

W *The Lutheran* WITNESS

SEPTEMBER 2002

VOL. 121 NO. 9

What Hath Terror Wrought?



*Also:
Fishing with Jesus
What Child Is This?*



The LUTHERAN WITNESS

A MAGAZINE FOR THE LAYPEOPLE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

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SEPTEMBER 2002

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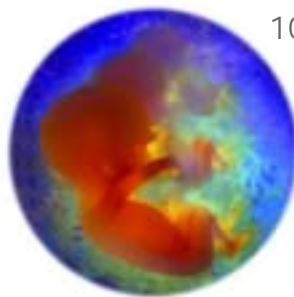
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What sort of funeral?

Let us pray that we will not try to pressure our pastors into reducing the funeral service to a sentimental focus on the deceased, rather than on our Christian faith and hope.

*Karolynn K. Bartus
Austin, Texas*

WHAT AN IMPORTANT AND TIMELY ARTICLE on Christian funerals by Pastor Allen Scharlach ("In My Opinion: Missed Opportunities," July '02)! Jokes or praising the dead at funerals might relieve the tension temporarily, but only the Gospel can give permanent comfort.

At Lazarus' death (John 11), our Savior gives us an excellent outline for all funeral services. He speaks of 1) death and the resurrection ("I am the resurrection"); 2) the way of salvation ("He that believeth in Me"); and 3) a time for repentance and faith ("Believest thou this?").

*Dr. Arthur E. Graf
Lubbock, Texas*

PASTOR SCHARLACH IS CORRECT WHEN HE states that a funeral service is a worship service, but it is more than that in the eyes of the grieving family and friends. This is also a time for reflection, reconciliation and closure.

As an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, I attend about 500 funerals a year. I think the most important things to keep in mind are: 1) The funeral is not the time to conduct outreach for new members but to remind those in attendance as to what is happening. 2) Provide closure and assistance for the bereaved. 3) The Lord says, "Where two or three are gathered in my name ...," so don't get too hung up on where the funeral service is held and support the family in their hour of need.

*Frank E. Wilimzig
Pensacola, Fla.*

I WAS IN TOTAL AGREEMENT WITH Pastor Scharlach until he said we should "move away from the good old funeral 'chestnuts' like Psalm 23. ..." I hope and pray this never happens. Where else are there six verses in Scripture that are more comforting at the time of the loss of a loved one?

*Herbert Simon
Merrill, Wis.*

I'M NOT SURE WHAT A "FUNERAL CHESTNUT" is, but I am positive that Psalm 23 is the Word of God and that it gives grieving families and friends much to think about! Removing this precious Word of God from a funeral service is not the answer. More Scripture is the answer. That and pastoral support of the grieving family. A pastor armed with the Word of God—including Psalm 23—will always be blessed by God.

*Rev. Ed Blonski
Mayville, Wis.*

AS I APPROACH MY 80TH BIRTHDAY, I find myself attending more and more funerals. As to moving away from "chestnuts" like Psalm 23, I say, "amen, and again, amen." A Christian funeral offers a splendid opportunity to spread the Gospel besides the use of time-worn platitudes, however Scriptural, comforting and sincere.

A Christian funeral provides a near-perfect setting to declare the faith of the deceased, of repentance, of sins forgiven, of the promise of heaven, and to emphasize this to those in attendance so that they may profit by hearing of the faith in

Christ our Savior and His Resurrection that leads to eternal life. My own funeral, now in the late planning process, will attempt to do just that. And, of course, it will be held in the church sanctuary, before the font of my baptism and the altar of my confirmation.

*Robert Luerding
St. Charles, Mo.*

Heart breaking

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR "LUTHERANS Helping in Afghanistan" (June '02). I look at my grandchildren and ask myself, "How would I feel if I knew I had to feed them only flour, butter and rice?" My heart breaks!

But other aspects of the story are equally disturbing: rockets killing husbands, fathers and breadwinners; "stray bombs" killing and maiming; sons losing their minds because of the horrors of war. Surely there must be ways that we, as the most blessed nation in the world, can help these people more than we are. Please let us know as soon as the LCMS World Mission survey team's report is ready. These hurting people haven't got all the time in the world!

