

Issues
of
LIFE

Volume 8



THE CHRISTIAN
Appeal



Issues of Life

Do you remember the speech by Martin Luther King's niece, Alveda King, at the 2008 Democrat National Convention in Denver? In it she said, "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."

If King had lived to see what a high percentage of babies aborted in America every year are black, surely he would have led those who oppose this national tragedy.

Again in this issue our Senior Editor Gene Shelburne urges us to bring our faith to bear on these life-and-death issues.

THE CHRISTIAN APPEAL
(UPS 107-240)

July 2017, Vol. 66, No. 1. Owned and published monthly by CHRISTIAN APPEAL PUBLISHERS, INC., 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106. Senior editor, Gene Shelburne. Managing editor, Curtis Shelburne. Consulting editor, David Langford. Subscriptions: Free, thanks to our donors, to all who request the magazine. Free monthly bundles to churches, Bible study groups, and ministries. Send all orders to Christian Appeal Publishers, Inc., 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106. (Offer subject to issue and print-run availability.) Postmaster: Send address changes to 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106. Periodical postage paid at Amarillo, Texas. © 2016 by Christian Appeal Publishers, Inc.

COVER & PAGE 2 PHOTO by Jerry Huggins

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John Gulley

“What is man
that You are mindful of him,
and the son of man
that You visit him?
For You have made him
a little lower than the angels,
and You have crowned him
with glory and honor.”



Psalm 8

Issues of Life

It's Impossible

Seems like yesterday that we took down our Christmas tree. Now, as I sit keyboarding these words, almost in the blink of an eye, the lilies of Easter are about to bloom.

Have you noticed what these two grand celebrations of the Christian faith have in common?

No. Santa Claus and the Easter bunny don't bear the slightest resemblance. Nor do colored eggs and twinkling lights belong in the same setting. But, of course, these are not the Christian trappings of either Christmas or Easter. These are the trimmings of holidays, not of holy days.

From a faith perspective, however, one key element links Christian celebrations of both Jesus' birth and his resurrection. To participate in the real joy of either of these holy days, a person must be willing to believe in the impossible.

Some faith-challenged people find it easier to believe in Santa Claus than in Jesus. After all, they learned in Biology 101 that women who don't mate with men don't have babies. They think this Christian hooey about a virgin birth is too absurd for any educated person to buy it.

Likewise, these same unbelievers consider it much easier to envision an Easter bunny than to imagine an

escape from a grave or a dead man restored to life.


Our basic assignment as Christians is not easy. All God expects of us is that we believe the impossible.

"I'm thinking about starting a new religion," the French philosopher Auguste Comte announced one day to his Christian friend and author Thomas Carlyle.

"Okay," Carlyle responded. "For your new religion to have a chance, all you need to do is to be crucified, rise again the third day, and convince an unbelieving world to believe that you really are alive."

When God decided to save the world by sending us his Son, he obviously did not select the easy way to accomplish his goal. To a species noted for their doubting hearts and their quibbling minds, the Creator offered salvation on the basis of faith.

"Believe and be baptized and you will be saved," he tells us. "Those who won't believe will be condemned." That's the deal.

The first time anybody preached about Jesus, he proclaimed, "God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2:24). Not just on Easter but on any day, this is what Jesus' followers believe—that he did the impossible. 

Issues of Life

Getting It Right

Earlier this year my preacher/nephew Rick Lewis was reading a book I have not seen, a volume titled *The Irrational Atheist* by Vox Day. In it Rick ran across some interesting computation he shared with me.

I have no way to verify these stats he quoted, nor have I tried to duplicate the math involved. It appears to me, though, that both could be off by several thousand without materially blunting the author's point.

Day surely had a reliable source for the number of abortions performed in the United States in 2003. He cited 1.287 million. That same year 4,089,950 live births were recorded. A census figure maybe?

Day's shocking conclusion is that if the abortions were treated as infanticides (as they would have been in pre-Christian Rome), the life expectancy for any child born in the U.S. that year would have been radically reduced, from seventy-eight years to fifty-nine.

