BE THE DIFFERENCE.

Gateway Seminary students change the world — often one friendship at a time. Learn to share the gospel in every context so others can be transformed by Jesus Christ. Be the difference.

Become part of the global Gateway family on one of five campuses | in a virtual classroom | online anytime

WWW.GS.EDU • 888.442.8701

Gateway Seminary
Biblical • Missional • Global
FEATURES

SPECIAL SECTION: ROE V. WADE

32 Hope for the unchosen
Chances for life seem slim for thousands of tiny embryos frozen in storage or subjected to questionable tests meant to weed out “misfits.” But some advocates and families are on a mission to rescue these unborn babies from an uncertain fate.

38 Second time around
Women who have multiple abortions present challenges to pro-life efforts.

42 The new pro-life generation
High-school students are organizing and engaging in the fight for life, despite sharp opposition from some administrators and peers.

46 Guilt offerings
Special Buddhist temples memorialize the unborn dead in Japan, but they don’t solve the problem of post-abortion trauma.

50 Copycat crimes
As China steals U.S. technology, American firms fear speaking up and losing access to a massive market.

DISPATCHES

7 News / Human Race / Quotables / Quick Takes

CULTURE

19 Movies & TV / Books / Children’s Books / Q&A / Music

NOTEBOOK

55 Lifestyle / Technology / Sports / Health

VOICES

4 Joel Belz
16 Janie B. Cheaney
30 Mindy Belz
61 Mailbag
63 Andrée Seu Peterson
64 Marvin Olasky

ON THE COVER: Photo courtesy of Benjamin and Tina Gibson

Give the gift of clarity: wng.org/giftofclarity
Notes from the CEO

t’s amazing how, in the brave new world of news media, most media businesses pursue an advertising-based funding model that predates even the 19th-century penny-press era. Even for the most forward-thinking of the new media platforms, advertising still represents the overwhelming majority of total revenues.

It’s not hard to understand how such a reliance can shift a news organization’s emphasis away from the reader or listener or viewer. For these organizations, you are a commodity, a “unique visitor,” a pageview, a monetizable set of eyeballs among a vast number of others.

Their newsrooms produce content designed for mass appeal to popular taste, they are careful to avoid news that might hurt their advertisers, and they generally go with the flow.

But the flow of advertising dollars has slowed to a trickle, and so these days dozens of major news outlets have become ripe for acquisition or are otherwise in need of propping up by billionaire investors eager to disseminate their worldview. Other news organizations have turned to major foundations to stop the bleeding. And major foundations, seeing an opportunity to advance their positions, have been quick to seize a place of influence.

Where an institution’s treasure is, there will its heart be also.

At WORLD, our heart and our “treasure” are wrapped up in our members—specifically, in our calling to contribute to the renewal of your mind. You members pay for your own membership and often those of your friends and family, in specifically, in our calling to contribute to the renewal of your mind. You members need of propping up by billionaire investors eager to disseminate their worldview.

dozens of major news outlets have become ripe for acquisition or are otherwise in need of propping up by billionaire investors eager to disseminate their worldview. Other news organizations have turned to major foundations to stop the bleeding. And major foundations, seeing an opportunity to advance their positions, have been quick to seize a place of influence.

As we enter a new year on the momentum you provided in your generous year-end support, we are thankful for our unique calling and our unique members.
THOUSANDS OF CHURCHES ARE STEPPING FORWARD AND OFFERING THE CONQUER SERIES TO GIVE THEIR MEN A FIGHTING CHANCE IN PURSUING SEXUAL INTEGRITY.

OVER 450,000 MEN ARE IN TRAINING TO CONQUER PORN AND WALK IN FREEDOM

The result is years of bondage. This is how you can love the Lord, but still be trapped in bondage to porn. You must renew your mind. Dr. Ted Roberts in the Conquer Series will teach you how to biblically renew your mind and find freedom. Dr. Ted has a 90% success rate in helping men find freedom.

TRIALING HARDER ONLY TIGHTENS THE NOOSE AROUND YOUR NECK. Each time you fail you increase the shame you carry, which perpetuates the cycle - you go back to porn to medicate the shame you’re feeling. Committing to a process takes time because there’s no quick fix. It’s more than just saying “I will no longer watch porn” because it’s really not about porn. You’re using porn to medicate anxiety and stress in your life. You do this by accessing the internal pharmacy that you have in your brain.

Your brain has the powerful chemicals that you can access when you’re feeling low. Most likely, you’ve learned to rely on these chemicals from a very early age. When you watch porn, powerful neurotransmitters such as dopamine are released, which bond you to those images.

According to neuropsychologist Dr. Tim Jennings, “Any type of repetitive behavior will create trails in our brain that are going to fire on an automatic sequence.”

THOUSANDS OF CHURCHES ARE STEPPING FORWARD AND OFFERING THE CONQUER SERIES TO GIVE THEIR MEN A FIGHTING CHANCE IN PURSUING SEXUAL INTEGRITY.

The Conquer Series is a cinematic 6-disc DVD set featuring in-depth teaching from former Marine Fighter Pilot and Pastor, Dr. Ted Roberts, who shares powerful tools and Bible-based strategies that he has used to help thousands of men renew their mind and find freedom from porn.

START 2018 THE RIGHT WAY AND ORDER THE CONQUER SERIES TODAY.

ORDER TODAY AT CONQUERSERIES.COM

CALL (561) 681-9990
Sensible teacher

REMEMBERING R.C. SPROUL, ‘THIS ERA’S GREAT REFORMER’

If only as a matter of significant news in the evangelical world, this column must take note of the death on Dec. 14 of theologian and master teacher R.C. Sproul, the founder and leader of Ligonier Ministries. But Sproul was so much more than a name in the news.

I still remember the phone call I got one day in 1986. I was chairing the annual program of the Evangelical Press Association and had invited Sproul to come as our keynote speaker. The phone call was from Billy Graham, who said he had heard good things about this young man (Sproul was only 47 at the time) and wondered if he could slip in and hear him. We put them side-by-side at the head table—and I always wondered what they talked about during that lunch hour before Sproul spoke to a crowd of about 300—including Billy Graham.

The crowd at Sproul’s memorial service in Sanford, Fla., on Dec. 20 was probably 10 times that big. Academicians and noted scholars filled pew after pew an hour before the service began. Hundreds more came in blue jeans and flip-flops, reminders of Sproul’s Martin Luther–like ability to explain the fine points of theology to common thinkers.

It was a measure of the man that the most telling eulogy of the day came not from one of Sproul’s fellow Presbyterians, but from Baptist pastor-educator John MacArthur, founder of the Master’s University and Seminary in California. MacArthur surely spoke for most present when he optimistically reflected:

“No one can say to me: This is a very sad time, there’s so much bad preaching, there’s so much un-Biblical ecclesiology, there’s so much poor spiritual leadership, there’s so much disinterest in the doctrine of sanctification, there’s no real sense of holiness in worship. You know all these things. By the same time, there’s never been a time in the history of the world where sound doctrine is so available in a split second, anywhere on the planet. And the point of the

‘spear for that entire movement in our time was R.C. Sproul. He is this era’s great reformer.’

At the same time, MacArthur raised more than a few eyebrows at the memorial service when he went back some 22 years for an illustration of Sproul’s determined defense of truth. “I’m the last man standing,” MacArthur asserted bluntly, “of a group of three that gathered in Florida in 1998. It was one of the most amazing days of my entire life. ‘Evangelicals and Catholics Together’ [a loose organization promoting understanding among evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics] had come out the year before, and R.C. was profoundly disappointed because the man behind that was the man who claimed R.C. as his mentor—and he had abandoned the true gospel.

“For some reason, I don’t know why, I ended up there. It was James Kennedy, R.C. Sproul, and myself there representing the true gospel against those who wanted to accommodate Rome’s gospel—Bill Bright, Charles Colson, and J.I. Packer.

In 1995 we met in a private room for seven hours. And I sat next to Jim Packer. It was a massive education. The power in the room unmistakably for the seven hours was R.C. Sproul.... As affable, as irrepressibly charming as he was, he was a defender of the faith. Even when he was looking in the eyes of a very cherished friend, he never wavered on the gospel.”

MacArthur’s fiery comments were awkward, I thought, for a memorial service. I couldn’t help remembering, for example, that J.I. Packer—to aging—is still very much alive. And I remembered that when I had asked Sproul not so long ago about that specific event, he had replied sharply: “Oh, it was the most painful part of my whole career.”

I choose instead to remember this man for all he so sensibly taught me—and others—about the holiness of God and His sovereign design. R.C. Sproul was an enormously gifted scholar-communicator whose nuanced approach drove us all to a deeper commitment to the truth of the gospel.

Who cannot revel in Sproul’s magnificent grasp of Scripture—as well as his compelling teaching style? He was as carefully bounded by the Scriptures as any preacher most of us have ever heard, although within those bounds he was also a fully liberated Renaissance Man. It’s a combination I don’t expect to see ever again in my lifetime.
Real Answers to Hard Questions about
Life, Love, and Sexuality

In *Love Thy Body*, bestselling author Nancy Pearcey empowers readers to respond intelligently and compassionately to today’s headline issues.

We’re told that secularism liberates, but Pearcey brings a real-world perspective to show that the secular ethic is profoundly dehumanizing in its view of abortion, assisted suicide, homosexuality, transgenderism, the hook-up culture, and more.

Pearcey then turns the tables on stereotypes that portray Christianity as harsh and bigoted. She invites a fresh and original look at its holistic, life-affirming principles. Building on her earlier bestselling books such as *Total Truth*, she explains the reasons behind the moral rules.

*Love Thy Body* will equip you make the case that Christianity is reality-oriented, giving sustainable solutions for anyone seeking real answers to hard questions of life, love, and sexuality. Nancy Pearcey serves as professor of apologetics and scholar in residence at Houston Baptist University.

Now, more than ever, *Love Thy Body*. 
Get connected, equipped, and inspired!

Hear from these and many other dynamic speakers and musical artists

- MIKE LINDELL
- ERIC METAXAS
- KELLY WRIGHT
- JERRY A. JOHNSON
- JOEL ROSENBERG
- MEGAN ALEXANDER
- DAVID & JASON BENHAM
- LUIS PALAU
- RICK WARREN
- MARSHA BLACKBURN
- ALEX KENDRICK
- LARRY ELDER
- MERCYME
- FERNANDO ORTEGA
- BILLY KIM
- STEVE GREEN
- JACKIE GREEN
- KIRSTEN HAGLUND
- DAVID LIMBAUGH
- ED STETZER
- GABE LYONS

Convention Highlights

- Online Censorship: NRB’s new initiative, Internet Freedom Watch, counters censorship, as with PragerU on YouTube. Dennis Prager will speak.
- Film Screenings: Watch God’s Not Dead 3, One Nation Under God, I Can Only Imagine, Staines, and Paul, Apostle of Christ. Also hear from Dennis Quaid (I Can Only Imagine), Jim Caviezel (Paul, Apostle of Christ), and Stephen Baldwin (Staines).
- Israel Session: In anticipation of the 70th anniversary of the modern state of Israel, join us for a special session featuring David Jeremiah, Kay Arthur, Michael W. Smith, and others.

Other Highlights:
- Industry Sessions
- The Exposition
- Film Pitch-a-thon
- National Bible Bee Champions

For the full list of speakers and musical artists, visit nrbconvention.org | Day passes and special first-timers rates available!
Rising up
Protesters in Tehran speak out against the Iranian regime on Dec. 30 as part of a wave of anti-government protests that began on Dec. 28 in Mashhad and quickly spread to several dozen cities across Iran.

STRINGER/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES
Through the looking glass
THE NEW YEAR MAY PROVIDE TURNING POINTS FOR PRO-LIFE
AND OTHER ISSUES by Jamie Dean

As 2018 dawns, predictions abound, with many focused on odds of triumph: Who will dominate the Winter Olympics, the Super Bowl, and later in the year, the midterm elections?

Time magazine offered a preview of 2018 by featuring on its cover the four women starring in the upcoming film A Wrinkle in Time, based on the acclaimed children's book by Madeleine L'Engle. The novel appeared in 1962, but its themes are familiar: good versus evil, light versus darkness—who or what will win?

