalty is in a relationship. If I had not remained loyal to him and had judged him on a superficial level, I never would have gotten to know such a giving, loving, and unselfish person. He has taught me more than anyone else ever could about looking deeper than the surface and enjoying everything for what it has to offer. By facing the stares of the astonished, dealing with the mockery of 'his kind,' and ignoring the comments not meant to be heard, I have learned what true loyalty is."



What more would any of us hope to be said of our own lives?

The influence of Rob's life has continued since his death. Through the book about his life, *The Dance Goes On*, thousands have been inspired by the use God made of his life. Publishing of the book brought newspaper articles, radio spots, speaking invitations, and a national television program aired on many TV stations last October. All this because of one life and the choices made to value it.

We live in a world that thinks these accomplishments have no worth, or at best are mere rationalizations. We live in a world that does not value what author Christopher de Vinck calls the "nobility of suffering."¹ After burying two infants in three years who were born with genetic disorders, mother and author Nancy Guthrie writes, "The world tells us to run from suffering, to avoid it at all costs, to cry out to heaven to take it away. Few of us would choose to suffer. Yet when we know that God has allowed suffering into our lives for a purpose, we can embrace it instead of running from it, and we can seek God in the midst of suffering."²

Despite these words of great wisdom we live in a world that would not think twice about erasing such a life *before* giving it the opportunity to make *any* contributions. Even many who believe the termination of a normal fetus is wrong, question the choice to continue the pregnancy of an abnormal one. We live in a world that trusts man's wisdom over God's.

During Rob's lifetime, many children like him were aborted, starved to death, and denied routine medical treatment because they were conceived or born different. Shortly after Rob's birth a national story emerged. A Down syndrome child was denied routine medical treatment. The girl died of starvation. Years later an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* argued "if the life of a Down syndrome baby can be ended prenatal, why should it not be ended neonatally (just after birth)? The only difference between the fetus and the infant is that the infant breathes with its lungs."³

Professors of Ethics, John Harris and Peter Singer, share this opinion. Asked what moral status he accorded an embryo, Harris responded by endorsing infanticide in cases where a child has a genetic disorder that remained undetected during pregnancy and suggested there's no moral difference between aborting an unborn baby and killing an infant once it's born.⁴ He went on to say, "People who think there is a difference between infanticide and late abortion have to ask the question: What has happened to the fetus in the time it takes to pass down the birth canal and into the world which changes

its moral status? I don't think anything has happened in that time."⁵ In Charles Colson's book *The Good Life*, this opinion is shared by Singer who "advocates infanticide for children born with defects."⁶ Singer minces no words: "All I say about severely disabled babies is that when life is so miserable that it's not worth living, then it is permissible to give it a lethal injection."⁷ He rhetorically asks, "Why limit the killing to the womb?" As if to answer his own question he says, "Infanticide . . . should not be ruled out any more than abortion."⁸

Pearl Buck, who was herself the mother of a handicapped child, writes, ". . . who dares to begin the process of elimination? For death is the least of the evil. The damage is done to the killer, not the killed. For those who kill harden their hearts not only to the killed but to life itself."⁹

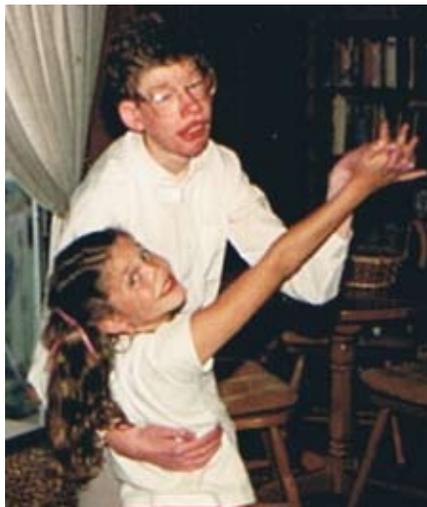
What do we say to such people? I believe we must use all of our abilities to be a voice for those who have none. I believe that each life has hope, meaning, and purpose. Each life is designed by God. Scripture reminds us of God's love, "**For I have redeemed you**" (Isaiah 43:1); "**I have called you by name**" (Isaiah 43:1); "**You were bought with a price**" (1 Corinthians 6:20). These words are true not just for those who were formed "normal" on the outside but are words for all of God's creation.

We must never lose the wonder of *all* of God's creation for "our inmost being was knit together in our mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). We are all "**fearfully and wonderfully made**" (Psalm 139:14). We were "**woven together**" (Psalm 139:15) and God's eyes saw our unformed bodies (Psalm 139:16). All our days were written in His book "**before one of them came to be**" (Psalm 139:16). "**Before I was born the Lord called me**" (Isaiah 49:1 *NIV*).