Until Rick ran this by me, it never had occurred to me to evaluate abortion from that perspective. Whether the viewer is in the faith or out of it, seeing abortion in this light should cause anyone to re-evaluate its serious impact on humanity.

On the other hand, my lifelong friend and fellow-writer Tom Williams

bids us instead to appraise the seriousness of abortion from a celestial point of view.


Our pro-abortion neighbors often try to rationalize the extermination of babies by cataloging all the anguish and hardship an aborted child won't have to endure. Our valid motive for killing, they tell us, is sympathy.

If (to borrow Tom's words) the baby is destined "to be deformed, mentally deficient, poverty stricken, unloved by parents, or to face some other trauma or calamity, that should elicit our sympathy and our involvement in alleviating the pain," the pro-abortionists tell us.

But Tom asks us to consider that every human embryo—whether at an early or late stage in the pregnancy—is a person "dearly loved by God, who will move heaven and earth to bring the child into his presence."

In other words, our compassionate efforts to spare the child unhappiness on earth may actually be a rude interruption of her divinely intended journey to heaven.

So Tom insists that "to avoid the travails of earthly life is surely no reason for taking it upon ourselves to terminate the marvelous process by which God chooses to populate heaven."

There you have it. From the vantage point of either earth or heaven, abortion flunks the test. 

Issues of Life

A Few Ticks of the Clock

Up to life behind bars was the sentence a Utah judge pronounced on the mother who pled guilty to killing six of the infants she bore.

Several months before Judge Darold McDade sent Megan Huntsman to live her remaining days in prison, her husband discovered the decayed bodies of the babies hidden in their garage.

In peaceful Provo, this mother horrified her neighbors when she admitted that she had murdered her newborns. She couldn't take care of them, she said, because she was so addicted to meth.

Nothing I write here implies a smidgeon of criticism of the judge and his ruling. Most of us would agree that this defendant had committed a heinous crime that deserved punishment. Even the mother agreed with him.

Megan Huntsman said that what she had done was murder. She told prosecutors she wanted to be held responsible for all six deaths.

What troubles me about the whole situation is the inequity embodied in our laws governing such matters.

This woman, now a lifelong felon, could have legally avoided motherhood and prison by driving a hundred miles or so in any of three directions to hire the services of an abortionist.

It all appears to be a matter of timing and dollars. At least in surrounding states she could have paid to have the same babies killed if she had just taken care of it a few days before their birth.

In abortion clinics surely she could have found professionals who had ended the lives of viable fetuses like hers. They could have killed her babies for her.

Because those doctors are licensed to kill, no judge in the land would have found them guilty of a crime. The same babies would have wound up just as dead, with what was left of their bodies in even worse shape. And neighbors, who today call their mother a heartless criminal, would instead describe her as a poor patient who deserves our pity.

What's wrong with this legal picture?

From the beginning, God's rules have established the sanctity of human life. Long before Moses wrote, "You shall not murder," Cain got in trouble for that offense. Anybody who intentionally shed human blood was to pay with their blood, God said (Genesis 9:6).

Does a story like this one help us to see how much our current laws differ from God's?



Issues of Life

In Colorado It's Okay

Colorado's claim to fame (at least, in the past year or so) has been their law that legalizes the recreational use of pot. The jury is still out on the practical, actual impact of that bit of legal pioneering.

Last spring the residents of the Rocky Mountain State discovered to their dismay that they may need another new law—one that would protect unborn children from fetal homicide.

The state's legislators turned thumbs down on such a law in 2013. When a similar measure was submitted to Colorado's voters a year later, they rubber-stamped their lawmakers' earlier decision. Voters rejected a ban on fetal homicide by a surprisingly large margin.

Evidently both the state's elected officials and those who elected them feared that any law passed to protect unborn babies might restrict abortion rights.

I wonder if the gruesome events of March 2015 caused anybody in Colorado to reconsider the reasoning behind their vote on that issue.