The first week of 2018 brought more urgent questions about epic struggles: Would protesters in Iran crack the nation's Islamic theocracy, or would a government crackdown on protesters crush the dissent and the dissenters?

Would the United States move closer to military conflict with North Korea, as North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un declared his 2018 resolution to mass produce nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles? (The leader also claimed the entire United States is within range of a nuclear attack by the rogue nation.)

Meanwhile, another long-running conflict continued, grabbing less attention but presenting staggering numbers: In the 45 years since the Supreme Court forced states to legalize abortion in its Roe v. Wade decision, National Right to Life estimates more than 59 million unborn children have died through abortion.

Thankfully, the abortion rate is at its lowest point since 1973, according to the pro-abortion group Guttmacher Institute. But when we mark finally killing less than a million unborn children in a single year, such a victory seems as tragic as it is sobering.

The year ahead brings important battles in the larger pro-life struggle: In a critical free speech case, the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review a California law requiring pro-life pregnancy care centers to promote abortion.

California lawmakers passed the legislation in October 2015, and it proclaimed that licensed pregnancy care centers must post signs telling women the state offers free or low-cost abortions to eligible women. It says the centers must also include a phone number for a local abortion center.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) filed suit to fight the legislation in October 2015 on behalf of a network of pregnancy care centers. A year later, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the law. ADF asked the Supreme Court to hear the case, and the justices agreed last November.

A handful of related decisions are encouraging: In October, a superior court judge in Riverside County, Calif., issued an injunction against the California law, saying the legislation “compels speech and regulates content. This speech is not merely the transmittal of neutral information, such as the calorie count of a food product.”

Pro-life groups have successfully defended against similar laws in Maryland, Illinois, Texas, and New York City, and pro-life advocates say it’s absurd to require them to promote a
practice they oppose as part of their core identity.

Indeed, workers in abortion centers seem plenty able to reach their target audience on their own. In its recent annual report, Planned Parenthood reported it had conducted 321,384 abortions in the last year.

Another front to watch: The U.S. Department of Justice has launched a federal investigation into Planned Parenthood, which receives nearly $500 million in taxpayer funding a year.

The Justice Department confirmed the probe in December. In 2016, the Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives both referred Planned Parenthood to the FBI, saying the group illegally profited from fetal tissue sales. The abortion giant has denied the charges.

Pro-life voters will also be watching to see if Republicans in Congress move to defund Planned Parenthood in the year ahead. Many were disappointed when the Senate failed to take such action last year.

It’s unclear how much Republicans will be willing to go for in a year with midterm elections looming. The GOP’s hold on the House of Representatives and its current 51-49 majority in the Senate are both shaky. Democrats have more Senate seats to defend than Republicans, but 2016 showed pundits what the Bible teaches as well: Don’t try to predict the future.

In the meantime, it’s important to note that some of the most critical battlefields remain local and relational. Whatever the prospect of legislation or court cases in 2018, advocating for pro-life causes remains a moral, cultural, and spiritual struggle to promote the value of every life.

It happens in pregnancy care centers and living rooms and school clubs and Sunday sermons and foster care agencies and personal conversations and private and public prayer. It often involves both victories and setbacks, but we can be sure of the long-term promise recorded by the Apostle John: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.
Dropped
U.S. life expectancy in 2016 dropped for the second straight year. An average U.S. adult can now expect to live 78.6 years, with a five-year gap between the lifespans of men and women: 76.1 years to 81.1 years. This multi-year drop in life expectancy has been the first since 1962 and 1963. Bob Anderson of the National Center for Health Statistics told reporters he cannot say whether a trend is developing, but he is worried about the steady mortality rate among opioid addicts. If 2017 had another increase in such deaths, it could signal a third straight drop in life-expectancy data for the first time since the Spanish flu epidemic 100 years ago.

Vindicated
A federal district court ruled on Dec. 20 that the city of Atlanta can no longer force its employees to submit all after-hours speeches and writing for city approval. Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran had lost his job after he wrote a devotional in his free time that included his views on Christian marriage and sex. Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed suspended him for 30 days without pay, put him through sensitivity training, and then fired him, even though a city investigation determined Cochran had not discriminated against anyone. The Alliance Defending Freedom brought Cochran’s case to federal court, where the judge overturned the Atlanta policy, saying the policy could permit an unconstitutional restriction of free speech.

Awakened
Alyson Davis, a teenager in Alabama, started the “oPIN your eyes” project in March 2017 after reading an article in WORLD comparing abortion and the Holocaust. The article noted that Americans have pictures of the aborted babies and still allow them to be killed. Thinking about the power of visuals, Alyson remembered visiting a Holocaust memorial in Tennessee, a railroad car used to bring victims to the killing camps. The car held 6 million paper clips, representing the murdered. She began collecting safety pins from churches for a similar display for the victims of abortion, each safety pin representing 200 murdered babies. Nine months later, the collection of 328,528 pins is complete and ready for a display planned for Sanctity of Human Life Sunday at Eastside Baptist Church in Winfield, Ala.

Denied
Aaron and Melissa Klein, Oregon bakers who refused to make a cake for a same-sex wedding, lost their appeal to an Oregon appeals court on Dec. 28. The Kleins told the same-sex couple they couldn’t make the cake because of their Christian beliefs, and the couple sued, arguing the Kleins had violated an Oregon law preventing sexual discrimination in places that serve the public. An administrative law judge agreed, fining the Kleins $135,000. The Kleins appealed, claiming the Oregon Equality Act should protect their religious beliefs. They also argued that baking was a form of expression protected under the First Amendment. The judge denied them on all counts.

Announced
U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, announced on Jan. 2 that he will not seek an eighth term in November. “I was an amateur boxer in my youth, and I’ve brought that fighting spirit with me to Washington,” said Hatch, the longest-serving Republican in Senate history. “But every good fighter knows when to hang up the gloves. And for me, that time is soon approaching.” Political analysts expect 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney to run for the open Senate seat.
We commit to provide an outstanding Christian liberal arts education purposely designed to inspire a lifelong pursuit of learning, loving and leading.
‘I’m just heartsick.’

Actress **MIRA SORVINO** on director Peter Jackson’s statement that he didn’t cast her in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit films because of what he now sees as a “smear campaign” against Sorvino and Ashley Judd orchestrated by Harvey Weinstein's Miramax. Both actresses had reportedly rejected Weinstein’s sexual advances.

‘Leaving was tough, but staying would have been tougher.’

**ANDREA SEQUIERA**, 29, on moving with her husband and son from Venezuela to Peru in order to escape hyperinflation and severe shortages of food and medicine in their socialist home country. “We know lots of people who would like to get out of Venezuela but can’t afford the ticket.”

‘If I can [still] run 3 miles four times a week, I’ll be running for reelection.’

U.S. Sen. **CHUCK GRASSLEY**, R-Iowa, on whether he will run in 2022 at age 89. Grassley is one of eight U.S. senators over age 80—a record number.

‘We’ve lost some of our stars and lost none of our audience.’

**RUPERT MURDOCH**, executive chairman of 21st Century Fox, on the strength of Fox News’ ratings despite losing Megyn Kelly and Bill O’Reilly. Ratings for Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN increased in 2017. Analysts credited the unpredictability of the Trump White House with attracting viewers to the news channels.

‘God does work in mysterious ways.’

U.S. Rep. **MO BROOKS**, R-Ala., noting that if he had not lost in August’s Republican U.S. Senate primary in Alabama to Roy Moore and Luther Strange, he wouldn’t have scheduled a physical examination with his doctor that revealed he had “high-risk” prostate cancer. Brooks, 63, underwent successful surgery in December.

Volunteers distribute food to people in Caracas, Venezuela.
SHAME ON YOU FOR EXPANDING THE NATIONAL DEBT.

DEMONCRATS

GOP

QUICK, TELL THE WHITE HOUSE TO SEND ANOTHER PALLET OF CASH!

THE NUMBER YOU’VE DIALED IS NO LONGER IN SERVICE.

Death to Khamenei!

The ISIS Caliphate

PERIODIC CORRUPTION.
Klose call
A retired Montana man will soon take his seat on the Laurel, Mont., City Council—even though he never ran for the post. City officials called Richard Klose after Montana’s Nov. 4 election telling him he won the race for the Ward 4 position on the City Council. That was news to Klose, whose name wasn’t on the ballot and who had no intention to run. But Klose secured three write-in votes in the uncontested election, more votes than anyone else. Klose said he would accept the election results.

Let’s pretend
Child Development has a useful tip for making 6-year-olds more productive: dress them up as Batman. According to a study in the academic journal’s September/October issue, researchers found that young children worked harder when dressed up as superheroes like Batman or popular children’s entertainment icons like Dora the Explorer or Bob the Builder. In the experiment, children between 4 and 6 years old were given repetitive tasks to accomplish along with the option of taking a break to play games on an iPad. Those who imagined themselves as popular fictional characters performed more work and took fewer breaks to play iPad games.

Better late than never
More than 2,000 years after the Emperor Augustus banished the prolific poet of Rome’s golden age of literature, Rome’s city council has officially rescinded the exile. The wildly popular poet Ovid, whose sense of morality clashed with the conservative Augustus, found himself exiled in A.D. 8 to the Black Sea town of Tomis in present-day Romania. There the poet lived out his days until his death in A.D. 17. In rescinding the exile on Dec. 14, the city council expressed regret and hoped to “repair the serious wrong” suffered by Ovid. Last year, an Italian village issued a similar apology, saying it was sorry for the role it played in 14th-century poet Dante Alighieri’s exile from Florence in 1302.

For extra credit
Nothing would get in the way of Nayzia Thomas’ schoolwork—not even childbirth. The Kansas City college student and expectant mother faced a dilemma while studying for finals at Johnson County Community College this December. Thomas, a sophomore, had been aiming to finish her final psychology paper early so that she could then focus on motherhood. But she went into labor and had to be admitted to the hospital before getting a chance to finish the coursework. So Thomas, while prepping to give birth, finished writing the paper on her laptop while sitting in a hospital bed on Dec. 11. She gave birth to a son the next day.

District deadlock
The Nov. 7 election for the Virginia House of Delegates could not have been any closer in the state’s 94th District. Election night results indicated incumbent David Yancey, a Republican, had won the race by 12 votes. A subsequent recount showed challenger Shelly Simonds, a Democrat, had won the race by a single vote. But a three-judge panel decided to count one ambiguous vote in favor of Yancey, leaving the incumbent and challenger tied at 11,608 votes apiece. The race had broader implications for Virginia as the November elections left Republicans with a slim 50-49 advantage in the state House of Delegates—with the outcome of the 94th District race leaving open the possibility Democrats would tie for seats in the legislative body. In late December election officials said they planned to decide the race by a random drawing.
Booby-trapped box

Like many homeowners who use Amazon.com, Jaireme Barrow has become increasingly incensed by passersby who pilfer packages off his porch. He installed surveillance cameras and showed footage of the thefts to police officers in his hometown of Tacoma, Wash., but nothing came of his complaints. So the 34-year-old took matters into his own hands. Barrow designed a dummy box, empty except for a 12-gauge shotgun blank rigged to go off, and left the box sitting on his front porch. Barrow then filmed porch pirates becoming startled by the loud sound of the exploding cartridge as they tried to steal his package. The Washington man began selling versions of TheBlankBox last March. Since then, Barrow’s videos have gone viral. He told The Washington Post that sales of his dummy box peaked during the Christmas online shopping season.

Kith and kin

Alan Robinson and Walter Macfarlane have been best friends for 60 years, and until recently, they thought they knew each other pretty well. After becoming buddies in sixth grade, Robinson and Macfarlane found they enjoyed spending time together: Over the years the two Oahu residents swam and fished together and played football, softball, golf, and cribbage. But when the two pals each became curious to learn about their family backgrounds—Robinson was adopted, and Macfarlane never knew his father—they submitted to DNA testing, and got the surprise of their lives. According to test results, Robinson and Macfarlane are biological half-brothers, sharing the same mother. “It was a shock, definitely,” Robinson told KHON-TV in December. “This is the best Christmas present I could ever imagine having.”

