Picture-Your-Pastor
A Contest for Kids in Grades K-8

The Big Idea:
If you’re in Grades K-8 (or know someone who is!), Concordia Seminary wants to know what makes your pastor wonderful.

How to Enter:
1. Get a piece of paper (8.5” x 11”) and some crayons, markers, colored pencils, or pens.
2. Somewhere on the paper, write one sentence about what makes your pastor great.
3. On the same side of the paper, draw a picture of your pastor in action, doing what you wrote about.
4. Write your name and age on the back of the drawing.
5. Mail it in. Mail your Picture-Your-Pastor picture and completed entry form to: Concordia Seminary, Picture Your Pastor Contest, 801 Seminary Pl., St. Louis, MO 63105 by April 1, 2013.

Cool prizes and national recognition for Picture-Your-Pastor entries at every grade level. See www.csl.edu for full contest details.

Official Entry Form

Child’s Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Grade ___________________________ Age at time of submission ___________________________
Home Address ________________________________________________________________________________________

Address     City  State  ZIP

Telephone Number (area code included) _______________________ Email _____________________________________

School/Church ________________________________________________________________________________________

School/Church Address _________________________________________________________________________________

Address     City  State  ZIP

Pastor’s Name ________________________________________________________________________________________

I give my permission for my child to participate in this contest and understand that my child’s first name and age will be utilized for public viewing. I agree that by submitting an entry, I have read the terms and conditions as printed on the website.

Parent/Guardian Name _______________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature _______________________________________________________

MAIL TO: Concordia Seminary, Picture Your Pastor Contest, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105 by April 1, 2013.
God’s Gift of Life

The lie is the death of man, his temporal and his eternal death. The lie kills nations. The most powerful nations of the world have been laid waste because of their lies. History knows of no more unsettling sight than the judgment rendered upon the people of an advanced culture who have rejected the truth and are swallowed upon in a sea of lies. Where this happens, as in the case of declining pagan antiquity, religion and law, poetry and philosophy, life in marriage and family, in the state and society—in short, one sphere of life after another falls sacrifice to the power and curse of the lie. Where man can no longer bear the truth, he cannot live without the lie. Where man denies that he and others are dying, the terrible dissolution [of his culture] is held up as a glorious ascent, and decline is viewed as an advance, the likes of which has never been experienced.


Like few other conservative Lutherans in Germany in 1933, Hermann Sasse recognized in Nazism the mystery of evil mentioned by St. Paul. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). The world largely ignored the murder of six million human beings by the Nazis, whom the latter regarded as a “decadent” race, ignored at least until the prison camps were opened, and photos and films were released to a world aghast. Sadly, the aged Luther’s vitriolic attacks on the Jews for not accepting the Gospel (not on racial grounds, as in the case of the Nazis) only added anti-Semitic fuel to the horrific fire. Forty years after Roe v. Wade, we—the soldiers and very liberators of Germany from the darkness of the Third Reich—have largely ignored and continue to ignore the deaths of some 50,000,000 innocent unborn babies in “the land of the free,” where we are allegedly guaranteed “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

By the love of God the Father, who chose a young woman to carry out His plan of salvation, a young woman who knew what it is to be confused by an unplanned pregnancy; by the grace of Christ, who while still in the womb was greeted by the “leaping,” yes, “rejoicing” John the Baptistizer, himself unborn (Luke 1:14); by the strength of Him who healed every disease and cared for every life He encountered (Mark 1:34); by the mercy of God the Father who sent His Son, mercy incarnate for all (Luke 1:78), by the knowledge of our eternal God and Lord who knows and loves every child formed in the womb (Jer. 1:5; John 3:16); empowered by the Spirit of life who gives me life (Job 33:4; Rom. 8:10), I—a sinner no better than the next (1 Tim. 1:15)—shall speak (Jer. 20:9). I shall intervene (Luke 10:33). I shall love all and treasure God’s gift of life, womb to tomb (1 Tim. 6:18). For Jesus experienced it all, sanctified it all and redeems it all (Gal. 3:13). He has redeemed me that I may no longer live for myself (1 John 4:9; 1 Pet. 4:2).

“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them” (Acts 14:15).

For the sake of LIFE,

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison
America changed on Jan. 22, 1973. Prior to that, children in the womb still had some measure of protection. They were still valued. They still had worth. But when the Supreme Court ruled on Roe v. Wade, the dignity and respect inherent in human life were flipped on their ends.

Forty years later it seems the country is more upside down than ever. It's easy to lose hope, to wonder if the Lord has heard our prayers to end the deaths of 3,200 unborn infants in America each day, to despair that He doesn't even care. But within the following pages, you'll find that He does, that He always has, and that His will for each child, each mother, each father is good and perfect and right.

The Rev. Jason Braaten's “3 Ways to Talk about Life” debuts a new column for LCMS youth (#believeboldly), one that, this month, provides them with conversation starters to talk to their friends about life. The Rev. Dr. Robert W. Weise explains whether or not embryos in petri dishes are really human in “Shaped by God,” and the Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer encourages Christians to boldly defend life in “Our Littlest Neighbor.”