Police reports say that a pregnant 26-year-old woman, Michelle Wilkins, was lured into a Longmont home by a Craigslist ad offering her baby clothes for the child she was about to bear. Instead

of giving her diapers, investigators later found out, Dynel Lane attacked the mother-to-be and cut the baby out of her belly.

When Lane's husband found the baby in their bathtub, he rushed the little girl to a nearby hospital, but he was too late. The infant was already dead.

As neighbors began finding out about the atrocity committed right there in their town, they could hardly believe it. How could any sane person do such a thing? they wondered.

But they were even more shocked when Boulder County's district attorney Stan Garnett announced that Dynel Lane would not be charged with murder in the baby's death. Why? Because Colorado's existing laws would not allow it. The state's voters had said no to any law that would set penalties for fetal homicide.

In Colorado, a spotted owl or a timber wolf enjoys better legal shelter than a baby in its mother's womb.

In fairness let us stipulate that Colorado is not the only state that leaves unborn babies legally vulnerable. Eleven other states also lack laws outlawing fetal homicide. So I guess this legislative oversight has not been caused by too much puffing on the weed.



Issues of Life

Unprotected Faith

In China in a community called Lower Dafei Village, on a sad day last summer, Christians stood around their church weeping and singing hymns.

As they peacefully protested, an official vandal sent by the government scaled their fine building with a cutting torch in hand. His job was to topple the steel cross that marked the church's true identity.

During 2015 the government of China decided to remove all crosses visible in the land. In a blatant blow designed to stifle the influence of the Christian faith, government leaders dispatched construction teams to church buildings and monuments to remove crosses.

With cutting torches, chain saws, sledge hammers, and other tools for destruction, the crews demolished crosses all across the region. Observers surmised that this official strategy designed to subdue Christians likely accomplished the opposite result.

Meanwhile, during that week when Chinese Christians watched crews removing their church's cross, opponents of the Christian faith made headlines in America.

Just one day after the Chinese cross story surfaced, news media in the U.S. ran stories with headlines calling conservative evangelical Christianity a "freak faith."

As I read those stories that bordered on insult to Bible-believing Christians, I found myself wondering.


What if a network reporter in our country had referred to Islam as a freak religion? She would have been hunting a job the next day, wouldn't she?

But in America today—as in China—Christianity is fair game. Expunge the name of Jesus Christ from the Ritual and Missal guidebooks for chaplains, and then listen to the deafening silence as the media pretend that nothing newsworthy happened.

Ditto when the Daughters of the American Revolution erase any mention of Jesus Christ from their official book. All poems and prayers with Christian imagery had to go. DAR members were warned not to pray in the name of Jesus.

To become more inclusive, the DAR chose to exclude believing Christians. Did you hear anybody protesting that the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and religion had been violated?

What if they had told a Muslim he could not mention Allah? Imagine the resulting uproar.

When infidels in China attack the Cross, we get incensed. How strange that we suffer in silence when it happens here in the USA. 

Issues of Life

Born to Die

People familiar with the Omo Valley tribes near the southern border of Ethiopia tell us these people seldom speak aloud about the local taboo called Mingi. This taboo dooms many newborns to death.

A child born out of wedlock, for example, bears a curse, according to this taboo. Likewise, any visibly disabled baby is seen as a curse to its family.

But it doesn't stop there. Mingi rejects a toddler as a curse-bearer if her top teeth come in before the bottom ones. Twins are also considered cursed—at least one of them, and often both.

Cursed children are "put out" of their village, by ruling of the elders. They may be left in the bush as prey for wild animals. Sometimes their mouths are filled with dirt to silence their cries. People familiar with Mingi tell us that a "cursed" child may be starved or drowned.

In 2012 the Kara tribe outlawed this sort of infanticide, but other tribes in the valley still practice Mingi, fearing that a cursed child will afflict the entire tribe with famine, disease, or drought.

Published reports tell us that as many as 300 Omo Valley kids die every year because of Mingi beliefs.


Reading about this unthinkable carnage stirred at least two immediate reactions in my soul.

