

LifeDate

Fall 2012



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

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Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-
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Look-a-Likes



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Ever notice how children who are adopted sometimes look like their adoptive parents? It is amazing how frequently this happens. It helps underscore the idea that children who come into a family through adoption are just that, children, a son or a daughter, not an “adopted son” or “adopted daughter.”

It works that way with God’s family too. We come into His family through adoption (Galatians 4:4-5). It must be this way. By nature we exist as spiritual orphans separated from God by our sinfulness. But God comes to us through the cross of Jesus, calls us by His Spirit in baptism, and adopts us. But never does Scripture refer to us as “adopted children,” only children. **“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are”** (1 John 3:1a).

It gets even better. Once adopted we start to look like our Father! **“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit”** (2 Corinthians 3:18). Now back to 1 John 3 as he points us ahead to the completion of this look-a-like transformation. **“[W]e know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is”** (2b).

God’s adoption and look-a-like transformation process gives us a unique perspective from which to view life and particularly unborn human life. We rightly give value to the unborn because God

creates them. We rightly give them value because Jesus shed His blood to pay for them. But we sometimes forget that God gives the unborn value because He desires to adopt every human being as His child and transform them to look like Him.

Contrast this to the societal view of certain unborn as “unwanted.” We often counter this with, “There is no such thing as an unwanted baby.” We point to the million-plus couples desiring to adopt, who truly *want* those babies. But we can—and should—raise this to a higher level.

There is no such thing as unwanted children because God wants them. God wants them splashing about in the waters of baptism. God wants to adopt them as His children. God wants to make them look like Him. God wants an eternal relationship with them.

What God has done for the unborn (created/redeemed) and what God wants to do for them (adopt/transform) raises abortion way above politics and parties and platforms. What God has done and wants to do compels us to defend and speak up for the unborn. What God has done and wants to do compels us to love and care for those facing “unwanted” pregnancies not just so they will choose life, but also that they might know how much God loves and wants both them and their baby. And, yes, what God has done and wants to do for the unborn compels us to think beyond health care or the economy when we vote for those who represent us this November.

Were you adopted into your family? Do you look like your mom or dad? If you answered “yes,” it might be fun to compare baby pictures! Were you adopted into God’s family? Then you are being transformed to look just like your Dad! What a look-a-like to have both now and eternally!

Adoption: FAQs

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

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



child their unconditional love, time, nurture, and providing for all of the material needs of the child.

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

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

Can birth parents “reclaim” their child? The media has tended to sensationalize the few situations where this has occurred. These situations are typically the result of adoption laws not being followed, and many states’ laws have changed in the past decades to enable the child’s permanency with adoptive parents. (In Iowa—where I work—birthparents have 96 hours after signing a release of custody to reclaim their child, and could not do so after that without proving fraud, coercion, or signing under duress.)

What fears do birthparents have about adoption? Fears that birthparents may have when considering adoption may include a fear that the child will grow up resentful about being adopted; of themselves not being able to “let go”; that they will never see or hear anything about their child after an adoption; that family members and/or friends may reject them for choosing adoption over parenting. Careful planning and open communication between the birth and adopting families, along with mutually shared information and increasing trust, helps greatly to calm this fear for birthparents over time.

It is important for birthparents to focus on all the reasons they are planning an adoption, including the goals they have for their child as well as their own clear personal goals. Without their own clarity about why they are placing adoptively, the natural feelings of attachment and emotional connection can easily threaten to overwhelm the decision-making process.

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

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

What about the birthfather? By Iowa law, the rights of the birthfather are the same as the rights of the birthmother. For there to be an adoption, there must be a legal termination of the parental rights of both birthparents. If a birthfather is unknown or cannot be located, there are special provisions that must be

followed to ensure that “diligent search” is conducted in order that his rights to parent the child are protected. The birthfather’s position in an adoption is very important. If the birthparents disagree about adoption, the concerns would be dealt with in court, with a judge making the ultimate decision.

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

Why do some people seem to consider abortion as a preferred alternative to adoption? (i.e. “I could never give up my baby for adoption,” yet the same person can somehow justify abortion.) When women consider abortion over adoption for an unplanned pregnancy, they are most likely making an assumption that there is less emotional pain involved with having an abortion. They may feel they would not bond with an embryo or fetus, but in carrying the baby to term and giving birth,

there would be an emotional bond. They may view abortion as a means of merely terminating an untimely pregnancy; in making an adoption plan, they view it as giving up a beautiful baby after giving it life. Recognizing the facts of a developing embryo and unborn child may help her understand there is a new human being (a little boy or little girl) from the moment of conception.

When Lutherans For Life focused on adoption for Life Sunday a number of years ago, we heard feedback that a congregation did not want to promote adoption as it would interfere with their pregnancy counseling in which they encouraged the moms to keep the baby. Was this a valid reason not to promote adoption? A birthparent could choose adoption for the wrong reasons, and can also choose to parent for the wrong reasons. There are many parents who are parents just because they found themselves in pregnancy, not because they are committed to parenting, or are prepared to offer their best as a parent.

At Lutheran Family Service of Iowa, we believe we cannot “steer” the client into a specific way of thinking, but can enable them to make a competent choice by thoroughly exploring both parenting and adoption as viable options. Birthparents need to make the best decision possible based on their own unique thoughts, feelings, and circumstances—not guilt or pressure.

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

birthparents who want to consider adoption as a possible way forward.

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

What age group of children is most in need of adoption? Numbers? Today in the United States, over 400,000 children are in foster care, and over 107,000 of these children are waiting for adoptive families. More than half are eight years old or older, and some have special emotional needs. Some are part of a sibling group who need to stay together. Most are children who have lived the early part of their childhood in chaotic and difficult situations. These children are legally free to be adopted, having had their legal ties to their birth families terminated. The only reason they are still in foster care is that no family or individual has come forward to adopt them.

What about the financial cost of adoption? Is financial assistance available? It is helpful if adoptive families understand what they are paying for and

to explore what help might be available. When a family pays a domestic adoption fee to an agency, they are paying for the counseling services necessary to support the birthparents to make a decision between parenting and adoption, and to follow through on a healthy adoption experience if adoption is chosen. Fees related to the legal process of terminating parental rights for the birth mom and birth dad are also usually included. These fees (and what they cover) vary greatly from agency to agency. When families pay an international adoption fee, the costs can be comparable or higher and are related to legal fees, dossier (required documentation and paperwork) preparation, translation fees, orphanage needs, and travel costs.

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

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

good to talk to other families that have adopted through the agency.

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

Adoption is both complex and beautiful. It involves loss, letting go of what was supposed to be, and resolution of these losses leading to healthy new attachments and valued life-long relationships. It has been said that adoption is rarely a "first choice" for any of the parties involved. However, because it is not the "first choice" does not mean it is second best! Adoption can be a beautiful solution for a child who needs a stable, loving home; for birthparents who want the best for their child which they are not able to provide; and for adopting parents who are ready in every way to parent but are unable to give birth to a child.

