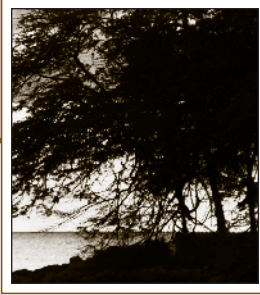


Issues
of
LIFE

Volume 9



THE CHRISTIAN
Appeal



Issues of Life

In her speech at the Democratic National Convention in Denver in 2008, Martin Luther King Jr.'s niece, Alveda King, spoke with certainty when she assured the crowd, "I know in my heart that if Uncle Martin were alive today, he would join with me in the greatest civil rights struggle of this generation—the recognition of the unborn child's basic right to life." Then she explained, "My Uncle Martin would agree that we cannot end poverty, hunger, or suffering by killing those who might suffer." Thus she hacked away the basis most often cited to justify legal abortions. In his series of devotional essays this month, Senior Editor Gene Shelburne calls us to consider some of the perplexing life/death issues posed by abortion.

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John Gulley

The God
who made us
"is not served by human hands,
as though he needed anything,
rather, he himself gives
everyone life and breath
and everything else."



The Apostle Paul
Acts 17

Issues of Life

A Bathtub Birth

Only a few miles from the U.S. Supreme Court bench where our nation's top judges ruled that any female in America has the constitutional right to end the life of her unborn baby, one citizen waited ten minutes too long.

According to an Associated Press news release, a 24-year-old D.C. resident gave birth to a baby boy in her bathtub in November 2013.

Somehow this new mother managed to get through nine months of pregnancy without any member of her family realizing that she was pregnant.

So, when her baby was born, Lillian Alvarado took extreme steps to keep her secret. Her federal indictment says she tried to strangle her newborn infant. When that failed, she drowned him in the bath water. Then she partially dismembered the child and tried to flush his body parts down her apartment commode.

Evidently the reluctant mother stopped up her plumbing. Neighbors in the apartment below hers knew something horrible had happened above their heads when bloody water began leaking down their walls.

Three years later, after extensive mental evaluation, Alvarado was arraigned in a Washington court and charged with first-degree murder.

This true story is an ugly, bloody, gruesome tale. I feel sorry for every person who so far has had to touch it—whether the family of the alleged killer, or the cops who arrested her, or the building maintenance people who had to swab up the bloody residue, or the psychologists who have had to listen to her story over and over again.

Most of all, I feel sorry for the poor woman who has to wake up every morning and face again the shameful of what she has done. What part of that bloody bathtub scene do you suppose she would she most like to erase from her memory?

When I stumbled across the news account of this mother's ongoing legal plight, though, what troubled me most was the injustice of it all.

Instead of being arrested and charged with a felony, this woman could have been heralded as a brave victim if she had visited a nearby abortion clinic just a day or two before her baby decided to appear.

Instead of her being charged with mutilating her baby, licensed medical professionals could have decimated that tiny body and legally disposed of it far more efficiently than she did.

Now, for doing what professionals would have been paid for, this woman goes to jail. That perplexes me. *CA*

Issues of Life

Manatee Rescue

Ever since that day three decades ago when my dear friend Leo Miller tried to show me one, I have been fascinated by manatees. But, like most West Texans, I don't get many chances to observe these massive animals that look a lot like obese sea lions.

This might explain my interest in a December 2016 news report about heroic efforts by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation staffers and a fire department crew in Jacksonville to rescue a huge, obviously lost manatee that got trapped in a storm drain pipe.

Over nine feet long, the distressed creature was estimated to weigh almost a thousand pounds. That's a lot of critter to ooze through a pipe, or to get out of one.

Construction workers paving a neighborhood street discovered the female manatee's plight. They probably had a lot more paving to do when rescuers completed their task that day. They had to dig up the storm drain and finally had to split the pipe to safely extract the endangered sea dweller.

The rescue crew even summoned a veterinarian to monitor the victim's vital signs while they figured out how to liberate and lift the half-ton victim.

When asked about this monumental rescue operation, the local fire chief

told a TV reporter, "Every life is precious to us. Doesn't matter who they are."

My hat is off to those valiant rescuers. For several decades now, manatees have been in short supply, and the experts tell us their numbers are dwindling. I'm all for saving as many of them as we can.

What does trouble me, though, is the glaring exception to that Floridian official's declaration that "every life is precious to us."

