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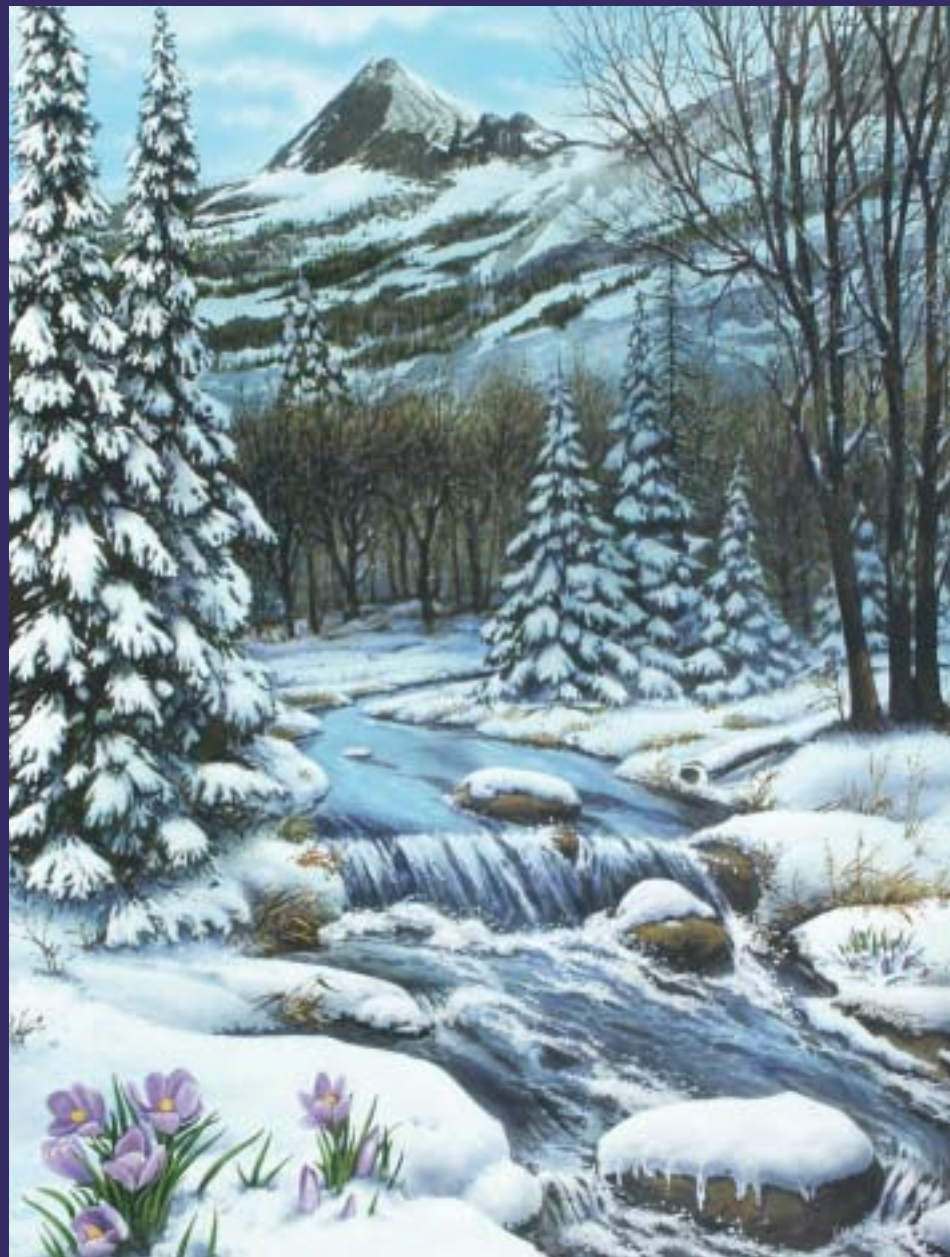
Volume 25, Number 2 March/April 2005

Shall We
Call It
“Doublespeak?”

Umbilical
Cord
Banking:
An Ethical
Stem Cell
Alternative

Easter
Sunrise

You Can
Handle
The Truth



your gifts at work

Christmas at New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers

Home Director, Pastor Doug Bode, provided this report: "Had a little Christmas party at NB tonight and even got Pizza Hut pizza – a big treat. Charlene had wrapped up some donated things for the girls and children, born and unborn. They seemed to enjoy it. After that, we went to Target so they could spend their Christmas gift certificates. They surprised us a little later with a card, a very nice handwritten thanks in the card, and a couple pretty candles. That was special!"

Thanks to all of you who helped give the residents at *New Beginnings* a Christmas observance that was, for some, a very new experience.

Ministry Updates

January was a busy month for the staff at Christian Life Resources. Pastor Fleischmann, Paul Snamiska, and Tim Snyder visited chapters, schools, and congregations as our nation observed the 32nd anniversary of legalized abortion in America. This sad anniversary is a reminder of the work left to be done as we speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Finally, we continue to improve the Christian Life Resources website. While a full launch of a new site is scheduled for the fall of this year, we continue to provide updated information on life and family issues. Be sure to check it out at www.ChristianLifeResources.com.