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

Eighteen Years

by Rick Fey

As we look back on the past eighteen years we remember so many faces, so many smiles, so many cries—all from the faces and feelings of children we did not know. Why? How? What happened? These are the questions that foster parents like us ask!

It seems so hard for those of us who have raised families of our own to comprehend what issues lead people with young children to lives of neglect, hurt, sorrow, and an unending lack of love.

How can God's young ones be left alone without care? How can a mother, after giving birth to a beautiful baby, not find enough time in her life to give it the unending love that he/she deserves?

Family stories with sad endings are all together plentiful. In our small Midwestern county, there is a lack of foster parents—which means there are more cases of abuse and neglect than there are families to care for them. A one-year-old left in a car alone, a one-year-old with a broken bone in an odd place, a set of two boys whose mom and dad can't get along and who won't put enough food in front of their children for fear there won't be enough money for alcohol or nicotine, or even worse, meth, or other hard drugs. How can we break that cycle?

John 14:18-19 says, **"I will not leave**

you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live." Isn't that but a promise and encouragement from God to those of us that give of our time to help these needy ones? With the help of our families—and our church families—God is telling us to share of our time with those who are desperate and alone.

How? The answer lies with love as well as time. Our family had the God-given will and financial stability to have mom stay home with the kids and be able to



Rick, Israel, and Karen Fey

care for them without the need of two incomes. When a family needed a place for a set of twin girls, we were overjoyed to give them the love they needed while mom and dad were away. Hours

turned into days and days into weeks. Along with education professionals, we worked with the girls' mom and dad on parenting skills, homemaking, and on budgeting—all in hope that this couple could make it work. Eighteen years later, we still have contact with those twin girls. Even with a rougher upbringing than they deserved, they are making it! They sense what family is and its great value.

Love. Family. That is what Karen and I hope to give to every child who enters our home. Some come as babies, some as preschoolers, and some as preteens. They have all been shown love by both us and our five children. (In fact, our fifth child

was a surprise to us. We had fostered him for so long that all our children agreed that we could not let him go. We gave him our last name and he is now an integral part of our family! What would life be without him? Empty!)

There are so many youngsters in need of support, care, time, and love. While not always easy, foster parenting is a wonderful way to share your time and natural parenting abilities with those who need it the most! Can you spare some days, weeks, or months from your life to help those children in need? Are these children tugging at your heart? Find out more. God has plenty of promises that your love will be returned, not only today, but in eternity!

(Rick and Karen Fey raised four biological children and now enjoy their fifth adopted son, Israel, and nine grandchildren—besides the joys of foster care children.)



This picture, posted by "Day of Prayer for Orphans," was a touching reminder of the millions of orphans in need of care around the world. The boy in the photo painted a picture of his mother on the floor and went to sleep in her hands. **To find ways you can help orphans, go to the Orphan Care section on the "Links" page at the LFL website. Orphan Sunday (orphansunday.org) is November 4.**

Get Involved Today!

As a Lutherans For Life supporter, you decide how to you can help! It might be through an **annual membership gift** or a **monthly or quarterly sponsor gift** (remember that gifts designated for membership are shared with state federations and local chapters—expanding the effectiveness of your gift).

Abundant Life Giving Society members help LFL with gifts of \$1000 or more annually.

Volunteers help by becoming involved in their federation and local chapter or by helping bring a Life Team to their congregation.



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Eight Foster Care Myths/Six Ways to Help Foster Families



By Lauren Hollon Sturdy

MYTH: All foster children are emotionally disturbed and damaged beyond repair. There's nothing I can do to help them.

FACT: "We see miracles happen all the time with foster children, and that's because of the relationship they develop in the foster and adoptive homes they're placed in," according to Buckner foster care leaders.

MYTH: You have to be wealthy to be a foster parent, and you need to own a home.

FACT: Foster parents must be financially stable, but they do not have to be wealthy at all! Home ownership is not a requirement, although there are rules about how many children you can foster based on the number of bedrooms in your residence.

MYTH: You have to be married to be a foster parent.

FACT: Single people can be foster parents, too.

MYTH: Someone has to be at home with the kids during the day, so people with full-time jobs can't foster.

FACT: People work full-time when they

have biological children, and it's no different with foster children. Your licensing agency can advise you on childcare options.

MYTH: You have to have parenting experience to be a foster parent.

FACT: While helpful, parenting experience is not an absolute necessity. "People can be trained to care for children," foster care professionals say.

MYTH: You don't have any control over or choice of the types of children who



get placed in your home, whether they are perfectly healthy or have a disability.

FACT: You have control over which children are placed in your home. However, the broader your parameters

are, the more quickly you will receive a placement.

MYTH: My children are grown and gone—I'm too old to be a foster parent.

FACT: The only age requirement is that foster parents must be 21 or older. Empty nesters often make great foster parents and find it a rewarding experience.

MYTH: I can't be a foster parent because I would get too attached. It would be too hard to see them leave.

FACT: It's true—you will get attached, and it will be painful when children you love leave. But these children have suffered through things no child should ever face, and they need the love and care foster parents provide when they open their hearts and homes. “When God calls you to do His work, He’s going to make sure you’re equipped to do it,” says Samela Macon, foster care program director for Buckner Children and Family Services in Beaumont.

But you may be saying, “I just don’t feel like our family is called to foster.”

That’s perfectly fine! Foster care truly is a ministry—one that many people are not called to pursue. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways you can minister to foster families and support them in their calling:

- **Offer to babysit.** Babysitting foster children does require some time spent in training and certification, but it is a huge help to parents who might need a night or weekend “off.”
- **Help around the house.** When you’ve got a full house, the laundry pile starts to look like Mt. Everest, and requires nearly as much stamina to conquer! Mowing, cooking a meal, or even offering to spend an hour helping clean the house are all great ways to assist foster families in their work when life starts getting the best of them.
- **Provide emergency supplies.**

Sometimes foster parents take children with very little notice of their arrival. You can offer your crib that’s sitting in storage or be an extra set of hands and make a quick trip to the store for necessities.

- **Help with the “extras.”** The stipends foster parents receive cover the bare minimum – clothes and food, and sometimes it doesn’t even cover all of that. Any “extras” come out of foster families’ pockets, and these are often things most families take for granted, like haircuts, birthday presents, prom dresses, football cleats, ballet lessons, entry to a basketball game, and many others.
- **Transportation and carpooling.** With a million different places to be at once, foster families can always use an extra set of wheels.
- **Prayer.** Partner together with a foster family you know to support them in prayer, because goodness knows they need it daily!

(Lauren Holly Sturdy is with Buckner International. www.buckner.org. Articles used by permission.)



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God Answered Prayer

by Kay L. Meyer
Director of Development



Some years ago my husband and I traveled to Minnesota to pick up our college-aged daughter from a Lutheran camp (where she had been a camp counselor). While we were in the area, we stopped and spent the night with one of my husband's friends from Vietnam. I'd only met Chuck and his wife Judy once before when they had visited us in St. Louis with their two young children.