Penny pinching

A generous inheritance from a German truck driver created six months of side work for a patient German banker. When the driver died in May, he left his family with 5,500 pounds of coins he had collected during three decades of travel. Most of the coins were denominated in Deutsche Marks, which were phased out of circulation in 2002 but can still be converted into euros. The family transported the coins—more than a million of them, stashed in freezer bags—by van to a branch of the German central bank, where employee Wolfgang Kemereit took on the tedious task of cleaning, sorting, and tallying the deposit by hand. “I quite enjoy doing such things, so in that sense it wasn’t a problem,” Kemereit told German public broadcaster NDR. When he finished the count in December, the inheritance totaled $9,400.

Mind the plow

Frustrated by snowplows leaving a snowdrift in your driveway? Police in Lowell, Mich., say they understand. But at the same time, they’re urging residents not to challenge the snowplows in the street. In a graphic Facebook post on Dec. 18, the town police department insisted that any residents who jumped out in front of snowplows to complain had a death wish. “26,000 pounds of metal and salt does not stop on a dime,” the post read. “If the truck doesn’t crush you and kill you instantly, the blade will dismember your body.” The Lowell Police Department apologized for the gory detail in the same post.
Exclusive ties

WHEN IT COMES TO THE FAMILY, ‘INCLUSIVITY’ HAS ITS LIMITS

Reviews for children’s books are not high on the list of cultural indicators. Yet, as the primary resource for library and bookstore buyers, who in turn funnel books into the hands of kids and parents, they’re worth noticing. That’s why this particular book review sounded an ominous note, even though the book in question seemed as sunny and blameless as a church picnic.

One Big Family by Marc Harshman pictures a reunion at the old homestead, where Grandma sets a groaning table, Great-Grandpa tells stories, dads pitch baseballs, and rambunctious cousins (many sporting red hair and freckles) bed down on the floor. The anonymous reviewer for Kirkus Reviews acknowledged the child-friendliness of the text and pictures—“However, the too-familiar European-American, middle-class family featured in the story lacks diversity of any kind.” No single parents, disabled children, or same-sex couples add authenticity to this family portrait, making the book “regrettably nostalgic.”

Picture-book authors take note: The cultural ideal of a traditional family is not only retrograde, but regrettable. There’s a “national discourse on inclusiveness” going on, and children’s authors and illustrators have a responsibility to contribute to it.

Kirkus, more than other industry journals, has accepted the mission of promoting inclusivity to the nation. Its children’s book reviewers now routinely identify protagonists by race, sexual orientation, or gender identity (even if the latter is in doubt). Depictions of families with same-sex parents or transitioning progeny are likely to get more respectful attention than their craftsmanship may deserve.

“Inclusivity” is a noble concept, and when it means accepting all people as human beings worthy of respect, no Christian should argue. And it’s a sad fact that throughout history not all families conformed to the father-mother-and-children model. Death often carried away one parent or both; wars wreaked havoc; polygamy flourished in some cultures and slavery in others. Children orphaned by death or neglect lived a perilous existence that many did not survive.

But it’s a long step down from the failure to live up to the ideal to the failure of the ideal. Those who vigorously promote inclusive families forget that families are by their very nature exclusive. Visitors are welcome and outsiders may be adopted in, but the open, fluid, ever-accepting vision promoted by forward thinkers doesn’t apply. In a family, the very things that are seen as limiting—organic ties and mutual obligations—are the things that bind its members together. The kind of “inclusivity” social justice holds up actually undermines what makes families work. Even what is necessary for them to survive.

The normalizing of single parenthood chips away at the unique (but separate) strengths of moms and dads. Same-sex parenting undermines the necessity of biological ties.

Transgenderism—the latest, and possibly most destructive crusade—questions kids’ individual bodily integrity.

As for parental authority, that’s mainly something to be bypassed. “Woke” librarians and booksellers write blogs and publish tips on how to go straight to the young reader. An independent bookseller told Publishers Weekly a couple of years ago how she addressed junior patrons before parents. “[The kids] know that reading is not just about reflecting the reality they see every day but also expanding it.” She likes to offer copies of George, a middle-grade novel about a boy realizing he’s a girl, to 10-year-olds: “By focusing on children’s literature’s true audience, the child, you bypass the parents’ ideologies and give the child the authority to decide for herself or himself.”

Given children’s limited knowledge and experience, their impressionable brains, and cultural influences that aren’t constructive, authority to decide is the last thing they need.

Isaiah speaks about another kind of “hand-selling” from the highest authority: “And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it’” (Isaiah 30:21). This is the way is just what we don’t want to hear when it regards our private lives, and families are where private life plays out most tellingly. To a culture that lazily assumes “it takes a village to raise a child,” families are negotiable. But what it takes to make a village is a lot of stable families.
TEEN LEADERSHIP CAMPS

Pursue Wisdom · Reason Biblically · Foster a Love of Learning

Join a community of like-minded students and world-class faculty at Patrick Henry College for a summer of learning and fun. Camp themes include Strategic Intelligence, Leadership, Moot Court, and more!

Registration opens early 2018.
Learn how to report on the front lines without hiding your beliefs

THE 20TH ANNUAL
SUMMER COURSE FOR COLLEGE REPORTERS AND RECENT GRADUATES

Dordt College, in Sioux Center, Iowa, will host the WORLD Journalism Institute for college students and recent graduates. Accepted students will receive free tuition, housing, lunches, dinners, and (for those who fly in) transportation from and to the Sioux City or Sioux Falls airports.

For two weeks WJI students hone writing and photography skills and learn the basics of video and sound. Professional journalists with Christian perspective and years of experience provide one-on-one mentoring. Students create news and feature stories, slide shows, videos, and radio podcasts. Almost all get clips, and the best get internships.

Situated amid the beauty of the Great Plains, Dordt College is dedicated to preparing students for service in Christ's kingdom. The Wall Street Journal recently named Dordt the nation's top college for student engagement for the second year in a row.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 29
To learn more and apply, go to: worldji.com
It seems very likely that Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks, and Meryl Streep will end up undercutting their stated ambitions with their new movie *The Post* (rated PG-13 for brief war violence and language). All three have expressed hopes the film will restore national regard for the Fourth Estate, but the examples of the 1970s-era journalists may further cause the reputation of modern media to suffer by comparison.

Contrary to what you may have heard, *The Post* deals not with Watergate but with the Pentagon Papers that preceded it. Meryl Streep plays Katharine Graham, the great society doyenne who inherits *The Washington Post* after her husband Phil's suicide. In the midst of taking the paper's parent company public, she's faced with the decision of whether to publish classified documents after a court injunction has already barred *The New York Times* from doing so. On one side of the argument stand the Post's board members, who believe publishing will lead to investor flight. On the other are legendary editor Ben Bradlee (Hanks) and reporter Ben Bagdikian (*Better Call Saul*'s Bob Odenkirk), who put in the legwork to obtain copies of the documents from leaker Daniel Ellsberg (*The Americans*' Matthew Rhys).

The performances are, as one would expect from this lineup, riveting. And for the first half of the movie, you can sit back and enjoy the tension as monumental debates over freedom of the press versus national interest are had over homemade ham sandwiches and lemonade in Bradlee’s living room. “The only way to defend the right to publish is to publish!” Bradlee barks at quivering corporate lawyers.

It may all be a little too noble and consequential to feel entirely realistic, but it’s also a joy to see such serious subjects explored with such crackling energy on screen. This becomes especially true once the...
story begins to have effects Spielberg and company probably didn’t intend. It’s impossible to watch Bagdikian’s street-pounding investigative work and not wonder when modern journalists became so content to overlook hot leads and juicy cover-ups. As The Post makes clear, the Pentagon Papers weren’t a Nixon administration scandal, they were Kennedy and Johnson scandals. (Though, unfortunately, it doesn’t go so far as to include the fact that Nixon’s first instinct was to let the Times publish the papers until Henry Kissinger convinced him it would set a damaging precednet.) The Post team never expresses dismay that reporting on the leaked documents will harm the Democratic party in the public’s eyes; they simply weigh their obligations under the First Amendment against their willingness to go to jail. This feeling of wondering what has become of journalistic integrity grows as Bradlee studies personal photos of himself and JFK and suffers remorse over spiking a negative story or two on behalf of his president. For all that entertainment headlines are calling The Post a Trump-era tale, this question of the media compromising their ethics to cozy up to power seems far more related to the Obama-Clinton years.

Toward the end, however, Spielberg’s impartial restraint comes to an end, and the film grows ridiculous. Particularly laughable is when he wedges in 2017’s cause du jour—female empowerment. Moral signaling doesn’t get much more conspicuous than when Graham descends the steps of the Supreme Court into a crowd of adoring women thanking her for aiding the cause of feminism by...well, I’m not sure. Happening to inherit a newspaper while female, I guess. Worse, however (indeed positively fatal), are The Post’s final off-putting moments which tease Watergate as a sort of coming sequel. Suddenly, the carefully modulated tone that “we’re criticizing all government power, not just Republicans,” gives way to gleeful screeching. Stay tuned to see how we’re gonna get Nixon! It’s a long way from that heady debate in Bradlee’s living room.

Movie

**Molly’s Game**

Molly Bloom didn’t set out to run an illegal gambling business. In the new film Molly’s Game, based on Bloom’s best-selling memoir, Molly (Jessica Chastain) recounts the negative external influences she says have culminated unfairly in federal racketeering charges against her. Will justice be served? Will she perceive her own folly? The film opens with the FBI arresting Molly. As she tries to convince an ethically principled lawyer (Idris Elba) to take her case, the film flashes back to pivotal moments in her teen years and the years afterward, when she operates a high-stakes gambling enterprise. A demanding father (Kevin Costner) pushes her hard in skiing and other high-stakes gambling training, but an injury (a film embellishment) during Olympic trials (true) ends her athletic career. What’s an ambitious, intelligent young woman to do with herself? Molly learns upon work with a man who also runs an illicit poker game in Los Angeles. She learns his trade, woos his contacts, then opens her own “game.” Celebrities and other wealthy folks pay six figures to buy a seat at her table.

For nearly 10 years, Molly runs “the world’s most exclusive and decadent man cave” in legal fashion: She doesn’t skim profits, cheat on her taxes, or employ seedy characters. But human nature takes its course. Screenwriter and first-time director Aaron Sorkin tells an engaging story with his trademark zippy dialogue. The film earns an R rating for language, drug content, and some violence, and Molly wears revealing clothing throughout. Sadly, Molly largely blames her fall on daddy issues and corruption in others and doesn’t recognize the greed in her own heart. The finale suggests Sorkin, too, intends more diversion than caution. Still, the film sounds a warning for a society bent on legalizing all that once was considered vice: The best of intentions cannot prevent the sorrowful consequences of sin.

—by BOB BROWN

---

**BOX OFFICE TOP 10 FOR THE WEEKEND OF DEC. 29-31 according to Box Office Mojo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Weekend Box Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Star Wars: The Last Jedi</td>
<td>Disney</td>
<td>Sci-Fi</td>
<td>PG-13</td>
<td>$72.56M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle</td>
<td>Sony</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>PG-13</td>
<td>$35.75M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Greatest Showman</td>
<td>20th Century Fox</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>$15.43M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ferdinand</td>
<td>Sony</td>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>PG-3</td>
<td>$14.16M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Coco</td>
<td>Walt Disney</td>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>$12.08M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>All the Money in the World</td>
<td>Columbia Pictures</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>$11.53M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Darkest Hour</td>
<td>DreamWorks</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>PG-13</td>
<td>$7.59M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Downsizing</td>
<td>Focus Features</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>$6.99M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Father Figures</td>
<td>STX Entertainment</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>$5.84M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CAUTIONS:** Quantity of sexual (S), violent (V), and foul-language (L) content on a 0-10 scale, with 10 high, from kids-in-mind.com

---

*Reviewed by WORLD*
The Greatest Showman

Perhaps it’s a good thing _The Greatest Showman_ embellishes its portrayal of Barnum & Bailey Circus, which shut down last May because of declining attendance. The musical, which tells the story of founder P.T. Barnum and his traveling show of oddities, may have the same glittery get-ups, midgets, and elephants, but the movie’s directors knew even the first freak show needs a boost of freakiness to work in 2017.

