

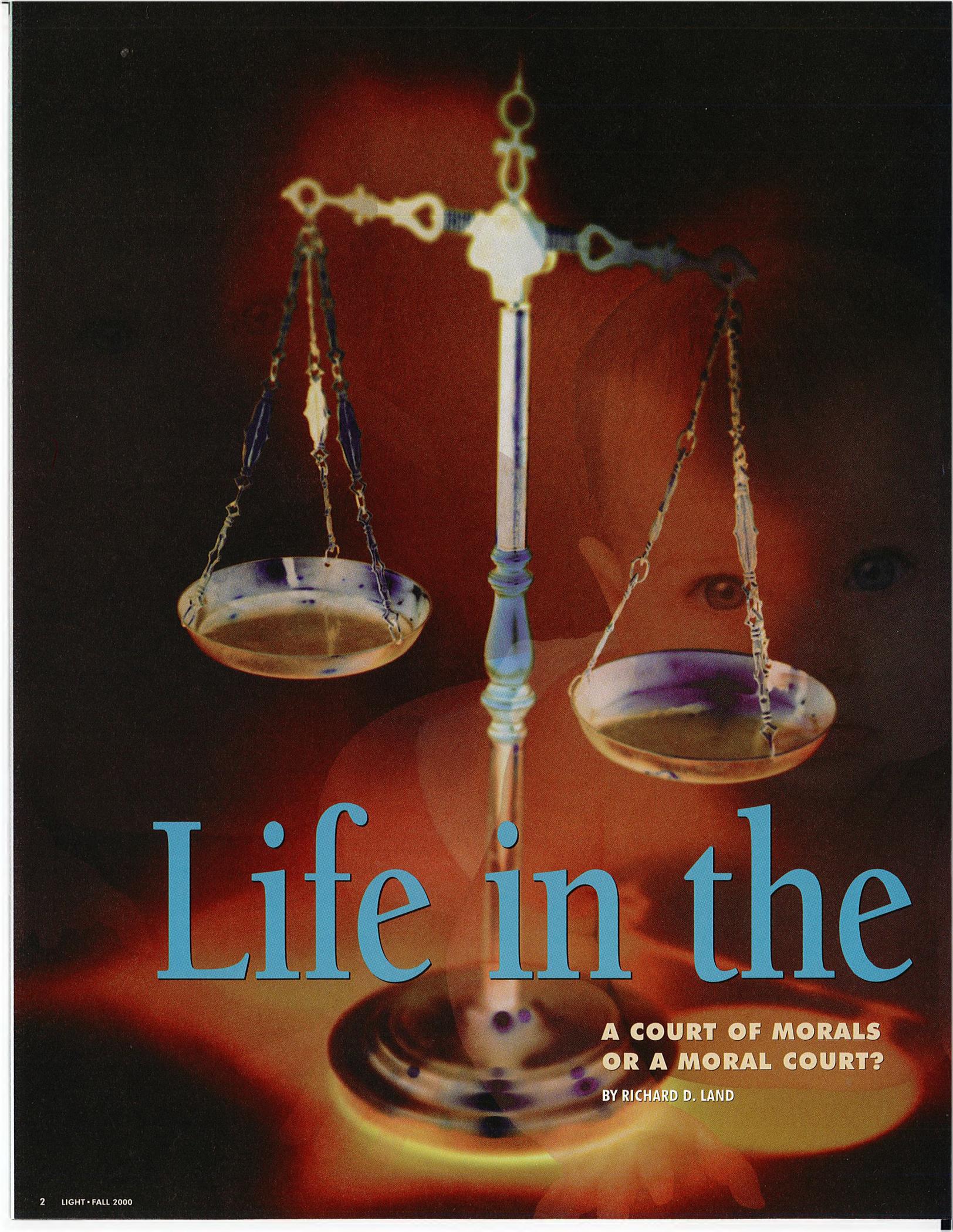
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Life in the

**A COURT OF MORALS
OR A MORAL COURT?**

BY RICHARD D. LAND

A few weeks ago three judges from Great Britain's High Court of Appeal prefaced a judicial decision by declaring themselves to be "a court of law, not a court of morals." What legal dilemma could have provoked such a statement from the esteemed justices?

The difficult and thorny case, which occasioned the judges' self-assessment, involved a set of conjoined twin girls, commonly referred to as Siamese twins, that physicians had determined would both die unless they were medically separated, in which case one sister would survive and the other would not.

The twin sisters, identified by the pseudonyms Jodie and Mary to protect their identities, were joined at the abdomen. Only Jodie had a functioning heart and lungs. Her sister Mary had suffered brain damage as well.

The physical burden of sustaining what amounts to two bodies was gradually weakening Jodie, and if they had remained conjoined, both sisters appeared virtually certain to die in a few months. Doctors were convinced, however, that with extensive and extreme surgery, Jodie, the stronger sister, could survive and live a fairly normal life in spite of some residual disabilities.

Further complicating the life and death decision was the fact that the twins' parents, devout Roman Catholics from the Mediterranean island of Malta

we kill one of our daughters to enable the other one to survive?"

The parents' position was supported by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, as well as Bruno Quintvalle of Britain's Pro-Life Alliance, who called the High Court's decision "infanticide" and "a green light for further attacks on human life."

The High Court determined the survivable twin's right to life outweighed that of her biologically doomed sister. Lord Justice Alan Ward, the father of twin girls himself, described how the judges agonized over the difficult decision, saying: "I freely confess to having found it truly difficult to decide — difficult because of the scale of tragedy for the parents and the twins, difficult for the seemingly irreconcilable conflicts of moral and ethical values, and difficult because the search for settled legal principles has been especially arduous."

Lord Justice Ward, speaking for the High Court, wrote that while Mary, the weaker twin, was an individual, "the sad fact is that she lives on borrowed time, all of it borrowed from

the girls took place November 6. Jodie survives her twin sister who died as a result of the surgery.

This is truly a difficult case, involving life and death issues as well as parental rights and deeply held religious convictions. Nevertheless, as an ardent pro-life advocate firmly rooted within the Judeo-Christian and Historical Protestant traditions, I agree with most of the High Court's decision.

First, the weaker and doomed twin, Mary, is an individual. However, I believe as a Protestant non-pacifist that it is permissible to take a human life if the motive is to defend the life of a person whose life is being threatened by the person whose life is forfeited. Jodie, the stronger twin, is being imperiled by her biologically doomed sister.

Second, I believe the Court has a right and an obligation to protect the life of the survivable twin, up to and including overriding the parents' convictions when a child's life is at issue. The Court can, as it has on occasion in the U.S. legal system, supercede parental custody and

Court's argumentation would conclude that they were indeed wrestling, as Lord Justice Ward acknowledged, with "seemingly irreconcilable conflicts of moral and ethical values" (emphasis supplied). Were the judges guided by the legal tradition of Western Civilization and British Common Law? Yes, they were. And those traditions were forged in a crucible that was thoroughly informed by the moral and religious values of the people governed by those legal traditions.

Is the British High Court of Appeal "a court of morals"? No, it is not. Yet that does not mean it is not and should not be a moral court, anchored in long-standing legal traditions informed by morality and profound respect for human life. We should truly fear the prospect of a mere court of law that is not informed by moral traditions. Surely the Fascist, Nazi, and Communist totalitarianisms of the twentieth century stand as eloquent testimony to the unspeakable human suffering and injustice unleashed when law is not informed by morality. ❶



Richard Land is President of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and host of the nationally syndicated daily radio broadcast, *For Faith & Family*.

This column was updated after originally appearing on www.beliefnet.com, a web site for the sharing of diverse religious perspectives on issues of the day.