My hope is that each of us will be able to defend those who have no voice of their own, that we will embrace those who are less acceptable in the world's eyes and in the process that each of us will be drawn closer to our Lord and Savior.

(Roberta Bandy is a preschool teacher, devoted mom, and author. In addition, she currently serves as a Sunday school and Vacation Bible School teacher at her church. She and her husband, Philip, have been married for more than 30 years and are the parents of five children. They reside in Barrington, Illinois.)

1. De Vinck, Christopher. *The Power of the Powerless*. Doubleday: New York, 1988.
2. Guthrie, Nancy. *USA Today*. July 16, 2002.
3. Bard, Bernard and Joseph Fletcher. *Atlantic Monthly*, 221 (1968 Apr.), pgs.59-64. http://www.wnd.com/news/printer-friendly.asp?ARTICLE_ID=36763.
4. Same as #4.
5. Colson, Charles. *The Good Life*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Wheaton, IL, 2005.
7. Same as #6.
8. Same as #6.
9. Buck, Pearl. *The Child Who Never Grew*. Woodbine House: Bethesda, MD, 1992.



Rob Bandy with his sister, Elizabeth

Too Old to Adopt? Think Again!

by Linda D. Bartlett

My husband, Paul, and I are pleased to announce the adoption of our second daughter. Lest you think we are too old to adopt, think again! This adoption was made official in the eyes of God and man through the act of marriage.

On August 11, 2006, our youngest son, Josh, took Alison Anne Frattare to be his wife. Just as we adopted Angie Marie, the wife of our oldest son Jon, so we have now adopted Alison. These two young women have become our daughters through a holy act instituted by God.

When Angie married our son Jon, she took his name. She came under her husband's covering just as the bride of Christ, the Church, came under Jesus. When Angie took the Bartlett name, she was, in a special way, adopted by our family.

Praise be to God! Paul and I now have two daughters by way of adoption! They are Christian women who, in their unique ways, imitate the faithfulness of other women before them. Like Eve with Adam, Sarah with Abraham, Ruth with Boaz, and Mary with Joseph, our adopted daughters have increased our family in a way that honors God and follows His orderly plan.

"Your people will be my people and your God my God," Ruth said to her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 1:16 NIV). Later, to Boaz, Ruth said, **"Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer"** (3:9). Then, the elders and all those at the city gate said, **". . . May the Lord make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel"** (4:11). In the appropriate time and a way pleasing to God, **"Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife"** (4:13). What a God-like way to bring hope into the world! Naomi's son had died. But, her son's wife—her daughter-in-law Ruth—chose to live out her life as the adopted daughter who would unite Naomi's family with the family of Boaz. From the union of Boaz and Ruth was conceived Obed who was the father of Jesse and grandfather of King David. From the line of David, came Jesus—the very Son of God, our Savior!

Biblical marriage is very different from non-Christian marriage. Although the Greeks and Romans practiced marriage, it was not what God intended. A Greek wife had little freedom and was sometimes little more than a slave. Greek men viewed women as inferior from birth. A Roman marriage could be arranged against a women's (or very young girl's) will; she could also easily be divorced at the whim

of her husband. It was common for the husband to frequent other partners for sex. The value of children was measured by whether they were conveniently wanted or not. A stable and generational culture was at risk in this chaos.

New life in Christ called for new patterns of marriage. (Ephesians 5:21-29). The inspired Saint Paul reminded the husband to love his wife and seek her personal development—a radically new idea in that culture. The wife was to respond with commitment and loyalty. Her submission is out of "reverence for Christ" and "as to the Lord."

In truth, a husband also submits. In his book, *Men and Marriage*, George Gilder notes that marriage changes a man. For the marriage to work, he can no longer live the "single" life but must, instead, commit to the needs of his wife and family. How does he do this? George Gilder writes, "In civilized conditions it is love, marriage, and the nurture of children that project a society into the future and make it responsible for posterity." (Copyright © 1986 by George Gilder, Pelican Publishing Co., Gretna, Louisiana, p. 16)

Sometime back in the 1970s, Shirley MacLaine was

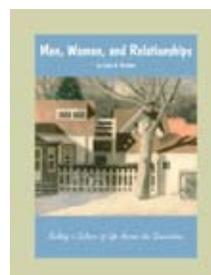
quoted in *Look* magazine, saying, "I don't think it's desirable to conform to having one mate and for those two people to raise children." Then she asked, "To whom does monogamy make sense?" (*Dr. Dobson: Turning Hearts Toward Home*, Copyright 1989 by Rolf Zettersten, Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas, p. 144)

Monogamous marriage makes sense to God! He is the Creator of this holy institution that impacts the world! It is through marriage—the union of God, a man, and a woman—that families are built. Families, in turn, build society. Only a God of order, victorious over chaos (1 Corinthians 14:33), could have such a perfect design for building a culture.