*Meredith Berg
Hudson, Wis.*

'Mission Eyes'

I AM HAPPY TO KNOW THAT THE SYNOD has finally opened its eyes and sees the United States as a "world mission field" ("Seeing with 'Mission Eyes,'" July '02). Even now, the LCMS does not have enough trained personnel to meet the challenges of mission work among ethnic groups.

A good example is the opportunity presented by about 2 million Filipinos residing here. While the Synod has mission work among Hispanics, Koreans, Chinese, Ethiopians, Cambodians, Hmong,

Haitians, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Kenyans, Burmese, etc., it has no mission work among Filipinos, the third largest ethnic group in the United States. Now the Synod reports a cut in its budget of \$9.1 million. Perhaps the Synod has not truly been a missionary church because of its short sightedness. It is my prayer that this would soon change.

*Rev. Dr. Jose B. Fuliga
Temecula, Calif.*

PERHAPS A GOOD FOLLOW-UP TO THE JULY report would be an update on what the Lutheran Heritage Foundation is doing to translate Lutheran theological books, especially the catechisms, into many languages. If we fail to catechize, we promote the distortion of God's truth, which leads to confusion among God's people as Lutheran-sounding terms are misused to promote a foreign theology (of glory) rather than the theology of the cross.

*Randall L. Muench
Hermantown, Minn.*

To the Church Triumphant

AFTER READING A FINE REFERENCE TO MY husband, Chaplain Al Saeger, by Leroy E. Vogel in the July "Letters," I was inspired to tell you that he died June 12 after a long bout with cancer.

*Joyce Saeger
Daytona Beach, Fla.*

A 1949 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Chaplain Saeger reportedly was the first LCMS pastor to minister at the South Pole. He served 30 years in the Navy and received numerous commendations, including the Antarctica Service Medal. — Ed.

Correction

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) does not provide survey forms for demographic studies, as reported in "Seeing with 'Mission Eyes'" (July '02). The LCEF does conduct demographic studies, using census and other statistical data, for a fee. For information, call (800) 854-4004, Ext. 1804 or 1806.

*A year after the
Sept. 11 attack
on America,
Lutheran spirituality
has never been
more relevant.*

WHAT HATH TERROR WROUGHT?

Last March, these twin towers of light recalled the twin towers of the World Trade Center as a temporary memorial to those killed in the September 11 terror attacks.

by Gene Edward Veith

I had just walked out of my eight o'clock class on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, when a colleague in the hall said, "You've got to see this!" and pulled me to a television set in the nearby audiovisual center.

As we heard about the airplanes that hit the World Trade Center, and then about another airplane that hit the Pentagon, and then, later, about a fourth plane that crashed in Pennsylvania, the campus community was in a state of shock. Chapel helped.

Then what else was there to do but go on with the day? When I walked into my English Lit class, the students were glued to the classroom TV monitor.

Together we watched the first tower fall. But the demands of ordinary life kept asserting themselves, as they will even in the midst of a great event. We had to finish our unit. We turned off the television and resumed our discussion of *Beowulf*.

That ancient epic depicts the construction of a great building called "Heorot," the biggest and most magnificent mead hall in the world, in which the tribe of the Shieldings feasted, celebrated and enjoyed their prosperity. But for all of their joy, success and security, they could not keep out the monster Grendel. A descendent of Cain, Grendel intrudes on their cultural complacency, breaks into their great hall and murders scores of innocent citizens as they sleep.

The parallels of Heorot and the World Trade Center, as the class analyzed this ancient poem, were chilling. So was what happened next? Beowulf killed Grendel, but he and the Shieldings became caught up in a blood-bath of revenge and escalating retributions.

Grendel and the rest of the monsters were symbols for the mystery of iniquity that has a way of interrupting every period of happiness and spoiling every civilization. Optimistic Americans tend to forget about the monsters lurking in the dark, something Christians and now the rest of America know are real.

Dial 911

We Americans had been going about our business, pursuing what Francis Schaeffer considered the only values we had left: personal peace and affluence. Suddenly an airplane—and then another—flew into that great monument to American affluence, the World Trade Center in New York City. Soon after, another plane flew into the nerve center that protects American peace, the Pentagon. Before long the economy went into a swoon, and the affluence Americans had taken for granted was shaken. Soon we were at war, and the peace Americans had taken for granted was gone.