While Chad and Chuck visited in the family room, I went into the kitchen with Judy as she began to prepare dinner. She began telling me about her sister and extended family. "Kay, I came from a large family and have 12 brothers and sisters. We never attended church."

"My mom told me my younger sister was very depressed. No one seemed to know why. I came to know Christ as my Savior some years ago and wanted to witness about Christ to my sister. My family was planning a family reunion. I traveled by train to see them. On the way there I prayed that God would give me the words

to share my faith in Christ with all of them, but especially that He would give me words to share my faith with my sister. But, the time never seemed appropriate. It didn't happen."

"On the train ride home, I continued to pray about my desire to do this. After praying, I had the thought come into my mind that I should tell my sister about

my abortion." (Note to reader: remember I was listening to Judy and knew nothing about her having an abortion. What did I do? I kept listening.)

She continued, "I thought, that is not going to happen. I have never told anyone about the abortion. I never told my mom or dad, or any of my brothers or sisters. So, although I kept thinking and praying about this idea, I didn't do it. But, Kay, I continued to feel like I should tell my sister about my abortion. I reasoned with myself, she is depressed—how is telling her about my abortion over ten years ago

"Kay, I continued to feel like I should tell my sister about my abortion as I prayed.

"I reasoned with myself, she is depressed ... how is telling her about my abortion over ten years ago going to help her? So for a time I didn't tell her."



going to help her? It won't help."

"So I put the idea aside for several more days—but the desire to tell her just kept coming to my mind. I couldn't understand it, but finally I decided I would write her. I'd tell her about my abortion and my faith in Christ. I sat down and wrote her a long letter. I told her that years before I had an abortion—and af-

terward felt terrible. Then I told her that a few years after my abortion a woman I knew told me about Jesus—that He had suffered and died for my sins—all of them! This woman never knew I had had an abortion. I didn’t tell her about that sin! But, after hearing of His suffering and death on the cross for me, I placed my faith in Him. I knew I was a sinner. I accepted His forgiveness. Then I began attending a Bible study and later a church. I came to understand that He had died for all my sins, even the sin of killing my own child.”

“The letter I wrote to my sister was ten pages long. I prayed again, put stamps on it and then mailed it. Four days later I got a telephone call from my sister. I finally understood why God had wanted me to tell her about my abortion. My sister told me that she had had an abortion, too. That was why she was so depressed.”

As Judy told me this story that day she said, “My sister still hasn’t placed her faith in Christ, but she asks me questions every time we talk. My husband and I continue to pray that she will come to know Christ.”

Judy told me she had never shared her abortion story publicly. But after our conversation she began sharing her story with small women’s groups at her congregation. She found that as she shared her story, she would almost always have someone come up to her afterward, often privately, and let her know that they too had had an abortion.

Prayer is vital as we share information about life because God answers prayer. I love to pray and often teach about prayer. I was privileged to lead the Lutherans For Life Prayer Breakfast at the most recent LFL national conference in Chicago. I designed a prayer breakfast PowerPoint presentation that I would love to share with LFL state presidents, Renewal For

Life® pastors and volunteers, and LFL chapter leaders. Hopefully you can use it to lead a similar prayer breakfast with your LFL chapter, Life Team, small group, or congregation. To obtain a copy, contact me at kmeyer@lutheransforlife.org.

Many of you who read this publication are actively involved in Lutherans For Life as volunteers. Remember that you could be the woman who shared Christ with Judy. She never told that woman about her abortion. But, learning that Christ had forgiven her changed her life and the life of her entire family. Because of you, LFL is making a difference in today’s world. Thank you for caring about individuals and their families and being an LFL volunteer.

Others who read this publication are not able to be volunteers. But, you support LFL with your prayers and financial gifts. **“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you”** (Deuteronomy 16:17).

Because of your gifts to Lutherans For Life you are making a difference in the lives of women who have had an abortion, teenagers who are pregnant and feel hopeless, those who have children with special needs, and those who are shut-ins or on hospice.

You help LFL accomplish the mission: to equip Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices for Life. Your prayers and financial support allow us to impact lives through the Gospel of Christ.

Thank you for your volunteer work, your prayers, and your financial support. Join us in praying that the Lord will continue to bless LFL today and tomorrow.



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Frightening Statistics

by Diane E. Schroeder



One in three women in our country will experience an abortion before they reach the age of 45. In the church, it's one in four. Sixty-five percent of women who have abortions claim a Christian affiliation. For every abortion, as many as 10 people may be affected (partner, family, etc.). Considering the over 55 million abortions since 1973, the number of people suffering from the grief and loss that abortion brings is astronomical.

One of my goals is to make pastors aware of the sheer magnitude of the abortion issue and the affect that it has on their ministry. Not only are women, in their churches, caught in unplanned pregnancies, but others may have had an abortion experience in their past. Remember:

- These are fellow Christians in desperate need of hearing the Gospel preached to them so that they can apply it to the sin of abortion and trust that God has forgiven them as He forgives all of us because of Jesus.
- The unresolved grief of abortion also leaves women (and men) vulnerable to secondary symptoms such as substance abuse, marital difficulties, promiscuity, and many others. It is important for pastors to understand that a person in their care for counseling with secondary symptoms may have an abortion in their past that is the root cause of their difficulties. But, they probably will

not tell their pastor without some prompting and complete assurance that they will not be judged. Pastors need to gently explore any pregnancy losses with compassion and understanding.

Fortunately, there is help available from Lutherans For Life for pastors as they minister to those suffering from the grief and despair of that abortion.

LFL's **Word of Hope** was founded in 1991 as an outreach to post-abortive Lutherans in need of healing. **Word of Hope** receives 300 calls a month from pastors, other congregation staff, concerned relatives and friends, and women and men suffering from the aftermath of abortion.

In the Chicago area women and men are able to meet personally with our executive director, Grace Kern, or Jenny Knox, our director of counseling.

Telephone counseling and referrals are available to women and men around the country as well as internationally. Lutheran deaconesses continue to be trained to recognize and heal individuals within their congregations.

Women healed are able to work with other women in Bible study, offering them compassion as together they discover the forgiveness available to all.

If you know of anyone in need of help, please tell them to contact **Word of Hope** to begin their walk toward healing and a brighter future. If someone you know is in a crisis pregnancy situation, has had an abortion, or has been hurt by someone, here they will find hope. Grace Kern and Word of Hope can be reached at **888.217.8679** (in Illinois 630.990.0909) or **help@word-of-hope.org**.