This may be true for him personally, but right there in the same city where hundreds of man-hours and tens of thousands of dollars were invested to rescue one disoriented aquatic giant, the lives of unborn human infants evidently are considered expendable.

While skilled, dedicated workers were making sure that manatee lived, not far away from them skilled, dedicated workers in the local abortion clinic were making equally sure that unwanted human boys and girls did not survive.

I feel sure God would applaud that fire chief's proclamation that "every life is precious," and then he might add just as he does in the Bible, especially those lives that are created in My image.

Every life *is* precious. *CA*

Issues of Life

Expectant Mothers

The craziness of this modern age evidently has no limit. The nuttiness coming down from our self-appointed social monitors gets nuttier with every tick of the clock.

According to major news sources, the British Medical Association has advised medical professionals in their domain to stop calling pregnant women “expectant mothers.”

The same watch-your-words alert cautioned medical staffers not to insult crippled people by calling them “disabled” or by referring to older folks as “elderly.”

I guess this could be more of the “fake news” we’ve been told to watch out for, but I saw this online in what at least masquerade as reliable news sources.

My first take on the “expectant mother” ban was that some pro-choice activist must be trying to shield women who opt for abortion. Although such females are “expectant,” even if they wish they were not, they have no intention of ever being a mother. Not if they and their medical accomplices can keep it from happening.

But I was wrong.

Calling a pregnant woman an “expectant mother” might offend her, these medical vocabulary experts decided, because—are you ready for this? (I wasn’t)—because the pregnant

person might not be a woman.

Really? This wacky word-change-warning violates everything most of us learned in Biology 101. Males can’t get pregnant. Guys don’t have babies. Not in the real world. But in our modern gender-confused society, the person having labor pains in the OB ward just might be a girl who decided to be a guy. So it would be grossly insensitive to call this faux-male a mother.

To substantiate this latest dose of sensitivity training, the gender-language cops cited two or three instances where a “man” (a female who decided not to be one) had a baby. Knowing what to call such a parent would be a challenge for the staff in any OB ward, wouldn’t it?

Even the finest jargon adjustment could not prepare nurses who have to report that “*Mr.* Jones is dilated to six centimeters,” or “*His* contractions are now less than two minutes apart.”

This incredible confusion addressed by that BMA bulletin gives us a clear demonstration of the kind of mess God tried to protect us from when he gave so many warnings in the Bible against mixing up gender lines.

Life was a lot simpler when we still accepted the biblical truth that the Creator made us male and female. *CA*

Issues of Life

Five Years or Five Thousand

I guess it depends on what side of the road you live on, or whose diploma hangs on your wall.

If she did what authorities suspect, Brooke Skylar Richardson faced five years behind bars, according to a Fox News report.

Acting on a tip from her doctor, law officers turned up the remains of a newborn baby in her Carlisle, Ohio, backyard. An examination indicated that the infant was born live and was not stillborn, so the county prosecutor charged the young mother with reckless homicide.

The criminal charges appear to have been filed even before the coroner confirmed the actual cause of the baby’s death.

Brooke Richardson was known in her town as a “good student” who didn’t drink, party, or smoke. Before her recent high school graduation, she was a member of her school’s cheerleading squad. “By all measures,” her attorney says, she was “a very good girl.”

Unfortunately, though, a high school diploma does not give a mother-to-be the right to kill her newborn. That right belongs to the professionals down the street who stayed in school another eight or ten years and got medical school diplomas that authorize them to do the baby killing.

According to our present mixed-up laws, a licensed abortionist could have ended the life of Brooke’s baby and disposed of the remains in a much less respectful way. And for that “service,” instead of getting five years in prison, the professional killer might have received as much as five thousand dollars.

Don’t take me wrong. In nothing I have written in the lines above do I intend to commend this formerly admired but then-desperate girl for what the prosecutors think she did to her baby. Murder is never permissible. It’s never okay. Not ever.

But that’s my point. Ever since God created us in his image, his divine laws have protected human life. When God included “You shall not murder” in his Top Ten rules for us, he didn’t include exceptions for those who have been specially trained to do it.

I don’t know Brooke Richardson. All I know are the glowing descriptions of her in the *Dayton Daily News*. But, as I write this, with all my heart I hope the coroner working on her baby found another way to explain its death, so that Brooke’s promising start in life will not end in ashes. *CA*

Issues of Life

A Party Invitation

A Fox News article headline on August 2, 2017, credited Rosie O'Donnell with saying in a Twitter tirade: "Women should form their own party if Democrats don't defend abortion rights."