Not just the lack of war, but personal peace—the old feeling of security—gave way to nervousness, even terror. Everyday activities—a trip to the mall, an afternoon at the ball game, going to work—could be occasions for a suicide bomber setting himself off in a crowd. Even something as mundane as checking the mail now entailed the risk of an anthrax attack.

But it was not completely bad that Americans had their complacency shaken up. It is healthy to confront death and the ever-present possibility of death.

Those who had loved ones killed in the attacks were filled with sorrow, but so were those who did not know

anyone who died.

Americans felt other emotions they had not felt for a while: anger, fueled not by selfishness but by righteous indignation, and patriotism, even on the part of those who before had been cynical or dismissive of their country. A country that had been divided—sometimes bitterly and sometimes just by the fact of its own pluralism—came together in a genuine sense of national unity. The vocations that protect our society—police officers, firefighters, the military—callings that had earlier been targets of criticism or condescension, now were seen as heroic.

It was not just the way people felt that was challenged, but the way they thought. What we experience as truth, said our intellectuals, is a construction, whether of the culture or the individual's own choices. The pop culture and even the conversations of ordinary folks reflected this postmodern view: "Truth is relative." "That may be true for you, but it isn't true for me."

But were the hijacked planes that crashed into those buildings—and into the consciousness of every American—mere "constructions"? Were the death and twisted metal truths that were "relative"? Or was

this all a traumatic example of objective reality that breaks in, oblivious to our subjectivity?

Moral values, too, had been assumed to be subjective, nothing more than cultural preferences or personal choices. Here, though, was a moral outrage in which the objectivity of right and wrong could be perceived with certain clarity. Those who took so many lives were—and the unfamiliar word was used over and over again—"evil." Conversely, those who gave their lives to rescue others were "good." From the courage of the airplane passengers over Pennsylvania who resisted their hijackers, saving untold lives at the expense of their own, to the perfidy of Osama bin Laden and the treachery of John Walker Lindh—objective moral categories were thrown into high relief. It appeared there were absolutes after all.

Of course, the immediate impact of 9/11—a date that ironically recalls the telephone number for emergencies—faded, at least somewhat. Lots of things returned to normal. When it happened, there was a spike in church attendance, but after a few weeks the number of churchgoers returned to normal. The entertainment industry shut down the week of the attack, but not for long. The war against the al Qaida terrorists in Afghanistan was surprisingly easy, not demanding much sacrifice after all, though

Americans would have been glad to give it. A plan to erect a statue to honor the firefighters who raised a flag at ground zero degenerated into the same old divisiveness. The pursuit of personal peace and affluence resumed.

Yet the events of Sept. 11, 2001, remain a watershed moment. They linger. Despite rapid progress in Afghanistan, the war with terrorism continues. Americans are not the way they were. Our history has entered another phase.

Religious relativism

Just as the events of 9/11 shook the foundations of intellectual relativism and moral relativism, one would think that they would challenge religious relativism. Surely the religious zeal that motivates the terrorists—who believe that eternal life can be earned by committing suicide in the course of killing innocent people—is not equally valid to a faith that teaches love and forgiveness.

And yet, religious relativism is one characteristic of the contemporary American culture that has not changed. In fact, it has become even more insistent. Many are saying that the problem with al Qaida's religion is not that it is wrong but that it is intolerant of all other religions. They think they are the only ones who are right. Under this thinking, Christians who believe Christ is the only way to salvation are essentially



Kathy Willens/AP

On the Cover:

On Oct. 4, 2001, fire fighters, police and construction workers, some with their hard hats removed out of respect, all with their heads bowed, listened quietly while New York Fire Dept. Chaplain Brian Jordan dedicated the 20-foot tall iron cross of steel beams that fell intact from the north tower when it imploded. The cross landed almost upright amid the ruins.

The cross was hoisted atop a concrete slab, a remnant from a collapsed walk bridge between the World Trade Center complex and the World Financial Center.

"We want healing ... not only for the city of New York but for America," Jordan said. "This [cross] is our symbol of hope, our symbol of faith, our symbol of healing ... a symbol of the pain and suffering of Jesus on the cross and the redemption of all humanity."

equivalent to the terrorists.