Balance

who vigorously opposed the surgery, presented a statement of appeal to the High Court which declared: "We cannot begin to accept or contemplate that one of our children should die to enable the other one to survive. That is not God's will. Everyone has a right to life, so why should

her sister. She is incapable of independent existence. She is designated for death."

The twins' parents declined to appeal the court's decision, although they argued that God and not the medical community should decide the fate of their children. The surgery to separate

assume custody itself to protect a child's vital interests.

Where I disagree with the High Court is in their attempt to reject the fact that there was any moral dimension to their decision, and that they were guided merely by the law. Any fair minded person who read the High



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Of Ethics AND Embryos

BY WILLIAM CUTRER, M.D., AND SANDRA GLAHN



In June, the American Heart Association (AHA) voted to fund research on human embryonic stem cells. While stem cell research offers a glimmer of hope for treatment of conditions ranging from heart disease to spinal cord injury, procedures of fetal research raise ethical questions because of where those cells are obtained — most often from aborted fetuses or frozen embryos discarded or rejected by fertility clinics.

Last April former *Superman* star, Christopher Reeve, told a U.S. Senate committee (the one that funds federal health programs) that we must pursue research on embryonic stem cells. These cells have the potential to cure diseases and conditions ranging from Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis to diabetes and heart disease—even spinal-cord injuries such as his own.

Then in June, the same week scientists announced that they had completed the initial sequencing of the human genome, the American Heart Association (AHA) voted to fund human embryonic stem cell research. Unfortunately, what might have otherwise made front-page headlines was buried beneath other big news.

So, what are the issues? Should a Christian support or oppose this research? After all, isn't it a good thing to help people with diseases or damaged hearts? Isn't it important to treat the sick, to save lives? Isn't that what beneficence means—to do good?

Beneficence is a key foundational ethical principle, and at first glance it appears that embryonic stem cell research is designed only to benefit patients. The ultimate goal of the AHA is to help those with hearts ravaged by disease. The thinking is that embryonic stem cells can be directed in their growth to create a pure, healthy line of cardiac cells. These cells would be grown in pure culture and then transplanted into a patient's ailing heart. Some believe an entire

heart might some day be "formed" in the laboratory and used in transplantation. However, most feel that transplanting healthy new cardiac cells alone will be enough to rejuvenate damaged areas. Might this be possible? Certainly. So, what's the problem?

The key ethical issue is *where* these stem cells are obtained. Currently, the primary source of cells for most investigators is aborted fetuses or from among the more than 100,000 discarded or rejected frozen embryos from fertility clinics. Here's the logic: Wouldn't it be better to use them for scientific research than just to throw them out?

Certainly it would be better for the patients who might benefit from the research. Yet consider the aborted fetus or discarded embryo. Though some might see their contribution as a "heroic sacrifice," a key here is that the "hero" has had no choice. Unfortunately, in reality, the researchers don't believe "they" are persons at all. So first we must define when unique, individual human life (with the rights of personhood) begins.

Most pro-lifers define the beginning of personhood as the one-cell stage at which the chromosomes align and begin to function to create a new person. Thus, what Mr. Reeve and now the AHA are endorsing is the sacrifice of innocent, ignorant (or at least "uninformed of choices") lives for the benefit of others.

This is where the principle of beneficence breaks down. The very thing that might be benefi-

OTHER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

Stem cells may be easier to obtain from adult tissue than earlier thought, according to recent scientific announcements. Researchers at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey determined that stem cells isolated from adult bone marrow could be grown into neurons. And a paper presented Nov. 6 at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes revealed that even cadavers could supply the versatile brain stem cells.

"The research shows that the [cadaver] tissue could be a new, noncontroversial source of human neural cells for transplantation and experimentation," says Fred Gage of the Salk Institute in La Jolla, Calif.

cent for the sake of the heart patient requires the destruction of another life, violating the principle of "nonmaleficence" (do no harm), if you hold to the sanctity of human life from the one-cell stage.

But in the meantime, we have all these embryos. And one troubling detail is the incorrect assumption that we have no other means of obtaining stem cells. Yet in reality, there are other options we could try first. For example, some researchers have retrieved stem cells from umbilical cord blood in healthy term infants. No harm is done to the baby, and the cells obtained may be as effective... we don't know for sure because we haven't tried.

A key question then is this: How do we know that *adult* stem cell research—using stem cells that are not taken from aborted fetuses or embryos—is less effective? A study reported in the prestigious journal *Science* shows that adult stem cells are not only powerful; they can also be controlled and guided through the body. The adult neural stem cells "broad developmental capacity" allows it to "generate many cell types, for example, in kidney, heart and liver," says study leader Dr. Jonas Frisen. "Yet, embryonic stem cells remain the golden standard," says Frisen. He explains that adult stem cells have yet to be described as totipotent, i.e. able to "generate all cell types."

The Christian Medical and Dental Association's Executive Director, Dave Stevens, M.D., comments: "Adult stem cells...

are able to differentiate into different cell lines all together. More than any scientist believed possible, they can act much like totipotent cells. This adds credence to voices saying there is an alternative stem cell research pathway that does not rely on killing embryonic human beings."

At the moment, false information is circulating. There's an insistence that stem cells from embryos are needed for research. In fact, an Associated Press article incorrectly claimed that embryonic stem cells "are the only ones that can grow into any tissue in the body."

As Christians, we encourage the seeking of good ends without taking the path of the ethical compromise, and in this case the most promising ethical alternative has remained virtually unexplored.

Nevertheless, even if *adult* stem cells are used, we must move ahead more carefully than we have. We are assuming that the benefits of this therapy outweigh the risks. Yet the death of Jesse Gelsinger, who died as a result of gene therapy, tells us that we don't know the risks. We haven't done the requisite animal studies in stem cell transplantation even to be able to hazard a guess about what the possible bad outcomes might be.

As Christians, we encourage good research. But that research needs to stand on the foundation of good ethics. That includes benefiting the patient, reducing the risk to the patient, and recognizing that life—even at the one-celled stage—is precious.❶

What can we do about all the frozen embryos slated for destruction?

- ▲ **Avoid cryopreservation of embryos.** First, we need to avoid the waste of more embryos by counseling couples pursuing assisted reproductive technologies to limit the number of eggs fertilized to the number they're committed to carry to term. With in vitro fertilization procedures, each mature egg is placed in a separate dish. So in the case of abundant eggs, embryologists can limit the number exposed to sperm. Generally when couples request this, clinics honor their ethical desires.
- ▲ **Perfect the egg freezing process so that gametes—sperm and eggs—are frozen instead of embryos.** Currently freezing sperm is commonly done, but scientists are still working to improve the egg-freezing process.
- ▲ **Encourage embryo adoption.** Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program, www.snowflakes.org, connects "adopting" couples with couples wanting to donate their frozen embryos. At the moment such a service costs about \$6,000. However, some Internet services charge less than \$100 to connect couples and let them work out the details.

William Cutrer, M.D., is the first medical doctor to join the faculty at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. After a successful medical career as an obstetrician, he served as a senior pastor and later as director of the Christian Medical/Dental Society in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. He holds a graduate degree from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Sandra Glahn is an author, magazine editor, and member of the adjunct faculty at Dallas Theological Seminary. She serves on the board of the Dallas/Fort Worth Christian Medical & Dental Associations and on the advisory board of Hannah's Prayer, an online infertility support group. Cutrer and Glahn lead workshops together and have co-authored three books: When Empty Arms Become a Heavy Burden: Encouragement for Couples Facing Infertility (Broadman); Sexual Intimacy in Marriage (Kregel); and a medical thriller about stem cell research, Lethal Harvest (Kregel). They are currently working on a sequel. They write a semi-monthly column which appears in the "My Life" section at www.iBelieve.com.