Paul's and my daughters were not born to us in the usual way; rather, they were brought to us by way of marriage. Our sons chose Angie and Alison to be their wives and, through a holy act instituted by God, we have been blessed. Like Naomi who saw hope in her daughter-in-law Ruth, I see hope for generations in Angie and Alison. Only a God who is our Savior Jesus Christ could bring hope to generations of our family through such an adoption as this!



Josh, Alison, Angie, and Jon Bartlett



Note: *Men, Women, and Relationships: Building a Culture of Life Across the Generations* (Item 901BS), by Linda Bartlett, is available from LFL. This reproducible study with leader's guide is appropriate for men and women together or separate on campus, in homes, or during Sunday morning Bible class.

Linda Bartlett is a former president of Lutherans For Life, and the founder of Titus 2 for Life—the mentoring outreach of LFL's *Word of Hope* ministry. Visit www.titus2-4life.org.

India – At least 10 million female unborn children have been illegally aborted in India over the last 20 years by women desperate to bear a son. This means that each year half a million girls are aborted. According to a 1994 law, medical staff is not allowed to use ultrasound scans to determine the sex of the unborn child, but this is widely ignored. Boys are considered socially desirable, while women who have girls are often shunned or even abused. States with the lowest ratios of girls to boys (820 girls to 1000 boys) are also the wealthiest. (*Daily Mail*, 7/3; *SPUC*, 7/4)

Israel – An Israeli group, concerned at the decline in the Jewish birth rate in Israel, is offering support for pregnant women to complete their pregnancies. Efrat, established after changes to Israel's abortion laws in the late 1970s, offers a thousand U.S. dollars' worth of support, such as baby clothes, to poor Jewish women if they choose not to have an abortion. Dr. Eli Schussheim, the surgeon who founded and directs Efrat, said: "Even if we had 10 million Jews here and there wasn't a demographic problem, I would still do it. In 29 years, I haven't had one case where a woman said she regretted it." (*Reuters*, 5/17; *SPUC*, 5/19)

Vietnam – High abortion rates in Vietnam are leading to the development of pro-life activities in the country. In Ho Chi Minh City, where over 74,000 abortions took place in 2005, local Catholics have set up a cemetery where the bodies of aborted babies are buried. The coordinators of this project have to remain anonymous for security reasons, as Vietnam is still a communist country where Christian activities may be suppressed. "Mr. H," who runs the project, said, "Yesterday afternoon, we buried 16. It's sad to see this with our own eyes. All 16 little fetuses had been placed in a green bag . . . In the first three months of this year, we buried at least 400 children." (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 6/26; *SPUC*, 6/29)

China – Mrs. Li Shimei, a seven months' pregnant Chinese woman, fell to her death at a hospital in Shuguang while trying to flee an attempt by local officials to force her to abort her unborn twins. She already had one child when she became pregnant with the twins, in violation of China's "one child per family" law. (*Evening Echo News*, 7/1; *SPUC*, 7/4)

Colombia – The first authorized abortions have reportedly taken place in Colombia, after the Constitutional Court decided to de-penalize abortion. The Court voted to de-penalize abortion in certain circumstances, including for the life and health of the mother, in cases of rape and incest, and life-threatening fetal deformity. Dan Zeidler, the U.S. representative of the Latin American Alliance for the Family, said, "Even if the Court 'only' de-penalized some abortions,

it is a tragedy of immense proportions for Colombia and the world . . . There is reason to believe their intent is to 'legalize' abortion or even recognize it as a 'right.' Also, the lack of preciseness in terminology in words such as 'health' may leave the door open for wide-open abortion." (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 7/24; *SPUC*, 7/25)

Dominican Republic – The Dominican Republic parliament has rejected a proposal to legalize abortion for rape victims. It is thought that a concerted effort by pro-life lobbyists persuaded parliamentarians to reject the proposal. Bishop Ramon Benito, secretary-general of the country's Catholic bishops' conference, said, "Just as there are centers of care for children, society must seek out solutions in favor of life for children who are conceived through rape, as well as quality care for mothers." (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 7/27; *SPUC*, 7/28)

England – The mother of a baby girl born after an ectopic pregnancy has told how she rejected her doctors' suggestion of an abortion. Claire Simpson gave birth to Molly in an emergency Caesarean section at Sunderland Royal Hospital after a scan detected that Molly was growing attached to the ligament tissue in the abdominal cavity. Mrs. Simpson said: "I was devastated when they said there was a problem because I thought I was going to lose her. They said that she could have Down syndrome, dwarfism—all sorts of problems . . . I just kept saying she's still alive, she's still inside me and she's not going anywhere." Note: It is extremely rare that ectopic babies survive; they usually implant in the fallopian (uterine) tube, causing it to rupture (if the baby is not removed first) after around 4-6 weeks of development. (*Daily Mail*, 8/2; *SPUC*, 8/3)