Syndicated columnist Thomas Friedman writes, "World War II and the Cold War were fought to defeat secular totalitarianism." This new world war, he says, is against "religious totalitarianism." He defines religious totalitarianism as "the view that one faith must reign supreme and can be affirmed and held pas-

sionately only if all others are negated." Conservative Christians and Jews hold to this view, he says, as well as Muslims. "Can Islam, Christianity and Judaism know that God speaks Arabic on Fridays, Hebrew on Saturdays and Latin on Sundays, and that he welcomes different human beings approaching him through their own history, out

of their language and cultural heritage?" The war, says Friedman, must be fought not just on the battlefield but in houses of worship. It is urgent that the different religions "reinterpret their traditions to embrace modernity and pluralism and to create space for secularism and alternative faiths" (Thomas Friedman, "The Real War," *The New York Times*, Nov. 27, 2001, p. 19). Or what? one wonders. Daisy-cutter bombs dropped on churches that teach that Jesus is the only way for salvation?

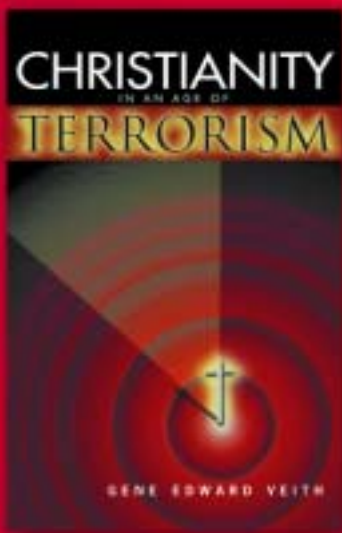
We members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are convulsed in controversy over an LCMS official participating in an interfaith event at Yankee Stadium. But whether we think this an act of syncretism or of evangelism, we need to come together on the realization that, post-9/11, evangelism is precisely what the new religious climate considers anathema. To try to convert someone to a particular faith means that there is something wrong with the other person's religion. Thus, Mr. Friedman's call for religious pluralism, while ostensibly affirming all religions, must be hostile to the religion of the Gospel. Real Christianity is the one faith that the interfaith movement has no room for.

The Lutheran contributions

And yet, however much Lutherans get beaten up by the culture for their insistence that salvation can be found in Christ alone, Lutheran spirituality has never been more relevant. Americans facing suffering and insecurity need the theology of the Cross. Christians trying to sort out the demands of citizenship need the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms. The heroism of the firefighters, police officers and military personnel now fighting a war finds spiritual affir-

The World Has Changed... But God's Word Hasn't

The Church faces serious topics—like Christianity versus patriotism, the growth of Islam, "just war" theory and terrorism, and more. As it wrestles with these, the Church finds new dangers and fresh opportunities.



Christianity in an Age of Terrorism by Gene Edward Veith shows how Holy Scripture and the confessions of the church can guide us through these changing times.

Veith is the author of *Modern Fascism*, *Spirituality of the Cross*, and *Postmodern Times*. He is a professor of English at Concordia University, Wisconsin.

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mation in the doctrine of vocation, which also helps us find our own role and purpose—in our families, workplace, and nation—in this time of national crisis.

Most crucial of all, though, is the distinction between Law and Gospel.

The terrorists are caught in a radically legalistic religion. Under Islam, salvation is earned by what you do. And yet, our fallen nature is such that not only do human beings fall short of moral perfection, despite their best efforts, there is something about legalism that actually increases sin.

Mohamed Atta, before he commandeered the plane that rammed into the World Trade Center, prepared himself with prayer and ritual. In papers discovered after his death, he counseled his fellow martyrs in the piety with which they should prepare for death.

And yet other evidence discovered after the attack disclosed that Atta and his fellow terrorists spent their last days frequenting Florida bars and strip clubs, getting drunk and paying for lap dances, despite Islam's prohibitions against alcohol, nudity and sexual immorality. When he came to Germany to study, according to one report, he became addicted to pornography.

Soon after, he began frequenting the radical Islamic mosques. Perhaps, in the sad

Army National Guard Specialist Melendez patrols near the Golden Gate Bridge Aug. 12, 2002, in San Francisco, Calif. Similar reminders of our shattered peace greet Americans at airports, sporting events and patriotic gatherings.



psychology of legalism, he decided to become a martyr out of his own guilt, his moral failure before an unforgiving god impelling him to a grand gesture of self-sacrifice, doing a spectacular “good work” for the glory of Islam that would compensate for his inner shame.