If she did say that (or anything even close to it), then in the same vein and in answer to her angry attack on innocent infants I'd suggest that perhaps babies should form their own party if their own mothers won't defend their right to breathe and eat and live.

While they're at it, maybe newborns should also set up their own media outlets that could counter the present media bias in favor of annihilating unborn humans.

If Rosie is still included in the ranks of comedians (despite what Fox called her "violent anti-Trump tweet" urging electronic gamers to push the President off a cliff, and despite the rude, crude obscenities she used on Twitter to advocate the legalization of baby-killing), then maybe we should watch only Christian comics and refuse to have our souls tarnished by the other kind.


A lot of loyal Americans have banded together to dump the NFL and its advertisers, and we didn't have to form a committee or raise

vast sums to do it. We just turn off the TV whenever the anthem-kneeling industry appears. We Christians need to join hands and voices to say a loud No to the baby-killers in our land.

"Thank you for standing up against abortion," one of my magazine's longtime generous donors wrote on a note that came with her check yesterday. I'm glad our nation's Constitution establishes a legal hedge between politics and organized religion, but a lot of us on the traditional Christian side of issues such as this need to speak up and be heard.

We need to make enough noise to drown out the Rosie O'Donnells. In loving, sensible, but forceful tones we need to stand up for the inviolable sacredness of the life of all who are made in God's image.

"If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image," is the Bible rule set early on (Genesis 9:6-7 NLT).

Rosie evidently doesn't believe what the Bible says about this or about a lot of other lifestyle issues. But those of us who do believe it need to stand up for the standards set by our Creator. 

Issues of Life

Changing Years


Every night while we sleep our clocks tick past midnight and move on toward the dawn. Each measured minute takes up the same exact modicum of time.

Why, then, does it seem like so much more time has elapsed when midnight chimes on December 31 and all the festivities break loose to welcome a new year?

The passing of time has always conspired to deceive us. No longer days ever existed than the weeks just before Christmas when I was four. No days vanish faster from my calendar than the weeks before Christmas now that I have run out of seventies.

The older we get, the faster all our days rush by. Not really. But so it seems to us all. How come?

This trickiness in time perception is at least partially explained by a great line Russell J. Becker wrote years ago. He said, "We inherit a past and invade a future in every present moment."

Every time a clock ticks and, just as surely, every time we put up a new calendar, our perspective on time must change. It's a wonder that our minds and hearts can keep up with the continual recalibrating it takes to know who we are and when. 


One of my favorite poets, Robert Burns, mused about this matter. He put his thoughts on paper in a poem he addressed "To a Field Mouse."

*Still thou art blest compared
with me:*

*The present only toucheth thee.
But oh! I backward cast my eye
On prospects drear!
An' forward tho' I cannot see,
I guess and fear!*

Burns was right. The bulk of our allotted time on earth lies either behind or before us. Far too many of us slog our way through life weighed down by the regrets of a dreadful past or by the dread of a future yet unknown.

Burns' field mouse and all its zoological cousins are exempt from this burden. The only part of time they touch is Now. But calendar hangers like us can be swamped by all our yesterdays and tomorrows.

We don't have to be. God has taken care of our yesterdays. "*The blood of Jesus cleanses us of every sin.*" And he offers us secure tomorrows. "*I will never leave you.*" And, if we trust him, his grace is sufficient to get us through today. 

Issues of Life

Life Expectancy

My dear friend Joe Barnett somewhere came across the latest actuarial stats. If the folks who compiled those numbers got it right, here in America today a fellow can expect to live for 78.4 years.

Joe's report got my attention. On the very day when I opened up my office computer and read his daily Pathway Evangelism devotional blog in which he cited that life expectancy data, on that exact day—would you believe it?—I hit the 78.4-year mark in my own life.

If that data is accurate, as of the day I write this I've been here as long as I can realistically expect to be. Any days I get beyond this one will be gravy.

Or maybe I should say that all the days beyond this one will be aimed inexorably toward the grave.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not complaining. So far it's been a grand ride. And I don't mean to sound the least bit morose.