These days, we entertainment-saturated spectators don’t just want bearded ladies and midgets. We want them to sing and dance in splashy staccato sequences! We want forbidden love and coordinated gang brawls under the big tent—then everything set alight!

The real-life Barnum, who once sold tickets to the autopsy of a woman he claimed was George Washington’s 161-year-old nurse, would’ve agreed. In the span of a five-minute song-and-dance routine, we are slingshot through the childhood and early adulthood of Barnum (Hugh Jackman) as he cheats his way out of poverty, meets and marries childhood sweet-heart Charity (Michelle Williams), and dreams up what becomes his first museum of curiosities. This is winsome theater, even if dotted with half-truths: When the museum flops (false), Barnum brings in trapeze artists (false), Monkey Boy (true), Siamese Twins (true), and an opera star he aggressively promotes before even hearing her sing (true).

_Showman_ (rated PG for gang fighting and an attempted affair) moves so fast there’s no time to consider the half-truths, or that Barnum’s real circus may have exploited human deformity and disability for personal gain. Instead we’re held captive to a musical as light and sweet as cotton candy.

Audiences are unlikely to overthink the plot while dazzled by Zac Efron and Zendaya swinging from trapeze ropes and belting out their duet. Sure, future iterations will have to up the ante—maybe midgets will jump through hoops of fire while reciting Shakespeare?—but for now, this will do.

—by JULIANA CHAN ERICKSON

All the Money in the World

If your teenage grandson was kidnapped, how much money would you be willing to pay to get him back alive? For J. Paul Getty, once the richest private citizen in the world, the answer was nothing. To the demanded ransom—$17 million—Getty snorted, “I have 14 grandchildren, and if I pay one penny now, I’ll have 14 kidnapped grandchildren.”

Getty gained more fame for that cold stinginess than for his immense wealth. _All the Money in the World_ tells the true story of the 1973 kidnapping, but the film is really about Getty (a magnetic Christopher Plummer).

With dark humor the film depicts Getty as a stinking-rich billionaire who obsessively watches the stock market, plays chess against himself, and washes his own clothes in hotels because he is too cheap to pay $10 for laundry service.

“Everything has a price,” the movie’s billionaire tells his grandson (Charlie Plummer, no relation to Christopher). “Everything in life is coming to grips with what it is.” Then his grandson disappears, and by refusing to pay the ransom the senior Getty makes clear to the public his value of his grandson’s life. (He later agrees to pay just $2.2 million, the maximum tax-deductible amount.) The film doesn’t dig much into what kind of effect that had on the younger Getty (in real life, his subsequent drug and alcohol addiction left him a partially blind quadriplegic), but it does show how it affected the Getty patriarch, whom we see dying alone while clutching a rare Madonna-and-Child painting for which he paid $1.7 million. “I like things,” he says at one point. “They are exactly what they appear to be.”

The film is suspenseful and riveting and includes a gruesome ear-slicing scene that earns the movie an R rating (along with foul language and drug content). But it’s foremost a tragedy about a man with all the money in the world who destroyed himself and his family because of it.

—by SOPHIA LEE

See all our movie reviews at wng.org/movies
Lisa Riggin’s *San Francisco’s Queen of Vice* (University of Nebraska Press, 2017) tells with impressive research the story of abortionist Inez Brown Burns, who from the 1920s through the 1940s performed or oversaw about 150,000 abortions and became one of the wealthiest women in California history.

Riggin gives the specifics: Burns owned abortion centers and conducted abortions at 325-27 Fillmore Street in San Francisco (on the other side of Buena Vista Park from Haight-Ashbury) and 435 Staten Avenue, Oakland. At her Fillmore abortion center each of three white-tiled surgical rooms included two sinks, which fed into an oversized concrete incinerator buried in the backyard: Almost every night it burned up the remains of unborn babies.

Regardless of the law, Burns’ abortion business was an open secret, with payoffs to police and politicians who might otherwise raise a ruckus. She was largely unimpeded until 1938, when two *San Francisco News* reporters, Mary Ellen Leary and Joe Sheridan (who masqueraded as Leary’s husband), wrote an undercover exposé headlined, “San Francisco Mill operates openly.” The problem was abortion and corruption, not cleanliness: A police report described a Burns room as “scrupulously clean and completely outfitted as a hospital.” One big legal problem for Burns eventually became income tax evasion: 30 to 40 abortions a day at Fillmore at $75 to $350 each ($900 to $4,200 in today’s dollars), but Burns claimed a minimal income. Of course, her payoffs cost $20,000 per month, and she faced pressure to buy 10,000 tickets for the annual policeman’s ball at $1 each.

Riggin gives specific detail of a 1946 Burns trial for “conspiracy to commit abortion” that ended with a hung jury. Burns employee Madeline Rand explained Burns’ painstaking directions on cleaning the tables with antiseptic and rinsing the rubber surgical pads into buckets that contained “mucus, blood, and the eyes of the fetus.” A second trial also ended in jury division, but in a third trial anesthetist Levina Queen testified to seeing “the head and face, the arms and legs and genital organs.” Burns went to prison for two years.

In 1951 she was indicted for tax evasion and headed back to prison, even though her attorney pleaded for delay: “Next Sunday is Mother’s Day.” In 1955 she settled with the IRS by paying it $745,325 ($8 million in today’s dollars) and was able to live most of the rest of her life at a home on Guerrero Street decorated in front by a statue of a little boy.

Some of us might say, “That’s just San Francisco,” but two books I wrote show that before *Roe v. Wade* doctors performed hundreds of thousands of abortions all over, with officials in major cities and some smaller ones as well winking at publicly decried but privately depended-on abortionists like Burns. The problem isn’t and wasn’t just a few unjust justices in black robes. Sin ground the dirt down deep into our souls.

Both the history of abortion and current bestseller charts should push us to read Psalm 73, which describes those who “scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth.”

Latest example: Near the end of 2017 Reza Aslan’s *God: A Human History* (Random House) was Amazon’s No. 1 bestseller in world religious history, comparative religion, and agnosticism. It’s an extended drumbeat for pantheism, with italics: “God is everything that exists. ... We are, every one of us, God. ... The universe is God. ... You are God.”

Such a belief is not only untrue, prudish, and strutting, but also not one that can comfort an aborting, mournful mom. Some, after personal traumas or when facing societal misery, turn against God. David Powlison’s *God’s Grace in Your Suffering* (Crossway, 2018) or Clay Jones’ *Why Does God Allow Evil?* (Harvest House, 2017) are good books to give them: They show how bad news helps us desire the Good News. —M.O.
FOUR BOOKS ON SCIENCE
reviewed by Marvin Olasky

RELIGION VS. SCIENCE
Elaine Howard Ecklund and Christopher P. Scheitle

Religion vs. Science purports to tell us “what religious people really think.” Authors Ecklund and Scheitle find it frustrating that “time and time again in our interviews, we heard Christians, Jews, and Muslims trying to maintain, in the face of scientific thinking and evidence, the belief that God created humans as they are now.” Evangelicals are a particular problem, since they “are much less likely than other religious groups to see scientists as the sole authority on science issues.” And, some “think scientists view themselves as God-like or worship science as a God.” Hmm, I wonder how that notion could have spread.

FAKE SCIENCE
Austin Ruse

Fake Science is a strident book, but there’s a lot to be strident about. Author Austin Ruse is pro-science that ends epidemics and lifts billions of people out of poverty, but against theologized science. (Many global warming advocates scoff at the Bible’s teaching that the world underwent rapid climate change following a bad day in the Garden of Eden and a bad few months during a worldwide flood.) Ruse criticizes opponents of genetically modified food and those who claim millions of Americans are “food insecure.” He rightly sees fracking as good news and points out that “peer review” is an ideological sledgehammer.

FASHION, FAITH, AND FANTASY IN THE NEW PHYSICS OF THE UNIVERSE
Roger Penrose

Fashion, Faith, and Fantasy in the New Physics of the Universe includes a disclaimer: “This account is not intended to be a technical discourse, accessible only to experts in mathematics or physics.” Yeah, right: Unless you’re an expert, this book will be like learning a foreign language. But Oxford math professor Roger Penrose’s basic point is simple and important: He “argues that researchers working at the extreme frontiers of physics are just as susceptible to mere trends, dogmatic beliefs, and flights of fancy as anyone else... [They] may be leading today’s researchers astray in three of the field’s most important areas—string theory, quantum mechanics, and cosmology.”

GALILEO REVISITED
Dom Paschal Scotti

If you’ve accepted the conventional view that the Inquisition’s persecution of Galileo was a battle of the Bible vs. science, Dom Paschal Scotti’s Galileo Revisited is a good, detailed explanation that looks at papal politics leading up to the Inquisition’s condemnation of Galileo in 1633. Anyone reeling from reading Penrose’s book will enjoy learning that Scotti demands of us no math knowledge, just a willingness to realize that history is more than good guys versus bad guys: Galileo, often seen to represent pure science versus weird faith, was a master astrologer and took that religion very seriously.

AFTERWORD

In Our Cosmic Habitat (Princeton, 2017), British astronomer Martin Rees acknowledges that “if we learn anything from the pursuit of science, it is that even things as ‘elementary’ as atoms are quite hard to understand. This should induce skepticism about any dogma, or about any claim to have achieved more than a very incomplete and metaphorical insight into any profound aspect of our existence.”

Rees then invokes trendy multiverse theories and proposes that our universe is one of a huge number: “The cosmos may have something in common with an off-the-rack clothes shop: if the shop has a large stock, we are not surprised to find one suit that fits. Likewise, if our universe is selected from a multiverse, its seemingly designed or fine-tuned features would not be surprising.” Rees attacks intelligent design but here uses the passive—“is selected from”—and admits that “nothing seems more conceptually extravagant than invoking multiple universes.” —M.O.
Fantastic tales

FOUR MIDDLE-GRADE NOVELS reviewed by Susan Olasky

THE VANDERBEEKERS OF 141ST STREET
Karina Yan Glaser

This wonderful novel is reminiscent of All-of-a-Kind Family. It features a happily married biracial couple, five rambunctious but nice children, and Mr. Beiderman, their crabby landlord, who declines to renew the family's lease on the brownstone they rent in Harlem. All this happens around Christmas, which casts a pall over the holidays. As the children scheme to get the landlord to change his mind, they learn his sad back story and the reason he's particularly crabby with them. Yan Glaser mixes humor and pathos in a throwback package. (Ages 7-12)

JIM AT THE CORNER
Eleanor Farjeon

Originally published in 1934, this book tells the story of Jim, an old sailor who sits all day on an orange crate on the street corner. The children love him, especially 8-year-old Derry. Each day, Derry wanders down to the street corner. He sits while Jim regales him with stories from his sailing days, stories about sea serpents, gigantic waves, and chimpanzees. The book ends with Jim getting his 80th birthday wish: Derry's family takes him to see the sea, “while the orange box stood at the corner of the street all by itself.” Edward Ardizzone’s pen-and-ink illustrations complement the stories. (Ages 6-10)

THE EXPLORER
Katherine Rundell

When a small plane crashes in the Amazon, only four children survive. The book follows them as they overcome obstacles to make their way home. The journey requires creativity and courage—traits they never had to use in their ordinary lives. They discover a lost city—and the bitter explorer who lives there. He teaches them survival skills, and they help him recover his capacity for kindness and generosity. This old-fashioned adventure tale has noncynical children learning the world is bigger and more wonderful than they ever imagined. (Ages 8-12)

THE DOLLMAKER OF KRAKOW
R.M. Romero

This novel about the Holocaust uses characters drawn from fairy tales. In the land of the dolls, a rat army invades, bringing with it destruction. Karolina escapes to the land of humans, hoping eventually to bring rescue to her land. Meanwhile in Krakow, the Dollmaker brings Karolina to life and discovers she can talk. They become friends and together meet a Jewish violinist and his daughter. Evil grows after the Nazis invade and spread their hatred. Although the book deals in a gentle way with great evil, it is an intense story with a historically accurate ending. (For mature middle-graders)

AFTERWORD

Conservative radio host Erick Erickson wrote Before You Wake: Life Lessons from a Father to His Children (Hachette, 2017) after sickness caused him to consider his legacy to his children: his faith, the centrality of family, and standing up for the things you believe. Erickson writes honestly: “The need for relationships and community is why it pains me to have to acknowledge what a jerk I have been and can still be on social media.” More than 30 recipes will encourage you to break bread with your neighbors.