Perhaps he felt that giving his life to kill the enemies of Islam would be a way for him to atone for his own sin, his only hope of paradise.

Terrorism—whether Islamic or of the secular variety—is intrinsically legalistic and self-righteous. Indeed, all of the world's religions are legalistic, setting forth some “law” by which human beings can save themselves. All, that is, except Christianity, which teaches that salvation is a matter of forgiveness, and is a free gift of God's grace, given through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who on the cross has atoned for the sins of the world.

Sadly, many Christians—even many Lutherans—have so confused the Law and the Gospel that the message of grace and forgiveness through Christ has been obscured. Some conservative Christians give the impression that their faith is nothing more than the imposition of morality, mere legalism. The interfaith movement, too, is based on mere legalism. After all, if the issue is being good and working your way to heaven, one path really is as good as another. But if no one has enough good works, if our sinfulness taints even the best of what we do, then everyone needs a Savior.

What will bring us through the terror—whether the terror caused by armed enemies or by economic uncertainty or by the guilt of our sins—is faith in the work of Christ. Lutherans must stand on this Gospel, despite all pressure, and they must continue to proclaim that Word to a terrorized world.

The author adapted this article for The Lutheran Witness from his book Christianity in an Age of Terrorism, published by Concordia Publishing House.

— Ed.



Dr. Gene Edward Veith is professor of English at Concordia University-Wisconsin, Mequon.



WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

The possibility of cloning humans raises far-reaching ethical and spiritual questions.

The Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations in April released a new report on "Marriage, Family and Human Cloning." What follows is an edited and adapted version of that report. The complete 23-page text is available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr or may be ordered from Concordia Publishing House (order no. 09-2611) by calling (800) 325-3040. — Ed.

In 1997, the world was introduced to Dolly, a sheep whose genetic instructions came entirely from one other sheep rather than from a male and a female. That started a public debate over cloning that continues today—especially over the possibility that humans might be cloned.

In what follows, we take a close look at the proposal to clone human beings in light of what the Scriptures teach about marriage, family and procreation, and in

light of God's redemptive purposes. We find that simple but enduring insights concerning marriage and family provide a firm basis for the conclusion of this study: emphatic rejection of the proposal that human persons be cloned.

(Reproductive cloning makes use of genetic science in ways that also raise ethical and moral questions about research and technology that manipulate cells that give rise to human life. The Commission will address these and other issues in subsequent studies.)

God's Word in Genesis 2 places the conception and birth of a child in the sexually intimate relationship of a man and woman and intends husband, wife and child to live together in a family.

If the intimate union of sexual intercourse is our reference point for how a child is conceived, what shall we think about conception through the variety of technologies available today?

Physically, the development of the human body is

directed by our genes, some 40,000 to 60,000 sets of physical instructions encoded in the DNA in our cells. In the usual case, our mothers have contributed one complete set of genes and our fathers the other.

In cloning, the set of genetic instructions that directs the embryo's physical development comes not from two parents but from a set identical to that of the one "parent" from whom the clone is generated. The new individual will thus be a "time-delayed identical twin" of the individual who supplied the cell from which the cloned individual developed.

What child is this?

What shall we think and say about this way of producing new humans?

God's Word teaches that every child of humanity is conceived of the flesh (see John 1:12–13 and 3:5–7). All human life is in a bondage brought about by sinful rebellion against, and separation from, God. John reminds us of the wonderful humility and love the sinless Son of God showed when He assumed our flesh and dwelt among us to redeem us (1:14).

There may be important differences between being born into a usual family, being born out of wedlock, or being born from artificial insemination or from cloning. But, from God's standpoint, no matter how a human life has begun, it has begun from flesh. And, except for the Word who became flesh and freely bore the burden of our sin, to be born in flesh means to be born in sin and estrangement from God.

Some demean the personhood of those who are born out of wedlock. The temptation is to think that our moral and spiritual significance varies depending upon some standard of purity concerning our origins. This same temptation has led some to propose that should humans result from cloning, they would have a debased personhood. But God's Word makes plain that there is no difference: "... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). And all human beings, apart from their origin and despite sins committed, "are justified by [God's] grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

The good news that comes in Jesus is that God patiently and wonderfully reaches out to us all, regardless of our origins or our current sin, with the new birth from the Spirit. No matter how a person's life begins, *anyone* can become a child of God through the

rebirth of Holy Baptism.