New Life Sunday Materials Available

Consider a "Life Theme" for Mother's Day or Father's Day this year. Service ideas, bulletin inserts, and a children's song are new for 2005 and available for free download from our website at www.ChristianLifeResources.com

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activity spotlight

Little Effort - Great Results

As we approach Mother's Day, your congregation can pay homage to the state of motherhood in a special way. Consider participation in the "Change for Life" Baby Bottle Program. For a period of time members keep a specially-supplied baby bottle on their counter or dresser. Each day they put in their loose change. Some may feel especially blessed and want to place a check into that baby bottle.

When the time comes all of the individual baby bottles are returned to church. The money is gathered and then sent to the national office of Christian Life Resources. The gifts go directly to the ministry the church specifies (Christian Life Resources or New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers).

This little effort brings incredible results. In 2004 this "Change for Life" program brought in nearly \$34,000 for this valuable ministry. Some congregations are even making this project an annual event. Some also work with their local Thrivent branch to match some of the funds. The result is direct help for mothers and their children at our special home and/or support of the ministry of Christian Life Resources. 🌸

To learn more on how you can have great results with little effort through the "Change for Life" Baby Bottle Program, contact: 1-800-729-9535, email: bottle@ChristianLifeResources.com, or go on-line at: www.ChristianLifeResources.com/?Changeforlifebabybottleproject




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The mission of Christian Life Resources (CLR) is to use life and family issues as bridges to convey the love of God and to share the message of salvation through Christ. CLR oversees the work of three distinct divisions: *WELS Lutherans for Life* develops educational materials and resources supporting our life and family ministry, and assists 82 affiliates in conducting their regional ministries and operation of 23 counseling and resource centers; *COMPASS Productions* produces media projects both within and outside the realm of life issues; and *Life Resources International* provides pro-life counseling, resources and humanitarian aid to people in other countries.

New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers, a separate legal entity affiliated with CLR, supports single mothers in a residential setting who have decided to carry their babies to term while teaching them how to include Jesus in their lives.

The Christians Concerned for Life Foundation is a separate legal entity affiliated with CLR, established to sponsor special life and family affirming projects not covered by regular operating budgets. Gifts to the foundation and subsequent earnings are granted to special projects which reflect Biblical principles in protecting human life and ministering to souls.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version @ 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Christian Life Resources (CLR) reserves and maintains the following websites:
www.ChristianLifeResources.com,
www.ClearlyCaring.com,
www.LifeWitness.com,
www.HomeforMothers.com,
www.SectionQ.com,
www.CLRStore.com,
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Shall We Call it "Doublespeak?"

by Rev. Robert Fleischmann
National Director of Christian Life Resources

I don't really know if there is a word for it. There is a secondary definition for "double talk": *Deliberately ambiguous or evasive language.* Also called *doublespeak*. While some use this type of language to be deliberately ambiguous or evasive, I am finding many more people using *doublespeak* in ignorance. Let me explain.

"I will buy a word for \$5,000"

Dr. Bernard Nathanson was one of the three founders of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL). The mission was to sell the American public on the concept of abortion-on-demand. His tools were lies, deceit, and doublespeak. In 1969 NARAL allocated \$5,000 to a public relations firm to "sell" the American public on abortion-on-demand. Two objectives needed to be met to do so: 1) fabricate statistics to make society believe that abortion-on-demand was favored by the majority of the public; and 2) frame the issue positively.

Nathanson acknowledges that to make NARAL's case, he and his cohorts claimed to have statistics showing a majority of the American public favored abortion-on-demand. He explained it this way: "Knowing that if a true poll were taken, we would be soundly defeated, we simply fabricated the results of fictional polls. We announced to the media that we had taken polls and that 60 percent of Americans were in favor of permissive abortion. This is the tactic of the self-fulfilling lie. Few people care to be in the minority."

Secondly, in order to re-frame the abortion issue, NARAL appropriated the term "choice." No one, even today, likes to talk about "abortion." Everyone likes to talk about having choices. So, to this day abortion advocates consider themselves "pro-choice" and even some pro-life advocates use that term. They are duped by the doublespeak.

"Surely not I?"

When Jesus stunned His disciples with news that one of them would betray Him, Judas engaged in doublespeak: "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Judas' intent was clear: divert attention away from himself and thereby preserve his plan. We know how that story ended. It didn't work for Judas. He wanted everyone to look past him, but sinners can't lie to God.

Today doublespeak is engaged in knocking people off track when a critical decision is to be made. For example, in a November 2004 *Associated Press* article about "living wills," author Laura Meckler wrote the following: "Would you want to linger in a vegetative state if it were unlikely you'd ever wake up? Or would you rather be allowed to die?"

Talk about leading questions! Who would want to linger in a vegetative state? If God was taking your life, would you want to fight against Him? Ms. Meckler's doublespeak is clearly meant for her readers to look past the issue at hand and be emotionally led down an agonizing road where efforts to preserve a life can only be seen as intrusive, undignified, and harmful.

Consider another way those words could have been written: "Would you want someone to shorten your life simply because its quality is diminished?" Or: "Would you prefer to live according to God's timetable?" It has to do with how words are stated. While no one cherishes the idea of living in a so-called vegetative state, it is sometimes the path of life that is handed to someone for a time. The distinctively Christian approach to such challenging issues is not to ask, "What do I like?" but "What would God have me do?"