Oliver Jeffers wrote Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth (Philomel Books, 2017) to give his newborn child basic facts about our planet. The tone is amazement at the scope and variety of creation—including lots of amazing people. The message: Be kind. Detailed illustrations and Jeffers’ amusing voice make this fun to read. Although Jeffers focuses on the material creation, the book provides many points for conversations about God. –S.O.
Learn Theology.
For free.
Wherever you are.

+206 MORE

www.covenantseminary.edu/resources
Author and speaker Frederica Mathewes-Green and I worked side by side at Americans United for Life in 1990 and 1991, when she taught me about the frame of mind of a woman seeking to kill her unborn child: “She wants an abortion like an animal caught in a trap wants to gnaw off its own leg.” Here are edited excerpts of our interview in front of students at Patrick Henry College.

You weren’t always pro-life. In college I was very strongly in favor of abortion. A bumper sticker on my car said, “Don’t labor under a misconception. Legalize abortion.”

When did you change? The January 1976 issue of Esquire published a two-page essay by surgeon Richard Selzer. The title was “What I Saw at the Abortion.” He wrote he had favored abortion, like all “right-thinking” people, but had never done one or seen one. He asked a friend if he could accompany him the next time he did one.

What did he see? He described the woman lying on the table, 19 weeks pregnant. The doctor took a syringe—a prostaglandin solution—and injected it into her belly, leaving the hub of the syringe standing upright in her belly. Selzer wrote, “I see something other than what I expected here. … It is the hub of the needle in the woman’s belly that has jerked. … Once more it wobbles, is tugged, like a fishing line nibbled by a sunfish.”

He saw the reality: a baby fighting to survive. He realized that no matter what you can say in favor of abortion, nothing can argue “against the truth of what I saw.” The being in the womb, no matter what it doesn’t have, does have a will to live. That desperate fighting for life gradually slowed down and stopped. He realized with horror that the child was dead. He said that nothing would ever be able to argue against the truth of what he saw that day.

Some pro-aborts say we don’t know whether unborn babies are persons. That’s so stupid—of course we know. They are composed 100 percent of human cells. They are not watermelons or lightbulbs. As soon as the sperm dissolves in the egg, there’s brand new DNA that has never existed in the world before. If you took a cell from the mother and a cell from the father, even with that first single cell, a scientist looking at those three would say three different people are represented there. These are living, unique human beings, and you have to talk yourself in a circle not to know that.

We even have the advantage of ultrasound pictures now. Back then we generally thought of the unborn as a blob of tissue—as this inert mass that comes to life at some point. Some in the pro-life movement saw the women seeking abortions as an inert mass. We were so focused on the baby that we really didn’t think about what was going on inside the mother’s heart at all. That changed over time.

You entered the larger pro-life movement when you were vice president of Feminists for Life and became involved in what at that time were called Fieldstead Forums. I felt so welcomed, even though it was right there on my label: “Feminist.” I felt a genuine interest in hearing what the feminist view on abortion would be, and on protecting women and children.

Did other feminists welcome your new involvement? It was quite the reverse. Suspicion ran very deep.

How has the pro-life movement changed over the past 25 years? It has gotten so much better. It frustrated me when pro-lifers only talked about the baby. Unlike many people, pro-lifers walk the walk but don’t talk the talk. They reach out to pregnant women, provide everything, and have their hearts in the right place. But if you put a microphone in front of them, all they say is, “It’s a baby.” If only we could talk about our compassion and our realistic view of how hard life is for a woman. We are doing it all, we just need to talk about it.

We do want to draw attention to the reality of the baby. Talking only about the baby makes it look like pro-lifers are against women. We were falling into this trap of “It’s the woman against the baby, and only one can win.” We should always say, “Love them both.” Of course, I could get up as a pro-life feminist and talk all day about how abortion was bad for women. But if it wasn’t killing babies, I wouldn’t have been as galvanized as I was about it. The fact that it kills babies makes people so committed to changing it.

You’ve written that abortion should be prioritized over other issues. You could say, if you are a very hard-line pacifist, “It’s wrong to kill
soldiers in wartime, it’s worse to kill civilians in wartime, and it’s worse to kill children.”

What happens to a society that doesn’t prioritize it, and instead minimizes it? There must be, in America, a huge subterranean lake of guilt and grief we are not tapping into because we can’t bear to.

Many pastors never preach about abortion because, they say, that would be painful for women in the audience who have had abortions. When pastors told Dr. Jack Willke, “Women might start to cry,” he would say, “Maybe that’s what they need to do. If they just hold it all knotted up inside, they won’t heal.” We can’t be afraid to name the most profound injustice of our age, just because somebody in the audience might be hurt. That might be the beginning of the healing.

You’ve spoken at many colleges and seen some journalists and students ignore reality and go along with pro-abortion ideologues. The thing that most motivates people and journalists is peer pressure—that you need to believe the same things that the important people in your venue believe. It was as if my pro-life arguments were wrong even before I opened my mouth because they needed me to be wrong, because they were shoring up their defense and their sense of identity.

We tell children to watch out for peer pressure, but we don’t say that to adults. You pay a terrible price for becoming pro-life, and many people aren’t willing to take on the rejection and fall in social status. Christians are willing to do that, since they know that they are not their own, but that they are bought with a price, and that they have to stand up for unborn children, even if it costs them.

Easier to forget. The average person just wants to forget the abortion issue entirely. In debates on college campuses I would talk about why abortion was a bad thing, and opponents would talk about why I was a bad person. I could see the audience relax and look so grateful, because what I was saying was disturbing. They didn’t have arguments against the facts I was presenting, and they were so grateful to the opponent for giving them permission to ignore me. Abortion is a miserable thing to think about—people don’t want to think about it.
Fading to gray
AS ITS FANS AGE, ROCK ’N’ ROLL MAY NOT BE HERE TO STAY  by Arsenio Orteza

Call it the graying of rock ’n’ roll—not the hair of its most-famous practitioners (although there’s plenty of that, at least among those who’ve refused to live and let dye) but that of its audience.

Until now, talk of rock ’n’ roll’s survival has focused on whether anyone will want to hear cover bands perform the music of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Beach Boys, etc. once the original performers have been prevented by decrepitude or death from going on with the show.

But maybe the real question is whether a tree that falls with no one to hear it really makes a sound. In other words, even if the cover bands are good (Cheap Trick has made a pretty fair Beatles), will the music mean enough to Generations Y and Z for them to supply the kind of demand that has kept Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart in heavy rotation?

Consider the June 24, 2017, show by Jeff Lynne’s ELO at London’s Wembley Stadium. Recently released as Wembley or Bust (Columbia) in a package containing two CDs and a DVD (or Blu-ray Disc), it is on one hand a triumph. Backed by a magnificent 12-member band capable of reproducing every ELO hit down to the last instrumental and vocal filigree, Lynne gets to preside over his cornucopia of hooks with a sophistication that he never could in the technically primitive 1970s. This much one can discern from the CDs.

The video disc, however, is the real revelation, immersing the viewer in the concert’s spectacular array of visual effects from an inexhaustible array of perspectives: Front row, onstage, the cheap seats, bird’s eye—never was “You had to be there” less true.

But many people were there, 60,000 according to one count. And they’re shown frequently throughout the film, cheering and dancing and singing along. Alas, here’s the rub: The vast majority of them have clearly reached the stage at which one enjoys hearing that he’s “looking good” as much as he once enjoyed hearing that he was “good-looking.”

That Lynne himself is 69 makes the advanced age of his fans inevitable. Still, there’s something odd at seeing so many oldsters acting like teenagers and at seeing no actual teenagers at all. If, as the cliché goes, the children are our future, Jeff Lynne’s ELO’s could be dim.

A similar phenomenon was apparent at the summer shows of the Moody Blues, who were touring the U.S. at the same time that Lynne was touring England. The occasion was the 50th anniversary of their landmark LP Days of Future Passed, which they played in its entirety during the second half of each show, accompanied by prerecorded orchestral passages and scenic rear projection that included Jeremy Irons reciting the poetry (“Cold-hearted orb that rules the night…”).

All three of the band’s original members are septuagenarians, and the drummer Graeme Edge is now more of an auxiliary percussionist. But the frontmen, Justin Hayward and John Lodge (both of whom, incidentally, have described themselves as Christians), looked fine. And they sang and played even better.

But of the 2,000 fans who packed the Moodies’ July performance at Northfield, Ohio’s Hard Rock Rocksino, for instance, most looked 60 and up. (Lodge thanked them for “keeping the faith.”)

Polydor has just released the 50th-anniversary edition of Days of Future Passed. It contains three mixes of the album plus contemporaneous bonus material and has never sounded clearer. It’s a shame to think that with the passing of the last Moody Blues fan its title might also become its epitaph.
NEW OR RECENT RELEASES
reviewed by Arsenio Orteza

**ALMOST HOME** *Blind Boys of Alabama*

The roughest lead vocals belong to Jimmy Carter, 85, one of two surviving original members. The smoothest belong to Paul Beasley, who, when he abjures falsetto, sounds as if he belongs. The most Clarence Fountain–like belong to Ben Moore. But while Three Dog Night fans will appreciate the advantages of such microphone sharing, it’s the variety of the material (contributed by approximately 10 spiritually sympathetic songwriters or songwriting teams) and the Southern black-church instrumentation that makes the album a lively farewell if a farewell it is.

**UNDER THE STREETLIGHT** *Boyz II Men*

Nathan Morris, Shawn Stockman, and Wanya Morris retain their ability to harmonize and to generate melismatic vocal glory. And, as wasn’t always the case on their 2014 album *Collide*, they do so without recourse to Auto-Tune. What else is new (or, rather, old): the material—heavy-rotation jukebox favorites circa the doo-wop era. If most of the songs have been done to death, here they’re done to life. And although Irma Thomas still owns “Anyone Who Knows What Love Is,” these guys sure make classy renters.

**ASYNC** *Ryuichi Sakamoto*

Dreamy loveliness alternates with the eerily nightmarish, fashioned from instruments common, unusual, and electronic. Meditative dreaminess combines with the eerily lovely in “Fullmoon,” which features a Paul Bowles recitation that begins, “Because we don’t know when we will die, we get to think of life as an inexhaustible well,” and ends, “How many more times will you watch the full moon rise? Perhaps 20, and yet it all seems limitless.” Then, to guarantee that nothing gets lost in translation, 11 other speakers recite it in their native tongues.

**FRANCIS ALBERT SINATRA & ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM**

*Frank Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim*

Apparently, Sinatra didn’t leave many scraps. This 50th-anniversary edition of his bossa nova album adds to the original tracks only one live medley and 11 minutes’ worth of attempts to get “The Girl from Ipanema” just right. But the original tracks deserve a fresh hearing, and not just because they beat Paul Simon to the pop-meets-world-music punch by almost 20 years. They also recall how open Sinatra remained to experimentation when he could’ve gotten away—and later that same year did—with “Somethin’ Stupid.”

**ENCORE**

*Fats Domino* sounded happy even when he was singing sad lyrics. Consider his 1957 B-side “What Will I Tell My Heart,” which goes “I’m trying to explain to friends, dear, / the reasons we two are apart, / I know what to tell our friends, dear, / but what can I tell my heart?” The words couldn’t be more doleful, but Domino sings them with the same sweetness that he used the year before to make sure that no one would mistake “Blueberry Hill” for a lamentation.

When Domino died in October at the age of 89, he’d been absent from the charts for over 50 years, a casualty of the British Invasion, next to which his New Orleans style of bonhomie seemed quaint. The recently released *The Complete Imperial Singles* (Capitol) gathers everything that he threw at the charts between 1950 and 1964. The baker’s dozen that stuck prove that the quaint sometimes have reasons that the hip don’t know. —A.O.
The Trump presidency dominated all other news in 2017, relegating top international stories to back pages, while closing a combative year for the United States on the world stage with a combative December vote in the UN General Assembly.