This means that we cannot determine the pluses and minuses of various ways and means of producing humans by thinking that some people are more human or less human because of their origins. Whatever we discover about the wisdom or "unwisdom" of various ways of procreation, we need to recognize these twin truths: 1. "there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" and 2. all "are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23–24).

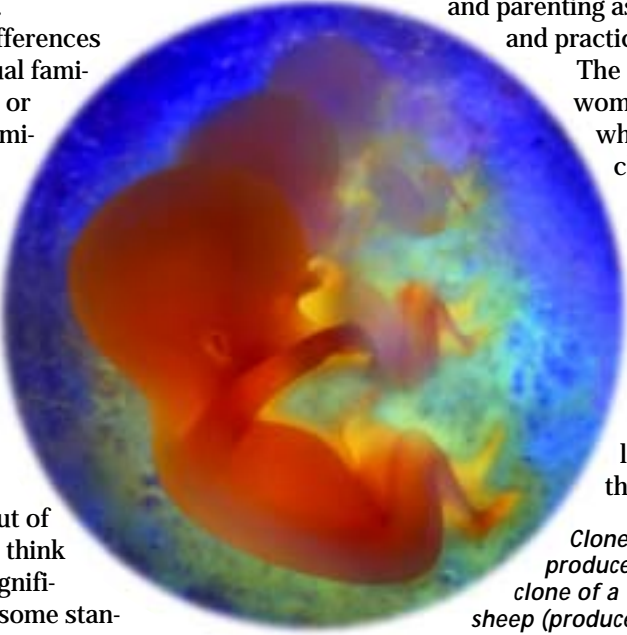
Marriage and family

The Gospel proclaims that Christ has come and that we are now called to be children of God, drawn into the life of the Holy Trinity and thus finally beyond the reach of the futility of life toward death. But it is difficult for us to come to a life like God's life, a lively outflowing of community and purpose (John 10:10).

This is where marriage and parenting take on a new dimension. God's Word invites us to think of marriage and parenting as opportunities to experience and practice the life of the Spirit.

The marital union of man and woman is a fundamental setting in which God desires to transform children of the flesh—parents and children—into children of God.

Thus, men and women are to learn to see their relationship to each other not as a temporary opportunity for a little self-fulfillment, but as an occasion for loving as God loves. Fathers and mothers and their children are to learn to see



Clones are genetically identical individuals produced asexually from one parent. First clone of a full-grown mammal was Dolly the sheep (produced in 1997).

each other not as objects and resources for fulfilling their goals in life, but as persons given to each other by God to be loved as God loves.

Marriage is a school for practicing how the children of God relate to God, themselves and one another.

Our principle then is that marriage is to be held in highest regard as the context in which children born of the flesh are best brought into the world.

Given this understanding of God's plans for marriage and parenting, we can understand why Christians ought not pursue sexual intimacy outside of marriage. Every proposal to do so is a proposal to continue living as individuals doomed to flesh-oriented, frustrated

biological existence.

Sexual relationship outside of marriage speaks a loud “No” to God’s intent that men and women enjoy this gift in a context of self-giving. In one way or another, an extramarital union says that the man and/or the woman will give and receive only in a fragmented and limited way—always leaving open the option that when a more fulfilling possibility comes along, it may be seized.

Perhaps the most troubling feature of *same-sex* relationships is that these relationships wholly circumvent God’s intention that there be challenging otherness and difference in the sexual relationship as well as the sexual self-fulfillment that so many seek. In the Hebrew, Gen. 2:18 more than hints that the partner God intends for the man is not only a partner but also a *counter-partner*. A *counter-partner* is one who, by the very fact of being *counter*, invites the spouse out of preoccupation with selfish self-fulfillment.

each other to a third party, that is, to the children that so often can be the fruit of sexual intimacy. In this way husband and wife are helped to look beyond themselves to someone else, someone to whom they together can give themselves in a love resembling God’s love for us.

A first insight, then, is that openness to procreation can help husband and wife transcend the preoccupation with self that is characteristic of our fallen condition, and aid them in resisting temptations to selfish sexual exploitation of each other.