*Judas engaged in doublespeak:
"Surely not I, Rabbi?" Judas'
intent was clear: divert attention
away from himself and thereby
preserve his plan.*

When the quality of one's life changes it is never easy. No one wants it to happen, yet it does. It's talked about a lot in the Bible. It is seen all around us and even in our own lives. But an attitude that "not my will but Thine be done" accepts a station in life rooted in the confidence that God has a purpose for it (Romans 8:28).

In this debate no one wants to talk about who really has authority over life and death. If the discussion is framed in such a way that life is only measured by what is lost, one cannot be surprised how short the leap is from talk to action. We see it now. People are creating medical directive statements with the primary intent of defining how rough they want life to get before action is taken to end it. Who is talking to God? Who is looking for His direction? His Word

(continued on page 6)

does not grant permission to shorten even a low quality life, no matter how badly it is desired. Don't be tricked by the doublespeak. It creates a bias contrary to God's will.

A lesson in futility

"Futile efforts" are those that are viewed as a big waste of time. Futility is to engage in something that just doesn't work. A person doesn't want to do futile things. But there is a doublespeak about futility that catches many people off guard.

Take, for example, a patient who suffers a serious stroke. Though not fatal, there is little, if any, likelihood of any significant improvement. All the things we knew this person to be are now different. That quick wit, sharp reaction, subtle sense of humor, or even the warm hug and friendly smile are now gone. Instead the patient's face looks dazed and out of touch. There is a lot of sleeping, very little conversing, and a lot of pointlessness to the day-to-day existence. Or so it would seem. From our perspective, there is pain that we wish would go away.

The patient has pain. The physical pain can usually be treated, but there is likely an emotional pain because the patient never would have chosen to live in this manner. There was a vibrancy and energy in life that is now reduced to this.

There is also our pain... remembering the better times – the engaging conversations and the warm hugs. The pain can be almost unbearable and the wish is that it would go away.

So the doctor states that some decisions must be made. At issue is the patient's feeding. It takes too long to do it by hand. There is too little staffing available for such a time commitment. Nasogastric feeding is an option but running a tube through the nose just seems uncomfortable. The real option is gastric feeding with a tube surgically inserted into the abdomen. But then – here it comes – it won't

change things. The patient will still be a stroke victim – unresponsive and needing constant care.

"It won't change things." Did you catch it? Do you hear the



doublespeak? What does feeding *ever* change? It never heals – it is not supposed to. It doesn't make blind people see or deaf people hear. It does not cure cancer or fight infection. Feeding simply sustains life. That is it. Nothing more and nothing less.

Feeding is not a curative experiment to try on a stroke patient. It is not some test to measure cognitive changes each day based on the balance of fruits, meats, and vegetables. Feeding simply sustains life. So there is only one reason not to feed and that is to stop sustaining life.

When we learn to compete with Christian values we become effective witnesses to the Gospel and forces of good in the world.

Now if there are other indicators suggesting that death is imminent (within a few days) no matter how a patient is fed, then feeding truly is futile. The kidney failure, the weakened heart, the liver failure, etc., all may not be able to be reversed. Then feeding is a waste – it is futile.

If, however, such failures are not happening, the decision to stop feeding accomplishes only one purpose: to end the life of someone. Don't be caught by the doublespeak. Feeding sustains, it does not cure.

It's not black and white, it's white and black

Read the above again! It sounds stupid, doesn't it? After all, it's just semantics and all in how you say it. In the end it is partially black and partially white, no matter how it is stated, how the syllables are inflected, or how dramatically and sincerely the case is presented.

The final example of doublespeak does just that: it says the same thing differently with the expectation that the point is missed.

Stem cell research is the ethical "flavor of the year." Bolstered by high profile endorsements stem cell research is being touted as the healing cure-all for

medicine. The Christian community has long supported stem cell research. The use of adult or umbilical cord stem cells to replicate tissue and repair organ or tissue damage is a wonderful way to care for others. What, however, happens when it is said that in order to help one person another must first be killed? Sounds crazy, doesn't it? Well, welcome to 21st century ethics.

While all of the advancements are being made in adult and umbilical cord stem cell research, it is actually embryonic stem cell research that is creating all the buzz today. You see, when stem cells are extracted from umbilical cord blood or from adults no risk is involved. No lives are endangered or lost. But in embryonic stem cell research a sad by-product of extracting the stem cells is that human life in its embryonic stage is destroyed. In fact, to gather enough stem cells for experimentation many lives must be lost.

The doublespeak continues with the advent of cloning technology. Cloning became a public issue with the creation of Dolly the sheep. Recently a woman paid \$50,000 to have her late cat cloned. Now humans are being cloned. Though the process is still flawed enough that no cloned human has yet been born, the inevitable has taken place: with the cloning of one species, it was only a matter of time before the human species would be next.

What happens in the cloning debate is that advocates play with some terminology to mask their work. Public opinion polls consistently reflect opposition to cloning people to make other people. That is called "reproductive cloning." But people are now being cloned just for experimentation and their eventual destruction. That is called "therapeutic cloning." Do you catch the distinction?

The bottom line is that human beings are being cloned. While still in the embryonic stage, stem cells are extracted, thereby killing the life as an embryo. It is still cloning. It is still the creation of human life. The only difference is that with reproductive cloning the intent is to bring about new life, and with therapeutic cloning the intent is that the new life dies.