Only seven nations sided with the United States in its decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and none of its major allies. Great Britain was among 128 nations voting in favor of a resolution condemning the U.S. decision, and Canada and Australia were among 35 nations abstaining. Symbolically, the tallies showed a world in which old orders seem no longer to apply. The challenge for the United States in 2018 is what sort of role it will play in the world’s hot spots, where it will find allies, and how far it can go it alone. Among those hot spots:

North Korea, where a war of threats and insults between Kim Jong Un and Trump escalated all year. “Why would Kim Jong-un insult me by calling me ‘old,’ when I would NEVER call him ‘short and fat?’” Trump tweeted in November. But also increasing is the Kim regime’s ability to do real damage. A November test launch showcased an entirely new intercontinental missile capable of striking Washington. Kim struck conciliatory tones in his end-of-year speech, but U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster has warned the potential for war there is “increasing every day.”

China’s President Xi Jinping announced a “new era” at a National Party Congress in October dominated by Xi himself and characterized by a continued hard line on civil society and dissidents. His new era includes more centralized control and an increased crackdown on human rights, highlighted by the closure of leading underground churches in 2017, fines for Christian activity, and the August death of jailed Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo.

Many of the country’s beleaguered Christians returned to their churches to worship amid burnt and shattered walls for the first time in years.

Christmas Eve service at the Church of St. Paul in Mosul

With Russia, there is more to watch than the ongoing flap over how the Kremlin may have intervened in the U.S. 2016 election. The Trump White House named Russia a “revisionist” power seeking to upend global order in its December national security strategy paper. And for the first time since Russia illegally annexed Crimea in 2014, the United States announced new sanctions against Moscow, approving also the sale of weapons to resist incursions by Vladimir Putin in Ukraine and elsewhere.

In 2017 Russia regularly violated NATO airspace in the Baltics. In December it tested “deconfliction” zones it helped to establish in Syria in a scary encounter with American F-22s. Putin appears unstoppable, running for a fourth presidential term on March 18. Russia’s highest court sided with Putin in banning from the election his top challenger, Alexei Navalny.

For Europe, friction and turmoil in the European Union only escalated in 2017. In March British Prime Minister Theresa May triggered Article 50, beginning formal separation from the EU, a process known as Brexit, to culminate in 2019. In October separatists in Catalonia declared independence from Spain, launching unrest and a financial crisis. Poland and Hungary found themselves under EU scrutiny for not towing the accustomed liberal line, while Austrians charted a more conservative course as well—electing for the first time the People’s Party and its 31-year-old leader, Sebastian Kurz, as chancellor.

The year’s biggest turnaround, however, took place in Iraq, where coalition forces liberated it from three years’ control by ISIS, or Islamic State. The nine-month battle that formally ended in victory in July often was fought door to door and highlighted a new level of urban fighting—and devastation: Over 60,000 homes were destroyed and about 10,000 civilians died in Mosul alone.

A massive rebuilding effort awaits Iraq in 2018, but at Christmas many of the country’s beleaguered Christians returned to their churches, once desecrated by ISIS, to sing carols and hymns in Aramaic, the ancient language of Jesus, and to worship amid burnt and shattered walls for the first time in years.
Get This New Family-Friendly Audio Adventure Free!

A Story Of Grace During The American Gold Rush

✓ Wholesome Christian Worldview Entertainment (Over 2 Hours!)
✓ Unlocks Hidden Learning Potential In Children
✓ A Fun And Easy Way To Inspire Kids Of All Ages
✓ Award-Winning Family-Friendly Productions
✓ Helps Busy Moms & Dads Tell Great Stories About True History

Christian Heroes For Christian Kids!

Get Your Copy For Free - Just Pay Shipping & Handling!

www.LiveTheAdventureClub.com

Use coupon code WLD41 to get $20 in Club store credit!
Hope for the un...
In late November, Emma Wren Gibson was born just in time for the Christmas season—and 25 years after her conception.

A quarter century ago, fertility doctors froze Emma while she was still an embryo created during the process of in vitro fertilization (IVF). Many parents who bear children through IVF choose to freeze indefinitely any remaining embryos after they have the number of children they desire (or if the mother can’t carry more unborn children).

At least 600,000 embryos sit frozen in storage facilities across the United States, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Some reproductive experts believe the number is closer to 1 million.

Among those frozen long-term, a small fraction of little ones get a chance to live, when couples like Tina and Benjamin Gibson adopt embryos like Emma. Early last year, a physician at the National Embryo Donation Center—a Christian organization based in Knoxville, Tenn.—transferred embryo Emma into Tina’s womb.

On Nov. 25, 2017, baby Emma arrived healthy and whole, weighing 6 pounds, 8 ounces. She likely holds the record for the embryo longest-frozen before birth. Tina, 26, marvels at the process, noting she was a 1-year-old baby when physicians created her daughter in a lab dish.

“People say, ‘Oh, it’s science,’ but... I think it’s a gift from the Lord,” the new mother told a local news station in December. “It’s a gift from the Lord, for sure.”

Not all fertility doctors view it this way. For many physicians, creating embryos and successfully transferring them into their mothers’ wombs—or the womb of an adoptive mother—is a mixture of science and odds. And the so-called “odds” for embryos often aren’t good.

Some embryos don’t successfully implant in the womb. Others don’t survive the thawing process. And many don’t survive the initial screening process to determine whether they should have a chance at life at all. If a pre-implantation test indicates a potential chromosomal abnormality, physicians often discard or freeze the embryo and move on to stronger prospects.

But one problem with the screening process is that it isn’t always accurate.

Over the last few years, a handful of physicians in the United States and Europe have reported that embryos deemed abnormal by early tests could still grow into normal pregnancies—and they have the healthy babies to prove it.

That means physicians have thrown away perhaps tens of thousands of embryos deemed abnormal that could have been healthy. Norbert Gleicher, a New York fertility physician involved in the research, has called it “an unprecedented scandal.”

“We as a profession have been disposing of thousands and thousands of completely normal embryos, with normal potential,” Gleicher told New York magazine last year. “And nobody—
nobody—has had the guts to stand up and say we are sorry.”

Gene Rudd, a physician and senior vice president of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, sees an even bigger scandal: a preoccupation with testing embryos in fertility clinics and babies in wombs to choose those deemed most desirable.

Rudd calls it a “cultural bent on search and destroy... This notion that life is disposable if we don’t get exactly what we want.”

As physicians debate the accuracy of tests for embryos in test tubes and babies in the womb, others are bent on search and rescue: adopting embryos out of frozen storage and advocating for children and adults who have shown that a life with disabilities is a life worth living too.

Monica Halem knows firsthand the anguish of nearly discarding her child. The New York dermatologist and single mother bore her first daughter in 2013 through IVF. Nearly two years later, at age 44, she began IVF again, but physicians told her that testing showed all her embryos were abnormal.

When pre-implantation genetic screening (PGS) shows a chromosomal abnormality that could make an embryo unlikely to live to birth—or could result in a condition like Down syndrome—physicians often advise discarding those embryos and trying for presumably healthier ones.

But some physicians weren’t convinced the PGS testing always produced accurate results.

Jeffrey Braverman, a New York fertility doctor, had grown suspicious of test results when he saw a handful of younger patients producing abnormal embryos. He joined a program to implant presumably abnormal embryos into older women. Eight women agreed. Five became pregnant. All five women delivered healthy babies.

Braverman encouraged Halem to try a similar approach. In such a scenario, a woman might still abort a baby if later tests showed the unborn child did have abnormalities. This wasn’t a pro-life program, but it yielded live results: In January 2016, Halem delivered another healthy baby girl.

Meanwhile, Norbert Gleicher was alerting his colleagues to the alarming findings. In October 2015, he told the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) that in some cases abnormal embryos had been born normal infants.

A month later, a group of doctors in Rome reported similar results: They had implanted presumably abnormal embryos into 18 women struggling to conceive. Six became pregnant. All six bore healthy infants. The consortium now reports 24 normal births. A hospital in Spain has reported 13 healthy infants.

A year later, a study by researchers at the University of Cambridge reported an intriguing possibility: Embryos might be able to “self-correct.”

Professor Magdalena Zernicka-Goetz led the study while waiting on further test results to find out if her 12-week unborn child had abnormalities. (An early genetic test for babies in the womb suggested he did. He was born normal as well.)

The professor decided to learn more about abnormal embryos and created “mosaic” embryos using mice. The term mosaic refers to embryos showing a mixture of abnormal and normal cells. The study suggested these mosaic embryos weeded out abnormal cells during development.

And since PGS testing uses cells from the part of the embryo that forms the placenta, it’s unclear if the results are an accurate picture of the tissue that forms the unborn child.

(It’s also notable that since many IVF embryos haven’t undergone PGS testing, physicians likely have been implanting mosaic embryos for decades without knowing it. It’s impossible to know how many healthy people born through IVF would have been deemed abnormal by PGS tests.)

Gleicher estimates tens of thousands of normal embryos may have been discarded over the last two decades—including embryos belonging to women who gave up on having children because they thought a normal pregnancy was impossible.

In an email interview, Gleicher said he thinks fertility doctors are more open to rethinking the practice of implanting mosaic embryos. Last year, the ASRM released an opinion saying it could be ethically justifiable to implant abnormal embryos, though it still strongly discouraged implanting embryos with “a high likelihood” of abnormality.

Gleicher says the toughest remaining pushback comes from the PGS industry that makes millions of dollars from the tests.
Estimates vary widely, but Grand View Research Inc. reported the pre-implantation genetic testing market was valued at $129 million in 2015.

Other companies have even more specific ambitions. An IVF specialist working with the startup Genomic Prediction told MIT Technology Review in November he believes the company will be able to predict which embryos might develop treatable conditions like Type 1 diabetes.

Could that lead to predicting height, weight, IQ, or social skills of embryos—a drop-down menu for choosing or eliminating babies? Physicist Stephen Hsu told Technology Review it’s entirely possible, though he thinks many would deem it unethical.

But if determining some undesirable qualities is already deemed ethical, it’s difficult to predict where the line would stop.

For Halem, who told her story to New York magazine last fall, the statistics and odds seem irrelevant when she looks at a photo of her infant daughter healthy and whole. “Here’s this little abnormal embryo, okay?” she told the reporter. “This is what they would have thrown away.”

For embryos that make it past being discarded or donated to science, a formidable obstacle remains: frozen storage. Many parents who don’t want to bear more children after successful IVF pregnancies say they feel conflicted about the embryos they’ve left in storage. It’s one of the most serious ethical problems related to IVF.

Tens of thousands remain in limbo.

Several organizations offer the option of embryo adoption, though the term adoption is controversial to some. The ASRM has released a statement saying embryos deserve “special respect, but they are not afforded the same status as persons.”

Legally, that’s true. Most states consider the donation and reception of an embryo as a property transfer, and contracts typically use such language.

But for Christian organizations finding homes for frozen embryos, adoption is the most fitting term.

Kimberly Tyson facilitates the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program for Nightlight Christian Adoptions. The organization matches embryo donors with those seeking to give birth and raise children. The group requires a home study for adopting parents and allows donor families to choose a home for their embryos. A physician at a fertility clinic typically transfers the donated embryo into the hopeful mother.
“I call them babies,” says Tyson. “I call them children. We recognize them as fully human because they have everything it takes to make a human being included at conception.”

One major distinction at Snowflakes: Unlike some fertility clinics that perform embryo transfers, Snowflakes doesn’t conduct PGS testing or allow it after an embryo adoption. If an embryo already has PGS results, Tyson says her organization will still work to find a home for the embryo, even if the results show an abnormality. Some families express a willingness to adopt a special needs embryo.

In some cases, Tyson says, Snowflakes has received embryos with doomed labels: “incompatible with life.” She says one family adopted a set of those embryos, and now has “two perfectly lovely little girls.”

Physicians at the National Embryo Donation Center in Knoxville have a similar policy: They do not perform PGS testing.

Couples travel to NEDC to receive an embryo donation, and the transfer takes place on-site. Like Snowflakes, the center also doesn’t discard embryos. Jeffrey Keenan, the physician who directs the center, says, “As Christians, we’re interested in trying to give every embryo created in God’s image the best chance of coming to birth that it can.”

For some families, the process produces moving results.

Aaron and Rachel Halbert, PCA missionaries in Honduras, adopted two infants after they married, but decided they wanted more. They had hoped to conceive naturally but also grew open to the idea of embryo adoption when Christian friends described it to them.