CHRISTIAN FICTION

A Deal with the Devil

A brilliant embryologist—the nephew of the president of the United States—is dead. The freakish accident that sent Dr. Tim Sullivan's car plunging into an icy river has left troubling questions: Why is his in vitro fertilization clinic suddenly mired in a lawsuit? What was the nature of the embryo research with which he was obsessed? Is the president somehow involved?

Only one thing seems clear—Dr. Sullivan has made a "devil's bargain" that now endangers his family and colleagues. Dr. Ben McKay must uncover the hidden truth about his friend and medical partner's research before more lives are swept away in the deadly harvest.

Lethal Harvest is published by Kregel Publications (ISBN 0-8254-2371-6).



Parents:

WAKE UP TO THE NEW RED-LIGHT DISTRICT

BY BILL PARKER

Imagine your eight-year-old straying, open-jawed and wide-eyed, into the littered passageways of your city's red-light district. Flashing neon signs ensnare him in their spell, luring him with tempting curiosities — nude dancers, peep shows, XXX videos, sex toys. Sinister characters enveloped in smoke and lust usher him through dark doorways into their depraved world of perversity, hate, and destruction.

As a parent, not much could be more horrifying than to watch my child's innocence prematurely shattered by exposure to the worst degradation our society can dredge up. Yet, that's just what many parents do by granting children unrestricted access to the red-light district of the new Internet cyber-city. Daily, we hear horror stories emanating from this danger zone of bomb-making instructions, child pornography, pedophiles seeking children, and hate propaganda. Have we not heard enough? American parents must wake up and protect our children from the real and present danger of Internet excesses.

The answer is not to flip the power switch and deny children access to the cyber-city. On the other side of town from the red-light district, the Internet boasts a collection of cultural and educational opportunities to rival any modern metropolis. Museums, zoos, scientific laboratories, encyclopedias, games, and other interactive tools of learning are too valuable to pass up with a flick of the switch. There are better solutions.

Just because the red-light district thrives doesn't mean parents are powerless to protect their children while giving them access to all the benefits of the Internet. A recent study by *Famly PC* said that only 20 percent of families use parental controls built into their browser or Internet Service Provider (ISP), and only six percent use blocking software. Nearly 20 percent of parents say they take no special precautions for their children. Yet, in a baffling contradiction, a study by Arbitron NewMedia reveals that 71 percent of parents are extremely concerned about children's web habits and believe that careful adult supervision is needed. The same study shows that almost half of adults think the Internet is dangerous for children due to easy access to X-rated content.

American parents need to recognize the incongruity between our handwringing over the dangers of the Internet and our failure to protect our children. Are we waiting for the government to pass a law regulating Internet pornographers? Or are we hoping the industry will regulate itself? Protecting children is ultimately not the government's responsibility, nor the technology industry's responsibility — it's ours.

Sadly, too many of us as parents have an unrealistic expectation that our children will resist the easy access, temptations, and ever-in-your-face exposure to the worst of the Internet. Or somehow protect themselves.

Do we need more evidence of the dangers? Take a look at a few recent news items. A North Carolina man pleaded guilty to charges that he traveled to New York to have sex with a 15-year-old girl he met over the Internet. A Golden, Colo., man dealing in hard-core

Warning! Parents must educate themselves on the real and present dangers lurking on the Internet but refrain from flipping the switch on this rich source of cultural and educational opportunities. Important safeguards for parents include spending time with children on the Internet and subscribing to providers that offer server-based filtering.

child pornography via the Internet offered clients around the world more than 200 videotapes and 4,300 photos of young boys engaged in explicit sexual acts. In March 1995 there was one hate site on the Internet; by March 1999, there were 1,426, with more appearing daily. A virtual visit to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue turned out to be an XXX-rated tour of a sex-oriented site. In 1998, profits from cyberporn topped \$1 billion, up 30 percent from the year before. "Sex" is the third most frequently searched word on the Internet.

Don't deceive yourself by thinking that your child won't encounter sex, hate, or violence while exploring the Internet — either intentionally or accidentally. Stumbling into the Internet's red-light district can be as easy as typing "Barney," "toys," or "games" into a search engine.

Do you think your child isn't vulnerable? What if your child met a schoolteacher on the Internet — would your child trust him? A teacher in Culpeper, Va., was recently arrested for possessing child pornography obtained via the Internet. A former teacher and coach in Birmingham, Ala., was caught in an Internet child-pornography sting operation. Police found 100 images of children in various sexual acts on the home computer of a high school band director in Jacksonville, Fla. Would your child trust a minister? An Arizona minister pleaded guilty to sending child pornography over the Internet to a 14-year-old boy. Would your child trust a soldier? A former Fort Campbell soldier was convicted of using the Internet to entice a minor to have sex. Would your child trust a firefighter or police chief? A Kansas City firefighter, a 12-year veteran of the Orange County, Fla., sheriff's office, and a former fire chief in East Chicago have all been convicted of charges stemming from Internet child pornography. Think your child isn't vulnerable? Think again.

Do you think that protecting your child is too complicated? The intimidation factor can be high when new technology is involved, but that's why there are tools to help parents. **The most basic precaution is to spend time on the Internet with your child.** Help her find the child-friendly streets of the cyber-city and steer clear of the red-light district. Place the computer in a high-traffic area in your home where you can monitor your child's activity. Contact your ISP to find out how to access your computer's "history" file in order to monitor the sites your child has visited.

While these precautions are needed, they aren't enough to ensure adequate protection. Many children use the Internet most after school when parents may not be home. Internet filtering can protect your children even when you're not around. While filtering software and parental controls have been popular in the past, the

proliferation of new pornographic sites at a rate of 500 or more a day makes them impractical to keep updated. Instead, I recommend server-based filtering, which ensures that objectionable sites are blocked before they enter your home. There are a number of good filtered ISPs, and *crosswalk.com* offers a server-based filter at no charge to families who want to access the good of the Internet without the worries. That way, you don't even have to change your ISP to get web filtering. But don't take my word about what's best for your family. Examine the options and pick a solution. I don't care which one — just do something!

The Internet has so much good to offer — kids can benefit tremendously from the interactive offerings of the cyber-city. Yet, while providing our kids access to the benefits of the web, there's no excuse good enough to warrant the risks of exposing our children to the Internet red-light district. The dangers are too great and the solutions too easy for us to remain paralyzed between fear and inaction. ❏

Bill Parker is president and CEO of *crosswalk.com*, the premier Internet gateway for the Christian community, providing a comprehensive range of content and services to support the integration of faith and values into everyday life. Its featured channels include Homeschooling, Music, Money, Health, Careers, Spiritual Life, and Sports.

The image displays two overlapping computer screens. The top screen shows the homepage of *crosswalk.com*, featuring a navigation menu with categories like 'Who Is Jesus?', 'Channels', 'Spiritual Life', and 'Entertainment'. The bottom screen shows the homepage of *LifeWayonline*, which has a yellow background and a central image of a woman reading. The *LifeWayonline* page includes a headline: "Every child has a built-in search engine. It's called curiosity." Below this are several buttons: "Internet Safety", "Kid-proof Filtering", "30 Day Risk-free Trial", "Rates & Features", "Ministry Tools", and "Sign-up". A phone number, 1.888.454.5965, is also visible. The *LifeWayonline* page also contains a welcome message and a description of its filtering services.