In “Bios and Biology,” the Rev. Dr. Gilbert Meilaender explains bioethics and why the faithful ought to care about them, and the Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Voss’ “Wonder and Elegance” outlines examples of God’s marvelous design in the creation of the human body.

“God Is Not Done with You,” by the Rev. David Petersen, offers Christ's comfort and hope to families who have lost children because of a miscarriage, and “Hope for Rachel,” by the Rev. Dr. James Lamb, outlines what the Church has to offer women who are suffering the physical and emotional trauma of an abortion.

Forty years ago this month, the value of human life was flipped on its end. But the Lord didn't allow the Church to be silenced on the matter. He didn't abandon His people. And He continues to provide His faithful with the strength to speak out, to endure, to defend life.

“Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears. . . . there is hope for your future, declares the Lord” (Jer. 31:16–17). He is faithful, and by His grace, we will endure.

Adriane Dorr, Managing Editor
The Lutheran Witness
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The 4-1-1 on the 2013 Synod Convention
The Synod’s 65th Regular Convention, set for July 20–25 in St. Louis, Mo., is meeting under the theme “Baptized for This Moment” (Acts 2:39). Visit the convention webpage at www.lcms.org/convention to find nomination forms and other convention documents, such as the Handbook, overtures, notices, updates and registrations. Access the Synod Convention webpage on your smart phone.

You can also download a Lutheran Witness widget for your church’s (or your personal) website or blog at www.lcms.org/lutheranwitnesswidget.

Correction: The September 2012 issue of The Lutheran Witness incorrectly listed the 2011 Kansas District pledge as $639,948. The correct pledge amount is $543,000. Thus, the 2012 pledge of $585,000 was an increase of $42,000 from 2011.
Ways to Talk about Life

by JASON BRAATEN

It’s easy to talk about your pro-life beliefs with your Christian friends. You’re all coming from the same source: the Bible. But what happens when you chat with friends or teachers who aren’t Christian, who don’t see the Bible as anything at all? How can you stand up for life in a pro-choice world?

1. Clarify the Issue. A lot of times, people don’t ever really get to the heart of the abortion debate: Are the unborn human? Are the unborn full-fledged, living members of the human race who just happen to be really tiny and still developing? Or are they just blobs of cells? If the unborn aren’t human, then we don’t need a reason to commit an abortion. But if the unborn are human, no explanation for abortion is good enough.

2. Build a Case for Life. Try starting with science. Remember the Law of Biogenesis that you learned in sophomore biology class? It says that (1) Life only comes from life, and (2) Kinds produce like kinds. In other words, a human being outside of the womb has to come from a living human being inside the womb. It doesn’t just magically turn into a living human being at the point of birth. Human beings reproduce human beings. Second, scientists who study embryos have made it pretty clear: “The beginning of a single human life is from a biological point of view a simple and straightforward matter—the beginning is conception.” Science has spoken: The unborn are fully human! The only thing that separates the unborn from us are things like their size, how developed they are, whether they are inside or outside the womb and how dependent they are. But these differences don’t make it right to take human lives, especially those who are not yet born.

3. Answer Objections. Offer to answer any questions or concerns that your friends and teachers might have. Don’t write them off. Take them seriously. As Christians, we give the same respect to them that we expect them to give us. And answer honestly. If you don’t know an answer, say so, and promise that you’ll look into it. Your goal isn’t to convince them to change their minds right there. (It wouldn’t be great if they did, but let’s get real: That’s not likely.) Instead, challenge them just enough to get them to rethink their current position, especially this question: What are the unborn?

Q: Are you against women’s rights to choose what they do with their bodies?
A: We shouldn’t take away a woman’s right to choose what she does with her body. We shouldn’t get between a woman and her doctor. We totally agree ... if the unborn aren’t human, then we don’t need a reason to commit an abortion. But if the unborn are human, no explanation for abortion is good enough.

Q: But what about the poor who can’t afford to have another child?
A: Would it be okay for a large family to decide to get rid of its two-year old child to help make the family budget less tight? Of course not! Why? Because the child is a human being. And that’s the point. What are the unborn? If the unborn aren’t human, then we don’t need a reason to commit an abortion. But if the unborn are human, no explanation for abortion is good enough.

Q: Should someone be forced to raise a child with physical or mental disabilities?
A: Would it be right to take the life of a two-year-old boy with Down Syndrome? Of course not! Why? Because he’s a human being. That’s the issue, remember? What are the unborn? If the unborn aren’t human, then we don’t need a reason to commit an abortion. But if the unborn are human, no explanation for abortion is good enough.

Q: But what about in the case of rape?
A: Rape is profoundly evil. Victims of rape deserve our best spiritual, physical, financial and psychological care. But there’s more to it than that. Would it be okay for a mom to end the life of her two-year-old daughter who was born due to a rape because she was reminded of the event? Of course not! Why? Because that little girl is a human being. And that is the heart of the issue. Are the unborn, regardless of how they were conceived, human beings? If they aren’t, no justification for abortion is needed. But if they are, none is acceptable.

