

LifeDate

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



Spring 2007

Witnessing to the Sanctity of Human Life through education based on the Word of God.



Lutheran
Theology and



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See enclosed brochure.

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Lutheran Theology is Life Theology

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

“We need to train pastors to deal with these issues,” commented someone at an LFL planning meeting. I disagreed. We don’t have to train them. They already have what it takes—the theology they learned at seminary. The Lutheran understanding of biblical teaching makes their theology “tailor made” for life issues. Some examples:

Sin. Lutherans take some “ribbing” now and then for confessing that we are “poor miserable sinners.” But that’s good theology! It enables us to address the life issues from a level playing field. We know that it is not the sin of abortion or other sins against life that separate us from God. SIN separates us from God! All have fallen short. All are in need of forgiveness. That means we can address the life issues in a way that is not condescending, judgmental, or condemning. We can boldly speak the truth, but we do so in love knowing that we all depend upon the mercy of God.

Justification. Lutherans know we have received God’s mercy freely and without merit. Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross, validated by His resurrection from the dead, stands as an objective fact. Circumstances cannot change it. Feelings cannot change it. As God said through the prophet, **“Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for”** (Isaiah 40:2). Payment for sin is past tense, a “done deal”! What value God places on human life to purchase such a gift! What a powerful message for those filled with the unparalleled guilt and hopelessness because of an abortion.

Law and Gospel. Lutherans articulate this better than most. In a world of relative truth, we proclaim, “There is truth.” In a world of moral pluralism, we make known, based on the Word of God, that some things are morally wrong. Silence, when God’s ways and truth are being maligned, proclaims Satan’s favorite line, “Did God really say?” (Genesis 3:1). Holding up the mirror of God’s Law convicts the sinner of sin and of the inability to do anything about it.

But there is only one reason we call wrong things wrong—to lead people to Christ. Paul says, **“The Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith”** (Galatians 3:24). When the Law forces people to say, “There is no way out of this,” the Gospel gives Jesus who is

“the way” (John 14:6). When the Law creates hopelessness, the Gospel gives Jesus the “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3). When the Law condemns, the Gospel gives Jesus in whom there is “no condemnation” (Romans 8:1). The Gospel transforms people to live differently, to view life differently and, therefore, to view the life issues differently.

Theology of the Cross. Lutherans understand the biblical truth that God “hides” in suffering. When we look at the horribleness of that Friday we now call “Good,” when we see the suffering and pain, when we witness the utter forsakenness and hear the cry of the Forsaken One, there, in the midst of it all, we see God. We see God at work bringing from the greatest suffering of all time the greatest good of all time—forgiveness

and eternal life. This scene becomes the lens through which we view the horribleness that life can bring. Through this lens we see God “hiding” in the midst of pain and suffering and working things together for good according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). What a uniquely powerful message for those dealing with the struggles of disease and disability.

Yes, Lutheran theology is “Life Theology”! It is “tailor made” for the life issues faced by our society and by God’s people.

Lutheran pastors need no training to deal with the life issues. They are well equipped. I pray God will bless our pastors who courageously apply their theology to the life issues and that, working through His undershepherds, the Good Shepherd will change hearts and minds and make a difference in people’s lives.

I invite you to read the various articles in this issue of *LifeDate* that apply Lutheran theology to the life issues.



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Does the Church Want People With Problems?

by *Diane E. Schroeder*
President, National Lutherans For Life

I recently had a conversation with a doctor who volunteers his time at my Care Net office to perform ultrasounds for women in crisis pregnancies. He mentioned that his wealthy, very prestigious, church had been abandoning specific ministries for hurting individuals. The church had individual pastors for children, youth, and young adults, but there was no one to reach out to divorced families, single parents, etc. He concluded with the statement, “You know what it is? The church really doesn’t want to have people with problems.”

His church, like many others, appears to have a problem with sinners. Condemning the sin is easy, but welcoming the sinner as a fellow forgiven member of the body of Christ is difficult. Several years ago I received a call from a woman looking for help for a daughter who was pregnant. During our conversation she mentioned where she was worshipping and I, knowing the church and pastor, commented that it was good she was in a pro-life congregation. Not so, she replied. She was experiencing much judgment, comments, and condemning looks. The situation was so difficult that she dreaded attending services or meetings.

Sometimes Christians have a problem with pride. We put ourselves on pedestals with statements such as, “I don’t know how anyone could have an abortion,” or “My daughter will never come home pregnant.” We know that all people are sinners and in need of God’s forgiveness, but sometimes fail to equate our sins with the girl pregnant outside of wedlock or the woman who had an abortion. After all, we haven’t done anything quite that bad. But God’s Word tells us differently. **“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags”** (Isaiah 64:6). **“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it”** (James 2:10).

The church is for **all** sinners in need of God’s forgiveness. One of my friends—a woman who had an abortion years ago—equated the hearing of the Gospel like being a kid in a candy store. God no longer condemns them and that is our message. **“There is no condemnation for those in Jesus Christ”** (Romans 8:1). Pro-life Christians are called to encourage our churches to love these forgiven men and women among us who have made wrong choices in the past.

Certainly the choices people make matter. As Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). But we need to understand the horrible pressures that make women choose to abort their child. A

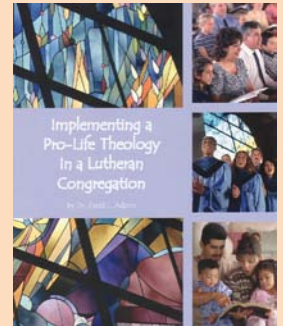
woman who sidewalk counsels at a Chicago area abortion clinic wrote, “I wondered how the women could do such a thing. Then I started to talk to them, to hear their stories of desperation, of pain, of feeling they had no other way out. I talked to the girls who were afraid to disappoint their parents. Could I honestly say I wouldn’t feel the same way if I had made different decisions as a teenager?”

When we fail to accept those among us who have made a wrong choice, we are telling them that they committed the unforgivable sin. When we harshly judge a pregnant teen we are putting up the sign, “No sinners here.” What message does that give to other women who someday may find themselves in the same situation? Instead of condemnation, let all of us reach out to these women and men with Christ’s hand of compassion and healing. If the church, representing Christ and His forgiveness, cannot welcome these forgiven men and women who will? **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:28).

In Implementing a Pro-Life Theology in a Lutheran Congregation

Dr. David L. Adams says it is time for the Church to put its pro-life convictions into action! This booklet outlines a way to do just that!

Item 208B. \$0.75 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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Abortion Under Duress

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

Since Word of Hope began in 1991, our hot line (888-217-8679) call volume has steadily increased—up to well over 3000 abortion related calls a year. Every day women and men contact us from congregations, schools, hospitals, prisons, and military bases across the country.

A significant number of our hot line calls are from young people who have been coerced into abortion. “Tina” called saying, “I haven’t stopped crying since my abortion, I don’t want to eat or come out of my room. I wish I was dead. I can’t forgive my mother for dropping me off at an abortion clinic saying she would kick me out if I didn’t abort my baby.”

“Steve” called saying he forced his wife to get an abortion. “I told her I’d leave if she didn’t abort, but after the abortion she left me. I don’t understand what happened. She just wasn’t the same.” “Wendy” called saying, “I don’t trust anyone anymore. All my friends and a few of my teachers told me I should abort. They all said a baby would ruin my life. But, the abortion has ruined my life.” “Jill” called looking for help, “My boyfriend got mad when I told him that I was pregnant, he said he would jump on my stomach until the baby was dead if I didn’t abort. He said he’d kill me too because he didn’t want his wife to find out. I had an abortion like he wanted but I haven’t heard from him since.”

Their names have been changed, but their stories are all real. We often hear these and other similar stories of coercion on our hot line. Therefore, it is no surprise to me when I read statistics that say that 64 percent of abortions involve coercion. Some are violent, even homicidal.

Under Duress . . . “I’ll kill both you and the baby.”

Intense pressure to abort can come from husbands, counselors, parents, partners, doctors, or others. They may threaten blackmail or abuse a woman until she agrees to the abortion. Coercion can escalate to violence. Pregnant women who resist abortion have been beaten and killed.

Reasons women give for having abortions:

- Forced by mother
- Husband or boyfriend persuaded me
- Would have been kicked out
- Lack of support from society
- Father opposed
- Loss of family’s support

In 95 percent of all cases, the male partner played a central role in the decision and 64 percent felt pressured by others.

Up to 83 percent would have given birth if they’d had support from family and friends.

Uninformed Choice . . . “When I learned the truth I can’t tell you how betrayed I felt.”

- 67 percent received no counseling beforehand
- 84 percent received inadequate counseling beforehand
- 79 percent not counseled about alternatives

Word of Hope recognizes the serious effects of these forced and uninformed choices, and is there to offer help and healing to those who come to our ministry beaten, abused, and hopeless.

How Do We help?

At Word of Hope we offer spiritual care, Bible studies, and recovery groups because with the love of Christ there is hope. We offer healing and reconciliation through God’s Word. Our message is simple and biblical: Word of Hope seeks to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to the broken hearted. For the women, men, and families who have been wounded by abortion there is a Word of Hope, words of healing, and words of help. It is our prayer that those who suffer may, **“with all of God’s people, be able to understand how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ”** (Ephesians 3:18). Because of Christ there is hope.

How Can You Help?

There are many people hurting all around you, silently suffering from abuse and abortion. Many don’t know that we are here to help. You can help by building awareness of our ministry in your church. Put information in your church bulletin and place our brochures where they can be picked up.