Australia – An Australian trade union leader has likened destructive embryo experimentation to the lethal experiments conducted by the Nazis. Joe de Bruyn, national secretary of the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association, said, "Therapeutic cloning is the creation of human life for the express purpose of destroying it so you can obtain the stem cells and do research . . . That's no different to what Hitler's doctors used to do during the last century. They experimented on human life, and that's what this is." Mr. de Bruyn's comments were in response to calls for the federal government to lift its ban on human cloning. Tony Abbott, federal health minister, told the National Press Club on August 2 that the promoters of embryonic stem cell research were "guilty of over-peddling hope to vulnerable people." (*The Australian*, *SPUC*, 8/3)

World News summaries are from the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) based in London, England: www.spuc.org.uk.

Cherishing the Children at the National LFL Conference

Cherish the Children was the theme as over 200 Lutherans gathered from across the United States and Canada for the national conference of Lutherans For Life, July 14-16, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Gibbs, Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, gave the Friday night keynote address on the theme *Why Are They Greatest in the Kingdom? Jesus' View of Children*, based on Matthew 18:1-10.

Dr. Gibbs asked, "Why do we regard these children unborn as so in need of protection? . . . In Matthew's Gospel, as in the rest of the Bible, to be 'like a child' is to be weak, in need of protection, unlearned, unable to fend for yourself, small, vulnerable . . . In God's plan, the most important people are the least important people."

Earlier, LFL President Diane Schroeder shared how, through the pain of infertility, God had taught her and husband Carl "that children are not ours by right, but truly a gift given by Him . . . that children are not clones of parents, but unique individuals created by God for His purposes." Diane and Carl are the parents of four adopted children.

Chuck Asay, editorial cartoonist for the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, opened the first of two plenary sessions on Saturday. He said, "We are supposed to warn the idle . . . encourage the timid . . . help the weak—who's weaker than an unborn child? . . . We need to leave behind this idea that we are in charge and make the rules." He encouraged those in attendance to "be a blessing along the way. Get people engaged in a conversation" about life issues because "it's about God's children—He wants lots of them!"

In a second plenary address, Roberta Bandy, author of *The Dance Goes On*, shared her and her husband's experience raising a handicapped son, Rob, their first born child, along with four other children. She said "each life has hope, meaning, and purpose" because through Christ that life was "bought at a price." Rob lived for 29 years. "We know his life had value because we saw evidence of it each and every day . . . to this day." "He made us stronger and wiser" and taught "duty, humility, self-sacrifice, grace, peace . . . [Rob] reflected Christ's humility more than any other person I have ever known." (See pages 12-13.)

Saturday's workshops focused on caring for the mentally and physically handicapped; engaging in conversation with

those opposed to the pro-life position; daycare, Creation, chastity and relationships; building a culture of life; cherishing children in other lands, through adoption, in families, through LFL; cherishing moms in crisis, and post-abortion recovery.

"I was pleased to hear the [plenary] speakers and others in workshops all talk about the Christian worldview based on biblical truths, versus the secular or humanist worldview that we are constantly fed in contemporary culture," said Darrin Urbytes of Frankenmuth, Michigan. This was the second national LFL conference that Urbytes and his wife, Cristina, had attended.

Urbytes said he was especially encouraged because a committee at his congregation (St. Lorenz Lutheran Church, Frankenmuth) is recommending a Bible study to members that "addresses all aspects of life from the standpoint of biblical truth, putting things through the filter of the Bible. This is the type of thing we need to be involved in as Christ's people."

Three teens received LFL scholarships to cover registration and expenses. One of those teens, Alexandra McMillan, said the conference was "very educational," and that she "will use the information throughout life."

LFL Executive Director Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb had three main points in his Sunday sermon: Cherish means to care for in a close, intimate way. The children we are to cherish are all those vulnerable and in need. We cherish the children because God does. He concluded his sermon this way: "The primary message we are to take back to our family and friends and congregations is not that we need to start pregnancy centers. The

primary message is not that we need to promote families and abstinence and adoption. The primary message is not that we are to care for those with broken bodies or broken hearts. The primary message is not that we are to cherish the children because they are precious. The primary message is that we are to cherish the children because they are precious to God. Everything else will flow from that."

The 2007 National Lutherans For Life Conference is set for July 6-8 in Omaha, Nebraska.