The number of people who ended their lives with help from assisted suicide organizations in Switzerland increased by 60 percent in the last five years, according to Swiss Info ... The 2011 total of 560 deaths means one in three of all suicides in Switzerland occur by assisted suicide. According to Zurich's prosecutor Andreas Brunner, assisted suicide has been allowed in the country for the terminally ill since the 1940s. It broadened to include ill patients facing suffering. Then it became open to the elderly effected by multiple illnesses and old age. Now the practice is open to healthy people. (*First Things Blog, LifeNews.com, 7/10; CLR Life News, 7/11*)

Reports of forced abortions in late pregnancy in China have spotlighted the country's one-child

policy prompting a change or repeal of the population control law. The policy is being questioned more widely than in recent years following reports of Chinese women forced to undergo late-term abortions. One woman, Feng Jianmei, was a victim of an abortion in her seventh month of pregnancy. Her relatives posted photographs of the dead baby on the Internet. Critics also point to abuses—such as the use of forced sterilization and coerced abortion—because the one-child policy either rewards or penalizes local government officials in regulating the population in some Chinese provinces. Business experts and economists are concerned that the policy will increase China's aging population and reduce its youth labor. China's National Population and Family Planning Commission first implemented the country's

one-child policy in 1980. (*CitizenLink, 7/23/12; CLR Life News 7/26/12*)

The number of babies born following conception via IVF has reached five million worldwide, according to estimates. Around 100,000 IVF babies are estimated to have been born in the UK since the first IVF baby was born in 1978. Anthony Ozimic, SPUC's communications manager, commented: "What is largely overlooked is that many millions more embryonic children have been killed following IVF, a quality-controlled process which is also intrinsically abusive of human beings. If the countless millions of pounds given to IVF had been given to the much-more successful ethical alternatives, many more children would have been born." (*Mail, SPUC, 7/2*)



Prince Alois of Liechtenstein won a solid electoral victory when 65 percent of the little country's voters opposed a referendum that would have ended his legislative veto power. Only 15 percent of

Lichtenstein's people voted in favor of the measure. In September 2011, in advance of a nationwide vote on decriminalization of abortion, Prince Alois announced that if the voters passed the measure, he would use his authority to veto it. In fact, the voters turned down the bid to legalize abortion, by a narrow margin. Proponents of abortion then organized the subsequent referendum to eliminate the royal veto power, which was defeated. (*www.catholicculture.org, 7/3/12*)

Follow us on ...



Number of abortions worldwide per year: approximately 42 Million; per day: approximately 115,000
Total USA abortions since 1973: 54,559,615 • Source: abortionno.org; National Right to Life

November is National Adoption Month!

Check out these
adoption—
option
resources!

BOOKLETS

Adoption: Finding a Family for a Child

explores adoption opportunities.

Item LFL503B.

\$0.50 ea.

The Adoption Option

by Dr. Jean Garton.

Item LFL500B. **\$1.00 ea.**

BROCHURES

The Servanthood of Adoption – Item LFL501T.

\$0.50 ea.

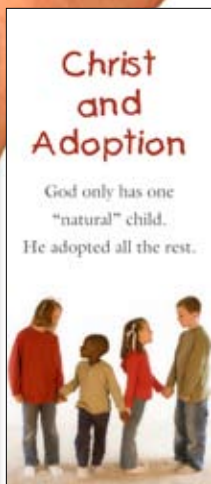
Christ and Adoption – Item

LFL504T. **\$0.50 ea.**

BULLETIN INSERT

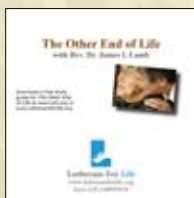
Welcome a Little Child.

Item LFL500BI. **\$0.07 ea.**

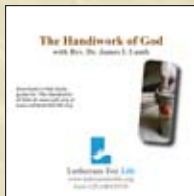


Consider starting an Adoption Fund at your congregation to help those trying to adopt. Also, your congregation could have an Adoption or Orphan Sunday at your church. (The official Orphan Sunday—orphansunday.org—is set for November 4.)

New DVDs from The Equipping the Saints Series!



The Other End of Life, with Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, takes a look at end-of-life issues. Key Concept: God gives life value and purpose and decides the time of our death. Gospel Focus: Christ's victory over death and the grave makes death a gain and makes life meaningful. *Item LFL1409DVD. \$5.00 ea.*



The Handiwork of God shares how the value of human life comes from what God has done and continues to do! Life is His **handiwork**! He creates life with His hands. He redeemed life with His hands. He desires to call and hold each life in His hands. Understanding these answers gives us a positive, Trinitarian foundation for dealing with the life issues. *Item LFL1401DVD. \$5.00 ea.* A companion brochure is also available (*Item LFL1007T. \$0.50 ea.*)



These are wonderful resources for congregational, school, and home use!

Note: Free DVD study guides can be downloaded at both the CPH and LFL websites.

Spanish/Russian Resources!

Lutherans For Life offers several resources in Spanish and Russian (funded by designated gifts)—and more are on the way!

Newly in Spanish:

Real Love/Real Life • Amor Real/Vida Real • Item LFL615T-S. \$1.00 ea.

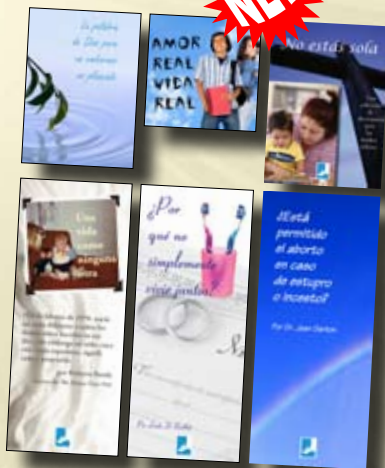
God's Word for an Unplanned Pregnancy • La palabra de Dios para un embarazo no planeado • Item LFL912B-S. \$1.00 ea.

Why Not Just Live Together • ¿Por qué no simplemente vivir juntos? Item LFL607T-S. \$0.50 ea.

A Life Not Like Any Other • Una vida como ninguna otra • Item LFL1622-S. \$0.50 ea.

Is Abortion Allowed in Cases of Rape and Incest • ¿Está permitido el aborto en caso de estupro o incesto? Item LFL132-S. \$0.50 ea.

Not Alone • No estás sola • Item LFL901B-spn. \$2.00 ea.



Russian: Abortion and the Message of the Church; Abortion – A Matter of the Heart; Called to Remember; The Secret Pain. Note: Russian resources are available only as PDF downloads on the LFL website.



Best Way to Order LFL Resources:

At www.cph.org or 800.325.3040.
Shipping/handling applies to all orders.
Quantity pricing on select resources.

Unknown to me, but not to God!

by Beth Schaible



(June 10, 2012)

It has been a year since Cal and I began his last six-month journey on this earth. On June 8, 2011, Cal had a fatty tumor, (lipoma), removed from his hip. Additional tumors were found in his groin area. Exactly a week later, we got the call that the fatty tumor and the tumors in the groin were found to be melanoma—skin cancer. From there the cancer progressed.