In addition to the filtered Internet services offered by *crosswalk.com*, LifeWay Christian Resources offers a family-safe service called *LifeWayonline*. For additional information on these services, visit their web sites at www.crosswalk.com and www.lifeway.com.

On Their Honor

SCOUTS STAND TALL IN THE FACE OF BITTER CRITICS

BY KAREN COLE

A rite of fall took place again this year as thousands of wide-eyed young boys all over America participated in back-to-school promotions for Boy Scouts. The trappings of Scouting have changed little over the years—sharp uniforms, colorful merit badges, shiny pins and medals, the

**On my honor
I will do my best
to do my duty to God
and my country and
to obey the Scout Law;
to help other people
at all times;
to keep myself physically
strong, mentally awake,
and morally straight.**

— THE SCOUT LAW

promise of adventure, and leaders who are ready to pitch a tent and cook over a campfire. And along the way, those same leaders are entrusted with the responsibility to mold a boy's character into one that is "trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent."

For some boys, however, the opportunity to participate in Scouting is now uncertain.

As a result of the June 2000 Supreme Court decision affirming the right of the Boy Scouts of America to ban homosexuals from leadership positions, some troops have lost charitable contributions or have had access to public schools restricted or denied.

While only a handful of local United Way chapters have cut funding to the Scouts because of their "discriminatory policies," they have made banner headlines in the national press. "Only a minimal number of United Ways have decreased their funding," reports Gregg Shields, spokesman for Boy Scouts of America, adding the number is "a very small percentage of the 1,400 local chapters across the country."

United Way of America says it "does not dictate policy or funding decisions to local United Ways except to the extent that funding decisions must be consistent with applicable laws." However, spokesman Philip Jones says the organization's legal counsel is "reviewing the decision [to determine] if there would be any legal ramifications concerning our desire to be a non-discriminatory organization."

A few school boards also have cut support for the Scouts. In Minneapolis, more than two dozen Scout troops with about 900 members will have to find new sponsors. While these Scouts in this Minnesota city can continue to meet on school property, they must look elsewhere for the administrative and financial help that a chartering organization typically provides. A New York City school district voted to bar its 42 schools from sponsoring troops. Other districts will no longer allow Scout promotional literature to be distributed in schools.

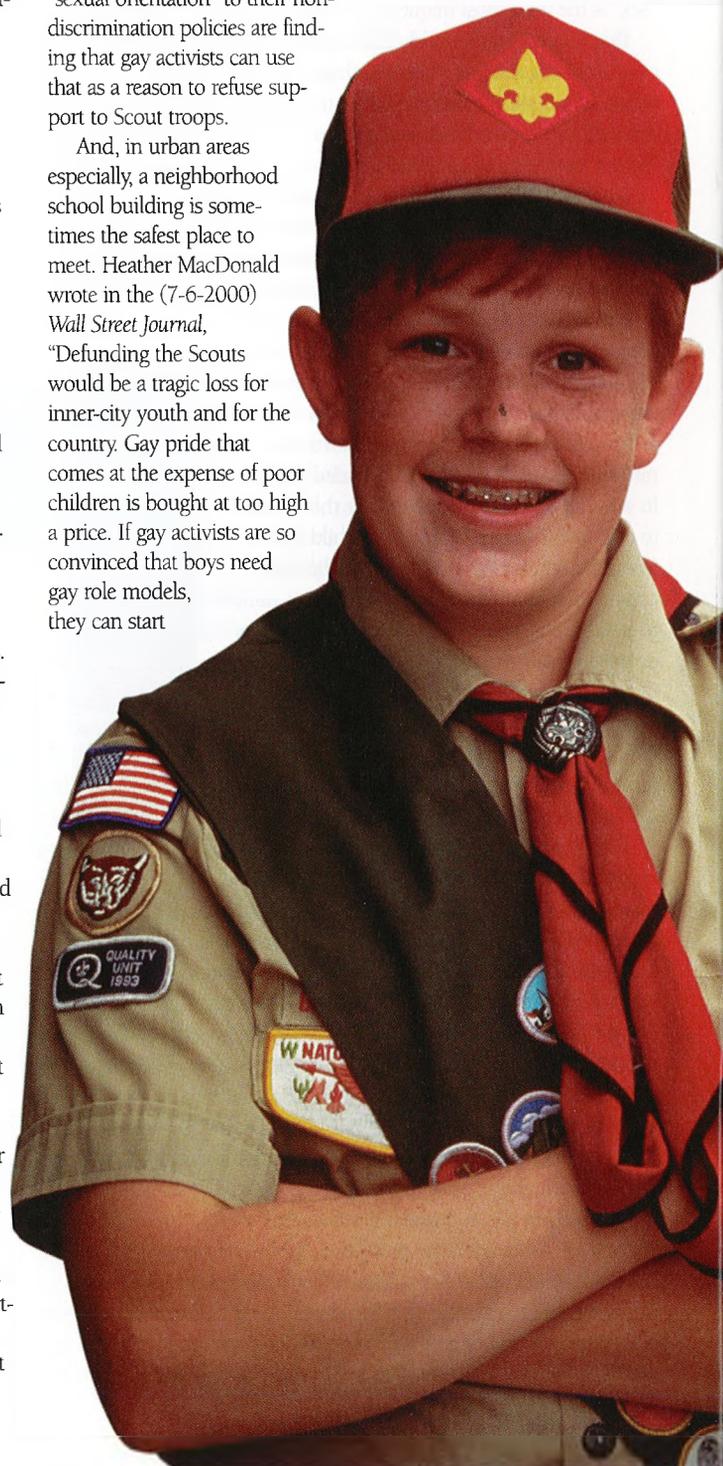
Some note that it is the poor and minority children who are the real losers when funding or support is cut by charities or school boards. While suburban troops are generally self-supporting, troops in urban, disadvantaged areas are more dependent

on charitable contributions. Urban areas also tend to be the ones with large and vocal homosexual constituencies that are unhappy with the Boy Scouts' stand on homosexual leaders. School districts that have added "sexual orientation" to their non-discrimination policies are finding that gay activists can use that as a reason to refuse support to Scout troops.

And, in urban areas especially, a neighborhood school building is sometimes the safest place to meet. Heather MacDonald wrote in the (7-6-2000) *Wall Street Journal*, "Defunding the Scouts would be a tragic loss for inner-city youth and for the country. Gay pride that comes at the expense of poor children is bought at too high a price. If gay activists are so convinced that boys need gay role models, they can start

alternative organizations with just that goal. But they should leave the Scouts alone."

Gay rights groups have no intention of doing that, however. GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network,



“The Southern Baptist Convention is on record as a strong supporter of Boy Scouts of America. We applaud their emphasis on religious duty and patriotism and affirm their right to define their membership standards. Christians should be always vigilant regarding the use of their charitable contributions and the policies of their local school boards.”

RICHARD LAND, ERLC PRESIDENT

plans to lobby school districts across the country to stop sponsoring Scout troops unless the organization reverses its policy. The group also plans to issue a report on what the nation's 20 largest school districts do to help the Boy Scouts. GLSEN has a proven record as a tenacious and influential gay rights lobbying organization.

People in some areas are rising to a vocal defense of Scouting. In Tempe, Ariz., the city council announced its intent to draft a new policy allowing city workers to designate that their United Way contributions go only to non-profit, charitable organizations that have policies against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The decision was reversed after a deluge of angry calls and e-mails; the openly gay mayor is targeted by a recall campaign. In Kentucky, the United Way of the Bluegrass decided to continue funding the Scouts after a number of donors threatened to end their contributions. In Indiana,

a conservative organization is raising \$17,000 to help their local Scouting council recoup the funding cut by the United Way.