My first response was to wonder how information like this would impact those who keep telling us that one religion is just as good as another. (Perhaps, if they were honest with us, they mean that one religion is just as bad as another.)

Maybe I'm wrong, but my next reflection was that any educated, compassionate citizen in my community would be deeply troubled to learn what is happening to so many Mingi-marked children. Surely this slaughter of innocents would strike any of us as ignorant, mindless, bloody savagery.

Why would all of us react in this way? Because all of us—even outspoken unbelievers—uphold traditional Christian estimates of the value of human life.

As I pondered the matter further, however, it struck me that a non-believer would have to consider the Omo Valley tribes to be mild and benevolent folks compared to pro-choice Christians in the U.S. today.

After all, these Ethiopians who fear the Mingi curse are killing only 300 children a year, while more "enlightened" believers in almost any single American state will end the lives of ten times that many babies for reasons that sound far more callous and selfish. 

Issues of Life

All Wet

Last summer I mailed free copies of my latest book *The Key Place* to over a hundred contributors to my devotional magazine, *The Christian Appeal*.

One of those books came back marked “REFUSED.” Which puzzled me. The intended recipients are longtime friends. I surmised that one of their offspring who doesn’t know me from Adam might have been taking care of their mail that month.

What concerned me most of all, however, was the condition of the book when the post office dropped it back into my mailbox. It was saturated. Soaked through and through. Wet in a way that could not have happened in momentary, accidental exposure to a few raindrops.

That brand new book and the padded bag I mailed it in had been allowed to lie in a puddle long enough for the water to soak the bag and every page of the book inside.

If my friends up north had accepted the book and had emailed me their evaluation of it, they could have accurately told me that my book was all wet.


Thankfully, I’m getting the opposite message from other friends who are reading it. My fingers were still moist from unwrapping that drenched book when my office phone rang. The caller was a dear lady—a neighbor—who wanted to know

if she could stop by to get some autographed copies of the new book.

After my publisher distributed introductory copies of *The Key Place* to folks who might boost its sales, heartwarming reviews popped up in an assortment of publications and blogs. And readers all across the country have blessed me with positive feedback.

Regardless of how well their books may be written or how rich their message may be, relatively unknown authors like me find that it’s tough to get published. Because the market for what we write is so small. We depend on our loyal readers to recommend our works to their family and friends and neighbors.

I’ll mail a copy of my book (hopefully a dry one) to anyone who calls (806-683-5966) or emails me (geneshel@aol.com) to order one. And I’ll tell the good Lord thank you for your kindness in helping me to touch someone’s heart with words I have written.

Come to think of it, that’s how the Good News of Jesus has always been spread. One friend tells another, who passes on the blessing. And the chain of grace and truth and hope keeps growing one link at a time. Together we tell the world about Jesus. 

Issues of Life

“Because I Live . . .”

Night after night the bombs fell in London. People raced to the bomb shelters and hunkered down until the explosions subsided, the earth stopped shaking, and all was silent. Then they climbed back up to the streets again to clear away the rubble and resume business.

Wallace Viets, in his book *My God, Why?*, tells of two London shopkeepers. In this harrowing time, they found themselves locked in competition.

Each of these men took extreme pride in being able to open his shop each morning after a night of bombing, no matter what damage had occurred. So a keen rivalry grew between them.

One morning after a particularly rough bombardment one of the owners emerged from the shelter to find the front blown off his shop and his stock scrambled in the wreckage. His competitor, seeing his rival’s disarray, could not keep from gloating. In front of his own store he posted a sign that said OPEN AS USUAL.

When the owner of the wrecked shop saw it, at first he was frantic. What could he do? Then the light dawned. He would not be outdone.

Rushing back into his much-damaged building, he rummaged around and found a large piece of cardboard. Where the front wall of his store had been, he erected his own


hurriedly lettered sign. It said simply MORE OPEN THAN USUAL!