(Lutherans For Life; additional quotes from www.lcms.org, 7/27/06)



LFL Speakers Bureau

Need a speaker?
LFL will work with you to help meet your needs for a speaker. A variety of formats are available from a single presentation or sermon to a multi-day series of workshops.



www.lutheransforlife.org/Who_Are_We/Speakers_Bureau.htm



What's the Difference?

by Karen L. Frohwein
Director of Development
National Lutherans For Life

"I thought Lutherans For Life was different . . ."

That was a comment following our 2006 National Conference in regard to our first "Conference Challenge" fundraising effort. This year, conference attendees and other supporters were given an opportunity to support *LifeDate* through special gifts given or pledged during that weekend. The goal of the Conference Challenge was to bring awareness to the importance of *LifeDate*, our quarterly journal that reaches over 30,000 homes, schools, and churches with each mailing. *LifeDate* is one of the main ways Lutherans For Life educates and equips people to witness to the sanctity of human life based on God's Word. Understanding that life issues are spiritual issues is what makes Lutherans For Life different from other pro-life organizations.

There was another reason to highlight *LifeDate* in our conference challenge. As you read this issue of *LifeDate*, you may not be aware of the expense involved. Although gladly provided free-of-charge, each edition requires over \$15,000 to produce and distribute. *LifeDate* is one of the major expenses in Lutherans For Life's budget, an annual budget in 2006 of over \$700,000.

So, back to that question: Is Lutherans For Life different than other organizations? If being different means we don't ask for your support, then the answer is "no." Appeal letters, conference challenges, membership mailings, planned gift information, and even the return envelope in this issue of *LifeDate*, give you opportunities to support Lutherans For Life.

Now, let's put that question into a different context. Is Lutherans For Life different than other organizations? YES! The difference is in the Word of God! Just as our mission is different than other pro-life organizations, our asking for gifts is different because it is based on the Gospel.

Luke 12:34 is one of my favorite stewardship verses: **"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** I truly believe that connecting your money to an organization that focuses on God's Word will grow your faith as you increase in your ability to apply the scriptures to every day living. But Luke 12 has more to say about how we react to our needs.

Let's start with verse 22: **"Then Jesus said to His disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.'"** Some people might say asking shows a lack of trust in the ability for God to provide. However, Jesus' words tell us not to *worry* about the future. That confidence makes Luther-

Conference Challenge Update

The first annual Conference Challenge brought in over \$26,000 in gifts as of July 31.

This total includes \$13,000 given by conference attendees, and others, and \$13,200 in matching gifts provided by several "Life Partners." Thanks be to God for the generosity of His children in support of the publication of *LifeDate*!



ans For Life different! When we ask you for gifts, we know that God will guide your decision on how, when, or even if you wish to support us. There is no panic in our asking, and no obligation on your part to contribute. As a Christ-centered organization, we can do the work set out for us with the assurance that God will continue to provide for our needs according to His plans. We pray that God will lead you to join with us in this ministry, but if you are called to another organization, our prayer is that you will consider the message of LFL and how it applies to your daily life.

There is a great need for people to understand what God has to say on abortion, stem-cell research and cloning, end-of-life decisions, chastity, and other life issues. While we do not worry about the future, God calls us to be prepared to serve Him. It's interesting that soon after Jesus said, **"don't worry about what you will wear"** He says: **"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning"** (v. 35).

We also read in verse 40: **"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him."** For Lutherans For Life, being ready for service means producing materials and providing speakers to address issues as they arise. Satan continues to attack life and offend our Creator. The initiative in Missouri on stem-cell research and cloning, the upcoming Supreme Court hearing on the partial-birth abortion ban, and the vote on the abortion ban in South Dakota are examples of challenges for LFL to meet the needs of God's people with clear, concise, biblically-based information.

As we continue to answer God's call, we continue to ask for your support. The monetary costs of doing business are no different from one organization to the next. But, the focus and use of those funds makes all the difference.

Luke 12:48b: **"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."**

As God continues to bless us with His gifts, He continues to call us to His service. Thank you for answering His call to defend human life—with the Gospel message of eternal life.