In Eugene, Ore., a school district's ban on Scout recruiting at schools was lifted following complaints. The superintendent and school board chairwoman apologized for not seeking the public's opinion before the ban was imposed. In Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Mayor Jim Naugle was the lone dissenter in a 3-1 city commission vote to deny the Scouts a grant for a school program for at-risk and disabled children. "Homosexuality is a sin," Naugle says. "Some people want to rewrite the Bible, and that's not going to happen." Gay activists are vowing to aggressively campaign against his re-election.

"By picking a fight with the Boy Scouts of America, you have gone too far... you have awakened a sleeping giant," said Janet Folger of the National Center for Reclaiming America following the Ft. Lauderdale vote.

The U.S. House of Representatives signaled its support

of Scouting in September 2000 when it overwhelmingly rejected, by a vote of 362-12, a proposal to revoke the group's 1916 federal charter, an honor given to groups that serve charitable, patriotic, or educational purposes. Fifty-one representatives declined to take a stand in the matter, recording themselves as "present" rather than voting "yes" or "no."

"We would like for people to understand that we respect everyone's right to an opinion," says Gregg Shields. "No one is forced to be a Boy Scout. No one is forced to charter a troop. Although this year's numbers won't be out until the spring, we can report that back-to-school recruitment drives are going very well, and attendance and interest continue to be very strong."

Despite the onslaught of somewhat unbalanced reporting, Shields says the Scouts anticipate continued growth. "We look forward to the best years we have ever seen — more Scouts, more parents, more volunteers, and more financial support," he says confidently. ☺

PLEDGING SUPPORT

The ERLC's Richard Land visited Boy Scout headquarters in Irving, Tex., to deliver letters of support from *For Faith & Family* listeners. Land, president of the ERLC, hosts the nationally syndicated radio program. Land told Donald Oblander, Director of BSA's Relationships Division: "I want to applaud the Boy Scouts not only for all you do, but for taking on a very politically incorrect issue. For saying, 'There is a huge difference between what we are willing to tolerate (deviant behavior between consenting adults in private) and what we are willing to affirm as a positive lifestyle choice for our children.'"

For more information on supporting the Boy Scouts, call (972) 580-2000 or visit the web site, www.scouting.org/fsd/give2bsa/index.html.



SBC CHURCH STEPS UP TO SUPPORT BOY SCOUTS

FBC of Fort Lauderdale Wears Champion for the Faith Mantle Well

After Boy Scouts had their request for funds to help disabled and disadvantaged children rejected by city commissioners in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., members of the city's First Baptist Church stepped forward and gave the South Florida Boy Scout Council \$10,200.

The gift — given by church families in increments of \$100 or less — will allow the Scouts to offer a program entitled Learning for Life, an in-school Scout program that serves students in urban, often high-crime, areas.

Larry Thompson, senior pastor at First Baptist Fort Lauderdale, presented the check to the city commission, saying: "Our congregation members responded not with cries of anger and name-calling, but by personally giving of themselves to ensure a vote like the city commission's would not injure the most helpless of our society." Thompson told *Light* magazine the amount of the church's gift to the Scouting program was more than the Scouts' original request to the city. Interestingly, Thompson noted, church members did not know the amount of that original request until after the offering was collected.

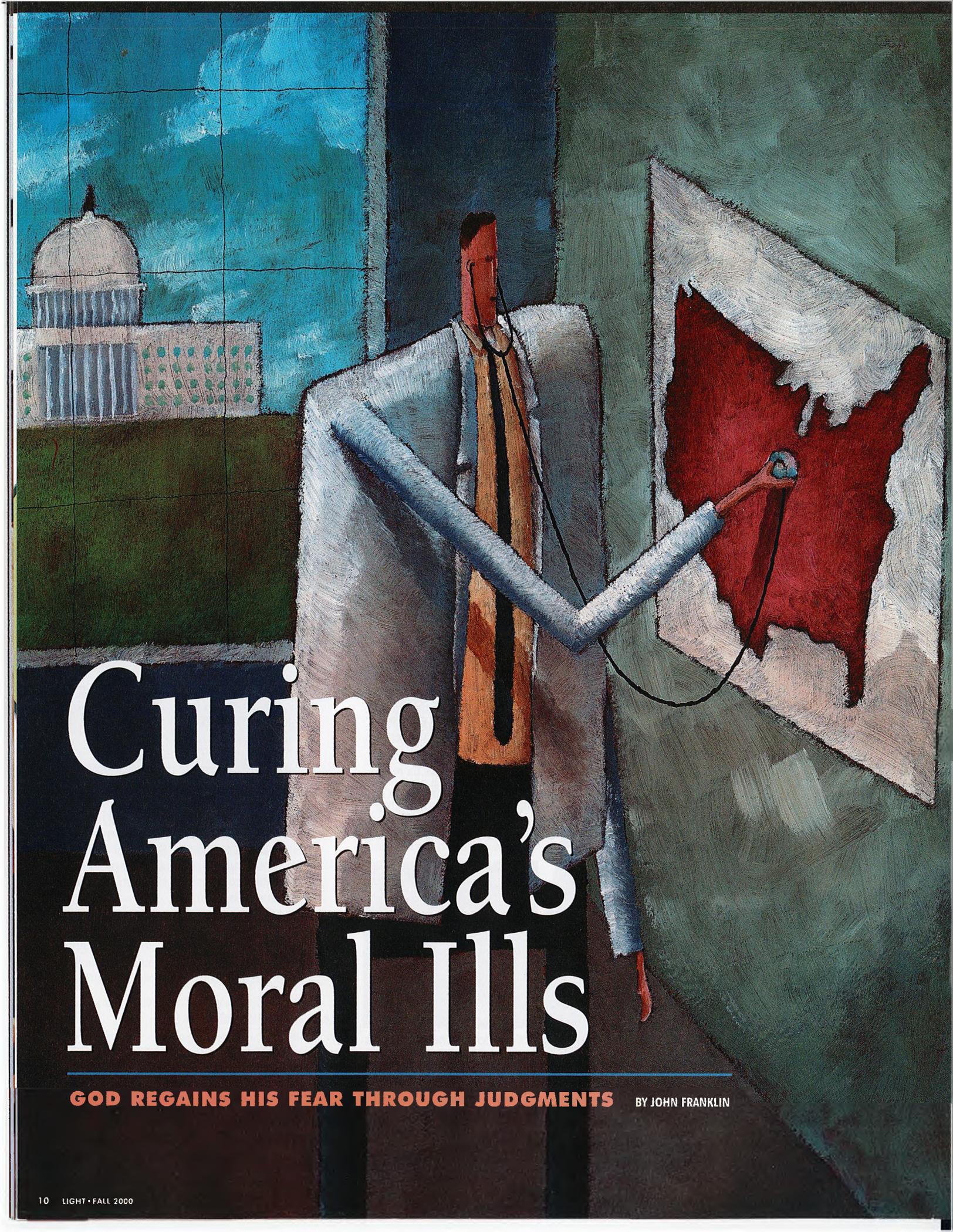
"We were joyfully surprised to see that God had met the original need [\$10,000] rather than the City Commission's subcommittee recommendation [\$4,167]," Thompson says. "We decided to light a candle of hope rather than simply curse the darkness of despair."

Broward County, where Fort Lauderdale is located, had earlier voted to pull \$92,884 in funding from the local Scout organization in response to the Boy Scouts of America determination to prohibit homosexuals from filling positions of leadership in the organization.

"There are many of us exasperated with the gay lobby that continues to push an agenda far beyond the limits of civil rights," Thompson told the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* after the commission meeting.