As I write these words, this year’s Easter Sunday is not far away. I’m always excited when Easter approaches. On that special day when most of the Christian world pauses to remember the death and resurrection of our Savior, I know that the hearts and minds even of the most devout believers will be “more open than usual.”

On the night before he died, Jesus promised, “Because I live, you shall live also.” All Christians know and value that assurance. And this link to our Lord’s victory over death blesses us on more than one level.

These familiar words comfort us whenever we surround a grave to bury our dead, but they may encourage us even more when we consider the eternal life the risen Lord gives us now. “Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father,” the apostle Paul exulted, “now we also may live new lives.”

Comparing our baptism to the death and burial of Jesus, the Bible describes us as “dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus.”

This is what we celebrate on Easter. This glorious day is not just about the resurrection of Jesus. It’s about ours too. 

Issues of Life

Halftime Indoctrination

When the Super Bowl rolls around next year, what will you do? Will you assemble your children and your grandchildren and your neighbors—maybe even, part of your church—and encourage them to watch performances that glorify civil rebellion and moral degradation?

That's exactly what happened at halftime during Super Bowl 50.

All across America Christians focused on spacious HD television screens and jived to the beat of the bands of Beyonce and Bruno Mars and the British pop-rockers called Coldplay.

Did the Christian viewers get the message intended by the entertainers? Non-Christians sure did.

"Beyonce apparently had a political message to convey," Fox News opined. Starting with her costume but also with her lyrics, Beyonce paid tribute to the Black Panther Party (on their fiftieth anniversary of lawless rebellion) and possibly to the infamous racist Malcolm X.

Left-leaning CNN described Beyonce's performance as possible "race-baiting." Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani described it as "an attack on cops." Sarah Taylor in her "Fishwrapper" blog described Beyonce as "raunchy" and "offensive."

The *New York Post* seemed to intend a compliment when they wrote that "much of the halftime show was about love and togetherness."

Okay. But what kind of love and togetherness?

Coldplay's act drew less fire than Beyonce's did because its message was more subtle. In America's gay capital, San Francisco, these folks from England treated us to what Newsbusters called "a 12-minute tribute to LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) love."

Many straight members of the audience may have missed this theme, but observers like entertainment commentator Tom Barnes didn't. He insisted that Coldplay was "waving a gay pride flag."

Is that why we watch the Super Bowl—to have our patriotism and our most basic moral convictions scorned and trashed? Is this what you invited your friends to watch with you?

If you watched that halftime show, you know there was one redeeming half-minute. That Doritos commercial. Seeing that precious unborn baby touched all who saw him, including the pro-choice viewers who want so much for us to believe that human fetuses are not human.

Way to go, Doritos!



Issues of Life

Con-man Gets Conned

I just finished reading another snatch of Allen Ross' fine commentary on Genesis. This time I was soaking up this capable Bible scholar's reflections on Genesis 34, that bloody tale about the rape of Dinah.

Ross overlooks one of the main reasons this event winds up in Scripture. In this chapter and the one that follows, the historian shows us why Jacob's oldest three sons got kicked out of their top slots on the family tree. When Reuben, Simeon, and Levi rip their family britches, Judah winds up as the presiding patriarch and the ancestor of Jesus. That's the main point of this violent story.

But Ross does alert us to other currents in the tides of this chapter. It would be easy, for example, for Bible skimmers to miss the contrast between daddy Jacob's fear and his sons' ferocity in their reactions to Dinah's rapist.

Cautiously concerned for his family's safety, Jacob tries to appease the rapist's pagan clan. All the while his furious boys, Simeon and Levi and their brothers, are dead set on avenging their sister's disgrace.

As Ross analyzes these opposite responses, he puts his finger on a truth that I had overlooked while teaching this tale dozens of times. Mature leaders like Jacob often deal with moral messes in a more restrained way, Ross suggests,

while hot-headed youngsters like Jacob's sons may opt for a ruthless, scorched-earth response.

Failing to respond at all to evil is hardly laudable, Ross points out. But flying off the handle to wreak vengeance may result in equally indefensible results.