Got teachers or friends who think you’re old-school for being pro-life? Learn how to own the discussion. #likeaboss
Becky Rogness (left) served as press secretary for Rep. Michele Bachmann (R, Minn.).

on abortion. It is the biggest fight of our life. My faith has informed my decision on life; I don’t see any way to be Lutheran and not believe that life begins at conception.

LW: In what ways do you think Lutherans are uniquely positioned to address sanctity of life concerns?

BR: We take the biblical position on life in the womb, so Lutherans are in a position to stand up. I was very encouraged by President Harrison on Capitol Hill, speaking against the Health and Human Services mandate. We need more Lutherans to add their voices too. We know we’re on the right side of this; we just need more people to stand up and educate others.

Life comes from our Creator. Life comes from God, and it’s not man’s right to kill. We need to speak out against abortion; it is murder. We speak out against other things. Why not this? People need to hear about it, even from the pulpit. As Lutherans, we need to proclaim what is right.

LW: How can Lutherans involve themselves in promoting and protecting the sanctity of life?

BR: We can connect with elected officials at all times to share our views on life. We’re blessed to be in the United States where we can contact them and they’re elected by us. We can educate our children and make sure they know that abortion ends a human’s life. We are seeing numbers of those claiming to be pro-choice going down; it’s at the lowest point it’s ever been. Young people are beginning to speak out. Now we just need to keep standing up for what we believe in and what’s right.

10 Minutes with . . .
Becky Rogness
by JENI MILLER

I make plans, and God gives me new ones.” Becky Rogness, communications director for Indiana Right to Life and communications manager for Allen County Right to Life, uses those plans for the benefit of those without a plan and without a voice. A Minnesota native, Rogness followed up her Lutheran education in communications and religious studies with an internship at Fox News and a successful career on Capitol Hill, where she served as press secretary for Rep. Michele Bachmann.

After moving to Fort Wayne, Ind., with her husband, Noah, a first-year seminarian at Concordia Theological Seminary, she found herself well-suited for the plans God had for her. “My office is 15 feet from the only abortion facility in Fort Wayne,” said Rogness. “My organization knew it was important to have a presence there, with women going in [to the facility] pregnant and coming out no longer pregnant. . . . Allen County is seeing decreasing numbers of abortions; it’s dropped 56 percent in five years. Any number of abortions is too high, but we’re moving in the right direction.”

LW: How does your Lutheran faith inform your work?

BR: I’ve always believed that life begins at conception; it is always a child. I really appreciate my parents because my views on abortion come from them. I urge all parents to educate their children by ROBERT W. WEISE

Are embryos in petri dishes really human?

We are made and shaped by God physically. We are human beings from the union of maternal and paternal genetic material delivered by the ovum (egg) and sperm to form the one-cell embryonic human being called a zygote. In addition, we are made and shaped by God to live the life of Christ in this world as Christians by water, His Word and faith through Holy Baptism. To be a fully human being, a new creation in Christ is to be righteous in His sight, and so we are both a created creature and a newly created child, made and shaped by God through His Word.
from the rib of the man. Such a creature, which has a share in immortality... and, as Moses states later, makes the woman out of the rib of the man. Such was the origin of man. But what about today? The burgeoning science of assisted reproductive technology, including more than 28 reproductive ways to make a baby (this excludes God’s Word in Genesis ‘to be fruitful and multiply’), the freezing and thawing of human embryos, as well as embryonic stem cell research, continues to trivialize the tiniest and weakest amongst us: the embryonic human being. But what should we as Christians consider when we discuss the relationship of parenting to assisted reproductive technology, especially as it results in the freezing and thawing of embryonic human beings and their ultimate death?

God’s Word affirms that the child in the womb is a human being, a person in continuous development (Ex. 21:22; Job 31:15; Is. 44:2; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 51:5). God knows the child in the womb as a human being. This becomes more profound and compelling within the context of the incarnation of God who became like one of us from His incarnate conception and birth (Luke 1:31; the Nicene Creed).

From conception through birth and beyond, parents are to raise their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord (Eph. 6:1–3; Deut. 6:1–10). Parenting begins when they learn that the mother is bearing a human person created by God. After the child is born or adopted, the parents will bring this child to the waters of Holy Baptism. This baptized child of God is a new creature in Christ with the sure and certain hope of living eternally in the new creation. But when a husband and wife or a female parent goes through in vitro fertilization (IVF) or Direct Egg Sperm Injection (DES) into an ovum (egg), the resulting embryonic human being is graded as to its viability for implantation. If the human embryo is not viable to the naked eye, the embryo will be destroyed. If the embryo is viable, he/she will be implanted, with the extra or spare fertilized embryos (4–7 day old) frozen at −321°F in liquid nitrogen. Right now, there are more than 500,000 unwanted, homeless embryonic human beings remaining in liquid nitrogen. These may be thawed and used for embryonic stem cell research, resulting in their destruction.