For more information, copies of our brochures, or if you need to take the first step to recovery, please call our office toll-free at 888-217-8679.

(Statistics from “Forced Abortion in America” at www.unchoice.info/resources.htm.)



The Flat Side of the Cross

by Rev. Ryan Mathias

A man came to our church the other day who had been arrested, tried, and convicted for stealing from churches. Over the course of our conversation, through a deluge of tears, he confessed that he relived these sins almost every single day of his life. He admitted his embarrassment. He acknowledged that since his release from prison, he couldn't go back to any church in the area because of his shame. Despite any healing that he'd received in the Word, the old scars seemed to shine bright like livid, white worms spelling out, "Church Thief."

"This is what I am," he said.

"This is what you *were*," I replied.

As I placed my hands on his head, forgave him of his sins, and uttered Luther's words, "Go, you are free," he shook almost uncontrollably. For him, justice had been served.

The justice of grace had been meted out upon him. He had been hit with the flat side of the cross. Recognizing his sins, weeping in shame, he crawled to the very place from which he had stolen. And then, he realized that *he* had now been stolen. *He* had been offered relief in the midst of the maelstrom that his life had become. And that was a treasure he couldn't let go.

So, what is it about abortion that causes such malignant withholding of grace? Why do we have a tendency to make this sin so much greater than others? Why

do we spy on these people with the eyeglass of the Law when in some cases they've clearly been beaten over the head with that eyepiece?

Sin. Its vile head is reared in *all* of our lives. It is that thing that throws us down, naked and dirty at the foot of the Savior. It causes us to wretch and pull away from God. Luther says this in the Augsburg Confession XX:

"It is taught among us that although almighty God has created and still preserves nature, yet sin is caused in all wicked men and despisers of God by the perverted will."

There is no hierarchy of sin—it is what it is. At times, we are the ones, who by our own perverted will, lower others down into the echelons of villainy. We are the ones who look at the tax collector and say, "Thank God that I'm not like him."

In John 8, as Jesus stared down at the adulterous woman with mercy, His eyes did not narrow condemnation and His mouth did not betray. He simply said, "Open your eyes,

dear, there are no stones flying here." The justice meted out on Jesus was the death of our sins—even the death of that aborted baby.

Where else can she turn? She has stolen from the Church one who might have led. But now where else can she run to? Do we "Lift High the Cross" or "Lift High Her Loss?"

The doctrine of grace is jaw-dropping though. That God would choose another murderer (Paul) to be the greatest missionary of all time is amazing. When was the last time we scorned his conversion? The Lord Jesus saw fit to include him in the plans of His grace. And yes, Paul stole some fabulous people from the Church with his murders.

With grace we really see the enormity of the Father's love. That He would love one such as these is the extent of Jesus' words in John 3:17. **"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."** That's the extension of John 3:16.

Our God is the God of grace and mercy and these gifts are indelibly found in the place that He leaves His Word. The Church is not simply a place where nicely dressed people come to gather for donuts and coffee. It is the place where the church thief and the abortive mother come to hear, "I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." It is the place where divine justice is truly meted out in His ironic way. It is GRACE we lift up as God pulls them from their sins. It is GRACE that consumes the soul of the penitent. It

is GRACE that consumed us so that we might not relive our sins because God has forgotten them. **"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).**

To the church thief, the murderer, and yes even to a sinner as bad as you and me, Christ says, "Go, you are free."

(Rev. Mathias is Associate Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Davenport, Iowa, husband of Sarah, and father of Sam.)



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

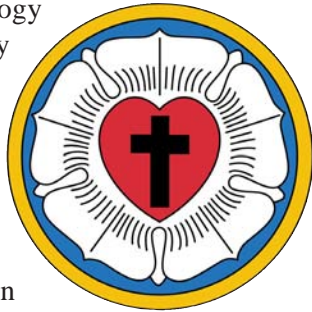
Abortions from 1973-2005 (using the 2003 estimate for 2004 and 2005): 45,888,300.

Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute.

Law and Gospel & Life Issues

by Rev. Tom Baker

How does Lutheran theology serve the issues of life, especially in regard to the pro-life position in opposition to elective abortions? For Lutherans there is only one source for Truth and that is God's holy Word, the Bible. Unlike newspaper editorials that have only one person as both writer and author, the Bible has many writers (prophets, apostles, etc.) but only one Author: God Himself.



Lutheran theology uses two principles to proclaim the Word of God. The first is that of interpretation; the second is that of application. The principle of interpretation is "Scripture interprets Scripture." The principle of application is the distinctions between Law and Gospel. A sermon that only interprets a passage of Scripture might increase one's knowledge in the head but falls short of touching the heart if the proper use of Law and Gospel is never spoken.

The first distinctions of Law and Gospel involve their proper use by God Himself. He uses the Law in the temporal realm to curb wickedness and in the spiritual realm to mirror our sin and provide us with guidelines as to what pleases Him. The Christian operates in both kingdoms in that, as a citizen, he attempts to persuade others to keep good order, and as a believer attempts to make disciples of Jesus Christ from all nations.

God uses the Law in the government to force unbelievers and the old Adam of Christians to obey the outward observance of good order. The motivation is one's self-interest either through hope of reward or through fear of punishment using temporal authorities. God uses the Law in the Church to persuade the hearer that no work he can do will move him even one inch toward God. When the hearer realizes that, God then uses the only means of grace; that is, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, to provide the gift of free salvation by grace through faith on account of Jesus Christ.

There are only two religions in the world. Christianity and . . . everything else! Every other religion that has rules and commandments uses them to help an individual improve his standing before a god by works, meditation, sacrifices, offerings, and so forth. Only Christianity reveals the true Triune God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Who ignores and despises good works if done for the purpose of either getting saved or staying saved. For anytime one adds to the cross of Christ, one subtracts from the cross of Christ.

The proper distinctions between Law and Gospel may be charted as follows:

LAW	GOSPEL
1st use: To curb wickedness in the temporal realm.	The message received in Word and Sacrament that the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ results in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who believe.
2nd use: To mirror the sinfulness of human beings.	
3rd use: To give a rule in regard to the will of God.	

However, there is another charting involving Law and Gospel that is part of Lutheran theology because it is spoken of in holy Scripture. More than once God speaks of it as the distinction between living under the Law in contrast to living under grace. This distinction points to the fact that people have one of two interpretations of God. The first interpretation assumes that our works make a difference to God in regard either to our being saved or to our remaining saved. The second interpretation has concluded on the basis of revelation that works make no difference at all. A second chart of this distinction, as found in Romans 6:14 and elsewhere, follows:

Living Under the LAW	Living Under the GOSPEL
God is a god of Justice in the sense that you get what you deserve.	God is the God of Mercy in that you do not get what you deserve (eternal punishment) and God is the God of Grace in that you get what you do not deserve (forgiveness of sins).

Those who live under the Law have a totally different picture of God and everything else in the world in contrast to those who live under the Gospel. For example, in regard to commandments:

Living Under the LAW	Living Under the GOSPEL
Commandments are given by god in order that we might work hard to merit our way into salvation.	Commandments are given by God in order that we might inherit salvation and realize that "Nothing in my hands I bring" so the Gospel may reveal, "Simply to the cross I cling!"

Those who live under the Law are referred to as "Theologians of Glory" attempting to produce self-glory to impress God and merit salvation. Those who live under the Gospel are referred to as "Theologians of the Cross" who find their only hope in Jesus Christ. Thus, for the purposes of the pro-life movement, the following chart is helpful.

Poll Finds 68 Percent of Americans Back Abortion Restrictions

A poll taken in January indicates that a majority of Americans are in favour of restrictions.

According to a poll by CBS News, 68 percent believe there should be restrictions on abortion, while 31 percent believe it should be permitted in all cases. The poll interviewed 1,168 adults and has a three percent margin of error.

Of those in favor of greater restrictions, 30 percent believe abortion should be permitted only in cases such as rape, incest and to save the woman's life, 12 percent say just to save a woman's life, and five percent say not at all.

(Peter J. Smith, LifeSiteNews.com, Angus Reid Global Monitor, 1/26/07)

Abortion Poll Finds Most Christians Think Life Begins at Conception

A new poll conducted by a leading Christian web site finds that an overwhelming majority of Christians believe that life begins at conception. ChristiaNet.com recently surveyed 500 members of its web site and asked the question "Does life start at conception, first heart beat, second trimester, or birth?"

Of the 500 participants 440, or 88 percent, believe that life begins at conception, subscribing to the idea that abortion at any time during a pregnancy is killing a life.

"Egg and sperm create a new cell and living cells begin dividing," cited one poll-taker, with another saying, "Because God tells us that before He formed us in the womb, He knew us (Jeremiah 1:5)."

"The Bible is clear about life," stated ChristiaNet's president, Bill Cooper. "But many people, even some Christians, are unclear on this fact because our society accepts abortion procedures. The truth has become skewed in order to ease the social conscience."

That is evidenced by the fact that 34 respondents, or nearly seven percent, believe that life begins at birth.

"When in the womb you are nobody, you know nothing, and nothing knows you. You could be anything in the womb, a snake, football, stone, water, etc. 'Till you are born and take in the breath of earth (life)— now life continues," stated one participant.

Only two respondents selected the option that life begins at the second trimester and 24 respondents believe that life begins at the first heart beat.