Few readers of this chapter miss the macabre humor in the Jewish slaughter of the recently circumcised and totally disabled Canaanites. Did you miss the more subtle irony that the dead guys in Shechem had submitted to that crippling surgery as a devious way to take control of the Israelites? Turns out the joke was on them.

I caught myself grinning again when Ross highlighted the fact that in this ancient story another infamous deceiver gets deceived. From his earliest days Jacob is a con-man. As his name implies, he spends his life tricking people and taking unfair advantage of them.

Now, in this story, the trickier gets tricked. The liar gets lied to. By his own sons. Jacob's angry sons convince him that the city-wide circumcision is a way to confirm a treaty, to seal a deal. All along they know it is a sure way to enable a massacre. And it's kind of fun to see how upset the con-man gets when he gets conned.

It's a great story. Grab your Bible and enjoy it again.



Issues of Life

Proud to Be an American

July 4th is not the joyous occasion it used to be in America, because a lot of us are no longer proud to be Americans. Many who have the most education seem to have the least patriotism. We live in a time when our nation is seriously divided.

Those of us who lived through WWII tend to be patriots, proud of our country, supportive of those in uniform, somewhat in awe of our flag. Our early heroes sank German submarines and dodged Japanese bombs on Iwo Jima. So we are baffled—scandalized—when American citizens refuse to say the pledge or want to make it illegal to display the stars and stripes.

But to many who reached maturity in the 1970s, patriotism reeks of racism or bigotry. Their early heroes burned their draft cards or fled to Canada to dodge being drafted. Like Beyonce in her half-time performance at the 2016 Super Bowl, they may idolize Malcolm X and the Black Panthers.


The war in Vietnam rallied their generation to protest in the streets of our cities and caused them to scorn veterans who had fought bravely in the jungles of southeast Asia. They may not have burned any flags, but silently many of them sympathized with those who did reduce Old Glory to ashes.

You'll never hear these people singing, "I'm proud to be an American." In fact, they are more likely to apologize for being one, offensive as this may be to those who remember Dunkirk and Pearl Harbor.

Deeper still than the rift between pro- and anti-patriots, however, is the growing chasm between Christians who still support Bible-based morality and citizens who consider scriptural norms archaic.

"God's will is for you to be holy," Paul told his converts, "so stay away from all sexual sin." He said that all Christians are expected to control their own bodies, and "live in holiness and honor—not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

Today those pagans are making policies that govern our lives. Will we accept their godless standards? Or will we obey the biblical mandate to honor marriage and keep the marriage bed free of immorality (Hebrews 13:4)?

This year when we pause to celebrate our nation's freedom, our serious divisions will be clear. Some will rejoice that we have freedom of religion. Others will insist that it should be freedom from religion. Which side will you be on? 

Issues of Life

Endangered Species

Although it would surprise all of the original authors, our nation's top judges tell us that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of any mother in our country to have her unborn baby killed.

If this is an accurate reading of the basic founding document, please explain these recent news reports.

AP tells us that on October 16, 2013, Tiona Rodriguez suffocated her newborn baby boy, then stuffed the body into a shopping bag, and went on a shoplifting spree at Victoria's Secret. She was charged with murder.

In late July 2015, the same charge was filed in Louisville, Kentucky, against a 15-year-old who smothered her newborn daughter and hid the body in her purse.

Two months later, AP tells us, another new mother was charged with murder in the Bronx. Someone found her baby girl, umbilical cord still attached, outside an apartment building. Authorities said this don't-want-to-be-a-mother threw her newborn girl out a seventh-story window.

Nauseating news reports like these just keep coming.

Murder was also the charge lodged against Nausheen Rahman on March 13, 2016, according to station WPIX on Staten Island.


After 28-year-old Rahman

showed up at a nearby hospital with postpartum bleeding, her dead newborn was found in a trash bag in front of her home. Medical examiners determined that the baby girl had taken a breath. She was not stillborn. Hence the murder charge.