Cal had first seen the presence of melanoma in December 1989 and had surgery in January 1990 to have that cancer removed, with no following issues. We thought we were past that

struggle. But it was only delayed, so God could offer me 22 extra years of blessings with a Godly man and bestow on us another child, a daughter, in addition to our son.

I am sitting at home watching the Liam Neeson thriller, *Unknown*. I'm drawn to the title of the movie. Our futures are unknown to us, (thankfully), but they are not unknown to God. He is all-knowing; He is sovereign. God, through Christ, experienced the supreme suffering in human form when he took it upon Himself to accept the sin of us all through his death on the cross. Because He knows

what it's like to suffer, he can empathize with us in our suffering. Not only can he empathize with us, but God promises to one day relieve us of our suffering.

You see, the events of the past year were unknown to Cal and me, but not to God. I could not have guessed I would have had to pick out my husband's casket after Christmas, and travel to visit his grave this Memorial Day, or a year later be looking at a headstone for him. But God knew and this was part of His plan. While I may not understand now, I will understand later. Right now, I need to trust that He has good plans for my future—and I

do. I need to trust that He loves me immensely—and I do. He knew Cal's days. He knows my days. And He knows your days.

There are times when I miss Cal terribly and am moved to tears, but God hears my heart and surrounds me with His arms of love to bring me peace,

His peace, that comforts me beyond my understanding. Thanks to all of you who have remembered me and my family in prayer and have continued to come along side us, even now. And to let you know—My Anchor Holds.

“Your eyes saw me when I was only a fetus. Every day of my life was recorded in your book before one of them had taken place.”

Psalm 139:16 **GOD'S WORD**

(Beth Schaible lives in Fargo, North Dakota and is a past member of the national LFL board of directors.)



Beth, Cal, Daniel, and Katherine Schaible

2012 LFL National Conference Photos

Find out more about the conference on pages 24-25. More photos are on the LFL website.



Acting our Age: Priceless!

by Linda D. Bartlett
www.titus2-4life.org



Every younger generation deserves the wisdom and experience that is most naturally mentored by an older generation. But, in this present culture, we parents and grandparents seem to resist acting our age. Isn't this rather selfish? If we're absent from the role of mentor, to whom are we abdicating? What is the price paid by children? Grandchildren? Children in our neighborhoods?

The older generation hasn't evolved, says the world. So, girls! Boys! Follow your heart! Listen to your instincts! Rubbish! How typical of the world to offer deceptive counsel. But people who call themselves "Christian" should know better. We should value the wisdom and spiritual maturity that comes with age.

As I was preparing the keynote address for a women's conference, I was drawn to passages from 1 Timothy 5. There, the Apostle Paul is speaking to young Timothy like a father. He is inspired by the Holy Spirit to offer instructions for the Church. Something the Church is called to do is honor the widows, especially those who are truly left alone. What got my attention was the distinction made between an "older" and "younger" widow. Verse nine notes that a widow is eligible for church assistance if she is not less than 60 years old. The one who has been a faithful wife of one husband, has a reputation for good works, has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of saints, and

has cared for the afflicted is considered to be a wise woman who won't bring shame to the congregation.

But what about a younger widow—a woman less than 60 years of age? The household of God is to encourage her to marry and manage her household; if possible, to have children. Why the clear distinction of age here? Because, as real life has a way of proving out, younger women are more captive to their passions. They are more tempted to romantic desires, idleness, and gossip, or saying things they should not. They are more easily deceived by worldly trends and led away from Jesus Christ.

What do you think of that? Does this make sense to you?



God's Word consistently through the Old and New Testament reminds the older generation to mentor the younger. The Creator of life entrusts children to parents; not to their peers. He wants parents and grandparents to tell children and grandchildren about the wonders of God's work. This includes all the lessons learned over the

course of time and in the midst of challenges. So, when a man or woman refuses to accept their age, resists learning from past mistakes, and clings to the foolishness of youth, woe to the young ones in their charge.

As for me? Well, I admit I don't like the gravity of age. My head, after all, still thinks creatively. Enthusiastically. Optimistically. (Laughter is good for my soul—and others.) But, given to me are priceless years of experience and lessons often learned the hard way—years of seeing God at work in my life. Why would I want to keep that all to myself? Where is the shame in acting my age?

Stem Cell Research Debate Over, Embryonic Side Lost

A new report by the Charlotte Lozier Institute takes a comprehensive look at the stem cell research debate and comes to the conclusion that proponents of embryonic stem cell research have lost.

The new report analyzes the history and trajectory of funding for stem cell research by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) and it reveals the scientific community now views morally unproblematic alternatives to embryonic stem cells as the best hope for progress toward effective treatments and therapies ... However, the Charlotte Lozier Institute report notes CIRM's growing preference to fund ethical stem cell projects is evidence of the scientific community's acceptance that the best hope for progress lies in the funding and pursuit of morally unproblematic alternatives like adult stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells.

"A decade ago researchers, media, and Hollywood alike dismissed moral and ethical concerns to hail stem cell research using, and destroying, human embryos, as the 'only hope' for developing efficacious therapies," said Chuck Donovan, president of the Charlotte Lozier Institute.

He continued: "But despite the millions of dollars spent on this research, cures brought about by embryonic stem cells have continued to prove elusive, while adult stem cell research applications have exploded. As the leading funder of stem cell research, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine has made grant decisions that show where the industry sees promise. In the past six years, where that promise lies has become increasingly clear: ethical adult stem cell research."

The report concludes this way:

In 1999, when then-President Clinton's National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) first endorsed federal funding for hESCR it recognized that the research raises serious ethical concerns and that "human embryos deserve respect as a form of human life."

For this reason, NBAC made pursuit of the research conditional: harvesting "left-over" IVF embryos for stem cells "is justifiable only if no less morally problematic alternatives are available for advancing the research ... The trajectory of CIRM's grant-making since 2007—halfway into its 10-year life—certainly argues that such alternatives to hESCR do indeed exist. 18 CIRM's "natural evolution" to placing increasing emphasis on clinical trials has led it to provide more and more resources to adult and other non-embryonic avenues of stem cell research, and fewer and fewer to hESCR.

Adult stem cells may be "less glamorous" in some esoteric sense than their embryonic counterparts, but in terms of arriving at real therapeutic benefits for patients, they are the warhorses getting the job done. As CIRM's grants show, the "alternative" has now become the preferred option.

In light of this, it is reasonable to ask, in the spirit of NBAC's recommendation, is human embryonic stem cell research still "justifiable"?