Cooper concluded, "Poll results represent a belief that abortion is wrong, yet our culture continues to tolerate this social travesty."

(LifeNews.com, 1/17)

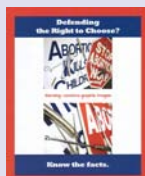
Living Under the LAW Theologians of Glory	Living Under the GOSPEL Theologians of the Cross
The center of attention is ME. I am motivated by self-interest. I decide what is best for me.	The center of attention is Jesus Christ. I am motivated by the love of Christ. God decides what is best for me.

In C.F.W. Walther's lectures on *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* he demonstrates 21 ways in which sermons become improper by teaching us to be theologians of glory! However, the pro-life movement needs to have materials that address both those who are unbelievers as well as those who are believers. For believers, proclaiming the pure Word of God and making the right use of Sacraments comforts, motivates, and informs us that God is pro-life.

However, in reaching out to the temporal world of the government, we need to understand that what motivates and changes minds does so because of self-interest. People will both support and then obey the laws against stealing because they don't want their possessions stolen. It is one thing for Christians to know that the abortion movement is contrary to God's will. It is quite another thing for us to persuade those who don't know God that they ought to oppose elective abortions. But it can be done through visuals, science, medicine, philosophy, and logic if the self-interest of the hearer is kept in mind. What needs to be understood, though, is that using these means of persuasion may change minds but will not effect the hearts. Yet that is the purpose of the curbing use of the Law to affect both unbelievers and the old Adam of every believer.

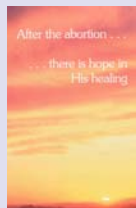
(Rev. Tom Baker hosts "Law and Gospel" on KFUD Radio, www.kfuo.org and www.lawgospel.com; is Director of Development of Concordia Mission Society and is available for seminars and preaching.)

Choosing Life (DVD) deals with the subject of abortion with great sensitivity, focusing on the biblical foundation for the sanctity of life. Included is a Bible study guide from LFL. *Item 100AV. \$15.00 ea.*



Defending the Right to Choose/Know the Facts - This booklet helps people understand what defending the "right to choose" truly involves. (Note: contains graphic images.) *Item 124T. \$0.75 ea.*

After the Abortion There is Hope in His Healing - This booklet offers hope to those who are struggling with an abortion decision. By Linda Bartlett. *Item 405B. \$1.00 ea.*



Defending the Defenseless

by Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Voss

On January 28, the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, I was asked to preach a message to a congregation celebrating Life Sunday. The text I chose was Luke 4:31-44. In that narrative Jesus begins His ministry in Capernaum after having previously been driven out of His hometown, Nazareth. In this text Jesus teaches at the synagogue, casts out evil spirits, and heals the sick (including Peter's mother-in-law). It occurred to me that the contrasts described in this text were incredible! For example, there's a stark difference in how the people of Nazareth treated Jesus versus the reception He received in Capernaum. This text also points out huge differences between good and evil, between people (and unclean spirits) with a focus on self versus those having the Lord at their center.

Today we face this same dichotomy. The classic battle between good and evil goes on. Though our Savior has won the war with His suffering, death, and resurrection, the forces of anarchy and death still battle the Church today and will continue to do so until the end of time. On one side, the forces of darkness won't let anyone stand in their way of getting what they desire. Life is cheap for them, especially the lives of the weak and defenseless. The principle of autonomy rules today's medicine. Each person is entitled to say what happens to their own body. An important drawback to this me-centered viewpoint is that defenseless human life is very poorly protected. The rights of a competent person are secured, but those people who cannot speak for themselves, either at the beginning or at the end of life, are sometimes deemed to have little value because they can't interact with society or be productive individuals.

We humans are selfish by nature and want to push out of our way anyone who might cause us inconvenience or discomfort. Our society mirrors that thinking. Those of us who study life issues are concerned about the lack of respect for human life in our culture. It was about 34 years ago that the Supreme Court issued the *Roe v. Wade* (1973) decision making abortion on demand legal in this country. In November 2006, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported abortion statistics for 2003.¹ A total of 848,163 legal induced abortions were reported to the CDC for 2003. That works out to about 24 abortions per 100 live births and 16 abortions per 1,000

women aged 15 to 44 years. Based on this² data, Pastor Robert Fleischmann of Christian Life Resources estimates that abortion has taken approximately 39.7 million defenseless lives since 1973.³ Just think how many Albert Einsteins or Brett Favres were tossed into medical waste during that time!

An article appearing in the September 1, 2005, issue of *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* did a survey of over 1,000 abortion patients on reasons why they sought abortions. The top two reasons for abortions were: "having a baby would dramatically change my life" (74 percent), and "can't afford a baby now" (73 percent).⁴ Fleischmann comments on these abortion figures: "As I researched these statistics I could not help but think of the passage, '**Because of the increase of wickedness the love of most will grow cold**' (Matthew 24:12). Abortion represents a worship of the pagan god of 'self.' Without thought of the Author of Life, people presume their own authority to kill. Most disturbing, however, is the apathy of those who know better."⁵

But abortion isn't the only example of contemporary society sacrificing the defenseless for self-serving reasons. Many scientists have little problem destroying five-day old human embryos to make embryonic stem cells. Even though no treatments have ever come from embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells have already been used to treat about 70 diseases, researchers continue to press Congress and President Bush to use our tax dollars to fund embryonic stem cell research. The scientists' argument

is heart-rending. They promise they can treat many incurable diseases like diabetes, heart disease, nerve damage, and many others. However, for a Christian it is never acceptable to do evil to cause good—to sacrifice innocent lives for the dream of curing others (Romans 3:8).

In contrast to the worldview that some human life is cheap and that personal autonomy is all-important is the perspective championed by our Savior, who became flesh and blood to save us from our sin, death, and the devil. "**The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us**" (John 1:14a). He is both "very God of very God" and "was made man."⁶ His divine nature reveals much about God, but His human nature also tells us much about true humanity. His flesh and blood is the same as ours except without sin as we read in Hebrews 4:15, "**Or we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.**"

Jesus' incarnation speaks volumes about bioethics issues



like human embryonic stem cell research. Jesus' humanity began when He was "conceived by the Holy Spirit."⁷ From conception Jesus was fully God and fully man. We often forget that Jesus' existence here on earth as true man began, not with His birth, but with His conception by the Holy Spirit. This has always been a consistent teaching of the Christian Church. Although Christ's birth was a miraculous event, He entered into this world like we do, as a one-celled embryo. Jesus was still an early embryo when Mary visited Elizabeth (Luke 1:39ff). In verse 43, Elizabeth calls Mary "the mother of my Lord." Jesus was certainly a human person of inestimable worth from His conception onward. Since Jesus was true man, it makes a lot of sense that we too are valuable human persons at the time of our conception.

Scientists argue, "Why can't we sacrifice an insignificant little embryo to save the life of someone dying from an incurable disease?" Christians must respond that human beings are persons from conception onward and therefore should be respected as such. We cannot sacrifice innocent human lives for the unrealized hope of saving other human lives. Adult stem cell research is a highly successful alternative to the moral dilemmas presented by the destruction of embryonic stem cells. Adult stem cells have recently been discovered in the amniotic fluid that surrounds the baby during pregnancy.⁸ (See page 16 for more on this story.) Researchers have indicated that those cells may be as powerful as embryonic stem cells in their ability to form different types of tissues. Charles Krauthammer, a well-known columnist, remarks: "The cells are just floating there, as if waiting for science to discover them."⁹

Events surrounding Jesus' incarnation also help us to understand more fully bioethics issues such as abortion. As Mary greeted Elizabeth, her baby, John the Baptist, leaped for joy in her womb (Luke 1:41, 44). The simple fact that a six-month old baby was able to respond to the Lord speaks volumes about the awesomeness of the unborn state, much of which is still not well understood. The Greek word used for "baby" in this verse is *brephos*. Arthur Just, Jr., states that this same term occurs eight times in the New Testament, referring to John the Baptist in the womb, Jesus after birth, to young children brought to Jesus, and to newborn babies. So children are called *brephos* before and after birth. According to Just, "The biblical usage of this term has important ramifications for human-life issues. It supports—even mandates—a concern for the sanctity of human life from conception onward and makes disregard for such life morally reprehensible."¹⁰

The incarnation and events surrounding the incarnation strongly support the view that all unborn human life has intrinsic value. From the Bible's understanding of life, babies both before and after birth are equally valued in God's sight. Jesus was a human being, a person, from the time of His conception and so are we. As I prepared for my sermon

on the beginnings of Jesus' teaching and healing ministry in Capernaum, I was reminded again how our Lord defended the defenseless. The chronically ill and demoniacs were the dregs of the ancient world, but Jesus helped and restored them. Our Lord faced setbacks, but He continued to bring the Word of life and healing to many. Though the pro-life community may suffer reverses, like the passage of the Missouri constitutional amendment allowing embryonic stem cell research and human cloning, we cannot give up the effort to fight for the unborn so that all humans are recognized as persons, beings valuable in and of themselves.

(Rev. Dr. Kevin Voss is Director of the Concordia Bioethics Institute and Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Concordia University, Mequon, Wisconsin.)