In West Covina, California, Mary Grace Trinidad got off a tad lighter. On February 21, 2016, employees at a Subway restaurant saw the bleeding woman leaving their shop. Following the blood trail, they found her crying infant in their toilet. Since the baby survived, the mother was only charged with a felony child abuse rap.

I have not tried to trace the outcome of these cases. Perhaps some of the murder charges later were reduced. But my consternation arises from the indisputable fact that each of these mothers could have been praised and smiled upon by our legal system if they had ended their babies' lives just a few days earlier.

Instead of facing murder charges, these baby-killers would have been applauded by pro-abortionists if they had asked a doctor to do the killing for them. Tax dollars probably would have paid to end the infants' lives.

As it is, these mothers face harsh punishment. Can anybody tell me why? 

Issues of Life

Bombs and Bullets

In the past decade or so, how often have you heard someone try to squelch religious comments by affirming that “one religion is just as good as another”?

Such sentiments sound loving and tolerant, don’t they? Some folks even call them “Christian.”

Try telling this to the six children of the loving father who was gunned down by Muslim jihadists in the San Bernardino massacre early this year.

Or attempt an even harder sell to the three orphans whose dead mother brought them from Iran to California to escape religious persecution, only to be slaughtered by “peaceful, loving Muslims” in a diverse society.

Do you suppose that good citizens of Brussels still value one religion as much as another?

They tried to do the right thing by opening their borders to refugees from war-torn lands. Driven by their murderous faith, those newcomers screamed, “Allah akbar!” as they detonated their bombs to kill infidels.

In the name of their god they littered the Brussels airport with dozens of dead and hundreds of injured victims lying in pools of blood and shards of shattered glass. Medical workers said the feet and legs of many of these were blown off or mangled. If you were one of the wounded who will never walk again,


could anybody ever convince you that Islam is as good as any other faith?

If such atrocities were rare—if car bombs and head-loppings and mass shootings did not fill news headlines almost daily, a column like this one could be branded as over-the-top bigotry. The reported violence could be dismissed as the actions of a few demented zealots.

But you’ll never sell that interpretation to the parents of the newlyweds or the wife of the young attorney who were among the eighty innocents who got mowed down by Muslim gunmen in the Bataclan concert hall in Paris.

Over and over witnesses and journalists used “bloodbath” to describe that gory scene. On the Internet we can still pull up photo mosaics of the faces of the dead at the Saint-Denis soccer stadium and the concert hall—all of them dead because of one deadly religion.

Add to these European casualties the thousands who died so mindlessly on 9/11. Listen as their survivors evaluate the religion that forever stole the ones they loved.

All of us want to be reasonable, kind, and loving. If you really want to be like that, choose a faith that tells you to love your neighbors instead of one that commands you to bomb or butcher all who don’t see it your way. 

Issues of Life

Another Dangerous State

That 23-year-old mother, Kenlissa Jones, who was accused of aborting her baby by taking Cytotec pills, at first was charged with murder with malice. Prosecutors had no doubt that she killed her baby on purpose.

In June 2015, District Attorney Greg Edwards dismissed that charge and reduced Jones’ prison sentence to three days. He cited Georgia’s state laws that exempt women from feticide prosecution as long as the unborn baby they kill is their own.

At least for a few days, headlines about this case put the state of Georgia on display both for those who favor abortion and for those who oppose it. As this case unraveled, pro-life and pro-abortion leaders even in that state said they were stunned, first by the murder charge and later by how quickly it vanished.

One conclusion was indisputable: under the state’s current laws, unborn babies in Georgia face no greater menace than their own mothers.

Just a few months later police in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, jailed 31-year-old Anna Yocco after she climbed into a bathtub full of water and tried to abort her 24-week-old unborn baby with a coat hanger. As her own blood turned the bath water red, Yocco got scared and sought help.

Local TV reporters quoted police

sergeant Kyle Evans as saying, “The whole time she was concerned for her health, her safety, and never gave any attention to the health and safety of the unborn child.”


The baby survived his mother’s coat-hanger assault, but with lifelong damage to his lungs, eyes, and heart.