Advocates, however, want people to think they are being ethical in not creating humans because they know the public isn't ready to accept human cloning.

But they use doublespeak to fool people into thinking the objection is in the cloning alone. The objection is in the *killing*. Whether therapeutic or reproductive cloning is being done, human life is being created. Therapeutic cloning becomes even more offensive because it is not simply the reckless creation of human life – it is creating human life with the sole purpose of killing it, hoping that one day it might help others.

Don't be fooled

Some say the glass is half empty. Others say it is half full. While it may reflect two different ways to look at something, it doesn't change the reality. Doublespeak is a clever tool for people to get their way when the truth is just too hard to swallow. Be on your guard by growing in your knowledge of God's Word so you are not duped by every clever phrase used by those who wish to do wrong. The world is attracted to such things but don't be fooled (Romans 1:30). Doublespeak is simply a guise to do wrong. ❖

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www.CLRevents.com or
call 800-729-9535.

by Paul Snamiska
WELS Lutherans for Life Administrator

Q: What is terminal sedation? Is it the same as physician-assisted suicide?

A: Physician-assisted suicide is defined as a physician's act that is meant to intentionally end the life of a patient. Terminal sedation is practiced when a patient is drugged into unconsciousness and kept that way until death.

Although physician-assisted suicide is illegal in most parts of the world, terminal sedation is quietly allowed in most medical institutions. There seems to be an attitude that terminal sedation is acceptable because the practice does not immediately kill the patient, as is done with physician-assisted suicide. Terminal sedation "allows" the patient to die more

naturally and gradually. Supporters of terminal sedation also note that death is accomplished with the use of legal pain medications that are simply given in larger doses.

In applying this issue within the Christian ethic, there are two considerations. Scripture teaches us that God alone has the authority over life and death (Deuteronomy 32:39). We also know that our responsibility is to provide care as we preserve and protect human life (Genesis 9:5-6; Luke 10).

Euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and terminal sedation are all meant to end a life prematurely, usually for the purpose of alleviating suffering. When these acts assume authority over life and death, they go beyond the responsibility God grants to man. The second issue deals with the provision of comfort and care for others. When a loved one is suffering, he or she needs to be kept as comfortable as possible. That means medication can rightly be administered for the purpose of relieving pain.



In conclusion, the use of pain medication is acceptable when the purpose is to alleviate pain and to keep the patient relatively comfortable. Once the *intent* goes beyond the suppression of pain and becomes an intentional termination of human life, then it is an act that presumes an authority over life and death that God does not give to mankind.

Q: If frozen embryos are going to be destroyed anyway, isn't it better to donate them to science so some good can come from their destruction?

A: An "end justifies the means" philosophy is not consistent with the principles of Scripture. God's Word teaches that life is already present at conception (Psalm 51:5), therefore these frozen embryos are human beings in a very early stage of life. The fact that some of them are not going to survive to birth and beyond does not give us license to intentionally destroy them, even for the "benefit" of science.

There are two considerations when dealing with this question. The first is that there are organizations (such as snowflakes.org) that arrange for these frozen embryos to be adopted by infertile couples who have not been able to adopt through other channels. The second is that a supply of embryonic stem cells already exists which is available for researchers seeking benefits for mankind.

The embryos that were "created" in these clinics were meant to bring children into the lives of infertile couples. Rather than willingly destroying these young lives, even in the name of science, a more positive and godly response is to allow them the opportunity to continue their lives within a loving family. ❖



UMBILICAL CORD BANKING: An Ethical Stem Cell Alternative

Roger and Cindy Aggson both have a history of cancer in the family. It was for this reason that the couple decided to bank their youngest son's cord blood when he was born, an increasingly popular practice that capitalizes on the ability of special cells in the umbilical cord to treat a variety of life-threatening diseases.

"Because cord blood is rich in stem cells, a special type of cell that generates blood cells, it is useful in treating leukemia and other malignancies of the bone marrow as well as some immune deficiencies and sickle cell anemia," said Janice Olson, medical director of the Cancer and Blood Disorders Program at Legacy Emanuel Hospital & Health Center. Cord blood stem cells, which regenerate blood, differ from the more controversial embryonic stem cells, which have the ability to differentiate into any cells in the body.

"From the mom's perspective," said Aggson, "cord blood banking is a simple process." Before her son's birth, Aggson contacted a private company that banks cord blood. The company mailed a collection kit overnight. In the delivery room, after the umbilical cord was severed, a nurse used a syringe to extract the blood. The Aggsons then used a courier service to ensure the kit would arrive at the company within 24 hours.

Most doctors encourage parents to bank cord blood with public agencies rather than private companies. "I heartily recommend that parents bank cord blood with the Red Cross," Olson said. Her concerns have less to do with the legitimacy of private-sector practices – there are several companies that offer the service – than with the slim chance that a child would actually use his or her own cord blood. Parents who give cord blood to the Red Cross do so with the understanding that it is a donation and the agency may release the stem cells to others. Over the past year the Red Cross has collected and stored 350 cord blood donations for transplant use and has sent out 100 units.