(Steven Ertelt, LifeNews.com, 7/12/12)

Laying a For Life Foundation

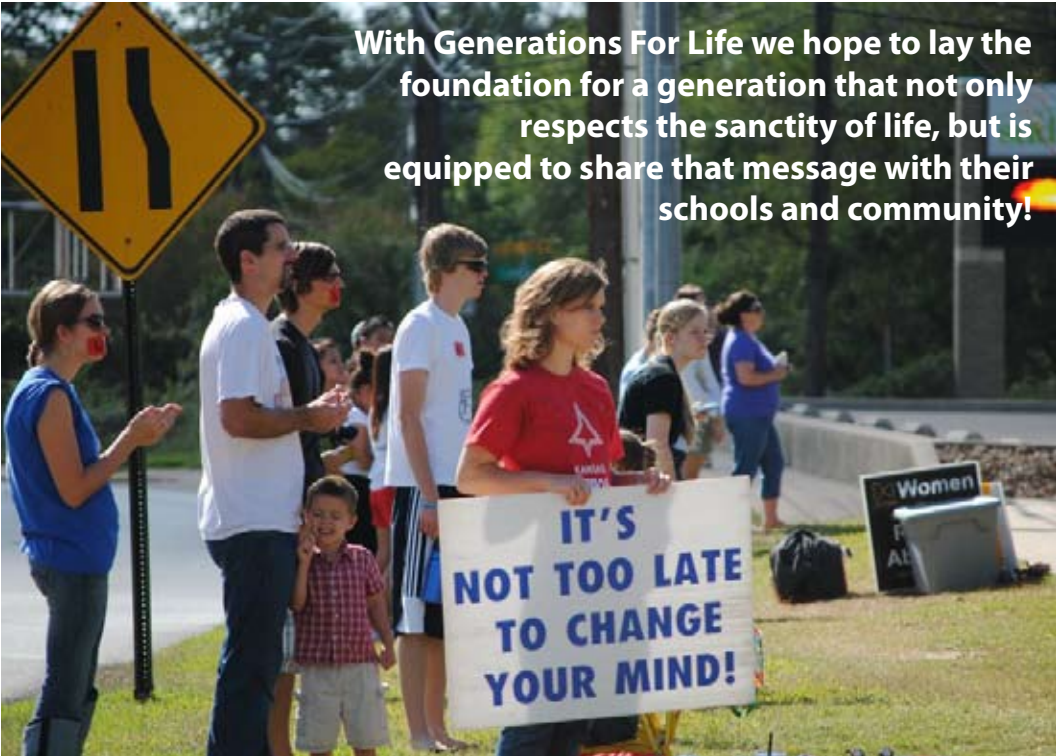
by Laura Davis, director of
Generations For Life



It was a typical Saturday morning in Bryan, Texas. The streets of Bryan, and the neighboring town of College Station (home to Texas A&M University), were full of students and out-of-town visitors, getting ready for another football game and all the festivities that went along with it. But, on one busy street in Bryan, a dedicated group of students from Texas A&M were preparing for a different kind of battle: a battle For Life. In front of the Planned Parenthood clinic on East 29th Street, dozens of children, college students, young adults, and families stood in a prayerful vigil—the last voice of hope to the women about to make the toughest decision of their life. The silence was

only punctuated by the sound of traffic, the occasional car horn, and the heartfelt appeals of the sidewalk counselors to the women entering the clinic, urging them to rethink their decision.

My name is Laura Davis, the new director of **Generations For Life** (as well as development counselor) for Lutherans For Life—and a proud graduate of Texas A&M. I am humbled to call many of these students and counselors my friends and am exceedingly proud of all that they do to support the lives of the unborn. During my time at Texas A&M, I was able to witness the energy and passion of youth and young adults for Life issues and the incredible impact they made when they were trained and directed to the right opportunities. I am taking these experiences and applying them to Lutherans For Life's **Generations For Life** initiative, a program designed to equip Lutheran youth to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.



With Generations For Life we hope to lay the foundation for a generation that not only respects the sanctity of life, but is equipped to share that message with their schools and community!

When thinking about this new program, I am drawn to 1 Timothy 4:12: **“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”** The youth of our churches and schools have an incredible opportunity to be an example to their peers in both their words and actions.

It is the goal of **Generations For Life** to give these students and young adults the tools they need to live out this example through resources, information, and training. Not only will we teach them the truth about life issues and God’s beautiful plan of grace for His creation, but we will help them learn how to share this information with their peers, where to go to volunteer their time and talents, and how to continue sharing the Gospel message For Life throughout their lives.

In addition to working directly with the youth of the Church, we will also work with those whose job it is to nurture and teach young people, including youth workers, teachers, and pastors. These servants are often one of the first points of contact for an individual facing difficult life issues, such as unplanned pregnancies, infertility, and end-of-life decisions. While many may know the basics about life issues, we will help them to address specific situations and give them the resources they need to guide and counsel those who come to them.

Through these programs, we hope to lay the foundation for a generation that not only respects the sanctity of life, but is equipped to share that message with their schools and community.

To learn more about **Generations For Life**, our upcoming programs, and ways that you can support our ministry, feel free to contact me at ldavis@lutheransforlife.org.

When we choose political leaders we place tremendous power in their hands. When we recognize that they will inevitably use that power to shape the world in their own image, then we must take into account the character of the person into whose hands we place the power to shape the future of the world in which we, our children, our grandchildren, and generations yet unborn will live.

Rev. David Adams



Photo: Kelly Gerke

The early Church changed the world with pro-life ideas! People were moved from publicly-accepting to publicly-rejecting abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia ... As we teach our own children and grandchildren God’s Word of Life, the Holy Spirit will equip them to oppose a culture of death. As we live with the manner of a servant, we will raise curiosity and cause others to ask: Why do you do what you do?

Linda D. Bartlett

LFL Conference Equips the Saints For Life

Equipping the Saints For Life was the theme as over 200 Lutherans gathered August 3-4 in Itasca, Illinois (near Chicago), from across the United States, for the 2012 Lutherans For Life National Conference.

In her welcoming address to conference attendees, President Diane Schroeder said, “Whether we save a million lives or only one, we know that what we do serves the Giver of Life and what we do makes a difference! ... [W]hat Lutherans For Life is equipped with, that matters the most, is being equipped with the Word of God. For we know God’s Word is the most powerful weapon we have to meet the challenge of our time and save lives ... Let’s go forward with joy and anticipation, eagerly embracing the opportunities God will give us to make a difference.”

Rev. Ken Klaus, speaker emeritus of *The Lutheran Hour*, said in his Friday night keynote address, “God stands solid and steadfast against anyone who would deprive the innocent of their rights—including the right to life ... You have come here this weekend to say, ‘Lord, count me in as one of Your faithful servants. Use me to take a stand for life; use me to speak for those who are silent;

use me to educate those who are misinformed; use me to bring comfort and direction to those who are confused and frightened; lend my strength to those who are weak. Dear Lord, use me so Satan may be forced to confess, ‘I almost succeeded in destroying a life, but I didn’t.’ You have come here to take a stand and in doing so you have been joined with 20 centuries of Christians who have, in their time, proclaimed the transforming power of the Redeemer ... this is our time, our moment to tell those around us, those who are coming after us: the Risen Savior values you, your unborn, your voiceless, and your elderly; He has died for you, your friends, and your enemies and He

has risen so all sinful humanity might have the forgiveness and salvation He freely offers. Today we come together in convention to be re-

committed to speaking on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. That is the purpose to which the Redeemer has called us.”