Lutherans For Life thanks all those who have given Donations in Loving Memory of:

Joy Bartel by Elmer Bartel; **Melvin Beck** by Jim & Jill Johnsen; **Adelle Braun** by Mr. & Mrs. James Beckendorf; **Kenneth Bryant** by Hugo & Muriel Armbrecht; **Marylee Canty** by Michael Canty, Gary & Carol Casadonte, Larry Chovanec, Mark W. Fischer, William & Debbie Hennig, Rickie & Colleen Inman, Carol & Leo Kamyszek, Leo & Rojene Kanugh, Redeemer Lutheran Church in Manitowoc, WI, Patrick Russell; **Ralph Chadwick** by Trisha Adams, Alpha Omega LFL Chapter #76 of Wisconsin; Doug & Lynette Auch, Paul & Linda Bartlett, Diane Chadwick, David & Patricia Engen, Rev. Marvin & Joyce Flanscha, Rev. & Mrs. Charles Gierke, Rev. Bruce & Deb Lakamp, Rodney & Dawn Rathmann, Texas LFL (Tell); **Katherine H. Cornils** by Robert & Oma Jean Amundson; **Marla Donald** by Hugo & Muriel Armbrecht; **Sue Duff** by Hugo & Muriel Armbrecht; **Adeline Eyer** by Bethine Klinker; **Darryl Giesselmann** by James & Sally Beckendorf, Betty Giesselmann; **Ruth Gerike Craven** by Rev. Gerhardt Gerike; **John & Aagot Eide** by Thora Eide; **Abigail Ferber** by Mark & Jonna Krueger; **Elaine Frey** by Lawrence & Dorothy Keen; **Mr. & Mrs. Julius Gilge** by Bernice & Conrad Roder; **Ed Gunderson** by Doug & Lynette Auch; **Harley Herold** by Alpha Omega LFL Chapter #76 of Wisconsin, Diane Chadwick; **Esther Horan** by Donald & Joan DeGeest; **Florence Jesmain** by Bernadine Herndon; **Stacy & Hayden Kaiser** by Florence Paulus; **Andrew Paul Kane** by Rev. & Mrs. Richard W. Widmann; **Linda Kearney** by Richard & Jane Hoelz, Ardele Menken; **Dick Kennedy** by Stephen & Karrie Reitz and girls; **Paul Klama** by Allan & Donna Benson; **Bill Kohlhaase** by Rev. & Mrs. Don Meyer; **George Lambert** by James & Sally Beckendorf; **Marilynn** by Carver Lifelines LFL Chapter, Waconia, MN; **Paul Matthews** by Byron & Donna Zuehlk; **Baby Miller** by Ray & Lorina Zinnel; **Rex Moline** by Rev. & Mrs. Don Meyer; **Louis H. Morner** by Henry & Florence Paulus; **Anne Mutchelknaus** by Doug & Lynette Auch; **Hattie Osborn** by Doug & Lynette Auch; **Kenneth Paarmann** by Ken & Frances Beer; **Dona Preiss** by James Preiss; **Janice Pries** by Ruth Proft Dannehl; **Alice Randleman** by Opal M. Bohlman; **Ruth Rathe** by Byron & Donna Zuehlk; **Mr. & Mrs. Conrad Roder** by Bernice & Conrad Roder; **Jo Roeder** by Dave & Janice Oppedahl; **Rev. Dennis Schiefelbein** by Fran Schiefelbein; **Donna Schradle** by Hugo & Muriel Armbrecht, Dorothy Edler, Lucille Hunzelman, Rev. Bruce & Mrs. Deb Lakamp, Juanita Lutz, Bill & Joyce Peters, Arthur & Ellen Riese, Gerald Schradle, Vic & Geri Schulz; **Lynn Schultz** by Doug & Lynette Auch; **Erwin Seifferlein** by Howard & Cindy Harkness, Gail J. Harm, Ronald & Carol Harm and Matt & Ruth Benge & Family and Kyle & Cheryl Chuhran & Family, R. E. Klein, Paul Kreger, C.O. & C.A. Matthews, Raymond & Lucille Schilling, Nelson & Amy Werderman; **Erwin & Eileen Seifferlein** by Eric & Gail Thompson, Byron & Donna Zuehlk; **Paula Sherman** by Edith Armbrecht; **Alene Hope Slieter** by Julie & Kelly Bedard; **Those Who have Died** by Jane Lohmeyer; **Victims of abortion** by Peter & Mary Gauthier; **The Father of Mitzi Vreugdenhil** by Doug & Lynette Auch; **John Walter** by Allan & Donna Benson; **Lucille Walz** by Joan Lyman, Elli McMullen, Gleni McQuade, Yvonne Steffen; **Rev. Paul H. Whitcomb** by Dave & Janice Oppedahl; **Bertha Willets** by Hugo & Muriel Armbrecht, Dick & Betty Oehlsen; **Mr. & Mrs. Noel H. Winter** by Rev. Marlo D. Lemke; **Richard Wolf** by Carl & Marilyn Schkade; **Willis Wubbena** by Lloyd & Dorothy Barhite

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Make the Connection . . . Join LFL!

Have you received your 2006-2007 membership card from Lutherans For Life? If not, it's time to renew your membership, or consider joining LFL. Membership will connect you with other Christians who are committed to witness to the sanctity of human life based on God's Word.

There are two types of memberships to consider.