You cannot parent a frozen embryonic human being. When frozen embryonic human beings are thawed, 7 percent to 57 percent will die. Again, this is not caring for the least of the tiniest human beings amongst us who are God’s creatures with a body and soul. Human beings, regardless of their stage of development or age, should not be frozen, but we should instead “defend them,” according to the Eighth Commandment. They should be either returned to the mother’s womb, given up for adoption (www.needlelight.org/crnoflake-embryo-adoption) or remain frozen. To remove the liquid nitrogen bath of the frozen embryos may be compared to human embryonic euthanasia.

Parents who enter the world of assisted reproductive technology that results in adult humans determining which human embryonic human being lives and which dies, and which will be implanted and which will be frozen, need to pray and reflect on their parental responsibility to raise their child in the instruction and discipline of the Lord Jesus Christ. Parents are called by their God-given vocation to nurture their children from conception onward. The gift of human creation by the Creator God-Man, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, compels Christians to care for these little ones at all times. As baptized Christians, we are neighbor to the weakest amongst us—the embryonic human being who is shaped by God physically and declared righteous in His sight at his or her Baptism.

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The Rev. Dr. Robert W. Weise (weiser@lcsei.edu) is professor of practical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.
A great darkness has fallen upon us. In the 1973 landmark decision known as Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court struck down all laws regulating or restricting abortion, thus effectively making abortion-on-demand the law of the land. Forty years our nation has wandered in this wilderness. Forty years, and we have grown comfortable with the culture of death.

Abortion mills dot our nation’s landscape, and the morning-after pill can be taken right at home. Our increasingly secular society no longer speaks about keeping abortion rare but is concerned only that it is available and affordable. Christians are even being drawn into abortion’s web. Our tax dollars fund Planned Parenthood, the nation’s largest abortion provider and great corrupter of our young. More recently, as part of the new health-care law, a mandate from the Department of Health and Human Services requires employers to include abortifacient drugs as part of their health-care plans.

We must ask some basic questions: Without the right to life, what does it mean to talk about the rights of liberty and the pursuit of happiness? What does affordable health care mean to a child whose life is taken from her? And by disregarding the lives of the little ones, are we not cheapening the inherent value of everyone?

On this 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we do well to step back and count our losses. Since that deadly decision, there have been over 54 million abortions. It’s hard to wrap our heads around such a number. Consider Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota and North Dakota. Now picture those states completely uninhabited.

The problem persists. Every day, abortion takes from us the number of people lost in the World Trade Center. Every day, little children are dismembered, with trash bags as their coffins and dumpsters as their graves. It can be too much to handle, and the numbers are mind-numbing. Perhaps it would be better to think small, and remember that every victim of abortion is a person. Each of us started this life as an embryo, the coming together of a sperm and an egg to create a new and wonderful person. A little embryo is not simply life tissue or a potential life, but it is a human being, loved and known by God. With the psalmist, we sing, “For you formed me in my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother’s womb” (Ps. 139:13). Take a look at an embryo on the very first day of conception, and you are taking a look at your own first baby picture.
As Christians, we confess that every unborn child has been redeemed by the blood of Christ and is endowed with an eternal soul. Our very lives are defined by the Lord of our souls. He was nourished, protected in the womb, and born for our salvation. Our Lord was conceived and born in a “war on women.” This is yet another of the many lies the devil tells. After every abortion, there are two casualties: a dead child and a wounded mother. Groups like Planned Parenthood tell our young women that abortion is a very common medical procedure and treat it as if it were nothing more than the removal of a tumor. But once the deed is done, they leave behind women who are hurt and wracked with guilt. In the midst of all this, we proclaim a better way, a way of hope and life, restoration and forgiveness.

Some might say this is a religious matter and that we should stay out of politics. But Christians can and must act as we are able. Many of those who fought against slavery or championed civil rights were motivated by Christ’s love for people of every race and tribe. Now, our time has come. We must put our faith into action by defending the most defenseless among us. With Christ, we must speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. The child in the womb is our littlest neighbor, and he needs our help.

Guilt, despair, fear

What is stopping us? Many of us are burdened with painful guilt and self-loathing. The sin of abortion has stained many of our own families. Women we know and love have had abortions. Others of us have encouraged women to do so. And for many others, abortion is the skeleton in our closet. But none of us is innocent. Abortion is a national sin, and the guilt belongs to all of us. For too long, we have encouraged a culture of decadence, standing idly by while our littlest neighbors suffer.

But know this: In Christ, there is forgiveness and healing. The same Christ who loves the little children has died for each and every one of us. Christ took the sin of abortion upon Himself, and that sin, like all others, was nailed to the cross. Take heart. As our Lord was dying, He prayed, “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.” Even now, He prays for us. Even now, His death pays for our greatest sins and takes away our heaviest burdens.

As we embrace the cause of the unborn, so also do we embrace those riddled with guilt and fear. Post-abortive support groups can be found throughout the land. Those struggling with abortion may want to learn about “Silent No More,” a group of women who have had abortions but are now speaking out in order to help other women in distress. Guilt need not paralyze us. Christ’s forgiveness is greater than our guilt, and His baptismal robe of righteousness covers all who come to Him. Christ is with us in our helplessness. Our greatest sins and takes away our heaviest burdens. Christ and we must speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. The child in the womb is our littlest neighbor, and he needs our help.