A news report in the Sept. 28, 2000, Baptist Messenger was used in compiling this article.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A champion for the faith is a Christian from any walk of life who desires to change the culture for good, one heart and one mind at a time. No special skills are required, just a willingness to serve God by serving others. If you know a Southern Baptist or an SBC church that is a "champion for the faith," please e-mail a brief note to editor@erlc.com or mail to: Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Attn: Light Editor, 901 Commerce St. #550, Nashville, TN 37203.



Curing America's Moral Ills

GOD REGAINS HIS FEAR THROUGH JUDGMENTS BY JOHN FRANKLIN

In three previous articles I endeavored to answer this great question: "In the devastating plague of moral decline, what is the antidote of hope that will cure the infectious spread of evil?" In those articles, you may recall that I argued the antidote is recapturing a proper fear of God. In a nutshell, my logic is: Whenever the fear of God is lost, you can be sure the greatness of God has been lost. And whenever man loses the greatness of God, he unfortunately finds the greatness of man. The more man finds his own greatness, the less he acknowledges God, until finally God becomes despised or lost to his consciousness. Once respect or God-consciousness is lost, man becomes ultimate. When man becomes ultimate, he loses any sense of accountability or ability to be convicted of sin. Conversely, whenever the greatness of God increases, man's awareness of his accountability to God increases and he departs from evil. Therefore the cure is to regain the fear of God.

If fear is the antidote, how does God reestablish fear? Precisely by doing the opposite of what caused man to lose it. Scripture exposes the reason men left to themselves despise God. Isaiah 57:11b asks, "Is it not because I have held My peace from of old that you do not fear Me?" Likewise after listing the sins of sinners God declares in Psalm 50:21, "These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes." Since men lose the fear of God when God withholds judgments against them on earth, then it logically follows that for God to reestablish His fear, He must do it by actively judging sin in the earth (Ps. 58:11, Isa. 26:9).

And that is precisely what you find throughout all of Scripture whether for nations or His people. Large portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Revelation warn nations of God's impending judgments against them. When His own people continued in sin, God warned them of judgment in the same books. Since God is the same yesterday, today and forever, He still reestablishes His fear by judging sin. This begs the question: If God reestablishes His fear by judging sin then what would that look like today? What would be the indication that a nation or His people are under judgment for sin?

Let's begin with a nation. Too many evidences exist for the brevity of this article, so please allow me to list the one I deem most serious. Job notes in 12:13-25 that God does as He pleases with the nations. He "makes them great and destroys them" (v. 23). When God is destroying a nation, Job identifies which judgment of God He exercises, "He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth..." (v. 24). To Job, the worst judgment God could inflict is the deprivation of wisdom. This holds true in other passages as well. In Isaiah 3:1-5, God begins to judge the nation of Israel by taking away everything that benefits them. Notice that the list includes "the judge and the prophet... the honorable man" and "the counselor"—in other words, the people with wisdom. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul lists how the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness in a three-step progression of increasingly severe judgments—all of which relate to the understanding. To sum up the final state in verse 28, Paul notes the continual loss of wisdom eventually leading to a completely debased mind.

Is the Scripture clear? Whenever a nation begins to be deprived of wisdom, it ought to recognize it is under the judgment of God. This being the case, America ought to be quaking. Our understanding has already been darkened to the point of accepting homosexuality as a viable lifestyle, and with the rise of cultural violence we are not far off from the completely debased mind described in Romans 1:29-31. Evidently since we have not thought it worthy to retain a knowledge of God, He has righteously judged us unworthy of retaining knowledge and wisdom. This horribly severe judgment against our nation indicates that God has already begun the process of destroying us. Of course that process can be reversed by repentance,

but the departure of wisdom evidenced by turning from God, family breakdown, broken relationships, and increasing violence ought to reawaken us to fear God so that we will repent and plead for His mercy before He renders a final judgment.

What about the church? Is she under judgments of God as well? Unfortunately many Christians' theology does not allow for this possibility because they limit the idea of judgment to end times and eternal destiny. However, numerous passages in the Bible point to the reality that God's people have an earthly accountability for sin (Lev. 26, Deut. 28, 1 Cor. 11:27-34, Heb. 2:2-3, 10:30, and Rev. 2-3). Since this is an Old and New Testament reality, this begs the question, "How would the church in America know if she were under judgments from God?"

Scripture and history record that when God's people please Him, He answers their prayers affirmatively and grants them favor by transforming their culture. This happened in the Old Testament, the Roman Empire, Europe, and America. When we displease God, the converse happens just like it did in the Old Testament, Europe, and America. This being the case, we ought to ask some questions. In America, where we once had widespread respect, honor, and influence, why have we now lost it? Why is sin advancing in our land? Why are we being turned over to immoral leadership in our nation (Job 34:29-30)? Why are our enemies succeeding (Lev. 26:17)? Why are great numbers of our youth being led astray? Why are Christians now the only politically correct group to bash? Why have we been praying for the abortion decision to be overturned for 27 years, yet God has withheld His hand? Could it be that the main problem lies not in our culture, but in our relationship with God? In light of the fact that the majority who profess Christianity basically do the same things in the same proportions as the culture, does it not make logical sense to ask if God is righteously judging us because we no longer fear Him? Since we have not honored Him, could it be that He is no longer giving us honor in our society? Could the cultural antagonism against us be God-allowed because God is calling us to account for sin?

If God Himself is judging us, if this withholding of His hand on our behalf is because we have displeased Him, then the solution demands that we stay before God until we identify where we have departed from Him and repent.

I contend that the signs indicate we are not right with God; therefore, we ought to ask what are the sins for which God is calling us to account. In the next article I will try to identify the main ones, but for now suffice it to say that our nation is under the severest judgment of God it can incur before final destruction, and that Christians by and large have departed from God and also are incurring judgments as evidenced by the fact that we are losing the battle. Both realities ought to be interpreted as God seeking to reestablish His fear because we have ignored His standard of holiness. ❊

John Franklin serves with LifeWay Christian Resources (formerly Baptist Sunday School Board) as prayer and discipleship consultant.

How Can You Respond?

PRAY

- ▲ Pray for families who are facing difficult decisions regarding the level of care to be provided to a family member with a terminal illness. Ask that God would surround them with caring Christian physicians and caregivers.
- ▲ Pray for the women who are at this moment in the midst of a crisis pregnancy. Pray that God's Spirit would give these women the discernment to choose life.
- ▲ Pray for the millions of women who have had abortions and their families as they now deal with the trauma resulting from those decisions. Pray that they would know that Christ is able and willing to forgive this transgression.
- ▲ Pray for those who are dealing with an infirmity that is causing them to question the value of their life. Ask God to instill in their heart that all life is precious.
- ▲ Pray for those in the medical community who are involved in genetic research that they would particularly respect human life of any age. Pray for medical breakthroughs that honor God as Creator.

ACT

- ▲ Educate yourself about what the Bible says about such human life issues as euthanasia and assisted suicide, cloning and genetic research, and abortion.
- ▲ Contact a local crisis pregnancy center to determine if you can assist them in their ministry by providing needed items of clothing for expectant mothers or newborns, or train to be a labor coach for a single mother-to-be.
- ▲ Wear a Precious Feet® or Precious Hands® pin to show that you are pro-life.
- ▲ Celebrate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in your church. Encourage your church to make the emphasis a year-long event by committing to stand up for the rights of the unborn, the handicapped, and the elderly.
- ▲ Promote abstinence-based sex education programs in your local schools—in lieu of the safe-sex curricula promoted by groups such as Planned Parenthood.
- ▲ Contact your elected representatives who do not support pro-life legislation. In a Christ-like way, help them understand that everyone has a right to life. Encourage, support, work for, and vote for pro-life elected officials.