As I wolfed down a sausage biscuit at McDonald's this morning, I scanned the obituaries in today's newspaper. Aside from seeing that Santa Claus had died (Really! The mug shot of one dead guy had him in his Santa garb, fur-lined hat and beard and all), all the dead folks were strangers to me.

I was surprised to see, though, that the obits were for men in their sixties.

For some reason all of them got cheated out of at least a dozen of their 78.4 years—all but one sweet lady who had made it to 102.

When Moses sat down to pen the famous 90th Psalm, he must have been going through a day like the one I just described. "Seventy years are given to us!" he reflected. "Some even live to eighty."

Which side of eighty was the famous lawgiver on when he wrote those words? I don't think we have a clue. But, perhaps because I'm there as I write this, I think I hear a fellow who is still shy of eighty and hopes to get there.

Right when he's dreaming of sticking around for another decade or so, Moses takes a more sober look at life. He confronts raw reality and admits that "even the best years are filled with pain and trouble."

Most octogenarians will tell you that even the best years after the big 8-0 seem to be jet-propelled. "Soon they disappear," Moses lamented, "and we fly away."

God has been good to let me traverse this amazing planet for so long. I have no idea how long he intends to leave me here, but I intend to relish his blessings in every minute he grants to extend my stay. *CA*

Issues of Life

Deadly Dump Truck

Two seconds quicker and I would be dead right now.

The light had been red. So I sat, waiting, as I do at that intersection several times most days.

When red turned to green, for some reason—I have no idea why—I hesitated for just an instant. Something I seldom do. Seems that I'm almost always in a hurry.

Then, just as I started to hit the accelerator and buzz on through the empty intersection, a monster dump truck at least twice as tall as my RAV4 ran the opposite-direction red light. It came barreling through the intersection as if the light was not even there.

If I had hit the gas as I usually do, that monster truck would have T-boned my car on the driver's side. But for that two-second delay, I'd be dead right now.

Yes, I know. All of us are that close to death all the time, whether we're young or old. If you doubt it, ask the folks who were bowing before the Lord that Sunday morning in Sutherland Springs' First Baptist Church. Here one minute, dead the next.

Those of us who have managed to hang around on this planet as long as I have are increasingly aware of death's proximity. Hardly a day passes when we don't hear the news of

another relative entering hospice care or another classmate whose days have ended. Death is part of our daily diet.

But I don't sit around every day worrying about dying. Do you?

I have far too much to do yet. So much of life still delights me. So many people still bless me. I still have places I want to go, sights I dream of seeing. Heaven will be glorious, I know, but, please, Lord, not quite yet.

A dear family friend in her late nineties was literally on her knees saying her bedtime prayers. Her visiting daughter heard her tell God how eager she was to see her oldest son whom she had just buried and her long-dead but still much-loved husband.

"I'm ready to be with them," this sweet lady prayed. "But," she quickly added, "not tonight!"

She was like the apostle Paul. He wrote that going "to be with the Lord" was "far better" than staying here on Earth. But he said he was glad to hang around a while longer because God had important tasks for him to do.

Why is the Lord keeping you here? Does he know some person you alone can rescue or encourage?

He must have something else for me to do. If not, why did I survive that dump truck? *CA*

Issues of Life

“Metal Illness”

Right after Devin Kelley used his semi-auto weapon to slaughter and wound the worshipers in that Baptist church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, that disaster was the leading news on all the media. Especially in Texas.

One news report that conveyed a comment by one of the gunman’s high school classmates also contained a timely, truth-laden typo. “It’s crazy,” the misquoted quote said, “what time and metal illness can do to you.”

Of course, the classmate actually said “mental illness.” Lawmen investigating the tragedy soon found that the attacker had been on psychiatric meds ever since his early teen years. They uncovered his atheistic rants on social media and easily tracked his earlier convictions for child and wife abuse and for animal cruelty. Soon they learned of more recent family fussing that fueled his hate.

But in those post-shooting days, as always happens after a mass-shooting, liberals began ranting for stricter gun controls. They focused on guns—on “metal illness”—as the root problem.

Investigators verified that existing gun laws had not been applied. The anti-gun lobbyists were right about this. A fellow like Kelley never should have touched a gun. But Kelley’s guns were not the root problem. Devin Kelley’s real problem was “mental”—not “metal.”

Years before the church massacre, Kelley’s mental illness got him jailed and dishonorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force. Uncle locked him up, but current mental health protocol in the civilian world left him free to roam unmonitored in Texas streets. He was a predictable disaster going somewhere to happen.