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In one sense, bioethics is something quite new, a development of the last half-century or so. The term itself is of recent coinage, and only in the last few decades has bioethics gradually come to be regarded as an academic discipline.

Nevertheless, much of what we call bioethics has been around for centuries and is known as “medical ethics.” As long as there have been physicians, they have reflected on what a proper practice of medicine means. The Hippocratic Oath probably dates from the fourth century B.C. from one of the philosophical schools in ancient Greece, and codes of medical ethics have been drawn up in the West for several centuries. Hence, in many contexts it may make sense to use the terms “medical ethics” and “bioethics” interchangeably.

There are also some reasons to distinguish the terms. Bioethics may, for example, have a somewhat broader meaning. It can include ethical problems in the biological sciences outside of medicine (for example, attempts to manipulate the genes of nonhuman animal species, or the use of animals in research). Roughly speaking, we can say that, even when we set to the side issues involving the use of other species, bioethics has come to include three (not entirely homogeneous) areas of concern.

First, it includes the sorts of issues treated for centuries as part of medical ethics—matters that shape the clinical encounter between physicians and their patients. It asks how this encounter should be structured. We want to know whether physicians are obliged to tell their patients the truth about their condition (and, even more, what exactly “truth-telling” means). We need to ask ourselves how much personal responsibility patients have for their health or illness, and we need to think about whether health is a purely biomedical good or whether it has more expansive spiritual and emotional dimensions.

Second, bioethics includes a range of issues that have to do with our coming into and our going out of existence. Some of these issues will also be part of the traditional concept of medical ethics—how best to care for the dying, for example. Other aspects of this second area will, however, be more philosophical in nature. What do we mean by an “individual human being” or a “person”? How shall we understand the place of human beings in nature? How are body and spirit related in human beings?

Third, bioethics deals in questions that involve political life—questions—much in the news and debated today—about how a community organizes itself to pay for and allocate health care. What we decide about many of the questions that fall within the domain of bioethics must surely demand our attention and concern.

Christians cannot help but care about many of the questions that fall within the domain of bioethics and must, therefore, care about the shape bioethics takes. The meaning and point of suffering, the body as the place of personal presence, the importance of human freedom and its limits, the physician as one who cooperates in God’s healing work—such beliefs move us to attend to bioethics, David J. Rothman, a well-known scholar of the social development of medicine, wrote of the movement from “bedside ethics” to “bioethics,” a movement from a traditional patient-centered medicine to one in which other “players”—bioethicists among them—are now gathered around the bedside and involved in decisions about medical care. A move to increased presence of government regulators is a still further step in that transformation.

Medical ethics have been around for centuries. But what does the way in which we understand those ethics say about what we confess as Lutherans?
The death of a child because of a miscarriage changes families. Hear Christ’s words of comfort and hope.

God escaped in the night. He was exiled to Egypt, the land of slavery and infanticide. And the women of Bethlehem, not God, felt Herod’s God escaped in the night. He was exiled to Egypt, the land of slavery. He crossed the Jordan with them in the future.

God is gentle with Rachel. She refused comfort but He doesn’t stop. He says: “Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears. For your work shall be rewarded” (Jer. 31:16 NKJV).

Why would Rachel refuse that? She is angry with God, deeply hurt, afraid and lonely, but also desperate for His comfort and promise. So it is for all those who abide in this dying life, still infected with original and actual sin, but blessed with faith.

Do not mourn, do not live, do not sleep, do not eat, do not move as those who have no hope. You have hope.

God’s promise to Rachel is explicit: “Your children shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is rejoicing in your future... Your children shall come back to their own border” (Jer. 31:17 NKJV). If you have lost a child, do not mourn as those who have no hope. What God takes away, God restores. Yes, there is sadness, but God is not yet done with you. He will bring it to completion in the Day of Jesus Christ. Thus are you called to live by faith, not by what you see or feel or think, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

The boys from Bethlehem died that night that Jesus escaped and would return to die for them. His martyrdom liberated them out of this living death and relieved them early of their burdens. It was not, as it may have appeared, that their lives were exchanged for His. His life was given in exchange for theirs. They seemed to die, but they really lived. What Herod meant for evil, God meant for good. Herod delivered them to heaven, peace and joy without measure. They praised God not by speaking but by dying. Their lives were emptied of themselves and filled with Him. They had no complaint. It was their mothers who were the victims. This is also your life in Christ. You are the victim. You are suffering in sadness. Yet the life Christ lived and the death He died, He lived and died also for you. And the resurrection to which He rose, He rose for you. Do not mourn, do not live, do not sleep, do not eat, do not move as those who have no hope.