Annual members join by making a membership donation and renewing that membership each year. Annual memberships have a renewal date of June 30 each year.

Sponsor members pledge to contribute a certain amount each month and to pray regularly for LFL. Sponsor members renew their pledge each year.

Both types of memberships show a special commitment to the mission of our organization. Back in 1999, one of our supporters listed some of the blessings of Sponsor membership in LFL:

- "It teaches me the discipline of regular giving to this area of the Lord's work.
- "It keeps the mission and ministry of LFL before me on a monthly basis.
- "It makes me feel more connected to the ongoing ministry of LFL.
- "It allows me to receive the Sponsor letter each month (one of the few monthly mailings I genuinely look forward to reading!).
- "It enables me to contribute more annually to LFL without taking such a big bite out of my budget at one time.
- "It is an encouragement to the national staff and board to receive support on a regular basis."

As you can see, Sponsor Membership has some unique benefits. Won't you consider making the connection today? (Remember, membership gifts are shared with your state federation and local chapter as well!)



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Life Thoughts in the Church Year

Based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Worship*. Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

October 1 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Like Peter (Mark 8:32), we who confess Jesus can rebuke Him just as quickly when we have in mind “the things of men” (33). Even good intentions—which Peter undoubtedly had—offer no excuse. The Christian who favors abortion, even with what he thinks are good reasons and intentions, rebukes Jesus the Lord and Giver of life. May He help us all focus on the “things of God.”

October 8 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Think of it! When we welcome a little child—anyone vulnerable and in need—we welcome God! (Mark 9:37) What we do not think about much is the opposite. When we fail to welcome a “little child,” when we reject them by failing to defend them, speak up for them, and protect them, who are we rejecting? Love for life is love for God.

October 15 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Saying, “You shall not murder” does not apply to abortion is “sitting in judgment” of the law of God (James 4:11). Saying someone who has committed abortion is a hopeless murderer is sitting in judgment of our neighbor (James 4:12). It is Jesus’ love for life that enables us both to love what He commands and those He has forgiven.

October 22 – 20th Sunday after Pentecost

God instituted and defined marriage in a perfect world (Genesis 2:24). Jesus affirmed this institution and definition even in the midst of imperfection (Mark 10:1-9). How foolish of man to think he can change what God has ordained and redefine what God has defined.

October 29 – Reformation Sunday

“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Romans 3:22). Martin Luther rediscovered this central teaching of Scripture. Luther also knew the importance of applying this powerful message to everyday life. “All have sinned” Paul reminds us (Romans 3:23) and all need to hear this healing message. This is especially true for those who have sinned against life.

November 5 – All Saints Day

Persecution of Christians abounds in our world today. Christians who uphold the Scriptural truth regarding the sanctity of human life receive persecution as well, sometimes from fellow Christians. The promise stands for all, “**Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me**” (Matthew 5:11).

November 12 – Third Last Sunday of the Church Year

Standing “firm to the end” (Mark 13:13) means standing firm on all of God’s truth. Ignoring truths that are controversial or divisive really diminishes the need to stand firm. It is much easier to “go with the flow.” Stand firm on the truth of Jesus. He will not abandon you.

November 19 – Second Last Sunday of the Church Year

“Heaven and earth will pass away” (Mark 13:31a). Spending so much time trying to be politically correct so as not to offend anyone caters to this passing-away world. It may also very well erode that which never will. “But my words will never pass away” (13:31b). “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus” (Hebrews 12:2).

November 26 – Last Sunday of the Church Year

“Watch!”—That’s the word for the last Sunday in the Church year (Mark 13:37). Jesus will come again and make all things new. That makes “watch” a positive word for God’s people! Regardless of our struggles, regardless of our circumstances, regardless of how defeated we may feel at times, ultimate victory is assured!

December 3 – First Sunday in Advent

Jesus came the first time as “The Lord Our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 33:16). Through faith in what Jesus did through His cross and resurrection to declare us righteous, when Jesus comes again we will be able to stand “blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father” (1 Thessalonians 3:13). What a healing and hope-filled message—especially for those burdened with guilt over those “big sins” like the sin of abortion.

December 10 – Second Sunday in Advent

Lutherans who are “For Life” are really in “partnership in the gospel” (Philippians 1:5). We seek to apply the Gospel to life issues. The life issues give opportunities for sharing the Gospel and introducing others to the Lord of Life.

December 17 – Third Sunday in Advent

John the Baptist did not fear confronting people with their sin (Luke 3:7). God’s people should not fear boldly sharing God’s truth and calling sin, sin. John the Baptist did not hesitate to point people confronted with their sin to Jesus. God’s people should be eager to bring sinners to Jesus and the forgiveness and hope found only in Him.