Back in the Dark Ages—in my first decade as a pastor—the daughter of a lady in my Arizona flock was in the state hospital’s ward for the criminally insane. She had come after her mama with a butcher knife.

But, as psychotropic meds became the therapy of choice, the asylum keepers began releasing her to come to church on Sundays. She brought with her another medicated patient—a woman who had put two dozen slugs into her husband in the lobby of a downtown office building.

Sunday after Sunday this would-be killer and her killer-friend sat on the fourth pew in our sanctuary. Every week I wondered: what if one of them has decided not to take her meds?

Today in-patient mental health therapy is brief and rare. Much of the violence in our headlines can be traced to sick people who did quit taking their meds. The problem is not “metal.” It’s “mental.”

CA

Issues of Life

Fetal Felony

When the bodies were hauled away after that Baptist church shooting, officials in Sutherland Springs had listed 26 victims.

The dead ranged from a grandmother to a fetus.

That’s right. One of the victims in that Sunday massacre was Crystal Holcombe. She was eight months pregnant. Her fetus was numbered among the dead, which included three of her other children along with four other members of her family. Her husband was wounded, but lived.

Antonia Blumberg’s *HuffPost* report on this mass homicide may have surprised some of her readers. Far from being an oddity, according to her report Texas “is one of 38 states that have enacted laws to protect the rights of fetuses killed in violent crimes.”

Do the math. Citizens in right at three-fourths of the states think a fetus deserves special legal protection. In fact, the penalties this Texas law sets for murdering a fetus are much stiffer than for killing the mother-to-be.

Almost half of the states in America have passed fetal homicide laws that protect an unborn baby even in the earliest stages of gestation. Law-makers in states like Texas have quite specifically identified such a child as an “individual” who has legal rights.

Surely I don’t have to tell you that

laws like this—whether in Texas or in the hinterlands—ignite huge concerns in the hearts of abortion advocates. In state after state they have warned about “the slippery slope” these feticide statutes pose for a pregnant woman or for a licensed abortionist who wants to kill a fetus.

In most states, these laws include language that distinguishes between abortion and manslaughter or murder. But that distinction denies the obvious truth that in either case the baby in question ends up dead. We’re just fussing about who has the right to kill it.

Had Crystal Holcombe visited her obstetrician the day before she was murdered and that good doctor had spotted some urgent reason to deliver her baby early, a simple C-section could have resulted in a viable, breathing, yowling baby. Then the Holcombes would have had six healthy offspring under their roof.

That very same day, though, if Crystal had opted for it, a licensed abortionist in a nearby state could have delivered her a corpse. And been paid, not penalized.

The only legal difference in the two scenarios appears to be the mother’s decision. What an incredibly haunting burden for any could-have-been mother to bear.

CA

Issues of Life

Burning Hearts

Strange things happened that first Easter morning in Jerusalem.

In God's good wisdom, women were allowed to be the first witnesses of the risen Lord—the first to share that good news. Their reports perplexed the male disciples. The idea of resurrection was so far from their minds that two of them set out on a Sunday afternoon road trip.

Somewhere on that seven-mile jaunt to Emmaus, Jesus began to hike along with them, but neither man realized it was him. “We had hoped . . .” they lamented, as they told this stranger about the awful days just past.

Luke tells us in his Gospel that Jesus replied to their tearful accounts of the crucifixion by recalling several scriptures that spoke of the Messiah's death. At the time, neither man got the point or recognized their teacher.

Only when he blessed the bread at their supper table were their eyes opened so that they knew who he was.

At once, Jesus vanished. And in a dazed euphoria the two men began to recall their experiences earlier that day with the stranger who turned out to be the very Master whose death had caused them to mourn.

“Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked with us about the Scriptures?” both of them agreed.

How long has it been since

reading or hearing God's word has made your heart “burn within you”?

If you're like me, you can probably remember experiencing that kind of internal reaction the first time you saw the Grand Canyon, or the redwoods, or Niagara Falls.

Do you remember the thrill you felt the first time you drove a car you owned? I was so excited.

I'll never forget the first time I saw a real July Fourth fireworks show. Just as those Emmaus Road guys said, my heart burned within me. It still does when I stand with fellow-Americans and pledge allegiance to our flag.