In her Saturday plenary address, Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, thanked the attendees for spending time learning ways to help “people we will never see ... you have heard the call of the helpless.” She highlighted Deuteronomy 31 in her call to be courageous in taking a stand For Life. “We need to be training the ‘Joshuas’ ... the battle is going to be fierce.” Mrs.



Tobias reminded the conference that “abortion is the least regulated invasive procedure in the country ... an irreversible procedure ... 55,000,000 babies have lost their lives in this holocaust.” In closing, she referenced Galatians 6:9 (“**And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up**”) by asking for prayer for both those in the pro-life movement and for those who promote and provide abortion.

Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, LFL executive director, in his opening worship sermon, focused on Ephesians 6:10-20. “When you read



through this text, it is easy to think that it’s all about us. We need to be strong, we need to put on God’s armor, we need to take a stand against the devil, we need to pray, we need to boldly proclaim the Gospel. If we do all this, then we will win the victory. We can quickly fall into that kind of thinking when it comes to this For Life battle we are in. If we just elect the right people, if we just pass the right laws, if we just get the right judge, if we just get the right constitutional amendments then we will win the victory For Life ... It’s not about us. It’s all about God. It’s all about God equipping us with His strength ... You know what that means? We have no excuses to offer for not being engaged in this spiritual wrestling match for truth and for life You can’t pull a Moses and say, ‘I can’t speak so awful good.’ You can’t pull a Gideon and say, ‘I am the least in my family.’ You can’t pull an Elijah and say, ‘Everyone is against me.’ You can’t pull a Saul and say ‘Goliath is too big.’ You can’t pull a Paul and say, ‘But I used to be such a rotten

sinner.’

We have no excuse, because it’s not about us and our power. It’s all about God and His power, the strength of His might. It’s all about God and His power at work in us. It’s all about God and His power being perfected in our weakness ... It’s all about Jesus. It’s all about God. He equips you with His armor. And this armor, as precious as it is, does not come to us with fanfare and flourish, but in rather simple and ordinary ways—some ink on page, water in a font, wine in a chalice and cardboard-tasting wafers on a little plate.”

Dr. Lamb also shared that we are in a spiritual battle with Satan who is attacking, through various means, God’s truth, our faith, God’s plan for marriage, God’s plan for purity, God’s plan for human sexuality, God’s gift of life and the value He gives to life. “You don’t have to travel to some foreign battlefield. Satan attacks you, your congregation, your fellow Christians right where you are, right there by your section of the wall. Daily, as we wrestle and struggle and battle against these attacks we each need to be equipped with God’s strength and with God’s armor.”

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12).



Conference Resources:

Go to the 2012 conference page on the LFL website for info on ordering CDs (and select DVDs) of the conference. You can also download the conference book at no charge.

Equipping the Saints through RFL

by Jerilyn Richard
Director of RFL



At the 2012 National Lutherans For Life conference, focused on Equipping the Saints For Life, there was a special workshop offered to representatives from our Renewal For Life® congregations. Saturday workshops also offered an emphasis on Renewal in the Church.

Pastor Doug Merkey, with Churches for Life, presented training and encouragement that focused on equipping the Church for life by forming a Life Team within the



congregation. Pastor Merkey helped us focus on the most important thing in ministry, our relationship with Jesus.

What is our motivation? Luke 6:45 says, **“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart ... For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks”** (NIV).

As we set forth in our mission to Equip the Church with the Gospel, we are encouraged and motivated through the Gospel to be a light in this dark and fallen world.

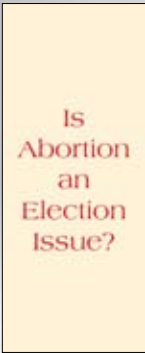
If you would like information on forming a Life Team in your congregations please contact the Life Center and also check out the Renewal For Life® website at www.rflonline.org.



Speak Up For Life!

Is Abortion an Election Issue?

– So often we hear people who oppose abortion still talk about it as if it is no different than tax cuts or Social Security. It is much different. It is not even on the same plane! Abortion is a sin. Abortion is a sin against the Author and Giver of Life. That makes abortion a spiritual issue-not just an election issue. *Item 118T. \$0.50 ea.*



Life News Monthly Bulletin Inserts



Share the Life Message Every Month!



Best Way to Order LFL Resources:
At www.cph.org or 800.325.3040.
Shipping/handling applies to all orders.
Quantity pricing on select resources.

Pro-Life Event! Pastoral Praxis for Life

Beeson Divinity School
Samford University
Birmingham, Alabama
September 11, 2012

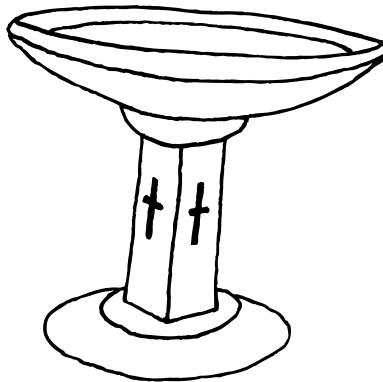
Featured speakers include Dennis Di Mauro, LFL's representative to the National Pro-Life Religious Council, Dr. Timothy George, and Fr. Frank Pavone.

www.nprcouncil.org
mail@nprcouncil.org



Babies, babies, and more babies! Pictured below are a few things babies need and a few things babies like just because they are babies! Unscramble the words and then draw a line to the right picture. Go ahead and color the pictures too!

RLLSOTRE



ERPCAIFI

IBB

EMBOLI

LEBTTTO

YETDD RBAE

DOFO



PBAMSIT

Life Thoughts in the Church Year are designed to help pastors and congregations see the church year through the lens of the sanctity of human life. **Life Thoughts** are based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*.

October 7 – Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost – In God’s perfect world, one thing remained “not good.” “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). God created a perfect woman for His perfect man. Then He ordained the perfect cornerstone upon which to build and promulgate civilization—marriage between man and woman. So perfect an institution that God uses it to picture Christ’s relationship to His Church (Ephesians 5:32). Those who redefine marriage not only erode this cornerstone, they defame this picture.

October 14 – Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – Speaking truth at the city gate must have been difficult in Amos’s day. He writes, “They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth” (5:10). People today—even God’s people—do not always like to hear the truth. But thank God for those who speak it anyway! For the ultimate goal is not condemnation but, “that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious” (15b).

October 21 – Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost – “I can’t afford a baby right now” can be a very real and heartfelt cry

for someone in a crisis pregnancy. But, used as an excuse for abortion, it becomes idolatry. The Bible never condemns wealth, but loving and trusting it more than God is “a grievous evil I have seen under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 5:13a). He who afflicted His Son on our behalf, will not abandon us in our afflictions.