After going through the application process, the couple traveled from Honduras to NEDC in Tennessee. Since their two adopted children are African-American and biracial, they asked to adopt African-American embryos. The physicians implanted two embryos in September 2015, and the family headed back to Honduras.

Several weeks later, a Honduran doctor performed an ultrasound. Aaron Halbert says he remembers the physician staring at the screen. “You said they implanted two?” he asked the couple. “Are you sure?” The parents said yes, and the doctor replied, “Well, I’m seeing three.”

One of the embryos had divided. The Halberts were expecting triplets.

Several months later, the family traveled back to the United States for Rachel to give birth. Their three African-American daughters were born in April 2016. They were six weeks early, but arrived healthy.

Aaron Halbert says life with five children under age 5 is challenging, but the family is thrilled with God’s providence. When critics suggest families should adopt children already born, Halbert says traditional adoption is a vital option (that his own family has pursued), but Christians should also see embryos as image-bearers who need protection.

“He has designed each and every one of them, so we ought to have a high view of them.”

He says it’s hard to fathom the reality their daughters sat frozen for 15 years. “When you get to this side of it, you think: ‘You’re telling me that embryo should have been destroyed?’”

The Halberts draw attention in Honduras for their non-traditional makeup, but the father says when people ask if the
children “are yours,” he emphatically answers: “Yes, yes, yes. … They bear my name just like I bear Christ’s name, and I am His. These children are ours.”

Embryo testing isn’t the only screening drawing controversy.

As labs develop earlier tests for conditions like Down syndrome, some physicians and disabilities advocates worry about a booming industry that often leads to abortion of babies deemed undesirable by some.

For example, a fetal DNA blood test on the market since 2011 allows doctors to test a baby for abnormalities earlier in the pregnancy without the invasive and risky techniques involved in procedures like amniocentesis.

If the results come back negative for abnormalities, it’s likely the baby will be healthy, reducing the need for more invasive tests later in the pregnancy.

But if results come back positive for a chromosomal condition, some studies show there’s as much as a 50 percent chance the test isn’t accurate. Expectant mothers would need more invasive testing later in the pregnancy to know for sure. Still, one company marketed the tests with catchphrases like “no room for maybe.”

A 2014 investigation by the New England Center for Investigative Reporting found that likely hundreds of women were aborting babies based on the new tests, instead of getting further tests. The report contended companies were aggressively marketing the tests without fully informing patients about the possibility of errors. The companies denied the accusations.

The study said one market firm estimated the industry would be worth $3.6 billion by 2019.

Meanwhile, adults with Down syndrome—one of the conditions commonly targeted for screening—are living twice as long as they did 35 years ago. Life expectancy rose from about 25 years in the early 1980s to more than 50 years today. Some experts attribute the increase to better quality of life and more opportunities for people with Down syndrome.

Last fall, Frank Stephens, a Special Olympian and disabilities advocate living with Down syndrome, testified before Congress about the importance of protecting people with Down syndrome.

“Some people say prenatal screens will identify Down syndrome in the womb and those pregnancies will just be terminated,” he said. “It’s hard for me to sit here and say those words.”

Stephens—who compared that notion to “a final solution”—noted a Harvard-based study showed people with Down syndrome and their families are happier than society at large. He also noted that because adults with Down syndrome have a high risk of developing early onset Alzheimer’s disease, they could contribute to research in fighting the disease.

“Finally, we are the canary in the eugenics coal mine,” said Stephens. “We are giving the world a chance to think about the ethics of choosing which humans get a chance at life. … Is there really no place for us in the world?”

Legislatures in some U.S. states agree with Stephens: Ohio passed a law in December banning abortions of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome. North Dakota passed a similar law in 2013. A federal judge blocked Indiana’s 2016 ban last fall, but the state’s attorney general plans to appeal the injunction. Ohio’s law may also face legal opposition.

Rudd—the physician with the Christian Medical and Dental Associations—notes technology will continue to be used for both good and ill, but when it’s abused, it should concern everyone.

The same arguments about quality of life versus cost to society could be applied to an aging person or a seriously ill person, he says: “Once you cross the lines, it can get really murky. … One day it could be used on you.”
Almost half of all the women who abort each year have had prior abortions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Guttmacher Institute. This percentage hasn’t budged much for the last 20 years—and those repeat abortions are a huge challenge for the pro-life movement.

Cassi Pavlo knows that firsthand. She’s now pro-life and the director of patient resources at the Rockville Women’s Center in Maryland, but she had an abortion when she was 16 and two more abortions during the next four years.

You might assume she wasn’t using birth control, but 44 percent of women who abort
were using contraception the month they became pregnant, according to a Guttmacher report published last year—and Pavlo was one of them.

You might assume she never received counseling at a Christian pregnancy resource center, but she did—and left unmoved: “I knew they wanted me to be pregnant. I just went to get a pregnancy test, and I was thinking, Get me the blank out of here.”

I asked officials of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the nation’s leading group of physicians providing healthcare for women, if they advised for medical reasons a limit on the number of repeat abortions a woman should have. They said no: Abortionists injure a woman’s uterus and cervix less than 1 percent of the time, so “the risk is less than those associated with carrying a pregnancy to term and delivering an infant.”

You might think Cassi Pavlo was incredibly evil to be consciously killing her children, but like many of us (in various ways) she compartmentalized: “You just have to tuck that part of your life away emotionally.”

Pavlo’s repeat abortions have influenced her counseling techniques. She doesn’t give “save the baby” talks or hand out onesies to women planning repeat abortions. Even if a client says she plans to parent, Pavlo will still give her the same brochures on pregnancy, adoption, and abortion. Because, for women like her, even the slightest hint of judgment will turn them off.

“She doesn’t need to hear about sin. She needs clear, truthful information that she can process,” Pavlo said. “There are some...
women who are hell-bent on having the abortion; the minute she sees the Scripture on the walls [of the Christian crisis pregnancy center] she’ll make a U-turn so fast you won’t even have time to say hello.”

Many in the pro-life movement are thinking through how to address the women who account for nearly half of all annual abortions. For them, the normally reliable pro-life arguments probably won’t work. Scaring them about Planned Parenthood won’t work if they feel they received kind treatment inside one of its centers. Seeing a sonogram won’t tug at them the second time if it didn’t the first.

So what will work to reduce repeat abortions?

Planned Parenthood believes it’s stronger birth control. While abortion advocates shy away from saying repeat abortions are a problem—it’s a woman’s choice after all—some nudge sexually active women toward intrauterine devices (IUDs), patches, and other long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs).

In 2011, researchers conducted a randomized controlled trial at 40 Planned Parenthood centers: Some centers received training on the effectiveness of LARCs, while others received nothing. At the centers with the training, more young women chose a LARC, and a year later the pregnancy rate was 19 percent lower for those who had gone to these centers than for the women who had been at the others. As the logic goes, birth control that’s highly dependent on a user remembering to use it (e.g., pill, condom) isn’t as effective as birth control implanted into the user (e.g., patch, IUD, ring).

Still, stronger birth control is not the solution, because women have been slow to accept it. Guttmacher estimates only 14 percent of women use a LARC, and for some, hormonal birth control of any sort causes more problems than it solves. A recent study by researchers at the University of Copenhagen reported hormonal birth control raises the relative risk of developing breast cancer.

Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood employee who now leads a ministry helping abortion workers leave the industry, had two abortions and said hormonal birth control didn’t work. “We used various methods of birth control, Nuva Ring, Ortho Evra, different pills,” said Johnson via email. “I settled on the Depo Provera injection and got pregnant eight months after starting the method. I got my shot at the right time, did everything I was supposed to. But here I was, pregnant again.”

Johnson eventually went for an IUD, and while it was effective, she said it gave her frequent infections and may have affected her fertility when she and her husband decided to build their family. Even if she’d had a good experience with birth control, Johnson says, teaching women about their bodies and fertility at a young age is a better answer, not birth control.

It helps to understand the reasons why women return to the abortion center, even if the reasons are as many and varied as the women themselves. “When I walked into the room and uncovered myself for the procedure, I broke down,” writes one woman on myabortionmylife.org. “I asked God to forgive me for my sin. I didn’t want to abort my baby but I knew I had to. That

**PERCENTAGE OF REPEAT ABORTIONS IN 2014***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Abortions*</th>
<th>Proportion of Unmarried</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>784,507</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>765,651</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>730,322</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>699,202</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>664,435</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>652,639</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Voluntarily reported abortions, according to the CDC

*This data is for 2014, the most current year available. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
was my second abortion within a few years. I wouldn’t wish a surgical or medical abortion to my worst enemy. I’ve been emotionally distraught, unattached to life.”

Hundreds of repeat-abortion stories like these dot the internet, most testifying to the pain, embarrassment, and sometimes remorse over the taking of life, even as women express pride for standing up for themselves. The women cite reasons for a second abortion that range from the tragic to the trivial, from a cancer diagnosis and fetal abnormalities to imagined fears of a jealous big brother. (You can find them at myabortionmylife.org, wetestify.org, projectvoice.org, and 1in3campaign.org, most set up by pro-abortion groups to give post-abortive women a chance to share anonymously.)

The stories and the statistics paint a picture of a patient who’s slightly different from the average first-timer. For one, she’s older. The likelihood of multiple abortions rises significantly with age, so while it’s less common for a 31-year-old to walk into an abortion center, chances are if she does, she’s coming for her second or third procedure. She’s also more likely to have attended college, though this doesn’t mean she’s learned about fertility or fetal development.

But most first-timers and repeat abortion patients have in common the absence of one thing: a wedding ring.

Roland Warren, president of Care Net, a pro-life organization that oversees 1,100 pregnancy centers, says the best way to make sense of the 45 to 50 percent repeat abortion statistic is to look at yet another data point—86 percent of all abortion patients are unmarried. Because these relationships are often tenuous, pulling in the expectant father is key, Warren says. The father, usually the first to be told about the pregnancy, is crucial in the woman’s decision, but he’s often absent from the conversation at the abortion center. Warren, who spent 12 years heading the National Fatherhood Initiative, says “guys can be a big social pressure for good.”

His group pulls the guys into both group and one-on-one conversations, which he feels are important both in saving the baby from an abortion and in what he calls promoting a “pro-abundant life,” emphasizing high-quality, conflict-free relationships. It’s those relationships, he says, that ultimately keep women from walking back to the abortion center alone.

Even though it’s unsexy to push it, pro-life groups like Care Net say steering a woman’s life away from no-strings-attached sex and toward sex within a stable marriage is the single best way to break the cycle of repeat abortions.

Warren knows this from experience. When he was an undergraduate and his parents learned he would be an unexpected father, they vowed to cut him off if he married his girlfriend and went through with the pregnancy. Everything seemed to point toward abortion, but Warren stood in the gap. “I said I’d be a husband and father to our child.” That, he says, made the difference. 

Steering a woman’s life away from no-strings-attached sex and toward sex within a stable marriage is the single best way to break the cycle of repeat abortions.
The new pro-life generation
High-school students are organizing and engaging in the fight for life, despite sharp opposition from some administrators and peers

by LEIGH JONES

PHOTO BY MANUEL BALCE CENETA | AP

Emily Curran expects opposition for her pro-life beliefs. Her parents started taking her to prayer vigils outside abortion centers when she was a child, and she witnessed first-hand the vitriol abortion supporters sometimes hurl at people pleading for the lives of unborn babies. But that didn’t make it any easier to face the same kind of ridicule and derision in her own high-school cafeteria.

Once, while handing out abortion information at Dripping Springs High School near Austin, Texas, Curran endured a harangue from a fellow student that included a stinging (though untrue) personal attack: She must be pro-life because she was sleeping around.

After another pro-life outreach event that included handing out free cupcakes, the principal called Curran into his office. Parents had complained after several students accused Curran of forcing them to take the sweet treats—and the pro-life handouts that went with them.

“We know we’re going to be discriminated against, even by parents, because of our beliefs,” said Curran, in 12th grade this year.

Despite the hostility, Curran and other members of Students for Life Dripping Springs continue to gather once a month in the school cafeteria to hand out flyers describing scientific facts about unborn babies. The students are part of the latest front lines of the pro-life battle: Winning the hearts and minds of the next generation means finding even younger activists.