All of us can identify experiences that fire up our souls. Unfortunately, for too many people today, the practice of our faith is not one of them. Going to church bores us. We wonder why they selected so many songs, or prayed so long, or the preacher droned on.

My guess is that those guys going to Emmaus were just like us. Some Sabbaths they also got bored and the synagogue worship made them yawn.

What made a difference for them that first Easter was the presence of the risen Lord. If we let him back into our worship and Bible study, maybe the flame of faith can be kindled in our hearts once more. *CA*

Issues of Life

A Baby in a Box

We'd probably have to live in or near to Fountain Inn, South Carolina, to know the rest of this story, but the part we do know raises all sorts of troubling questions both for those who must enforce the laws of the state and for those of us who want to obey God's laws.

Law officers were summoned to an apartment complex to help evict a tenant. But that call took a macabre twist none of them expected.

According to a FOX Carolina news report, in that apartment police found the badly decomposed remains of a baby in a clothes hamper. The child's body had been sealed inside a container and then stashed inside two larger boxes.

The tiny body in such sad condition posed a challenge to the medical examiner, but experts estimated that the infant had been dead almost a year.

The autopsy finally established that they were dealing with a 38-week fetus, but the decayed state of the remains made it impossible even to tell the child's gender. Nor could the medical examiner tell authorities whether they were dealing with a stillborn or a live birth.

Until they could learn more about what really had happened, authorities arrested and detained the mother.

At least while the investigation was ongoing, this woman who couldn't pay her rent now got free lodging.

At this point, the story vanished on national news, so I have no idea how it unraveled. If the fetus indeed was stillborn, the mother possibly faced minor charges for improper handling of a human body (which seems grossly unfair, since abortion clinics nationwide get paid every day to desecrate the bodies of similar fetuses).

If the baby took a breath, however, the consequences for that mother became far more severe. Many babies born 38 weeks after conception survive. At that point they would be considered about a month premature, sufficiently developed to be viable with a minimum of medical care.

Did this un-named mother murder her newborn? The criminal penalties for that offense likely would imprison her for a lengthy stay. And they should.

To me, though, what seems grossly unfair about all of this is the fact that, in two thirds of our states, a licensed medical professional could end the life of the same baby and be rewarded instead of punished for doing so.

Nobody can explain to me why we praise one baby-killer and punish the other. *CA*

Issues of Life

The Newest Pagan Nation

Long before former President Obama announced to the world that America is no longer a Christian nation, a lot of us here at home were seeing evidences of this disheartening shift.

If you have watched the national polls for the past decade or so, you know that the category called “Nones” (Americans who reply “None” if you ask them what religion they belong to) keeps growing year by year. We’re on the same track as western Europe.

When you question the “Nones,” though, often they’ll back up a step or two and explain that what they mean is they have severed ties with any established religion. A lot of these non-church-belongers still cling to belief in the Creator and still try to live by Judeo-Christian moral standards. So Americans may not be as anti-religious as the polls at first imply.

How much of our population would you describe as pagan? As deniers of biblical beliefs and principles? The laws each generation approves may say more about their faith status than polls ever can.

Take, for example, what Ginette Paris tells us in her book *The Sacrament of Abortion*. In our increasingly secular world, she claims that abortion is a sacred act of sacrifice to the pagan goddess

Artemis. As such, she characterizes abortion as “an expression of maternal responsibility and not a failure of maternal love.”

“Artemis stands for refusal to give life if the gift is not pure and untainted,” this author tells us. “As Artemis might kill a wounded animal rather than allow it to limp along miserably, so a mother wishes to spare a child a painful destiny.” By this pagan standard, if you love your baby, kill it. Death is less painful than life.

In the past four decades—during the years since abortion became legal in our land—we Americans have been aborting more than a million babies each year. How many of us realized that the actual roots of this infanticide might be pagan?

In January 2018 a woman in a Satan church went before the Missouri Supreme Court to challenge that state’s restrictions on abortions. She insisted that laws setting a three-day waiting period for abortions and requiring doctors to let any prospective mother hear her baby’s heartbeat violate her Satanistic beliefs.

If the two women I’ve just cited are right, how can we deny the disturbing truth that the expansion of abortion rights in America may be undeniable evidence that our nation is indeed being de-Christianized? *CA*

Issues of Life

Infant Autopsies

Autopsies on babies take a lot longer than adult post-mortem examinations. So the tragic stories I’m about to share with you have been in the works now for a year or more.