You have hope. The boys of Bethlehem were not abandoned. Your baby was not taken to the land of the enemy. You won’t be either. There is hope in your future. Jesus lives.
The human eye

Dr. David Menton, a cell biologist and a well-known speaker for Answers in Genesis, describes the complexity of the human eye. The eye is actually a very sophisticated living video camera and has a series of two lenses. The first one is the cornea, the clear “window” to the eye; it focuses most of the light entering the eye. The cornea is the part that is modified during Lasik® corrective eye surgery. Right behind the cornea is the iris, the colorful part of the eye. The iris opens in low-light conditions, and it closes in bright light. Behind the iris is a second lens made of a rubbery substance that will stretch or contract to enable a person to see nearby or distant objects. Unfortunately, as we get older, that lens loses its elasticity, and we need glasses to read. The interior of the eye has a black coating, like a camera, to minimize glare; it is also filled with a jelly-like substance to help transmit light faithfully to the back of the eye where the retina is located.

The retina is similar to camera film. Through complex chemical processes, it is able to transform photons of light into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain for interpretation. Externally, each eyeball has three pairs of muscles to move it in three dimensions and an automatic washer-wiper system, known as eyelids and tears. Unlike your car windshield, the eye will automatically try to repair itself when damaged. If any one of these parts breaks or is not formed properly, the eye will not work as it should.

Cilia

The second example from the human body is described by Michael Behe in his book Darwin’s Black Box (New York: The Free Press, 1996). Some cells have cilia, which look like hair but beat like miniscule whips. Using cilia, some cells swim around and others beat in sync to move things, like pushing mucus up the throat for elimination. Behe states, “The function of the cilium is to be a motorized paddle. In order to achieve this function, microtubules, nexin linkers, and motor proteins all have to be ordered in precise fashion. They have to recognize each other intimately, and interact exactly. The function is not present if any of the components is missing” (p. 204). For example, if the cilia in a person’s lungs do not work properly, pneumonia likely will result.

Blood clotting

The blood-clotting system is a third example of the complexity of God’s creation. Two different pathways with numerous components are finely tuned so that blood coagulates when there is an injury, but otherwise flows freely in the body to prevent a blockage that would result in a stroke. Behe describes this complex process: “The function of the blood-clotting system is as a strong, but transient barrier. The components of the system are ordered to that end. Fibrinogen, plasminogen, thrombin, protein C, Christmas factor, and the other components of the pathway together do something that none of the components can do alone. When vitamin K is unavailable or antihemolytic factor is missing, the system ‘crashes’” (p. 204).

More complex than the space shuttle

These are three amazing instances of the wonders and elegance of God’s creation. Each body cell is also much more complex than a space shuttle, and the study of the genetic information in cells has shown that a single human cell contains digital information in its DNA equivalent to 2 CDs worth of storage.

All the examples illustrate that these complex systems could not come into existence gradually by random chance as Charles Darwin supposed. Many of the biological structures and biochemical processes in the human body have well-matched, interacting components, each of which is necessary for the system to function. The loss of any one of these parts renders the system useless. These systems are well designed, finely tuned and meant to come online all at once, not one piece at a time. The wonders and elegance of creation certainly do testify to the power and divinity of our Lord!
It seems to dampen the Christmas spirit if we observe the Holy Innocents on December 28. We joyfully celebrate the birth of baby Jesus and then must think about the tragic death of babies. Bring up such a text in an edition of The Lutheran Witness devoted to life, and people conclude you will talk about abortion.

But another tragedy cried out from the streets of Bethlehem that night: Rachel weeping. “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more” (Matt. 2:18). Rachel, who personified the sorrow of the Jews enslaved in captivity in Jeremiah 31, now personifies the loud weeping and comfortless sorrow of these Jewish mothers at the murder of their babies.

Along with the Herod-like tragedy of abortion occurring 3,200 times every day in our country, another tragedy cries out from our streets: Rachel weeping, the mothers and fathers of these dead children weeping in the darkness of grief, refusing to be comforted. Rachels today sit in an even deeper darkness. Unlike the mothers of Bethlehem, they participated in the choice to have their own children killed. When that reality strikes, it crushes the heart and numbs the soul. Listen to their weeping, “You see, I didn’t just kill my child that day. I was a victim too. I killed something inside of me, something that is now replaced with the knowledge that I too, can do a very wicked evil,” wrote one woman to the National Office of Lutherans For Life. “I caused the death of our little one. I listened to the lies of the devil that there was no way out. He had cleverly laid his trap for me and many other unsuspecting women,” wrote another.

If this secret sin stays secret, it manifests itself in other ways. Women who have abortions are four times more likely to engage in drug or alcohol abuse and to have difficulty maintaining relationships with men. They have higher divorce rates and experience more physical and mental health problems. Over one in five report having attempted suicide. And there are spiritual consequences. Trapped in the darkness of sin, Rachels feel unforgivable and hopeless. A voice is heard in our land: “Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

But there is hope for Rachel! “Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears . . . there is hope for your future, declares the Lord” (Jer. 31:16-17). There is hope for those sitting in the darkness refusing to be comforted because one baby escaped Herod’s sword that awful night: Jesus. Jesus, who said, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5), and “I have come into the world as a light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in the darkness” (John 12:46). No one needs to stay in the darkness. Jesus hung in the darkness of sin. He suffered the hopelessness and forsakenness of that darkness. He was buried in the darkness of the tomb and death. But the darkness of death could not contain the Light of Life! The Light shattered the darkness, giving us “a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). We find hope in our living God.