Jeffrey Barrows, MD, Director of Medical Education International, explains: "When I was in my Ob/Gyn



residency in the early 1980's, umbilical cord blood was something to be disposed of; but today, that has drastically changed. As this article points out, umbilical cord blood is rich in blood stem cells and the therapeutic benefits of those stem cells are being rapidly expanded. Umbilical cord blood should now be recognized as a valuable therapeutic resource that should not be wasted. If the patient desires to make use of that resource, she has two options: private cord blood banking for her own personal/family use, or making a public cord blood bank donation. Private cord blood banking is expensive, with the initial cost around \$1,700 and an added annual fee of approximately \$95 per year. The probability of someone needing a transplant of autologous blood stem cells in their lifetime is one in 400.

"The other option is to donate the umbilical cord blood to the public sector. The National Marrow Donor Program has worked with the American Red Cross and other organizations to create a network of cord blood banks across the country. Donation is free and does not harm the baby or the mother in any way. There is potentially more benefit from donating excess umbilical cord blood to the public than donating a unit of whole blood to the Red Cross, with no side effects." ❖

To find the closest cord blood bank to your hospital visit:
http://www.marrow.org/cgi-bin/NETWORK/nmdp_cord_blood_banks.pl

For more information about cord blood donation and storage visit:
<http://www.cmdahome.org/index.cgi?CONTEXT=art&art=2440>

[SOURCE: 1/13/05 - Christian Medical and Dental Association News & Views]

Abortion Advocacy Group Report Finds Increasing Passage of State Pro-Life Measures

NARAL, a leading U.S. abortion advocacy group, released its 14th annual report in January 2005 on the status of state abortion laws. The findings show that states are passing pro-life measures at an increasing rate and that 19 states would ban abortion if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. In 2004, NARAL found that 714 pro-life laws were passed in state legislatures; a 28 percent increase from the previous year. According to the report, if *Roe* is overturned, 19 states would quickly ban abortion and another 19 would follow suit.

[SOURCE: 1/13/05 - *LifeNews.com*]

Statistics Reveal a Changing Society

The face of society continues to change. Americans are now living longer and giving birth to fewer babies. For example, when Social Security was passed in the 1930s, 40 Americans were working for every retiree. A comparison of statistics from the 1930s also indicates that today's average birthrate is down 35 percent and the median age of females at first marriage is up by four years. That ratio has plummeted to three to one. The U.S. Census Bureau also calculates that by 2025, elders will increase in numbers by 80 percent.; yet the working adult population will only increase by 15 percent.

[SOURCE: 1/21/05 - *Changing values, Star Parker*]

California Stem-Cell Panel Have Financial Holdings in Biotech Companies

The *Sacramento Bee* reports that one-third of the directors overseeing California's stem-cell research fund have financial holdings in biotechnology companies. Ten of the 29 directors on the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee could profit from the taxpayer funding, increasing criticisms that the money will go to the biotech industry and not towards finding cures. The rules require the directors to disqualify themselves from voting on issues involving biotech companies of which they have financial interest. Consumer advocates are calling on the directors to sell their holdings.

[SOURCE: 1/21/05 - *Sacramento Bee*]

Faith- and Family-Friendly Movies Make Box Office Impact

Films sympathetic to faith and family are not only uplifting, they are showing increased financial returns. An analysis of the movie industry's final box office returns indicates that of 2004's top ten money-making films, one was a G-rated film, four were PG films, and four were PG-13 films. Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, ranked third in 2004 box office receipts, was the only R-rated film to make the Top 10 listing.

[SOURCE: 1/05 - *Family Research Council*]

Older Women Have Increasing Abortion Rates

New research shows that the abortion rates for older women are on the rise as pro-life groups and pregnancy centers focus on providing pregnancy help and assistance to teenagers and college students. The Beverly LaHaye Institute, a think tank sponsored by Concerned Women for America, shows that women over the age of 25 are having a larger share of abortions. The data show that such women are also having repeat abortions at a much higher rate (nearly half of all abortions are repeat abortions) – some having four or more abortions. Abortions on women who have already had at least one child are also more common (60% of all abortions).

[SOURCE: 1/23/05 - *LifeNews.com*]

Dolly Scientist Can Clone Human Embryos

Professor Ian Wilmut, the scientist who led the team that created Dolly the sheep, was granted a license on February 1 by Britain's Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA) to clone human embryos to study motor neuron disease.

The license is the second to be approved since Britain's legalization of research cloning in 2001. The other license was issued in August 2004 to a team from the University of Newcastle to use human cloning to destroy human embryos for their stem cells for research.

[SOURCE: 2/8/05 - *LifeNews.com*]