1. Lilo T. Strauss, et al, "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2003," *MMWR Surveillance Summaries* 55(SS11) (November 24, 2006): 1-32. Available online at www.cdc.gov/mmwr.
2. Robert Fleischmann, "Voices Unheard," *Clearly Caring* 27, no. 1 (2007): 4-6.
3. Lawrence B. Finer, et al, "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 37, no. 3 (September 2005): 110-118.
4. Fleischmann, p. 6.
5. The Nicene Creed.
6. The Apostles' Creed, Second Article.
7. Paolo De Coppi, et al, "Isolation of Amniotic Stem Cell Lines with Potential for Therapy," *Nature Biotechnology* 25 (2007): 100-106. Available online at www.nature.com.
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Key Facts About Stem Cell Research

Many media reports contain misleading scientific reporting—particularly common with stem cell research. Christian Medical and Dental Association Executive Officer David Stevens, MD, says doctors have a key role in setting the record straight in their local papers. Here are some key facts:

- Over 70 therapies are already available using adult stem cells.
- Over 1,229 publicly available clinical trials using adult stem cells are underway. There are none underway using embryonic stem cells.
- A number of adult stem cells appear to be pluripotent, including amniotic and placental stem cells. Why not use a readily available, ethical source of cells for research so that no patient will have reservations in accessing the treatment they need?
- Federal funds have supported over 130 million dollars of research using embryonic stem cells; and private institutions, much more. Billions of dollars will be put into this type of research over the next few years.
- Despite this, embryonic stem cell research is still in its infancy and has identified numerous problems in using these cells. They are difficult to maintain in culture, readily mutate, are hard to differentiate, form tumors, and are likely to require patient cloning.
- What we need is real cures for sick patients real fast. Why wait decades hoping over-hyped promises will materialize? Let's put our money and efforts where we will find results the quickest.

(CMDA News and Views, 2/1/07)

ANNUNCIATION RESOURCES!

2007 offers a particularly appropriate time to teach about the God-given value of human life! **The Annunciation of our Lord**, March 25, occurs on a Sunday.

The path to the cross did not begin in Bethlehem but in Nazareth! March 25 is the most appropriate time to celebrate the incarnation.

God became man at Jesus' conception in Mary. Since our beginnings were sinful (Psalm 51:5), Jesus had to take our place from that very moment. Part of the redemptive process was for Jesus to pass through all stages of our development. What powerful implications for the value of human life from the very beginning! Jesus' divinity and humanity at the moment of conception attest to our humanity from that moment.



NEW To assist pastors and congregations in observing the Annunciation of our Lord—and to teach the great value God in Christ places on all human life—Lutherans For Life offers—**free of charge**—these new resources:



The Miracle of the Annunciation bulletin insert, Item #1106BI, FREE

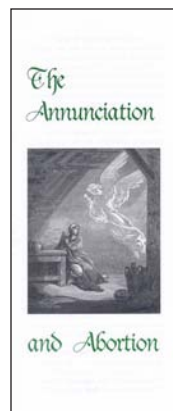
Sample Sermon: Pregnant with God, based on Luke 1:26-38, **FREE**

Worship Service. **FREE**

The sermon and worship format are available to download at www.lutheransforlife.org/annunciation.htm. Go to the same link to order the bulletin insert or call 888-364-LIFE.

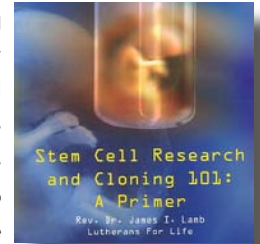
ALSO AVAILABLE:

The Annunciation and Abortion brochure reviews the Annunciation and Visitation of Mary and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and offers the historical witness of the Church and helps us answer the question, "When does life begin?" By Rev. Edward Fehskens. *Item 202T. \$0.25 ea.*



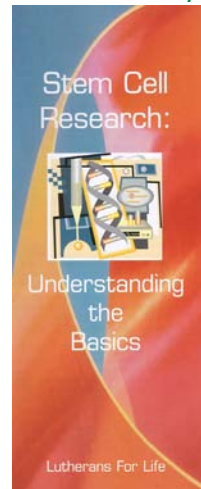
DVD

Stem Cell Research and Cloning 101: A Primer is a DVD hosted by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb. He says, "I want to make it clear from the beginning that this presentation is not going to be complicated and hard to understand. I will be presenting the basics of stem cell research and cloning. There are two reasons for that. First, I am not a scientist or an expert in these areas so I cannot make it complicated! Second, all we need to know are the basics. Once we understand the basic biology involved, we will be able to apply God's Word to these technologies—and God's Word is where we want to begin." (37 minutes) *Item 1001AV.*



FREE: One per order. Supplies are limited.

STEM CELL / CLONING BROCHURES



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. \$0.25 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. \$0.25 ea.*



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The Memory Project

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

Several months ago I saw a news program highlighting “The Memory Project,” a program designed to give children in orphanages around the world original portraits to provide them with a special memory of their youth. The Memory Project (www.thememoryproject.org) also hopes to raise awareness of the needs and rights of children around the world.

With this issue of *LifeDate*, Lutherans For Life is launching our own “memory project” by gratefully listing the gifts given in 2006 in memory or honor of loved ones and raising awareness of ways you can create your own memory through a gift to LFL.

Memories are certainly important. The apostle Paul reminds the Philippians “**I thank my God every time I remember you,**” (Philippians 1:3) and encourages the believers in Thessalonica with these words: “**We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 NKJV). Not only should we remember our loved ones, but it is good to give thanks for them as witnesses of the faith we share in Christ.

The following pages are full of memories for those who chose to honor their loved ones by sharing the life-giving and life-changing message of the Gospel of Jesus and supporting the mission of Lutherans For Life. There are many good memories, but there are also times of sadness, tragedy, trials, and tribulations. Still, in the midst of good times and bad, God’s children turn to the cross and give gifts of thanksgiving for the wonders the Lord has done as He creates, redeems, and holds each of our lives.

Giving helps put things into the right perspective. In giving, we worship and honor the Lord. We remember our loved ones as children of the Lord of Life and we create new memories as we watch what God can do through our gifts!

I’d like to share one note we received last December with a memorial gift.

“Because our beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather has gone to be with our Lord, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren filled his Christmas stocking this year with money for a memorial as their gift to him. Therefore, I am most happy and grateful to present these gifts of love to Lutherans For Life to help preserve the most precious gift of all—the gift of Life from our Heavenly Father to all His children everywhere—both born and yet unborn.”

What a memory this family created last Christmas! As they celebrated Christmas without their beloved patriarch, they were *happy and grateful* to present gifts of love to be used for the work of the Lord. In the coming year, won’t you also prayerfully consider a “memory project” by giving to Lutherans For Life? Here are a few ways you can help:



Give Online. You can join LFL or give contributions online through the secure Click and Pledge™ server. www.lutheransforlife.org. Click “Support LFL!”

Automatic Bank Drafts. Never write another donation check! Many banks offer electronic funds transfer from your checking or savings accounts. Check with your bank to see if you can set up this convenient way to give gifts to LFL.

Matching Gifts. Your gift can go twice as far! Does your employer have a matching gift program? Ask them to include LFL as a qualified charity! (Note: Lutherans For Life is not allowed to receive gifts through the Thrivent’s GivingPlus® program—more info is available on the LFL web site.)

LFL Endowment Fund. The fund receives gifts and bequests and uses the interest accrued from them for the mission and ministry of LFL. You can make a difference!

Planned Gifts. LFL can provide free, no-obligation information on how you can accomplish your personal and family goals through trusts, annuities, and other plans. Have you included LFL in your will or estate plans?

Online Shopping Rebate Program. When you shop online through iGive.com up to 26% of your e-purchases at hundreds of online stores can be donated to LFL—at no cost to you!

Internet Search Engine Rebate Program. Raise money for Lutherans For Life just by searching the Internet with GoodSearch: www.goodsearch.com.

New Opportunity! The Pension Protection Act of 2006. See page 22 for more on this.

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Edith Armbrecht's 70th birthday by David & Ruth Olson, Rev. Lawrence, Mabel & Lisa Schmidt;

Ruth & Dave Olson, Rhoda & Tim Davis, Ted & Deanna Armbrecht, Andy & Donna Armbrecht by Edith Armbrecht;

Anna Lee Aufderheide by Mr. & Mrs. Fred H. Aufderheide;

Cameron Aufderheide by Fred H. & Mary Aufderheide;

Kimberly Aufderheide's 6th birthday by Fred & Mary Aufderheide;

Kyle Aufderheide's 13th birthday by Fred & Mary Aufderheide;

Aunt Sis by Rev. & Mrs. Ed Brandt;

Our children & grandchildren by Rev. & Mrs. Mark Baldwin;

Henrietta Bartel's 90th birthday by Ruth Bartel;

Conception of our 3rd grandchild to be born to Jon & Angie Bartlett by Paul & Linda Bartlett;

Marriage of Josh & Alison Bartlett by Paul & Linda Bartlett;

60th Wedding Anniversary of Ernest & Minnie Barz by Marvin and Marilyn Barz;

Roland & Lorretta Bessinger by Thomas & Beth Bessinger;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Lorence & Marge Blase by Don & Norma Troester;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Marlin & Carol Brutlag by Bill & LaDonna Koch;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Clayton & Marge Christensen by Apryl Brand;

Our adopted grandson's 1st birthday by Glen & Dorothy Clayton;

Rev. David Dissen by Allen & Norma Spitler;

Marriage of Rev. John & Brenda Einem by Marvin & Marilyn Barz;

Rev. Charles Gierke by Paul & Linda Bartlett;

Joyce Gierke by the LifeLight Bible study group at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Omaha, NE;