There is hope for Rachel because Jesus shatters the darkness of our sin. He enters the darkness to give us the light of living hope. As one Rachel wrote to Lutherans For Life, “I never really understood that Jesus Christ was willing to get down into my muck and miry life and pull me up out of the sewage of my problems. He has since shown me that He really is.”

Satan would love us to believe that the Herod-like destruction of unborn children and the abuse of women through this destruction are political issues and do not belong in the Church. But that is precisely where they do belong! We have the Gospel, the message that can shatter the darkness and bring hope.

If you sit silently alone in the darkness, know that God loves you. He enters the very depths of your darkness and shines upon you with the light of His forgiveness. In that light, you can find hope and begin the path toward healing. “Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears . . . there is hope for your future, declares the Lord.”

By James Lamb

Thousands of women suffer from the effects of abortion. What does the Church have to offer them?
Resources

A Small Catechism on Human Life
by John T. Pless
Examine abortion, bioethics, end-of-life and sexuality issues through the biblical eyeglasses of Luther’s Small Catechism. Thoroughly lay-friendly, each chapter is followed by thoughtful discussion questions and Bible references.

Is Abortion Allowed in Cases of Rape or Incest?
by Jean Garton
Dr. Jean Garton, co-founder and president emeritus of Lutherans For Life, takes a look at abortion in cases of rape and incest through this brief study of 2 Kings 4:16.

A Love for Life
by Dennis DiMauro
Has God been silent on the abortion question? Has the Church really shown a diversity of opinion on the sanctity of life? This book will provide Christians with the biblical and historical information that they need to make an informed decision on the abortion question.

Abortion in Perspective
by LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations
This report studies the abortion issue from medical, legal and theological perspectives. It reflects on spiritual care and responses in the political sphere and makes suggestions for congregational response.

Additional Resources

Lutherans For Life offers confidential and professional counseling for those wounded by abortion. Contact Word of Hope at 888-217-8679, www.word-of-hope.org or help@word-of-hope.org.

Lutherans For Life offers the following materials:

Brochures
➢ After the Abortion, There Is Hope in His Healing
➢ The Secret Pain
➢ Confessions of an Executive Director
➢ Word of Hope

Bible Study
➢ From Heartache to Healing

Booklet
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Questions

The November 2012 edition of Lutheran Witness addressing ‘The Lord’s Office’ was lacking a perspective that plagues the church. What are congregations to do with a pastor that sinfully does “lord it over” the people? Unfortunately, too many pastors of congregations in conflict wield their “authority” without grace, a servant heart, patience or tact. Emotiolectically, one article used the word “authority” three times more often than the word “serve/service.”

Our seminaries skillfully train pastors to spot false doctrine and confessionally inadequately practices from a mile away, yet too many pastors simply do not heed the lessons of discernment. In a society that is quickly moving away from biblical foundations, we need pastors who will correct with firm gentleness, teach with care, rebuke with love and train with hope. Rev. Wes To Baumeister Ironwood, Mich.

In the otherwise helpful article “Set Free” (November 2012), I was disturbed by the response to criticism of his preaching by a pastor who said, “How can I presume to tell other Christians how to live?” St. Paul tells the Ephesian elders that he proclaimed to them “the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27).

Besides the stinging rebuke of the Law and the grace-filled comfort of the Gospel, our preaching needs to include the implications of the Gospel for the faith and life of the hearers (Third Use of the Law). This is Paul’s instruction to Pastor Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16–17), as well as his (Third Use of the Law). This is Paul’s instruction to Pastor Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16–17), as well as his...
Colleges

JOSEPH J. JACKS, Chattanooga, Tenn.; BRIAN BOWE, Oklahoma City, Okla.; BILL E. BAND, Doylefield, Wis., have submitted their applications for the Pastoral Colloquy Program at the Luther Church—Missouri Synod.

KIMBERLY A. GRIFFITH, Burbank Hill, IL; JULIE DOUGLAS A. ABELL, St. Johns, Mich.; JENNIFER L. CONORT, Mequon, Wis.; LINDSIE R. MILLER, Redwood City, Calif.; NOLFE M. MAIDEN, Redwood City, Calif.; CHALICE, F. MIKHAIL, Redwood City, Calif.; CATHY J. RUKAS, San Antonio, Texas; IAN M. THOMS, Bronxville, N.Y.; have submitted their applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of the Luther Church—Missouri Synod through CCEF.

ANTHONY M. CELLA, Frisco, Texas, has submitted an application for the Parish Music Colloquy Program of The Luther Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University, Austin, Texas. Carole Stroud, director of observations, noted that these applications should be directed within four weeks after publication of this notice to Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr., Chairman, Colloquy Committee, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

HILLY GRIFF, Illawarra, Pymble, N.S.W.; NELDA E. KOBEL, United in Christ, Frohnau, Mo.; DOBYN H. LIGHTNING, United in Christ, Frohnau, Mo.; and KATHY CHRISTINE OIHE, Edgewood City, Calif., Arnold, Mo., have submitted applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Luther Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call. —Dr. Mark A. Waldron, Director of Synodical Placement and Colloquy, Concordia University Chicago, 7700 August Ave., River Forest, IL 60305-1499.