December 24 – Fourth Sunday in Advent

“At that time” (Luke 1:39) means right after Mary found out she had conceived Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Jesus John reacts to with His joyful leap and the Jesus Elizabeth refers to as “Lord” is an early-stage embryo perhaps not even implanted yet in Mary’s womb! Jesus’ humanity at this stage acknowledges our humanity at this stage.

December 25 – Christmas Day

The One who made the universe and everything in it (Hebrews 1:2, John 1:3) became flesh to redeem what His hands had made. There can be no greater attestation to the value of human life.

December 31 – Eve of the Name of Jesus

Jesus, the Savior, came into this world as a result of a “crisis pregnancy” (Matthew 1:18-25). Today when crisis pregnancies lead to abortion, the world Jesus came to save becomes less for not having these lives a part of it.



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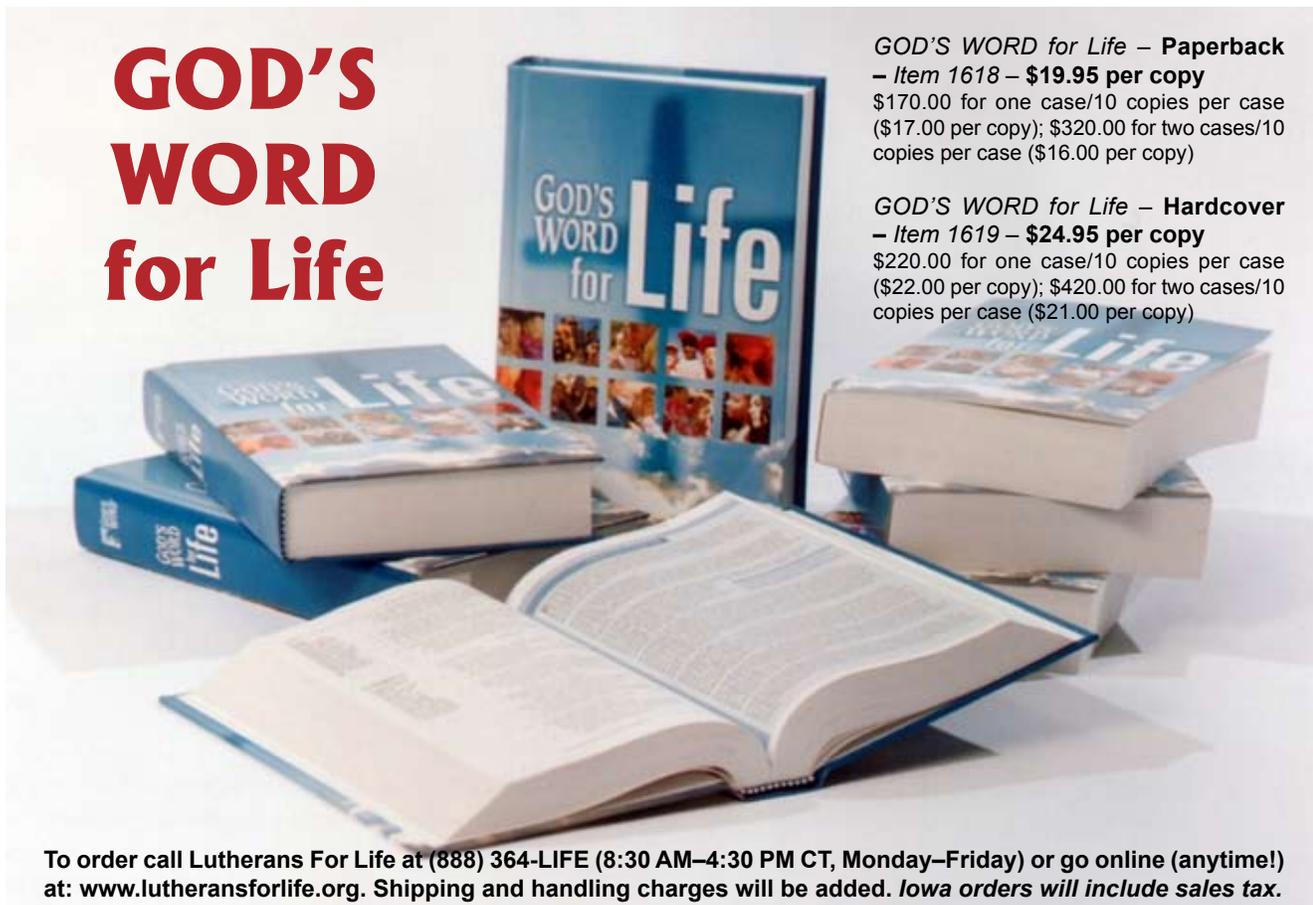
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