2. Procreation—hindering the exploitation of children in marriage:

Procreation, even in marriage, threatens constantly to provide opportunities for husband and/or wife to add one more selfish “project” to a list of accomplishments. Having and raising a child can become but one more occasion to engineer our own self-fulfillment rather than be an opportunity for love.

God teaches us to love our children the way He loves us all. We are not to love our children because they may be or become a fulfillment of one of *our* dreams. (One of the great dangers of cloning is that the cloned person may be brought about because the parent wants to produce another person exactly like himself or herself.)

This learning to love beyond oneself happens best when husband and wife together live and love and raise their children.

A second insight, then, is that childbearing that unites sexual love with husband’s and wife’s ongoing care for a new person can help husband and wife transcend selfish exploitation of children as “projects.”



Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI) is an artificial fertilization technique. A single sperm is injected into the cytoplasm of an egg, via a microneedle. This technique is used in treatment of severe male infertility.

Two important insights

Christians need also to see that God intends them to locate reproduction and the procreation of children within a marriage. To understand this requires patient consideration of two important insights.

1. Openness to procreation—hindering the potential for sexual self-exploitation in marriage:

Sexual intimacy, even in marriage, threatens constantly to turn marriage into a socially accepted setting for two people to use each other for selfish self-fulfillment.

God’s original creation and the promise of His continuing guidance urge married couples to open their love of

Reproductive technologies

With these Biblical insights about marriage and family in place, we can now turn to specific questions concerning reproductive technologies, including cloning.

First, a basic premise: *As long as a child is conceived from the sperm of the husband and the egg of the wife in a faithful marriage, the fundamentals of Biblical guidance are being observed.*

So, *artificial insemination* with the husband’s sperm is a possible approach to overcoming infertility. However, artificial insemination with donor sperm from outside the marriage conceives the child in a way

that disturbs the delicate balance between sameness and difference in God's plans for marriage. Artificial insemination by donor is therefore an inappropriate remedy for infertility.

Surrogacy—having a woman who is not intended to be the social mother of the child provide the womb in which the child develops—presents similar but also different problems. Surrogacy that conceives the child from the surrogate's egg rather than the wife's egg would be ruled out in much the same way as artificial insemination by donor. And carrying a child is such an intimate act of parenting that, even if the sperm and egg are from the infertile couple, the surrogate's presence disturbs the child's relationship to its various biological and social parents. Consequently, surrogacy is discouraged.

In vitro fertilization often uses sperm and eggs from the husband and wife, and the wife carries the child. In this circumstance, there does not seem to be a disturbance of the marital relationship and the relationship between the parents and the child. On the other hand, *in vitro* fertilization can be practiced using sperm and eggs from any of a variety of donors. In such cases the violation of the purposes of marriage seems once again to occur.

The prospect of *cloning*, which would not necessarily mean importing gametes from outside the marriage, raises rather different questions.

Cloning is fundamentally unacceptable because only one person's bodily life provides the genetic instructions; the delicate balance of marriage is once again disturbed. The child stands in an asymmetric relationship to the father and the mother, because its total set of genetic instructions has come from only one parent. The parent who has supplied the genetic instructions is not only the child's parent, but also the child's genetic twin. (Indeed, some point out that the son or daughter is, genetically, actually another child of his or her



God's Word in Genesis 2 places the conception and birth of a child in the sexually intimate relationship of a man and woman and intends husband, wife and child to live together in a family.

grandparents.)

In short, cloning human beings is a fundamental assault on the created order of God. Through cloning, the parents will have erected significant barriers to rising above mere self-fulfillment.

Christians are deeply sensitive to the sorrows of infertility. Not only Rachel cries out "Give me children or I shall die!" (Gen. 30:1). It is crucial also to remember that in this sinful world there is finally no such thing as a perfect marriage and family.

As we struggle with these problems and questions, we understand more keenly the limitations of our human existence in the flesh, captured so well in Jacob's troubled reply to Rachel, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" (Gen. 30:2).

Conclusion

"What child is this?" Indeed, whose children are we? Every one of us, whether conceived in the procreative act of husband and wife or through extraordinary means, are born children of humanity, in the flesh and with a human will. God's Word teaches that a full and abundant life will not emerge from the life of the flesh. But His Word also brings us the Good News of a Savior and the new birth He brings through Baptism.