KNOW

It is difficult to fully understand the preciousness of human life without considering what God has done for you in Jesus Christ. God loved you so much — knowing you even before you were born — that He sent His son to die a tortuous death on a cross for your sake. In accepting His Son as your Lord and Savior, your sins will be forgiven and eternal life will be yours. He loves you that much.

HOW CAN YOU KNOW JESUS CHRIST?

- ▲ Realize that you are not in control of your own future and admit that you, like all mankind, have fallen far short of the glory of God. All of us are sinners. Our works gain us nothing before God (Isa.64:6; Rom. 3:23).
- ▲ Come humbly to God, seeking a personal relationship with Him by trusting in His Son who took upon Himself our sins so that in accepting Him we could have eternal life (Rom. 10:13; 5:8).
- ▲ Know that once you have confessed your sins before God in accepting His Son as your Lord and Savior, He will forgive you and you will have a relationship with Him forever (John 3:16).
- ▲ Share your decision to accept Christ with others. Search the Scriptures for wisdom and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life worthy of your calling as a child of the King!

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More Evidence of Our Growing Disregard for Human Life

An ABCNEWS.com poll conducted September 6-10, 2000, found that a plurality opposed making RU-486 legal (47% illegal, 45% legal). "The degree of opposition would no doubt be even higher were it not for the misinformation that has colored much of the past media coverage of the issue, including highly inaccurate references to RU-486 as a 'morning-after pill' or as a drug that causes expulsion of a 'fertilized egg.' In reality, this method involves administration of two potent drugs, and frequently produces profuse bleeding, in order to kill a human embryo who is two to five weeks old."

Laura Echevarria, spokeswoman for the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC)

When researchers in Oxford, England, looked at 33,000 pregnancies between 1991 and 1996, they found 174 babies who were born healthy despite ultrasounds that had suggested abnormalities. However, 43% of the fetuses identified as having abnormalities were aborted, making it impossible to gauge how often genetic abnormalities are misdiagnosed.

Washington Times, July 13, 1999

Terminally ill patients who desire death are depressed, and depression is treatable in those with terminal illness. In one study, of the 24% of terminally ill patients who desired death, all had clinical depression.

Beginnings, May/June 1999

Life LIGHT



FOCUS ON

The Sanctity Of Human Life

Scripture Context

Genesis 9:6b

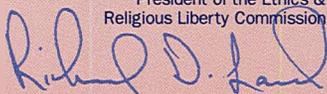
The expression, "image of God," appears in Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; and James 3:9. While the Bible does not explicitly explain what the "image of God" in man is, it is clear that it separates man from the rest of God's created order. The image is part of the makeup of every human. Because we are created in His image, we possess the ability to know and worship Him. The "image of God" centers on what we are rather than what we have or what we do. Central to any consideration of the meaning of the "image of God" is the fact that all human life is sacred.

By Richard D. Land

Dr. James Delahunty oversaw the births of hundreds of babies as an obstetrician in central New Jersey. The popular British-born physician had a successful practice until he was slapped with a "wrongful birth" lawsuit that alleged he failed to offer the mother of a Down syndrome child an ultrasound. Delahunty said the mother refused the procedure due to its high cost when she was 21 weeks pregnant.

"The Federal Drug Administration's decision to approve the abortion drug procedure RU-486 is a tragic one for women and for our unborn citizens. This is a dangerous drug that is fatal for unborn babies and hazardous to their mothers. I am extremely concerned that the use of RU-486 is going to exponentially increase the numbers of emotionally traumatized women. However emotionally traumatic a surgical abortion is, and multitudes of women have testified to its trauma, the abortion procedure itself is over in a fairly short period of time. With a RU-486 pharmaceutical abortion, a woman has to live with what she is doing and the painful contractions and ultimate abortion of her baby for a period of several days. One can only imagine the unexpected and overwhelming anguish and remorse that many mothers will feel as they experience this terrible process."

Richard D. Land
President of the Ethics &
Religious Liberty Commission



Despite Delahunty's protestations, a New Jersey court awarded the mother of the child (now an otherwise healthy five-year-old) and her ex-husband 1.85 million dollars because they bore a son with Down syndrome. The mother said she loved her "beautiful little boy" but would have aborted him if she had known of his disability. I wonder what her son would say? I suspect he would choose life!

When we consider the unborn child as something less than human and when we speak of the unborn as only having human potential, we take a dangerous turn. The fatal error in these propositions is a belief that the unborn child becomes a human at some magical point in its prenatal development. The reality is that at the moment of conception, while not having its final form, human life in all its wonder exists.

In this day of rapid medical advances, an unborn child can be examined, have his or her vital signs monitored, receive blood transfusions, and even have corrective, life-saving surgery inside the mother's womb. Each of these tiny persons

deserves our respect and society's protection no less than do a classroom full of first graders.

And the preciousness of human life extends beyond the nursery. Whether aged or infirm, black, white, or brown, wealthy or impoverished, God has placed His honor upon every man, woman, and child. It is incumbent upon each of us to value each life similarly.

Because His image is engraved upon us, God requires the life of one who takes an innocent life (Gen. 9:6a). Such a severe penalty is assessed because of the value of the victim, having been created *imago Dei*. God's sovereignty naturally extends over life and death. When human life is unlawfully taken, His sovereignty is disturbed.

Genesis 9:6b is referred to as "creation language" and is derived from the first chapter of Genesis (vv. 26-28), wherein we discover that man has supreme value in God's eyes in that He created man in His image. We are a special creation of God as image-bearers.

In this revelation of the crowning moment of God's creation, we can more fully comprehend the essence of the sanctity of human life. Humankind is of a much more noble and excellent nature than His other creations, and the uniqueness is one of kind

rather than of degree, for we alone are created in His image. Despite the purposefulness of these passages in Genesis, in our fallenness we have fancied ourselves God and taken the lives of the innocent at will.

The judicial decision against Dr. James Delahunty is likely to be the first of many such malpractice lawsuits filed for "wrongful life"—

on behalf of persons who claim they would have been better off never having been born. Such litigation will place the courts in the position of determining the value of a person's life and the calculation of the damages to be assessed upon a physician for "allowing" the person to be born.

Our culture's disrespect for human life is reflected in crime

statistics and public statutes on assisted suicide as well as in reports of the number of abortions performed. A general disregard for human life and the image of God it bears has critically weakened the foundation of our civilization.

God himself considers human life indescribably precious; dare we believe otherwise?

God's people must resolve to bear witness to the sanctity of every human life and to rekindle in our society an understanding and appreciation for this fact that "all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights and that among these are life."

Richard D. Land is President of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and host of the nationally syndicated daily radio broadcast, For Faith & Family.

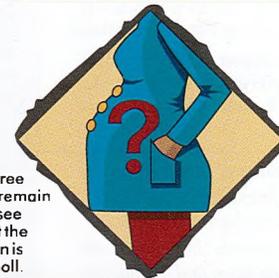
FOCUS ON The Sanctity of Human Life

"For in the image of God made he man"

Believers Ideas and trends in faith and values

Ambivalent on Abortion

More than 25 years after the legalization of abortion, most Americans remain conflicted about the practice. Although three out of four say abortion should remain legal, nearly half would like to see stricter limits on abortion. Yet at the same time, half believe abortion is murder, according to a recent poll.



In a nationwide survey, 1,101 adults were asked about their attitudes on abortion.

Abortion

...be generally available

32%

22%

...be available but with stricter limits

45%

22%

Margin of error is plus or minus 3%

Is abortion the same thing as murdering a child?