Birth of Nicholas John Gierke by Rev. Charles & Joyce Gierke, Bill and Lois Wehman

50th Wedding Anniversary of Stan & Eileen Gifford by Allan & Donna Benson;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Bob & Carolyn Gilbreath by Justin & Nichole Hetz;

Joan Grotelueschen's birthday by Major Mark & Alison Grotelueschen, Lt. Col. Paul Grotelueschen;

Rev. G. F. Hallman by Robert & Ellen Ferguson;

25th Wedding Anniversary of Jon & Cheryl Harger by St. John's Lutheran Ladies Aid;

40th Wedding Anniversary of Jim & Juanita Hargrave by Mark & Lynne Truax;

Gina Hubbard's birthday by David Hawkins;

Tina Jenkins by Judy Woodard;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Bob & Lawanda Kieffer by Mr. & Mrs. Douglas L. Dick, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Eckert, LaDonna Jungbluth, Lorna Kottmeyer, Ken & Ellie Meng, Charles & Judy Meyr, Audrey L. Miller, Erich & Delores Mueller, Rev. & Mrs. Herbert E. Muench, Lloyd & Glenda Schubert, Nancy Seeburger, Ferol & Marilyn Thiemert;

Terry Kieschnick by Don & Claudetta Theiss;

Louise Knispel by Mr. & Mrs. Waldemar Kautz;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Dr. & Mrs. Marvin H. Koch by Marcus Koch;

Doris Lovekamp by David & Sandra Booher;

Elda Mackay's 90th birthday by Jay & Jeanne Mackay;

Eileen Mc Connell by Glenn & Eileen O. Mc Connell;

Field & Alison McConnell by Glenn & Eileen O. Mc Connell;

Natalie Mellendorf by Jeffrey & Susan Dipold;

Members and leaders of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church and School, Miami, OK by Pastor Don & Jane Kirchoff

50th Wedding Anniversary of Rev. Herb & Melba Muench by Ferol & Marilyn Thiemert;

Rev. Bruce Noennrg by Greg & Becky Brockberg & family;

Mrs. Judith Otten by Eric & Kim Otten;

Dr. & Mrs. Ricardo Patron's birthdays by Brenda S. Wickham;

Confirmation of Ceira Lee & Cody Phillips by Mike & Glennise Wendorf;

William, Daniel, & Sarah Caroline Robinson by Caroline Robinson;

Thanksgiving for our grandson's health and Christian parents by Steve & Judy Rozek;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Wes & Sylvia Schmidt by Howard & Marjorie MacDougall;

Victoria Paige Shepherd by A. Ross & Jane Shepherd;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Cornie & Donna Shiehan by Donald & Norma Troester;

Birth of Talia Elizabeth Simmer by Bruce & Barbara Kaltwasser;

Carol Stamp by Michael & Ellen Stamp;

Marriage of Jim & Carol Steffens by Jeff & Sue Rattner;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Dick & Joan Steinke by Howard W. & Marjorie MacDougall;

Elijah Stubbs' birth by James Otte;

40th Wedding Anniversary of Eric & Gail Thompson by Byron & Donna Zuehlc;

Lily Thorsen by Faith Evans;

50th Wedding Anniversary of Jim & Ila VanKilsdonk by Howard W. & Marjorie MacDougall;

Pauline Wahl's 90th Birthday by Carl & Diane Schroeder;

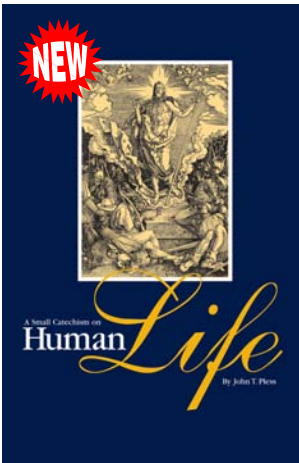
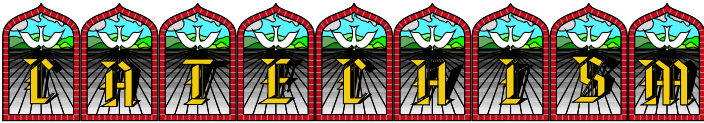
50th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Robert P. Witte by Walter & Kathleen Hartley;

The Unborn & those fighting to save them by Peter & Mary Gauthier.

This issue of *LifeDate* marks a change in how we acknowledge memorials and honorariums given to Lutherans For Life.

Each year, we will list all gifts from the preceding year, in the spring issue of *LifeDate*.

Although many of the gifts in the these pages were listed in previous issues, we combine them all in this edition to give you our first yearly list—gifts given in 2006.



A Small Catechism on Human Life examines abortion, bioethics, end-of-life, and sexuality issues through the Biblical eye-glasses of *Luther's Small Catechism*. Thorough, but lay-friendly, each chapter is followed by thoughtful discussion questions and Bible references. Available in a beautiful hardback edition with historic woodcut illustrations and slightly longer discussions (perfect for confirmation parents or any Bible study group),

or a smaller version edited for younger readers (perfect for confirmation or youth Bible studies)!

Adult version: *Item 213B. \$14.99 ea.*

Youth version (sold in packs of 10): *Item 214B. \$9.99 ea.*

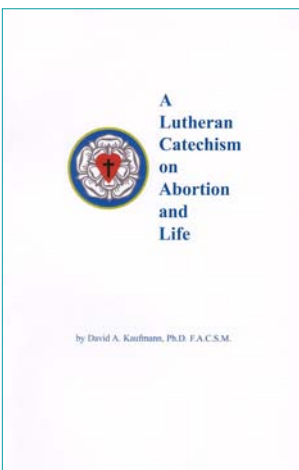
Speak Up For Life—

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.*

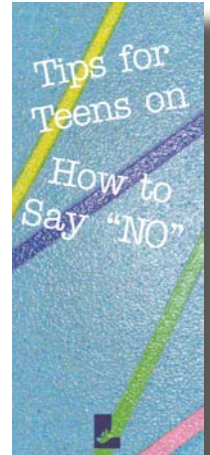
A Lutheran Catechism on Abortion and Life provides a question and answer primer on abortion and life in the format of *Luther's Small Catechism*. Unlimited educational use! By David A. Kaufmann, Ph.D., F.A.C.S.M. Updated in August 2004. *Item 104B. \$1.00 ea.*



NEW/UPDATED BROCHURES

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.*

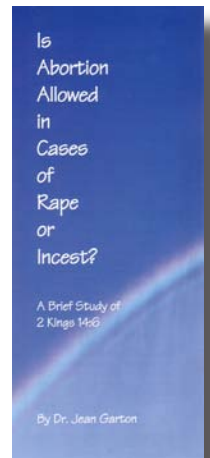


More Power! For Men Only

– “Within a man’s grasp is an incredible amount of power.” That power can be used for good or bad for women, 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.*

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. 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.*



PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Lutherans For Life has balloons, bookmarks, folders, logo pins, pencils, pens, stickers, and tote bags. Go to “Sharing the LFL Message” at our online catalog to find out more! These items are great for community exhibits, fairs, Sunday school, and Life Sunday!

ORDERING INFORMATION & PAYMENT POLICY:

Please **DO NOT SEND PRE-PAYMENT**. 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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Amniotic Stem Cells: Promises and Perils

by Rev. Dr. Robert W. Weise

The latest discovery of the pluripotent amniotic stem cells (cells that may turn-into various specialized types of cells or tissues, such as bone marrow, liver or skin) removed from the amniotic fluid surrounding the developing human being in the mother's womb have created a great deal of excitement amongst the pro-life community. Before anyone jumps onto the bandwagon of hype and hope, know the promises and perils of this new discovery, based on the original paper*.

Perils: At the first glance of published media reports in newspapers, magazines, and the Internet, pro-lifers were overjoyed—exhibiting the same hype used to promote embryonic stem cell research and the so-called cures that it will bring.

There are several areas that we need to focus on before we jump onto the “Eureka Band Wagon” of a technology that some believe, ultimately, will move embryonic stem cell research into the archives of scientific heresies. The following perils and concerns are presented for ongoing discussion and debate:

- The technology of genetic amniocentesis (and the use of chorionic villus sampling—CVS) has risks to the baby and mother.
- These technologies promote the choice to parents to either abort the severely disabled child or keep him or her if the test of the cells in the fluid show positive for a life threatening genetic disorder.
- These technologies, along with the possibility that extracted amniotic and chorionic stem cells, and the possibility of their use in treating genetic disorders propagate the exploitation of women and cause some women to volunteer for this test when it is medically unnecessary must be considered in our discussions.
- These technologies could lead to additional collection procedures of amniotic fluid as part of the elective abortion method.

Promises: The research results were scientifically profound. The researchers not only isolated fat, bone, muscle, skin, nerve, and liver cells from extracted amniotic cells, but also reported that these cells produced specialized functions.

For example, isolated bone marrow cells from amniotic stem cells showed the ability to produce functional bone marrow osteoblasts (bone marrow forming cells) and liver cells isolated from amniotic stem cells expressed proteins such as albumin and urea (a characteristic liver-specific function). In addition, amniotic stem cells produced characteristics of cardiac muscle and insulin production.

They hope that future banking techniques can be developed for the isolation and therapeutic use of amniotic stem cells. By saving them stored in liquid nitrogen, they could be used in the treatment of more than 3000 genetic disorders and spinal cord injuries.