This living Word calls men and women to see that their life together in marriage is filled with opportunities to give glory to God and to practice unselfish love.

As we engage also in this task of assessing contemporary technologies of reproduction, our foremost concern is to ask what these technologies mean in light of Christ's promise of new birth from above through water and the Spirit. And we remember that our ultimate mission is to participate in making "disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

GREED

“Greed is good.”

by Ben Eder

That line from the movie “Wall Street” sums up what seemed to be the attitude of many during the “Roaring ’90s.” But look at what has happened since. The high-tech-driven stock-market bubble has burst; the unethical practices of some business people at Enron, Arthur Anderson, Adelphia and WorldCom has led to bankruptcy and/or to the financial ruin of thousands of families.

One wonders: “Who’s next? What’s the problem here?”

The problem can be summed up in a word: “Greed.” From God’s perspective, Greed is *not* good.

Let’s examine the following Bible passages and see why.

1. It is instructive that the 7th, 9th and 10th commandments all deal with the sin of greed. Read Ex. 20:17 and Mark 7:21–23. Where does greed begin?

2. According to the inspired words of King Solomon (read Eccl. 5:10–11), why does the pursuit of wealth never satisfy?

3. What is the ultimate outcome for those who pursue wealth according to Jer. 17:11 and Luke 12:13–21?

4. What is Jesus’ warning to us concerning the pursuit of wealth and its effect upon our eternal salvation (Matt. 13:22 and Matt. 16:26)?

5. Rather than pursuing money and earthly things, what should we seek first (Prov. 30:8–9 and Matt. 6:19–33)?

6. Instead of living for the things that perish, what does Jesus tell us is better (John 6:26–27)?

The promise of contentment offered to us by money and material things is an illusion. But our heavenly Father keeps all His promises, and He offers us true contentment — no matter what our financial condition.

Where can this true contentment be found? Read the apostle Paul’s counsel to Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:6–16 and then read Heb. 13:5 to find out!



Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the son of Man will give you (John 6:27).



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LIVES TRANSFORMED THROUGH CHRIST, IN TIME, FOR ETERNITY ...

A deep spiritual crisis exists today throughout the United States and across the globe. Just read the newspaper or watch television news.

- The United States is waging a war on terrorism that is difficult to define but critical for the safety of our citizens and vital for the very existence of our nation.
- In the Middle East, Palestinians and Israelis are engaged in an ongoing battle, fueled by acts of terror that include suicide bombings orchestrated by members of radical “religious” groups.
- In our own country, preadolescent girls are kidnapped from their homes, young and middle-aged females are accosted in parking lots and on hiking trails, and even older women are violated in the privacy of their own homes. Most of these victims are violently abused and many even killed by their abductors, leaving loved ones in horrific grief.

What does “a deep spiritual crisis” have to do with such acts? It’s quite simple. It all boils down to the presence of evil in the world.

The word “evil” occurs 440 times in the Bible, according to my computerized search. One of the first occurrences is in Genesis, the very first book: “The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain” (Gen. 6:5–6).

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS

Students of the Scriptures will know that God took swift and decisive action: “So the LORD said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth ... for I am grieved that I have made them’” (Gen. 6:7).

And so begins the saga of the great flood that covered the earth, almost literally wiping mankind “from the face of the earth,” with precious few exceptions. “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8).

When the waters receded, only eight humans survived—Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives. One of Noah’s very first actions was one with lasting significance: “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: ‘Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done’” (Gen. 8:20–21).

God’s promise never again to destroy “all living creatures,” even in the face of flagrant eruptions of the evil that resides in the heart of all, leaves the heavy-duty question of how to deal with the reality of evil in the world.

Our government uses political strategy and military might to contain and eradicate the forces of evil that are readily identifiable throughout the world. We who call ourselves Christian have even greater power available for



this monumental struggle. What is our “secret weapon”? It’s called the Gospel, articulated in these words:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. ... God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:17–21).

The only remedy for the deep spiritual crisis in our world, which reveals itself in unspeakable acts of evil, is quite simply stated: “Lives transformed through Christ, in time, for eternity ...”

Thank you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, for your partnership in the Gospel, that this remedy might become reality in the lives of many. For only through the Gospel will the evils that lurk in the hearts of mankind be transformed into the good for which God has created the human race.

Jerry Kieschnick

John 3:16–17

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