It Is the Little Things That Count

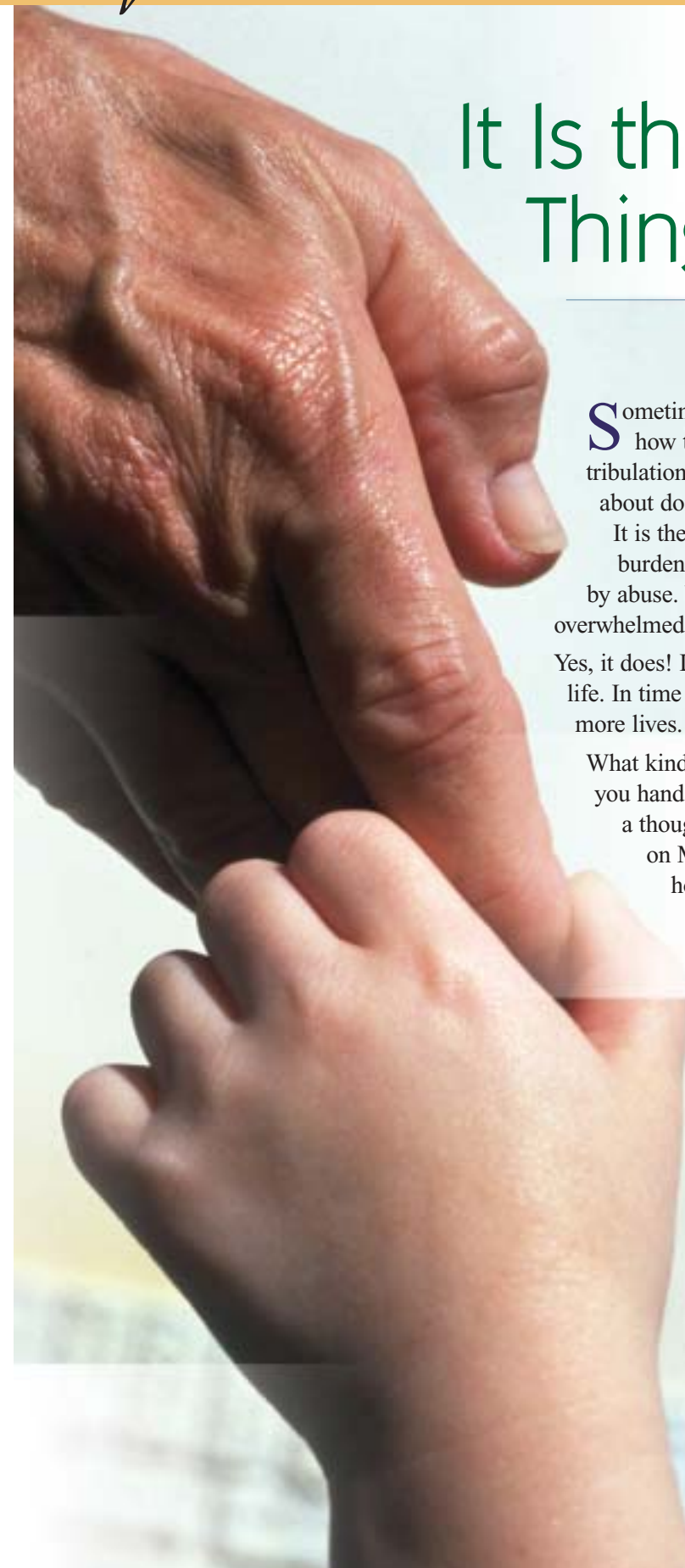
Sometimes "it is the little things that count." At least that is how the saying goes. Yet, when looking at the trials and tribulations of life and family issues, it is hard to get excited about doing "the little things." After all, in abortion a child dies. It is the elderly who often are neglected and made to feel like a burden. Families are broken by divorce. Children are scarred by abuse. When the problems seem insurmountable we often feel overwhelmed. Does it matter if we do "the little things?"

Yes, it does! Little by little we make a difference by touching one life. In time that life touches one or more lives. Those lives touch more lives. It grows and grows because of the little things.

What kind of little things? Maybe it is your friendly smile when you hand out *Clearly Caring* at the church doorway. Maybe it is a thoughtful poem neatly printed and handed to every mother on Mother's Day. Maybe it is a pretty bulletin board that honors parents and grandparents. Perhaps it is that new banner that celebrates life and family on display in the front of church.

As a Life Witness, your name, your face, and your compassionate heart become attached to the little things you do. Then in hard times someone remembers your smile and your concern about such things. They come to you to talk and seek direction. You don't need all the answers but you become a listening ear and helpful guide in directing them to where they can find answers.

A Life Witness becomes the familiar face of concern and compassion rooted in a love for God. To learn more about becoming a Life Witness and how you can touch lives in your congregation and community check out www.LifeWitness.com or call the national office of Christian Life Resources and ask to speak with the Life Witness coordinator. You can also send an e-mail to: witness@ChristianLifeResources.com. 



Easter Sunrise

by Captain LeRoy Kiecker



The rising of the sun is the

one thing that reminds me

of the presence of God.

Like so many other Army Reservists and National Guardsmen, I have been mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and sent overseas for up to a year of duty here in the sand. I've been a WELS member all my life, married to my wife for almost 15 years, to the army for almost 18. This Easter will be the third major holiday away from home and my family.

Iraq is a land we have read about in so many Bible stories. This is where civilization began. Not far from Mesopotamia, the Tigris and Euphrates (for all I know the Garden of Eden could well have been within a mere hour from where I now stand), there is ongoing fighting between "good and evil" if you would allow me. Since I have been here, I have seen so much sand that I will never care to see anything more than a beach. There are no trees, little in the way of buildings or settlements, and in some places roads are no more than tire tracks in the sand.

It would be easy to become depressed here. But

every so often, I am blessed with something that reminds me that even here, in this desolate place, the Lord is with me. Every morning and every evening, the sun rises and sets for everyone around the world, reminding us all there is Someone greater than us affecting our lives.