Discussion: As a Lutheran pastor and professor, as well as a former medical research scientist, I am overwhelmed by the results of this research—a wonderful counter to those who remain staunch in their support that embryonic stem cells remain the penultimate approach to treat and cure the many medical diseases that remain untreatable as well as medical enigmas.

Christians need to stay tuned to the facts and their implications for the care of the mother and the unborn child. The results of *Roe v. Wade* remain pivotal to this issue and how Satan will use the technologies of genetic amniocentesis to tempt men and women to have an abortion

and donate the amniotic fluid removed from an elective abortion. The unborn is our neighbor to support and care for! Any test performed during the developing of the unborn child must be for caring and not for killing!

The Explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed tells us this:

“I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given *me* [emphasis mine] my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them;”

This occurs at conception/fertilization. The recovery of amniotic fluid stem cells shows tremendous possibilities. Christians need to be well informed on this new source for stem cells so that we do not get caught in the hype that this is the answer to treating genetic diseases and traumatic injuries. Pray that the Spirit of God continues to give us the wisdom of God to stand up for the God who creates and sustains all life in Christ.

(Rev. Dr. Robert Weise is Professor of Practical Theology and occupies the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis Chair of Pastoral Ministry and the Life Sciences, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.)

*P. De Coppi, G. Bartsch, Jr., M. M. Siddiqui, T. Xu, C. C. Santos, L. Perin, G. Mostoslavsky, A. C. Serre, E. Y. Snyder, J. J. Yoo, M. E. Furth, S. Soker & A. Atala, *Isolation of amniotic stem cell lines with potential for therapy*, Nature Biotechnology 25(1):100-106, 2007, doi: 10.1038/nbt1274.



Help for End-of-Life Issues in the Theology of the Cross

by Rev. Dr. Eugene Boe

The Lutheran ethicist Gilbert Meilaender has observed that “a good bit of public attention in recent years has been focused on developments at the beginning of life: new reproductive technologies, for instance, and research on embryos. But questions about what we ought to do for those near the end of life may be more enduring and are, at least by my lights, more puzzling.” (Gilbert Meilaender, *The Freedom of a Christian: Grace, Vocation, and The Meaning of Our Humanity* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006. page 167.)

God has not left us without a word so as to wander through the maze on our own. The theology of the cross of Jesus Christ is a beacon of light that resources us with the kind of help so desperately needed in the midst of puzzling end-of-life issues. The cross of Christ is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:23-24) This is not wisdom from and of the world as we find in autonomous reason which is characteristic of the theology of glory. This is not a wisdom resulting from human speculations or emotions, but rather a wisdom revealed and given through the cross. When we see our end-of-life issues through the cross we see with the eyes of God.

End-of-life issues deal with the ultimate matters of life and death. It is the cross of Christ that puts us right with God. The apostle Paul writes, **“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”** (1 Corinthians 1:18). Also the writer to the Hebrews says, **“Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death”** (Hebrews 2:14-15).

We can face the end of life with confidence because Jesus Christ has defeated the enemy of death. For the believer in Christ, the Savior of the world, it is death with a difference. The cross promises what no science or medicine can: immortality. **“But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”** (2 Timothy 1:10). Through the cross and Christ’s resurrection comes new life, eternal life, life with Christ without end.

Often when facing end-of-life issues, the reality of sin and guilt rise to a place of prominence. “What did I do to deserve this?” and other related questions occupy our thoughts. The cross proclaims to us that our suffering is not God exacting payment for our sins for God laid on Christ all of our sins (Isaiah 53: 6). He took on Himself all that we have deserved

because of our sins. He left none of our sins unaccounted for. **“He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed”** (Isaiah 53:5). Perhaps you are reading this article having already made end-of-life decisions on the basis of the world’s way of thinking. Jesus took that on Himself at the cross. He is your Lamb of God who takes away your sin!

The cross proclaims to us that suffering is not a sign of God’s absence or disfavor toward us. Jesus Christ did not turn His back on suffering nor did He walk away from those suffering. He suffered for us on the cross and He suffers with us in all that life brings. He does not abandon us to suffer alone.

The cross establishes that we belong to God and that our lives are not our own to do with as we please or to do what might seem to be reasonable to us as the theology of glory would determine. **“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again”** (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Life is not ours to give nor is it ours to take. We leave our lives in the hands of the One who has the power to lay down His life and to take it up again. This calls us to make decisions that have as their aim the care of life and not the taking of life. Indeed the cross of Jesus Christ makes the difference in facing and living through our end-of-life issues. Thanks be to God!

(Dr. Eugene Boe is Academic Dean and Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. www.lbs.edu.)

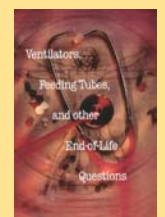
End-of-Life Booklets

Are you struggling with end-of-life decisions? Lutherans For Life has additional resources, including these well-received booklets. For more information go to: www.lutheransforlife.org.

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.*



A Day at Luther Clinic

by Linda D. Bartlett

It is nearly 7:00 p.m. on Saturday evening. Hours at Luther Clinic are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, but chairs in the waiting room were filled all day. It is the clinic's policy that no patient will be turned away. Most of the patients at Luther Clinic are women. Today was no exception. Some of them called ahead for appointments, but many came unexpectedly and out of fear.

The clinic is the partnership of two doctors, Luther and Brunkamp. Their skills compliment one another to help meet the needs of their patients. It is customary for Dr. Brunkamp to see the patients first. She asks the reason for the visit and listens to any concerns before performing a physical exam. Then, because Luther Clinic is free of federal funds and political correctness, she sends the patient on to the office of her colleague, Dr. Luther.

Dr. Luther has studied under the Great Physician. The Word of that Physician taught Dr. Luther to understand how sin can result in life-altering or even life-threatening consequences. For this reason, Dr. Luther is careful to connect the physical, emotional, and spiritual entities of men and women in a way that honors their created design. He has a reputation for sharing information many people have never heard.

The first patient on this Saturday was a college freshman exhibiting signs of severe depression. "Are you in a relationship?" asked Dr. Brunkamp. "No, I'm not," the girl responded, "but, I have a 'friend with benefits.'" There was a pause before the girl continued. "I'm a little confused. I really like this guy and he seems to like me, but when I suggest we go to a movie together or meet some other friends for a day at the mall, he says that would be a relationship and he's not ready for that. This is why I'm so confused. I don't really have a friend, but he's sure enjoying the 'benefits.'"

The day stretched long for Dr. Brunkamp. Three of her patients were girls in high school. One, 13, tested positive for herpes and one, 17, for the human papillomavirus (HPV). Neither considered themselves to be sexually active. The third girl, 16, was pregnant. Several of the patients were older women. Kate, at 30, had just suffered her third miscarriage. Ann, at 43, was having trouble conceiving. Kate and Ann spoke of multiple partners before marriage and their private

battles with Chlamydia. Did they know that this sexually transmitted disease scars tissue which can result in ectopic pregnancies and fertility problems? Laura, at 50, spoke of her successful career but expressed a deep sense of emptiness in her unmarried and childless state. She confessed to having had two abortions. "I now believe, doctor, that they may be my only children. How do I deal with this?"

By the end of the day, Dr. Luther found his colleague more weary than usual. "I'm so frustrated!" Dr. Brunkamp told him. "These women all had such promising futures. By the time I see them, they're physically scarred and emotionally wounded."

She paused with a heavy sigh. "I would give anything to be able to get to these women earlier, to tell them what Planned Parenthood and politically correct sex education refuses to tell them. The truth is, a woman's anatomy makes her more vulnerable to infection! Men and women are not the same!

A woman is not crazy to long for a faithful marriage, home, and family! I want to run through every high school and college campus screaming: Wait! Just wait—for any kind of sexual intimacy—until marriage! Wait for someone who has waited for you! You don't have to worry about HIV or HPV! You will survive!" Please, Dr. Luther, tell me there's some hope! Tell me that what we do here is making a difference!"

"My dear colleague," smiled Dr. Luther, "Jesus Christ makes all the difference. That's why we use His Word at this clinic. Listen up! Here's what I tell our patients. We are all in

the midst of a battle between God who loves us and the devil who despises us. God's very design of male and female preserves the human species. But, Satan, who can only distort God's perfect design, would have us all dead."

"Well," interrupted Dr. Brunkamp, "Satan must be very pleased with himself. He may not be killing these women, but he's leaving them physically scarred and emotionally dysfunctional."

"Ah," continued Dr. Luther, "the devil targets men and women where they are most vulnerable. Remember your patients Kate, Ann, and Laura from this afternoon? They all confessed to procreational acts outside of marriage; Laura confessed two abortions, but all mourned children they did not have. The world may view children as burdensome, but perhaps these women understood the truth: children are of great value! That makes motherhood a noble and high calling. We can help women see motherhood as the vocation it is. Personally, I am both delighted and awed by motherhood!



Young Adults Are Abandoning Biblical Faith

A Barna Group poll comparing the moral and religious views of young adults in their 20s and 30s with the views of adults over 40 shows that the young adults are abandoning the biblical faith of their elders at an alarming rate.

Morally speaking, adults in their 20s and 30s were at least twice as likely as their elders to have:

- a sexual encounter outside of marriage
- used illegal drugs
- gotten drunk
- used profanity in public
- lied
- taken revenge
- physically fought or physically abused someone
- viewed sexually explicit videos

The poll also found that young adults are 10 times more likely than older adults to download or trade music online illegally.