October 28 – Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost – Jesus’ words to blind Bartimaeus, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you” (Mark 10:49), provide constant comfort and hope for the faithful today. No matter what problem may come our way, we need never turn to worldly solutions. Jesus called us in the waters of baptism out of the blindness of sin, and He continues calling us through Word and Sacrament reminding us of our salvation and of His loving presence. Take heart!

November 4 – All Saints Day – Born of God, we bear the name “children of God” (1 John 3:1). Therefore, we are pure as He is pure (3:3). We are declared saints through Jesus Christ. No sin,

except that of unrepentance and unbelief, can defile this purity or the love that bestows it. The cleansing blood of Jesus purifies all.

November 11 – Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost – Today’s readings share the stories of two poverty stricken widows (1 Kings 17:8-16; Mark 12:41-44). Both serve God in their poverty, and God uses both to serve others. The worth of the destitute, weak, and vulnerable should



not be judged by what they can do or not do, but by what God does in and through them.

November 18 – Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost – LFL’s *Word of Hope* post-abortion hotline receives calls from women in nursing homes. Facing the end of life, they remained burdened with a past abortion. What a message God gives for all sinners facing the end of life or the end of time! Because Jesus “offered for all time a single sacrifice” for sin (Hebrews 10:12), our Father says, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more” (10:17). Therefore we can lift up our heads and face the end “with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience” (10:22). (*Word of Hope* – 888.217.8679)

November 25 – Last Sunday of the Church Year – On this last Sunday of the Church Year, the readings call for us to be “awake” and ready for the Lord’s return (Mark 13:24-37). But our confidence to be ready as we deal with life’s difficulties lies not in our abilities or actions. It comes from the action of God in Jesus “who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy” (Jude 24).

December 2 – First Sunday in Advent – “The Lord is coming!” Some would fellow that with, “So be afraid!” But Jesus says, “[S]traighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). We should be watching. We should be ready. But we need not be afraid, even if we have committed the most unrighteous of sins, when we believe with repentant hearts that the One returning is “The LORD is our righteousness” (Jeremiah 33:16).

December 9 – Second Sunday in Advent – John the Baptist proclaimed “a

baptism of repentance” (Luke 3:3b). Repentance means changing the way we think and act (3:10-14). Many in our pews today need to change the way they think and act about the sin of abortion. Abortion destroys a life created by God and for whom Jesus died. Undoubtedly, God’s law is already working repentance in the hearts of those in the pew who have committed this sin. It is those who would defend this sin as a “right” that need to heed the call to repentance. No one has a right to sin against God and do a wrong thing. Repent! Then joyfully hear John’s other proclamation, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

December 16 – The Third Sunday in Advent – The joy of this Third Sunday in Advent is not just ours toward God. “The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing” (Zephaniah 3:17). Now that’s something to rejoice about—a source of joy outside of ourselves and our circumstances!

December 23 – The Fourth Sunday in Advent – Leaping in a womb (Luke 1:41) sounds like something a human would do. Leaping for joy (44) sounds like something a human person would do. Leaping for joy in the presence of embryo Jesus, his “Lord” (43), sounds like something a spirit-filled human person would do (15). Life in the womb—maybe there is more to it than we sometimes think!

December 30 – First Sunday after Christmas – Simeon’s peace at the end of his life came from seeing his Savior. True peace at the end of our lives comes not from the absence of suffering but from the presence of our Savior and from His power at work in our suffering.

Hope, Sorrow, and Joy in Foster Care

by Diane E. Schroeder



Foster parents serve a critical role in our country in meeting the needs of children either on a temporary basis or permanently. The following is an interview with a friend of mine from Care Net who has been a foster parent for 12 years, fostered 17 children, adopted three, and currently has two foster children living in her home as part of her family.

Why did you and your husband decide to become foster parents?

Initially for the typical reason of wanting children and not being able to have them biologically. We decided to pursue domestic adoption believing that there are plenty of children needing homes, but the process of marketing yourself to prospective birth mothers felt odd, so we decided to investigate fostering.

What was the process? We enrolled in a 10-week class with the Department of Children and Family Services that was designed to weed out people who were not really interested in fostering. Nothing was sugarcoated. We learned that there are three kinds of fostering: (1) people who are interested in fostering only; (2) people interested in adopting only which means that they had in their home only those children that were legally free. (3) people interested in fostering that would lead to adoption. There is a great deal of uncertainty in that area. How long will the child stay? Will they become legally free? We decided that #3 fit us.

What were your emotions at the time? We were very nervous. We would

be new parents. We were afraid of getting in over our heads. You had to fill out a survey form indicating what sort of difficulties or situations you can handle—we checked very few and were surprised when we got a call to foster a child.

How did you start out? We started doing respite care which is fostering children who are scheduled to go to another foster care family, but for some reason, like vacation, they cannot go immediately. This was a good way to start. The time frame is limited. Everyone knows it is temporary and it gave us a chance to alleviate some of our concerns over fostering. I knew that I could do anything for two weeks.

What is your greatest joy in fostering? It caught us by surprise that we could make a great deal of impact in a child's life in a short period of time. Most of our kids

The Foster Care Option

were under the age of seven and had never heard of God. Within days they heard about God, became excited, and then thrilled to know that God was out there caring and watching over them. It is so important for children to know that there is a God.

What is your greatest sorrow? Loneliness is probably the biggest. You don't get to share with friends or your church family a pregnancy and you don't know families with similar children when a child arrives unexpectedly. You might not be able to share your child's medical or family histories because of legal restrictions. Of course, anxiety over how long the child will stay or if you will be overwhelmed by the child's experiences, and the messiness of the biological family. These are normal fears of fostering which many people have which can be eliminated by respite care and starting out slowly.

What can a church do to promote fostering? (1) People in the church need to be educated about foster care. Most people think fostering is an all or nothing proposition. People need to take it one step at a time. (2) Have a way for parents of certain age children to meet each other so that foster parents have a way to find friends for their children. (3) Encourage people to go through the licensing process to educate them and then offer respite care for those parents who are fostering. Legally, foster children are not allowed to stay with non-licensed people. (4) Encourage your church to view foster children as just another child in need of parents who love and provide for them. Include these families in Mother's Day observances and other church activities. (5) Set up a borrowing list—a place where foster parents can borrow cribs, baby items, or clothing to provide for children who arrive suddenly. Not every family can supply everything for a child. (6) Set up a transportation support system for foster parents that will help them meet doctor appointments, social worker sessions, or other requirements. (7) Encourage your staff to be helpful in special needs cases and not to judge foster parents if sometimes that child misbehaves. These problems are not caused by the home in which they are now being cared for. (8) Prayer. Pray for a family even though you don't know all of the information or issues. They are there and the family is in need of your prayers.

Thank you to my friend for sharing her knowledge based on experience. She is a foster care and adoptive parent and I am an adoptive parent. Over the years we have had many great conversations about our children and the role God played in forming our families, which is what unites all parents no matter the family!



Our Mission ... Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

Our Vision ... Every Lutheran congregation upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.

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

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