All of us know what kind of charges would have been filed against this mother if she had inflicted similar injuries on her son outside her womb.

I have seen no follow-up news reports on this case, so I have no idea what charges this mother finally faced. I do know what kind of future is in store for her baby. Doctors say his life quality for the rest of his days will be impaired by what his mother did to him.

All of us know that HIPA laws would have kept any of us from ever knowing about any of this if Anna Yocco had just visited an abortion clinic instead of trying to do it at home. The U.S. Supreme Court says her unborn baby could have been mutilated and murdered there legally.

At the same time, God clearly says, “You shall not kill.” And he explains why: “For God made human beings in his own image.”

Whose rule do you think we should follow? 

Issues of Life

Quality of Life

American author Paul Greenberg told about a time when a band of spin-doctors from Planned Parenthood came to visit him back in 2005.

Soon after they went out his door, Greenberg jotted down his gut-level reaction to what he had just listened to. “Once the modern, secularized concept, Quality of Life, replaces the old, religious idea of Sanctity of Life,” he wrote, “anything becomes permissible.”

How right he was.

Touchstone editor James Kushiner tells in one of his columns about hearing a presentation in Chicago by Dr. William Hurlbut, a professor in the Neurobiology Department at Stanford University.

In his speech Hurlbut told of working with Nobel laureates who are developing human cloning. All of them, he said, are “really nice guys.” Their passion is to save lives and relieve suffering in people’s lives.

In his column, Kushiner does not dispute this, but he does offer a sobering reflection: “Both the nice men and the ISIS jihadists think they are improving the world.”

Some of the worst evil set loose on this planet began as the misguided attempt of some well-meaning soul to save the world.

“Any man may imagine a moral order of his own,” Kushiner warns, “or he may subject himself to someone else’s moral order—that of the street gang, the Gestapo, a political party, or the jihadists of ISIS. They all espouse a view of good and evil.”

Kushiner’s examples to substantiate this truth are chilling. “Someone took pride in the design of the gas ovens of Auschwitz,” he reminds us. In this decade, he laments, someone in ISIS is proud every time he gets to show a video of a beheading.

In his book *The Seventh Million*, Tom Segev awakened me to a historical truth that had eluded me. I had no idea that the first Jewish settlers in what would become modern Israel had drunk the same Kool-Aid that caused Marxists and Nazis to try to ennoble their world by purifying society’s racial DNA. Only the physically and mentally fittest were welcome.

Jesus took the opposite approach toward improving the lot of humanity. He welcomed “the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind.” He violated racial, economic, and social taboos when he showed special love for outcasts and rejects. All of us who truly follow Jesus will do the same.



**“FOR YOU
CREATED
my inmost
being; you
knit me
together
in my
mother’s
womb;
I praise you
for I am
fearfully and
wonderfully
made.”**

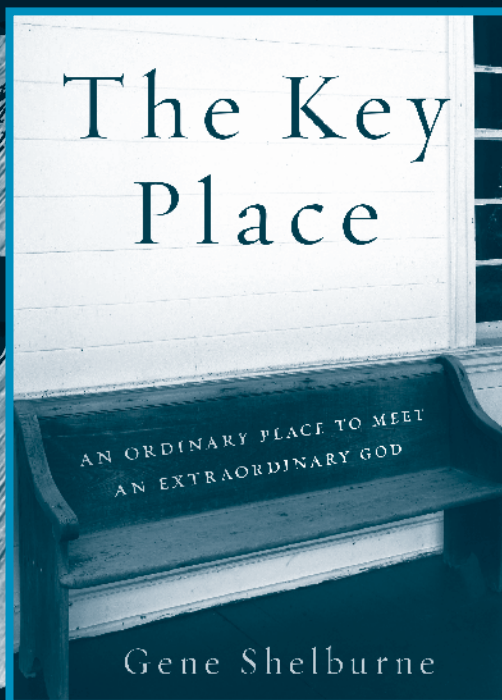
*** Psalm 139**

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