GERTRUD SEIFEL, Foothill Ranch, Calif., and DIANE M. ROSS, Yorka Linda, Calif., have completed the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Luther Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call. —Dr. Paul T. Fritzsche, Director of Colloquies, Concordia University, Irvine, CA 92612-2022.

SEFENIEE, Fountain City, Wis., has completed the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Luther Church—Missouri Synod through CCEF and is now eligible for a call. —JONATHAN GIBB, Cookeville, Tenn., Inc., has completed the Director of Christian Education Placement Program through Concordia University, St. Louis,Mo. and is now eligible for a call. —Dr. Kevin Hall, Director of Colloquies, Concordia University, St. Louis, Mo.

Requests for Reimbursement

ROBERT DANIEL MACNA, Castle Rock, Colo., and WILLIAM JOSEPH COLE, Kendall, N.Y., have applied for reimbursement from the Minister of Religion—Ordonnateur of the Theological Education—Missouri Synod. Applications from individuals in Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin, Ill., have been submitted for reimbursement to the Minister of Religion—Ordonnateur of the Theological Education—Missouri Synod. Concordia Seminary, Concordia University, St. Louis,Mo. S 83011.

Concordia Seminary, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, Concordia University, St. Louis, Mo.

Positions

The Lutheran Witness welcomes notices for positions available at affiliated entities.

KEMPER SERVICE ORGANIZATION: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The deadline for receipt of resumes is 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month i.e., January 20 for the March issue. Send notices to jennifer.duffy@lcms.org. —Ed.

The following institutions of the Concordia University System (CSU) are advertising positions for the following organizations:

• Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas: search for faculty positions in the Department of Psychology.

• Concordia University, Portland, Ore.: faculty positions in neuroscience, health care administration, etc.

• Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.: position in educational equity in the Department of Educational Studies.

• Concordia University, Austin, Texas: dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

• Concordia University, Austin, Texas: search for full-time faculty positions in mathematics.

For more information about these and other CSU positions, including complete job descriptions, qualifications, and application procedures, visit www.lcms.org/jobs and click on ‘Positions Available’.

Concordia Plan Services (CPS) seeks a committed and well-qualified associate general counsel for its legal staff in St. Louis, Mo. CPS provides a full range of quality employee benefits and services to the more than 6,000 congregations, schools, and other organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Required background and experience include:

• Licensed attorney (Missouri), or licensed in another state and willing to obtain Missouri license; a strong academic record and at least two years legal experience in personnel, employee benefits, and ERISA plan benefit plans. Applicants with 4-7 years experience, specific practice of employee benefits and another relevant area such as tax, corporate transactions or health care will be considered.

The successful candidate will preferably be an active member of an LCMS congregation.

Applications should be submitted online at www.lcms.org no later than Jan. 31. Learn more about Concordia Plan Services at www.concordiaplan.com.

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I.W. notices

Official Notices

Note: The ‘official notices’ are published for a single purpose only: giving notice of a result, hence, no changes in the Synod’s member rosters by the addition or deletion of the names of individuals and congregations. It is not appropriate that reasons for the changes be identical, or factual published in the notices. Since a change can occur for any of a variety of reasons, no assumption should be made merely from the fact that a change has occurred. —Ed.

Colleges
of noble birth

by Jesse Krusemark

To the church at Corinth Paul writes, ‘Consider your calling, brothers’ (1 Cor. 1:26a), that is, ‘Consider your station in life, what you were when you were called.’ Paul seeks to remind the Corinthians that they are not a church of intellectuals or people of great influence: ‘Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth’ (1 Cor. 1:26b). Of what sort of folks is your congregation comprised? What were you when you were called?

Most of us came to faith not as city treasurers, synagogue leaders, merchants or slaves but were baptized as children. Reread 1 Cor. 1:27–29. Consider especially verse 28 in light of the status of children (including the unborn) in our society today. How are children regarded contrariwise by Christ and His church? (See Matt. 11:25; 18:1–4; 21:16.)

Today, take great comfort in knowing that many of the unborn, who have died, have departed this world in faith. In this faith, awakened by God’s Holy Word spoken by Christian parents and family members, fellow Christians and pastors, Christ calls them to their final rest: ‘Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, the adult, infant, and unborn; the bright, average, and simple; those of high social standing and those of low; everyone, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I have become for you Wisdom from God’ (paraphrased from Matt. 11:28–29a; 1 Cor. 1:30b).

The fact that no two people are alike is a gift from God. We all have our own story. Like after 40 years of marriage, you can both still laugh about your disastrous first date.

In the end it makes discovering exactly who we are, as unique children of God, all the more rewarding. Because if you believe as we do—that nothing matters more than someone’s well-being, and that everyone is someone who deserves to feel loved, valued and at peace—it helps to get to know who that someone is.

Your story means something to us. Call 1-888-205-6334 or visit www.good-sam.com/lutheranwitness.