It was back in the summer of 2018 when a premature baby in Houston died from her injuries. Almost a year later the autopsy report led to the arrest of her parents. According to the news report, the long-awaited medical examination “determined the girl’s death was caused by blunt force trauma to the head.”

Any of us who have helped care for a preemie know how fragile a baby that small can be. We know how easy it would be to injure one unintentionally—if, for example, you accidentally dropped the child.

But the autopsy of this little one showed she had suffered 96 fractures, including six dozen rib breaks. AP reported that the investigators in this case “believe the baby’s crying angered her father, so he shook the newborn violently.”

My second dead-baby story doesn’t involve that level of uncontrolled violence, but the baby wound up just as dead.

In Danville, Virginia, the parents of a two-month-old girl were also arrested after they were indicted for

felony homicide and child abuse. The delayed autopsy of their infant showed that she died from “acute heroin and cocaine intoxication” in what the authorities referred to as “a setting of co-sleeping.”

I have not been able to follow either of these criminal cases, so I have no idea if the trials have been held and, if so, what verdicts might have been rendered. But both sets of parents likely are facing some prison time. That seems just, but also sad for every person involved.

What doesn’t seem fair are the laws that govern baby-killing in both of these states—in Texas or in Virginia—or for that matter, in most other states as well.

On one page our laws protecting human life specify stringent penalties for those who kill. Thankfully, the severity of those penalties is modulated by the intent of the killer. Our laws reflect the biblical gradations from innocent accidents to involuntary manslaughter and all the way to murder with malice.

But on another page in our modern world are laws that allow medical personnel to kill babies no older than the preemie in Story #1. This just does not seem fair. The Bible’s rules protect babies, before and after birth. *CA*

Issues of Life

Kids and Kitty Cats

The society I was born into eighty years ago was Mars compared to the Venus we live in today.

During my childhood, for example, part of our duty as responsible citizens was to control the over-population of animals in the region we lived in.

Rapidly multiplying jackrabbits ruined gardens and fields that provided human food, so they were considered fair game for anybody with a .22. When I was a boy, we shot them by the dozens.

Cats were welcome on most farms because they gobbled up mice and rats. When their numbers outgrew barn space, though, for both their good and ours, a wise farmer always thinned them out. Humanely, but effectively. The extra cats just vanished.

In those long-gone days, our rural society operated on the biblical principle that God made animals for the benefit of man—and not the other way around. It appears that we moderns have turned that animal/human ranking on its head.

On the same day recently, for example, national news featured stories on both ends of this spectrum.

Up in North Dakota, so AP reported, a veteran policeman lost his job and was facing criminal charges.

Why? Because he decided to control the stray cat population by shooting the vagrant felines.

Nobody explained how the result varied from having the humane society spend tax dollars to euthanize the homeless kittens. But in today's world that cop's common-sense animal control method cost him dearly.

Evidently his main mistake was doing it sixty or seventy years too late. When I was a kid, he would have been commended, not condemned.

That same day's news headlined the tirade of a congresswoman about a new Alabama law that made it a crime for any doctor or parent to abort a baby. The liberal lawmaker called the abortion restrictions "a brutal form of repression."

If I'm reading the news right, by today's standards it's a crime to kill a cat but, at least from the far-left perspective, it's also grossly wrong not to be able to murder a baby. Save cats, kill kids. Really?

Right after God created us, he told the humans, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." That's our Creator's plan. What will happen if we mess it up? *CA*

**“THE WORD
OF THE
LORD
came to me,
saying,
‘Before I
formed you
in the womb
I knew you,
before
you were
born
I set you
apart.’”**


*** Jeremiah 1**

Curtis Shelburne

Limited Time Offer

PAST CHRISTIAN APPEAL ISSUES—FREE!

We are about to downsize our overflowing stock of past issues of *The Christian Appeal*. Recently we sent bound copies of more than fifty years to several key historical collections. But now we need to clear out our storage area. The issues for decades past will soon be available only digitally on our website. Between now and June 30, 2020, we will send any available past issues in any quantity desired to anyone who requests them. Order them via e-mail (geneshel@aol.com) or by snail-mail at 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, TX 79106.

A silhouette of a person walking on a beach at sunset. The person is walking away from the camera towards the right, with their shadow cast on the sand. The background shows the ocean waves and a bright, hazy sky.