Easter sunrise service has always been one of my favorite worship services. There is nothing like watching the sun come up and seeing the stained glass windows bathe the church in color. Even though I am so far from home and my family, I'll watch for that sunrise. The rising of the sun is the one thing that reminds me of the presence of God. There is little beauty in this place, but the rising of the sun is absolutely glorious.

Every morning and every evening, the sun rises and sets for everyone around the world, reminding us all there is Someone greater than us affecting our lives.

Reporters offer little in the realm of truly good news, at least from what I can see. In a time and place where there is so much negativity, it's obvious how the Lord reminds me that He is still here, still watching, still protecting. It is a sense of wonder that I hope you feel while you are sitting in your church when the sun greets you on Easter morning. I wish everyone a Happy Easter and to know that the entire world is God's house, not just the church. ♡

Captain LeRoy Kiecker is a member at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in North Mankato, MN. His wife and children live in North Mankato, MN.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The issues of life, death, and family are challenging and often heart-wrenching. We face none of them in the sterile environment of perfect surroundings, perfect circumstances, or perfect faith. In today's turbulent times these issues are most intermingled in the lives of soldiers battling in a land far from home, family, and friends. The above article presents a perspective for all of us to consider especially as we celebrate Easter.



by Paul Snamiska
WELS Lutherans
for Life Administrator

A survey was recently sent to over 100 people on our parish nursing mailing list. The results are being used to help guide us in future efforts with this growing and exciting ministry. Here are just a few highlights from the survey:

Most parish nurses (77%) serve with other nurses rather than as a single parish nurse.

Most parish nurses (83%) volunteer their time and do not receive any compensation.

A large majority (83%) find great or some value to these articles in *Clearly Caring*, and an even greater majority (94%) find great or some value in the *Parish Nursing Today* newsletters. Smaller percentages of nurses (57% and 47% respectively) found great or some value in the parish nurse webpage or email news services.

Among topics of interest, the highest responses indicated a desire to receive more spiritual training and new ideas, develop a positive relationship with the pastor, and offer networking opportunities.

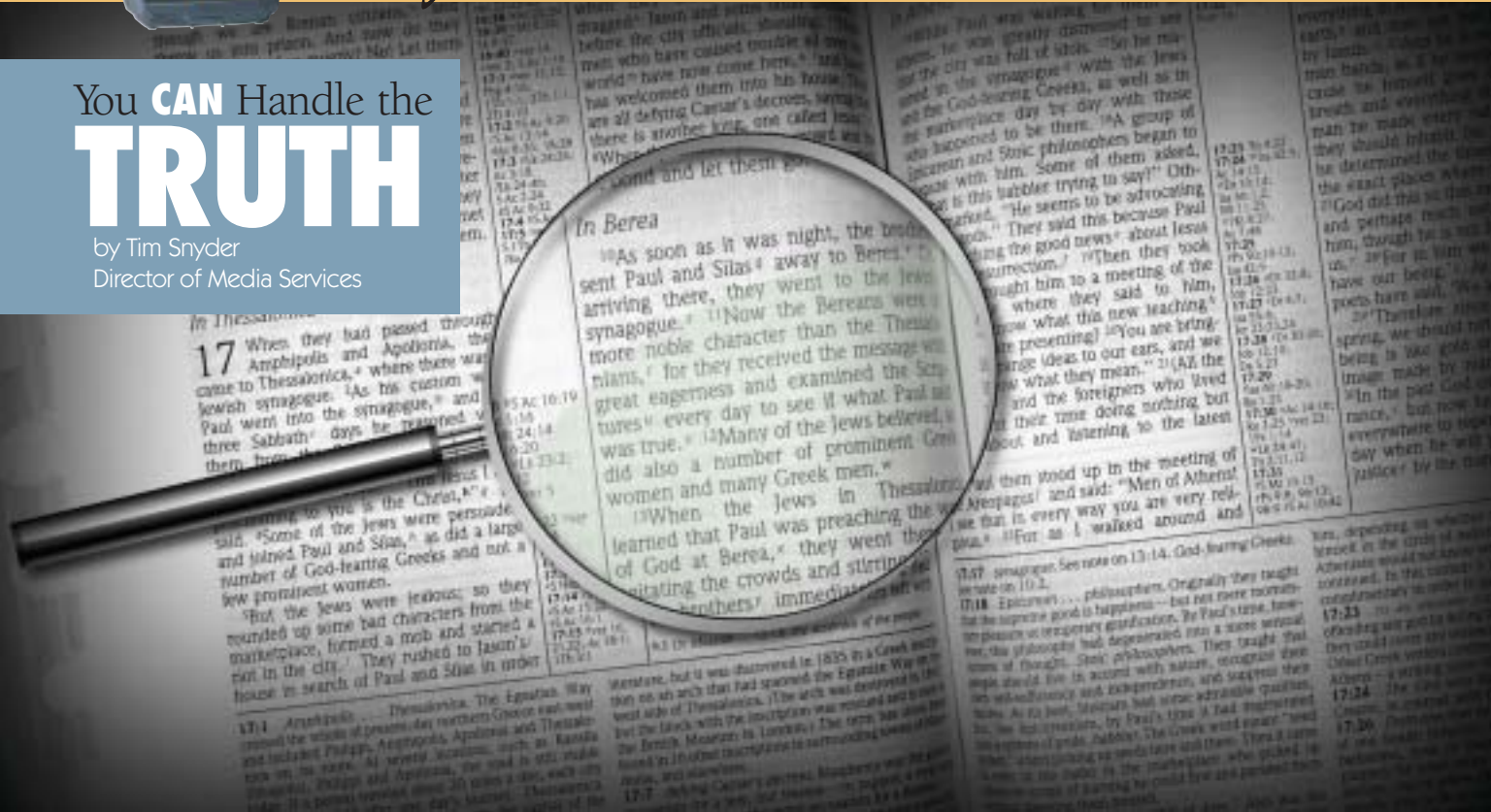
When asked for rankings on new product development to help parish nurses, the nurses said they wanted devotional materials, articles to be used in church publications, practical tips and ideas, and promotional items to help spread the news about parish nursing. ♡