Not murder

38%

12%

Murder

50%

Not sure/ no response

Margin of error is plus or minus 3%

Source: New York Times/CBS News Poll

By Monica Seaberry and Mike Pagnette
© 1998 Religion News Service

YOUR RESOURCE

National Right to Life Committee
(202) 626-8800, www.nrlc.org

▲ www.prolifeinfo.org

▲ The Elliott Institute (post-abortion)
www.afterabortion.org

▲ Crisis Pregnancy Helpline
(888) 833-8996

▲ Alternatives for Life Ministries
(NAMB) (770) 410-6349

▲ Christian Medical & Dental Society
(423) 844-1000, www.cmds.org

Euthanasia:

▲ www.euthanasia.com

▲ International Anti-Euthanasia Task Force, www.iaetf.org

C E L E B R A T I N G

Life



Who Broke the Baby?

This book by Jean Staker Garton offers a brilliant disclosure of what the abortion slogans *really* mean.

BKWHO \$5.75 ea.



Love Them Both

This question and answer book by John C. Willke, M.D., and wife, Barbara C. Willke, R.N., is a powerful educational tool on behalf of unborn babies and their mothers.

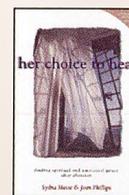
BKWHY \$4.95 ea.



When a Baby Dies

"Is my baby with God now?" Ronald Nash offers a review of often mistaken responses along with the scriptural grounds for pastors to offer real comfort to parents seeking solace in their grief.

BKWHEN \$9.50 ea.



Her Choice to Heal

This is a powerful book for women who seek spiritual and emotional peace after abortion. It features the stories of the authors who know that healing comes from God's love and forgiveness.

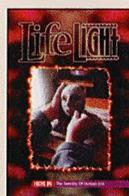
BKHER \$9.40 ea.



After the Choice

Real women share what it's like when the abortion is over. This video is a valuable resource for anyone who cares about unborn children and the women considering abortion or who may need love and forgiveness after the fact.

VTAF2 (25 min.) \$12.00 ea.



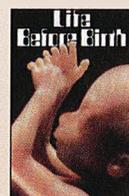
LifeLight

This undated publication includes real-life scenarios, biblical application, statistics, action points, and resources. It can be used as a bulletin insert or hand-out when addressing life issues.

SABULK \$3.50/50

Sanctity Poster

SAPOS \$95 ea.



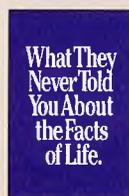
Life Before Birth

This amazing, chronological account of an unborn baby's life is critical when ministering to women facing unwanted pregnancies, offering precious life-giving alternatives.

SABIRU \$1.30/20

Infertility and Reproductive Technologies

CIINFU \$6.50/20



What They Never Told You about the Facts of Life

This pamphlet chronicles the first nine months of human life.

SANEVU \$9.80/20

Sermon Outline

SASER (individual) \$25 ea.
SASERU (bulk) \$4.00/20

Sanctity Fact Sheet

SAFACU \$4.00/20



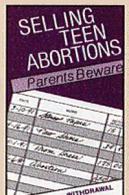
Mourning a Miscarriage

Miscarriage is an ironic and devastating twist of fate that contrasts the high-low experience of "miracle/no miracle." This pamphlet is designed to help parents through the grief process and has much to say about restoring faith and trust.

SAMOU \$75 ea.

Euthanasia

CIEUTU \$6.50/20



Selling Teen Abortions

The first physician in Mississippi to open a legal abortion clinic, Dr. Beverly McMillan now counsels against abortion. Her pamphlet answers often asked questions and is a valuable resource for crisis pregnancy centers.

SASELU \$4.80/20

What the Bible Teaches about Abortion

CIWHAU (English) \$6.50/20

CIWHASU (Spanish) \$6.50/20



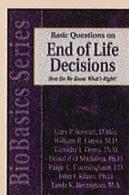
Know the Facts Before You Choose

Former abortion clinic operator Carol Everett shares firsthand knowledge of how the abortion industry infiltrates schools and manipulates children by describing techniques she used to get into classrooms to establish herself as an authority on sex to teens.

SAKNOU \$4.80/20

Bioethics

CIBIOU \$6.50/20



BioBasic Series

Produced by the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, these booklets look to Scripture to address serious ethical questions posed by medical advances.

End of Life Decisions

BKEND \$3.50 ea.

Suicide and Euthanasia

BKSUEU \$3.50 ea.

Sexuality and Reproductive Technology

BKREP \$3.50 ea.

"For in the image of God made he man."

GENESIS 9:6b

JANUARY EMPHASIS:
THE SANCTITY OF
HUMAN LIFE

SUGGESTED FOCUS SUNDAY:
JAN. 21, 2001

On the third Sunday in January, churches are encouraged to address the sanctity of human life. Emphasis is given to a broad range of life issues, including abortion, elder care, euthanasia, and genetic engineering. The products at right are just a few of those offered by the ERLC that focus on these issues. To order resources or obtain a color catalog with additional product information, contact us at:

1.800.475.9127

orders@erlc.com

View "bulletin inserts" in a whole new light!

Introducing *LifeLight*, our response to the growing demand by Southern Baptists for cutting-edge reference materials that address many of life's most critical social needs. *LifeLight* replaces the traditional bulletin insert offered by the ERLC in the past with an expanded 4-page format with informative features as outlined at right.

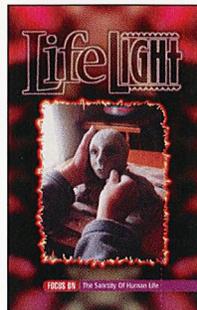
LifeLight can be used as a bulletin insert or informational hand-out in conjunction with social issues Sundays on the Southern Baptist calendar or anytime when addressing these topics in your church:

- Sanctity of Human Life (Jan. 21)
- Racial Reconciliation (Feb. 11)
- Substance Abuse Prevention (Mar. 18)
- Citizenship & Religious Liberty (July 1)
- Social Issues: Pornography (Aug. 5)
- Gambling (Sept. 16)
- Hunger (Oct. 14)

Touch your congregation with *LifeLight* as you encourage members to let their light "shine before men."

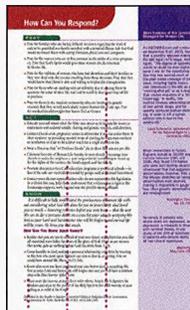
Consider ordering extra copies of these invaluable resources for your church foyer and prayer room!

See *LifeLight* sample on pages 13-14 of this issue of *Light* magazine.

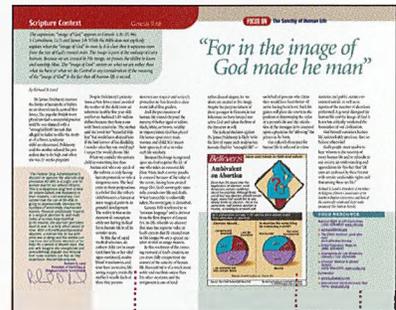


Sanctity
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Provocative photo



Specific prayer points related to issue
Action steps for Christians as well as people ensnared by the featured cultural issue
Plan of salvation to bring individual(s) to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ

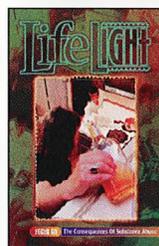


Commentary written in layman's terms relating real-life scenario along with biblical application

"Factoids" on featured issue relating current statistics from real-life situations

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Visual illustration

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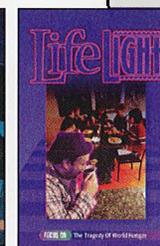
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