Differences also appeared in what the two groups believed. For example, young adults were more likely than older adults to reject the biblical concept of absolute truth. They were also significantly less likely to believe, as their elders do, that human beings should determine what is right and wrong morally by examining God's principles. Also, young adults were twice as likely than older adults to believe that ethics and morality are based on "what is right for the person."

Finally, even young Christian adults were more likely than older adults to accept same-sex marriage and pre-marital sex.

Vice President David Kinnaman of the Barna Group said: "It is important for churches to understand the natural skepticism of [young adults] as well as their desire for spiritual and conversational depth." He added, "Young adults do not want to hear on-the-stage monologues about moral regulations."

(Assist News Service, www.assistnews.net; Dr. Tom Snyder, *MOVIE-GUIDE*®, 11/23)

You know as well as I, Dr. Brunkamp, how a woman's body is adapted and formed for the care of infants. It amazes me to watch mothers comfort their little ones. Ha! Let a man try to do the same and he may act like a dancing camel, awkward and silly."

Dr. Brunkamp looked puzzled. "You surprise me, Dr. Luther. You always speak highly of men and their role."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dr. Luther, "Yes I do! Everyone does best when he—or she—does those things for which he—or she—was created. The female gender is merciful by nature because it is born to show mercy and to cherish—just as a man is born to protect! Consider the patient you saw this morning, the girl who told you she had a 'friend with benefits.' Did she come to our door, troubled and confused . . . only after she believed the world's lies? Did a man fail to protect her—indeed, love her with the unselfish love of Christ? You should have seen her expression when I told her she didn't have to have a 'friend with benefits.' She can decide to wait for the man who respects, appreciates, and guards her soul! He who marries a wife has her as a nest and home where he stays at a certain place, just as birds do with their young in their nest.

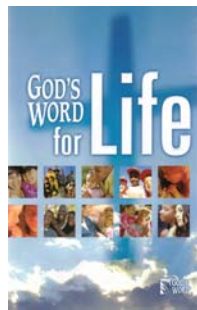
"My dear, dear colleague! Men can't do without women! Even if it were possible for men to beget and bear children, they still couldn't do without women. My wife, my dearest Katie, is my rib! With Christ as my model, I must be willing to forsake personal pleasure for the good of my wife and children. No man should be content to have those he loves exist in chaos; instead, all men should follow the design for order, reason, and logic. That design comes from God. This is most certainly true!"

Dr. Brunkamp's chin lifted; her shoulders straightened. "We do have our work cut out for us, don't we? You might say we're on the front line of a battle for marriage, home, and family. The culture needs us! We may be weary here among the wounded, but you're right. There is hope—for us, and for the hurting who are led to our door." She paused to watch Dr. Luther, almost tenderly packing *GOD'S WORD for Life* (see page 24) into his briefcase. "Strange, isn't it?"

Curious, he peered at his colleague over tiny rimmed glasses. "What's so strange?"

"How Truth changes one's perspective," she said, pointing to his Bible, "and even seems to energize! See you Monday!"

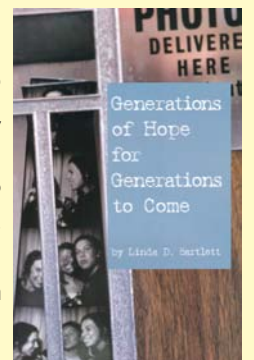
(This story is based on the author's experiences at the Lighthouse Center of Hope in Iowa Falls, Iowa; personal visits with two women physicians; the book, "Unprotected," by Anonymous, M.D.; and "What Luther Says," Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. Interested in hearing more of what Luther had to say about marriage, home, family, the church, and culture? Look for the Bible study "Martin Luther: An Example for Christians Who Want to Change Their Culture," available as a downloadable PDF from Lutherans For Life: www.lutheransforlife.org.)



Generations of Hope for

Generations to Come, by Linda Bartlett, can serve as a tool to help build a bridge between generations, an encouragement for LFL leaders, a motivation for parents, a promise to the faithful, a reason to take heart! Because of Jesus, people change, and changed people change the culture in which they live!

Item 906B. \$2.00 ea.



New Zealand – Manufacturers of the birth control drug Plan B have admitted that it can cause abortion. Schering Ltd, which produces the drug for sale in New Zealand, has produced a pamphlet about Plan B, which states that one of the ways in which the drug works is by “Stopping a fertilized egg from attaching itself to the lining of the uterus.” (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 1/3; *SPUC*, 1/4)

South Africa – An investigation on behalf of the South African Broadcasting Corporation has revealed that young girls are having abortions under the mistaken belief that it is a form of contraception. (*SABC* 11/14; *SPUC*, 11/16)

Chile – The fifth circuit court of appeals in Chile has upheld a lower court’s decision to continue to allow the abortifacient morning-after pill to be dispensed to minors without parental consent. (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 11/13; *SPUC*, 11/16)

Ukraine – Babies in the Ukraine are reportedly being stolen from their parents at birth and killed so that their organs and stem cells can be harvested for international trade. The Ukraine is the main supplier of the global stem cell trade, and officially provides embryonic stem cells of aborted babies with the mothers’ consent, but it is now suspected that there could also be hundreds of babies stolen at birth to feed demand for stem cells from around the world. (*Daily Mail*, *SPUC*, 12/18)

United Nations – Nicholas Eberstadt of the American Enterprise Institute said at a UN conference that sex selection abortion is leading to a worldwide imbalance in gender. He calls it a “global war against baby girls.” Natural birth rates are about 105 males for every 100 females born, but in some areas of the world the rates are as high as 150 boys per 100 girls. He cited a recent study showing that there are 20 million “missing” baby girls in Asia alone and this is permanently skewing the demographic balance in China and, increasingly, in India too. He thinks it is likely the only remedy will be a curb on all abortions. (*EWTN News*, 12/11; *SPUC*, 12/13)

England/Wales – A counselor for the pro-life charity LIFE has commented on the high number of abortions, including repeat abortions, among teenagers. Michaela Aston said: “This is a failure of the sex education strategy that has been forced on girls of this age for more than 10 years . . . It’s bad enough for teenage girls to be having one abortion, let alone repeated abortions, and they are obviously not being protected against the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases . . . girls tell me they no longer have a defense against having sex because of the overwhelming pressure from those promoting pills and condoms.” (*Daily Mail*, 12/21; *SPUC*, 12/27)



India – An Indian court has given elephants the same status as humans in a recent ruling. The Rajasthan High Court gave the owner of an elephant killed in a working accident £6,850, treating it as a “living creature equivalent to a human being.” Saddique Khan, the owner of the elephant, argued that the elephant should be considered to be of equal value to a human because she responded to commands, performed tricks, and was the main financial provider for his family. (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 12/22; *SPUC*, 12/28)

Spain – A Spanish hospital has used embryonic sex selection to screen out blind children. The Quir’n Hospital in Donostia-San Sebastian did the procedure for a woman who is a carrier of retinosis pigmentaria, an hereditary illness of the eye which causes severe visual impairment and often leads to blindness. Male children have a 50 percent chance of being born with the disease while females are born healthy but have a 50 percent chance of being carriers. In this case, sex selection was used to screen out male embryos who could have been born blind. (*Medical News Today*, 12/28; *SPUC*, 12/29)

Malta – A majority of Maltese citizens support a proposed constitutional amendment to enshrine the unborn child’s right to life in law, according to a recent poll. Three hundred households were asked the question: “Do you agree with the proposed Constitutional amendment to provide the unborn child with the right to life and, therefore, protect Malta further from the possibility of abortion being legalized in the future?” Eighty-four percent of those questioned agreed, while only eight percent disagreed and 7.7 percent said they were unsure. Gift of Life,

the organization that commissioned the poll, said in a press release: “These extremely positive research results clearly show that the proposal has the full backing of the Maltese population.” (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 1/2; *SPUC*, 1/3)

China – The Chinese premier has said that the country’s one-child policy will continue. Wen Jiabo said that China “will adhere to the basic policy of family planning with improved services and stronger leadership.” However, wealthy people in China can reportedly find ways to defy the one-child policy by paying the large fine, registering as “overseas Chinese,” or going abroad to give birth. For the poor there is no escaping the harsh methods used to enforce the policy. United Nations figures indicate that China’s population will begin to decline after 2025, and that by 2050 there will be twice as many people over 50 as under 20. (*Medical News Today*, *Reuters*, 1/4; *SPUC*, 1/5; *Sunday Times*, 1/7; *SPUC*, 1/8)

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

March for Life Reflections

by Karen L. Frohwein

As I gathered my warm clothes and my thoughts in preparation for attending the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 22, I wondered what the day would bring. As a citizen of this country, I believe it is important to be a part of the political process. Abortion is certainly a political issue, as the thousands of marchers with their banners, the politicians speaking to the crowd on the National Mall, and our destination—the steps of the Supreme Court—indicated. The atmosphere was charged with emotion and energy as pro-life people of all ages marked the 34th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

But, I wasn't marching as a citizen involved in a political cause. I was attending as a member of Lutherans For Life. I was a member of a group of about 50 people, decked out in blue and white "LFL '07" scarves and headbands, marching together under a Lutherans For Life banner. Was there something different, something unique, about our group? I believed there was. We were there to witness to the sanctity of human life because of Who created, redeemed, and preserves life. We were there because abortion, and all life issues, are spiritual issues.