To read a more detailed report, log on to our website at <http://www.christianliferesources.com/?parishnursing> and click on the link to the survey results.



You CAN Handle the TRUTH

by Tim Snyder
Director of Media Services



A Few Good Men is a popular film telling the story of a military lawyer defending two Marines accused of murder. The following dialogue is excerpted from a memorable scene in which Marine Colonel Nathan Jessup (Jack Nicholson) is on the stand being questioned by Navy Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee (Tom Cruise):

- Jessup: You want answers?
- Kaffee: I think I'm entitled.
- Jessup: You want answers?
- Kaffee: I want the truth.
- Jessup: You can't handle the truth!

Can you handle the truth? Some people think you can't. Like Colonel Jessup, they believe their way is the right way and feel justified in their lies and deception. The mainstream media can be like that. A 2004 Gallup Poll concluded that only 44 percent of Americans have confidence in the media's ability to report news stories fairly and accurately. Apparently the media doesn't think you can handle the truth.

Example: The popular press plays up the potential of embryonic stem cell research while at the same time ignoring the truth that it has been a failure in the

laboratory. They gloss over the destruction of life involved in this research and, despite real success, the coverage of adult stem cell research has been almost non-existent.

Example: The popular press says 10 percent of American men are homosexual. An Alan Guttmacher-sponsored study of men between the ages of 20 and 39 estimated that only 1.1 percent are exclusively gay. That's a pretty big discrepancy.

Example: CBS, a major network, allows a story to air without verifying its sources. Some feel the network intentionally aired a false report in the hope of influencing the outcome of the presidential election.

It's not just the news outlets. The entertainment industry also displays a definite bias. Movies and television, including productions for kids, push specific agendas. Television portrays someone who calls homosexuality a sin as a narrow-minded bigot and it portrays pro-lifers as religious fanatics who would deny someone a basic freedom.

How do you deal with the two-headed news and entertainment monster that hides the truth and even lies to serve a sinful agenda? Cable and the Internet

provide an alternative to major network news and, if you search hard enough, you may be able to separate fact from fiction, but ethical truth is as elusive as ever.

This article isn't going to help much when you sit down to tonight's newscast, but I can point you to the only resource you will ever need for separating right from wrong. The Word of God is the ultimate and final authority. The book of Acts shows us some people who knew just that. The Apostle Paul was preaching to the people of Berea and they in turn were checking Paul's story. Chapter 7, verse 11 reads: "They received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

Americans have confidence in the media's ability to report news stories fairly and accurately. Apparently the media doesn't think you can handle the truth.

Take your cue from the Bereans when you search for truth. If ten percent of American men are homosexual, does that make it right? What about 20 percent? Check out Romans 1, verses 26 and 27 or 1 Corinthians 6, verses 9 and 10 to see what God has to say. Whether one percent or 100 percent are doing it doesn't matter. Scripture clearly says homosexuality is a sin.

Do we only speak out against embryonic stem cell research because hard scientific data says adult stem cell research is better? In Exodus 20, verse 13 God says, "You shall not murder." Read Psalm 51, verse 5 where God assigns you personhood from the very time of your conception. Embryonic stem cell research is wrong because it involves sacrificing a human life.

Like Lieutenant Kaffee in *A Few Good Men*, you want the truth. You want the truth for yourself and for those you love. God wants you to have the truth. God wants you to have the salvation that is found only in His absolute truth. "[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). ❖

You CAN Handle the TRUTH



Every year our pregnancy counseling centers and life centers report their annual statistics so we can chart the ministry and note the effectiveness of each center. The same is true of our international life centers.

We recently received an activity report for 2004 from Lucy, our volunteer in Sofia, Bulgaria. Lucy reports that she had personal counseling with 16 people, gave presentations to approximately 540 people, and had Bible classes with six people. These numbers are truly amazing since residents of Sofia are quite private, and there is little interest in hearing a message of sin and grace when it relates to an unwanted pregnancy. On top of that, Lucy is doing her pro-life work on a completely voluntary basis!

Lucy is not satisfied, however. She is developing a plan to offer free pregnancy testing as a way to reach even more people with the gospel. She is working closely with CLR to find new ways to bring people to the truth of grace that is found in God's Word.

Another bit of exciting news is that one of the ladies who came to Lucy also attended Bible lessons and recently joined as a member of the Bulgarian Lutheran Church. This is just one example of the effectiveness of our bridge ministry in eastern Europe. Your prayers are certainly appreciated for Lucy as she continues this wonderful and powerful work. ❖



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"The LORD . . . is my refuge and my fortress"

(Psalm 91:2)

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