Three stories of the day reminded me of what it means to be a pro-life Lutheran. The first was how we began our day—in worship—acknowledging our Creator, hearing His words of life from the pulpit, confessing our sins, and receiving His very body and blood gathered together at His Table. This is the Lutherans For Life message. The rest of the day, with all the press coverage and public display, was nothing compared to the life message of the Gospel and the new life we received together through Word and Sacrament.

At the conclusion of the service, we made our trip into D.C. and joined the throng for the March—God's people, LFL'ers—reaching out to transform society. The atmosphere on the National Mall sometimes made me wonder why I was there. It had a somewhat carnival feel with the chanting crowds, the food vendors weaving through the masses, and at times rock music blaring from the public address system. Maybe it was pro-life rock music. I really couldn't understand the words. Which leads me to my second story.

Besides the visible signs identifying our group, LFL'ers witnessed as we marched through the singing of hymns. How Lutheran! *Onward Christian Soldiers* and *A Mighty Fortress*

is *Our God* rang out on the streets of the nation's capital! As we joined together in *Chief of Sinners Though I Be*, I was again reminded of how we are different from other pro-life groups. We reach out with the Gospel to address the life issues because we recognize our own sin. We were confessing our own sins against the Lord of Life—the times we remained silent as a mother aborted her Down syndrome child, or ignored the needs of a young single mom after she chose life for her baby, or put our efforts into saving a child from abortion but fell short of bringing that child to the waters of Baptism. We weren't singing "chief of sinners though *you* be." We were reaching out to those who were seeking light in the darkness of death as fellow sinners who recognize the saving power of the Gospel.

Yes, we witnessed as we walked, but really, can a group of warmly-dressed, hymn-singing Lutherans For Life folks on the streets of DC make a difference? Allow me to tell one more story. As we approached the Supreme Court, there was a group

of young women protesting on the steps of a nearby building. These women had bought into the culture of death. Their words of anger were unmistakable, but it was their faces that caught my attention. These were beautiful, young women full of pro-death anger instead of hope for the future. They should be celebrating life—not death! Was it a coincidence that as our group



passed by, we were singing *How Great Thou Art*?

A man walking beside our group offered us words of encouragement as he said, "Keep singing. This is important!" It was then that I was reminded that politics won't change these women, but a great God can. Somewhere in that group of women God's message of hope, expressed by our hearty band of marching Lutherans, fell on ears that were open to hear. We know God's Word will not return empty. We may never know that woman, but we will share heaven with her someday. That is the message of Lutherans For Life—in the midst of anger and confusion—we proclaim Life!

It was then, as we stood at the steps of the Supreme Court, that I realized the evidence that life issues are spiritual issues for the church to address was clear and convincing. As Lutherans, we must march on wherever we are—For Life—in Christ.

(Karen L. Frohwein is Director of Development for Lutherans For Life. Photo courtesy of Paula Schlueter Ross, LCMS Reporter.)

New IRA Rollover Law

“With God all things are possible” Matthew 19:26.

Faithful donors like you often tell us they wish they could make a difference “For Life” by giving a significant gift—the gift of a lifetime—but feel their dream is out of reach. The new IRA Rollover Law may help you make a significant gift to Lutherans For Life in 2007.

On August 17, 2006, President Bush signed into law the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which includes a provision permitting charitable rollovers from individual retirement accounts (both traditional and Roth IRAs). Throughout 2007, individuals age 70½ or above can make charitable gifts directly from their IRA accounts. The gifts are limited to a maximum of \$100,000 in each year, and must be made directly to a charitable organization (gifts to donor-advised funds and charitable trusts do not qualify). Because the distribution is made directly from the IRA account to a charity, it is accomplished without triggering any federal or state income taxes.

If you are 70½ or above, this new legislation presents a unique short-term window to give to Lutherans For Life through your IRA accounts.

How Does This Work?

1. The donor requests his or her IRA plan administrator to transfer funds to a charitable organization, such as Lutherans For Life (donor-advised funds, supporting organizations, and private foundations are not included under the provisions).
2. The IRA administrator transfers funds directly to the charity.
3. This “qualified charitable distribution” is excluded from the donor’s adjusted gross income.

Prospective donors should consult with tax advisors before making any charitable distributions from IRAs. Because the funds will be transferred directly from your IRA plan to Lutherans For Life, donors should advise the National LFL office of their intentions so that your gift is properly credited when it arrives.

If you wish to discuss the IRA charitable rollover at greater length, or if you wish to inquire about other creative giving opportunities, please contact Karen Frohwein, LFL’s Director of Development, at 888-364-LIFE, or by e-mail at kfrohwein@lutheransforlife.org.

You can do the impossible! You can make the difference of a lifetime—“For Life”—today!

Life Down Under

By Ed Szeto, Director of Outreach

While on vacation in December 2006, I had the distinct pleasure of speaking on stem cell research and cloning at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Lyons, Australian Capital Territory—an opportunity made possible through Dr. Rob Pollnitz of Lutherans for Life (Australia), a ministry of the Lutheran Church of Australia.

The talk was timely as the Australian Senate had recently voted to overturn a ban on human cloning (soon followed by the House of Representatives). Prior to the vote, newspaper columnist Miranda Devine wrote:

It’s ironic that the most passionate proponents of embryonic cloning are women . . . Yet where will scientists get the thousands of human eggs they need for experiments? Few women will line up for debilitating hyper-ovulation hormones just to donate eggs for ethically questionable research . . . egg shortages will leave women open to exploitation and will raise the unsavory prospect of harvesting eggs from dead women or aborted female fetuses.¹

The vote happened in spite of the fact that the leaders of the three main political parties were all opposed to lifting the ban, including the Opposition leader, Kevin Rudd, who said, “I find it very difficult to support a legal regime which allows creation of a form of human life with the single purpose of allowing the conduct of experimentation.”²

At my presentation was a woman who had just applied for a job with the oversight committee for stem cell research and cloning firms in Australia. She was glad to have her convictions against embryonic stem cell research and human cloning strengthened—and for a glimpse at potential abuses.

It was an exciting time to visit Australia and share God’s Word on life issues. I am thankful for the opportunity!

1. Miranda Devine, “Embryonic imbroglio,” *The Sun-Herald* (Sydney), Dec 3, 2006.
2. Mark Davis and Mark Metherell, “Embryo cloning gets the go-ahead,” *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney), Dec 7, 2006.



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Life Thoughts in the Church Year

Based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*, using the English Standard Version.

April 1 – Palm Sunday

The Annunciation of our Lord observed last Sunday marks the beginning of Jesus' humiliation at the moment of His conception. This Sunday's Gospel, Luke 23:1-56, gives the reason why. Jesus came as an embryo, as a human being, to suffer and die for sinful humanity. What a great love He shows for life! What a great sacrifice He makes for eternal life!

April 8 – The Resurrection of our Lord

The disciples thought what the women told them about Jesus' empty tomb was an "idle tale" (Luke 24:11). But this tale becomes the greatest tale ever told! Christ is risen! Death is defeated. Life wins!

April 15 – Second Sunday of Easter

After he released the Apostles from prison, the angel said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life" (Acts 5:20). What a beautiful way to describe Jesus and His message—Life!

April 22 – Third Sunday of Easter

Rejoice! The scroll—which contains what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen to God's people—is in the hands of the resurrected Jesus (Revelation 5:7). That means He holds you and your life and all the circumstances of your life in His hands. Take courage!

April 29 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Undershepherds of the Good Shepherd are to declare the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Declaring God's truth that may offend or cause controversy should not be avoided by God's church. For this too is part of being called to "care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

May 6 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

To illustrate the movement from sorrow to joy the disciples will experience, Jesus contrasts the sorrow of labor pains with the joy of giving birth. Today many women move from joy to sorrow when pressured into aborting their babies. These women, many of whom are in our pews, need to hear of the forgiveness and joy Jesus gives that no one can take away (John 16:21-22).

May 13 – Sixth Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)

Single moms, working moms, stay at home moms, moms who have lost babies through miscarriage or abortion all have special struggles as they try to cope in a world of tribulation. What comfort and hope in Jesus' words, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world

you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

May 20 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

The beauty and perfection of life in Eden will be restored complete with the "river of the water of life" and the "tree of life" (Revelation 22:1-2). What hope and purpose this brings to our lives right here and now.

May 27 – Day of Pentecost

On Pentecost, we see the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). We see the fulfillment of that promise daily as the Holy Spirit comes to us through the means of grace. He is our "Helper," the very presence of God, as we deal with life's struggles. He is our Truth that teaches us "all things" when we deal with life's falsehoods. We rely on His presence and His truth not on what the world offers or what our feelings tell us.

June 3 – The Holy Trinity

Acts 2:33 reveals our Triune God in a single verse. "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." What great value our Triune God gives to human life that all three persons are intimately involved in our creation, redemption, and sanctification.

June 10 – Second Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 5)

"And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived" (1 Kings 17:22). "'Young man, I say to you, arise.' And the dead man sat up and began

to speak" (Luke 7:14-15). The gift of life comes from God.

June 17 – Third Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 6) (Father's Day)

Like David, many contemporary fathers have "utterly scorned the LORD" (2 Samuel 12:14) by pressuring the mother of their own child into abortion. Later, when the reality hits, they are filled with guilt and despair. Other fathers want their baby but have no legal say to stop the abortion and are filled with helplessness and hopelessness. Both need to be uplifted by the love of God in Christ.

June 24 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 7)

Just laws are necessary to curb evil. Christian citizens should support and champion such laws. But only the Word of Christ can send the demons packing! (Luke 8:26-39)



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