Students for Life of America, best known for its work with college students, now has 604 high-school chapters—334 at religiously affiliated schools and 270 at public campuses. Starting clubs in public high schools isn’t easy, in part because that’s where the battle for influence can be most fierce: Planned Parenthood has steadily gained a foothold in the nation’s schools through sex education programs and “health-related” presentations. The abortion giant has an army of advocates among teachers and administrators sympathetic to the feelings-are-gospel mantra.

To counter that message, Students for Life is training teens to engage their peers in conversations about the value of human life and the moral imperative to defend the rights of society’s most vulnerable people.
Curran joined the fight better prepared than most. Inspired by her parents’ pro-life activism, she attended two pro-life boot camps hosted by the Catholic Diocese of Dallas. Later, she heard a presentation from Students for Life President Kristan Hawkins, who talked about the need for pro-life high-school leaders. Two weeks later, Curran and four other girls marched into their high-school counseling office to get the paperwork required to start an official pro-life club. Prepared by stories of hostile administrators in other districts, the students expected opposition. But Principal Joe Burns supported their efforts, and Students for Life Dripping Springs held its first meeting about a month later.

Dripping Springs sits 23 miles west of downtown Austin. Its proximity to the overcrowded state capital has made the once-rural community popular with commuters. In the last 15 years, developers have plowed over gnarled oak trees and grassy pastures to make way for cookie-cutter neighborhoods, grocery stores, and coffee shops. But the culture remains largely unchanged.

Curran says many people in the town go to church and hold conservative beliefs: “But there are a high number of agnostics among the youth, and most are really liberal.”

Students for Life Dripping Springs, now with 25 members, trains teens in foundational pro-life advocacy: protests outside abortion centers and participation in regional marches. But its biggest focus is sharing a pro-life message with other students. The club sets up an informational table once a month in the school cafeteria and occasionally chalks pro-life messages on the campus sidewalks. Members use scientific facts about unborn babies to advocate for the value of human life at every stage.

That message resonates with a generation often interested in advocacy for human rights issues. The club has even recruited some atheist and agnostic members. But other students still view the pro-life movement through a personal choice lens, as the complaints about the free cupcakes showed. The offended students told their parents the pro-lifers hated them. Teachers who observed the cafeteria interactions vouched for the pro-life students’ respectful behavior, and nothing came of the incident. But Curran, who serves as this year’s club president, knows she and the other pro-life students will continue to face opposition from peers indoctrinated in the understanding that tolerance equals support for any behavior or belief.

Whether they know it or not, students using the “hate” label to describe anyone who disagrees with them are parroting Planned Parenthood’s message. The nation’s largest performer of abortions often wins young people and creates new customers by building relationships early on, said Tina Whittington, vice president of programs for Students for Life. Planned Parenthood’s sex education curriculum encourages teens to follow their feelings and lauds casual sex. Videos used in classroom presentations include graphic depictions of various relational encounters.

Parents, even in often liberal states like California, have pushed back against overly explicit sex ed lessons, prompting Planned Parenthood to adopt a new tactic: get staffers permanently installed on campuses. In May 2017, the abortion giant proposed opening a “health” clinic inside Reading High School in Reading, Pa. The center would have provided sexual health counseling and referrals for services, including contraceptives and abortions. Although Reading doesn’t have its own pro-life high-school group, students from nearby schools rallied outside a Reading school board meeting in June to urge trustees to reject the proposal. They wore teal T-shirts emblazoned with the Students for Life slogan, “I am the pro-life generation,” and carried signs declaring, “We don’t need Planned Parenthood.” The board postponed its decision until August and eventually agreed to reject the proposal. Kristan Hawkins called it a major victory in one of the first ground-level fights Students for Life has engaged in at the high-school level. Emboldened by the Reading outcome, Hawkins has started to look for schools where Planned Parenthood doesn’t have an established presence but might seek one.

“It’s very powerful when you have a student group willing and courageous to stand up against adults in their schools,” she said.
“That speaks to where young people are the ones rising up and leading this charge. It sends a powerful signal to their peers.”

Students for Life launched in 2006, and as its college campus activism started getting more attention, high schoolers contacted the group for help starting their own clubs. When the number of high-school groups grew to about 50 in 2013, Students for Life realized it needed to start a new outreach initiative. At about the same time, Planned Parenthood ramped up its own efforts to reach high schoolers. “For us, to be the voice of life and disrupt that customer cycle, we decided we needed to be everywhere Planned Parenthood is,” Whittington said.

Students for Life created high-school-specific outreach manuals and information packets, tailoring the material for a younger audience. It also had to rethink recruiting efforts. College campuses are open to any visitors, but pro-life groups can’t walk onto a high school’s grounds to hand out information. Students for Life volunteers set up meetings with church youth groups, attended Christian concerts, and traveled to teen conventions. In the first year, the number of clubs tripled.

The effort to start a new club doesn’t always go as easily as it did in Dripping Springs. In 2015, administrators at a North Dakota school district denied applications for two pro-life clubs, calling them too controversial. The district approved the applications only after Christian legal firm Thomas More Society sent a warning letter.

Clubs in Washington and Virginia faced similar initial denials. And in 2017, a Pennsylvania district tried to restrict a pro-life club’s activities to its own members, forbidding the club from engaging in outreach efforts to other students. Administrators did not back down when Thomas More attorneys intervened, so the students filed a federal lawsuit. To avoid the litigation, the school district in October agreed to let the club operate freely.

Teaching students how to stand up for their rights presents one of the biggest challenges of working with high schoolers because many instinctively obey authority figures, Whittington said. If a school administrator tells them they can’t hang a pro-life poster even though other clubs are allowed to hang their posters, students aren’t likely to argue. Regional Students for Life directors spend lots of time educating students about their First Amendment freedoms and coaching them to object respectfully when their rights get trampled, Whittington said.

Although high schoolers might take more work to train than older students, the early pro-life activism experience makes them much better prepared to engage in the movement once they get to college. They already have a grounding in pro-life apologetics and experience in defending their beliefs before a hostile audience. When they’re in the less restrictive college environment, Whittington said, they feel free to do anything: “The sky’s the limit.”

Curran, the Dripping Springs senior, has applied to 14 different universities and doesn’t know yet where she’ll end up. But she says wherever she goes, she’ll join a pro-life club or start one.

Whittington said that kind of early resolve multiplied across the country could galvanize the pro-life movement. “We’ve been saying we’re the pro-life generation for years, maybe before it was true,” she said.

“But the more we invest in high-school students, the more that becomes evident. ... We have made so much progress on the legal front. If we really want to ensure those things stick, we must invest in young people. They are the next generation of voters. Who knows where we’ll be in 10 to 20 years?”

Teaching students how to stand up for their rights presents one of the biggest challenges of working with high schoolers.
Guilty offerings
Special Buddhist temples memorialize the unborn dead in Japan, but they don’t solve the problem of post-abortion trauma

by SOPHIA LEE IN KAMAKURA, JAPAN

Hasedera Temple leans against the slope of a wooded hill in Kamakura, a quiet coastal city about a two-hour train ride from Tokyo. I visited Hasedera on a drizzly, dreary November weekend: Water dripped everywhere—beads of liquid dribbled down the umbrellas of visitors, down tree branches, down the curved roofs of the medieval period Buddhist temple. A pond shimmered with the silvers and tangerines of koi.

Hasedera is not a familiar destination for foreign tourists. Its main historical asset is its 30-foot gilded wooden statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. On the steps up to Kannon, however, is a cemetery that outsiders can easily mistake for a pretty garden. To locals, that spot is a less trumpeted but more significant attraction of Hasedera: a site filled with hundreds of gray stone statues that represent the souls of dead unborn babies. Some were stillborn, some miscarried, but most were dead from abortion.

These 1-foot-tall statues, called mizuko-jizo, are shaped like bald monks with hands clasped in prayer. They surround the entire area in tiered rows carved into hills and rocks. Their eyes—tiny crescent-moon-shaped ridges—are half-closed, as though praying or resting; their lips are turned up slightly yet not quite smiling; their stance and their long robes are rigid. Some have fresh flowers before them; most don’t. Their innocent-looking, pacified faces can pass for either an infant’s or a god’s, neither living nor completely dead, like well-dressed, finely powdered corpses in open coffins.

Hasedera is one of the most famous and earliest temples in Japan to offer mizuko kuyo, a Buddhist memorial service for dead unborn babies that’s unique to Japan. Parents from all over the region travel to Hasedera, hoping that a mizuko kuyo would help alleviate their guilt, grief, and regret over their babies’ deaths. The temple estimates placing more than 50,000 mizuko-jizo statues on temple grounds since post–World War II—and still receives up to 20 requests a day for mizuko kuyo.

Nobody knows exactly when the practice of mizuko kuyo began, but for centuries, parents have been erecting roadside shrines dedicated to babies dead from miscarriages, abortions, and infanticide. Yet it wasn’t until the 1970s—after...
Japan legalized abortion in 1948 and abortion rates spiked thereafter as the main form of birth control—that public demand for mizuko kuyo grew, so much so that locals began to use the terms “abortion heaven” and “mizuko boom” to describe the phenomenon.

Unlike in Western countries, where pro-abortion groups minimize the psychological trauma of abortion and use words such as “fetus” and “unwelcome invasion” to try to hopscotch around the humanity of the unborn baby, in Japan abortion is accepted but not celebrated. In the United States, the pro-life and pro-abortion groups draw sharp lines between their views: One says the unborn child is a human life; therefore abortion is murder and should be illegal. The other says the personhood of a child in the womb is a subjective matter and that women should be able to choose. In Japan, these viewpoints coexist in one mind.

Most Japanese consider the unborn child a “life”—the Japanese start counting the baby’s age at conception, and even the law somewhat acknowledges the unborn child’s personhood: Babies aborted from 10 weeks and above must be registered with the local government as born-dead babies. Buddhism, a major religion in Japan, also teaches that life begins at conception, and its First Precept is that one should never willingly take the life of a living thing. A Buddhist priest’s wife in Tokyo wrote: “Of course we who are Buddhists will hold to the end that a fetus is ‘life.’ No matter what kind of conditions make abortion necessary, we cannot completely justify it.”

Yet the Japanese, including that Buddhist priest’s wife, accept abortion as an unfortunate necessity—and those who have an abortion seek for some way, any way, to assuage their guilt, pain, and fears about having willfully extinguished a life. Mizuko kuyo is the Japanese Buddhist’s creative way of reconciling these two contradictory beliefs by rearranging religious systems to fit his personal purposes. And as entrepreneurial temples caught on to rising public demand and advertised mizuko kuyo services in newspaper ads, many mainline Buddhist sects also reluctantly began offering the practice, fearful of losing parishioners who pay for their upkeep.

I visited two mizuko-jizo cemeteries in Japan—Hasedera in Kamakura is one, Zojoji in Tokyo the other. At Zojoji, the statues all wear bright red hand-knitted caps and red cloth bibs, some donning little pink dresses, some puffy parkas, one a navy track jacket. Their eyes are shut, their cheeks chubby, their lips small and pouty. Many have colorful pinwheels stuck in a vase before them, the plastic curls twirling and creaking lazily in the autumn breeze. Some have fresh or fake flowers in their vases, but the majority of the statues look worn with age, dust flaking off bibs and decomposed leaves dangling off caps. Trees cast shadows over the cemetery, yet the area popped with blobs and whirls of colors from the red caps and pinwheels. The overall mood seemed strangely both gloomy and kitschy, like a carnival blaring with musical rides but barren of people.

Buddhism teaches that life begins at conception, and its First Precept is that one should never willingly take the life of a living thing.

Meanwhile, the statues in Hasedera Temple are unadorned and uniform, with no accessories to distinguish one from the other. In the middle of the cemetery stands a shrine for Jizo, a divine figure that the Japanese believe protects the dead infants. There, parents placed offerings to their unborn babies in black wooden crates: squeeze bottle juices, cookies, clementines, rainbow-striped baby socks, tiny stuffed animals. A candle stand nearby offers candles for 200 yen ($2) and incense sticks for 100 yen ($1) apiece so that visitors can offer prayers for the mizukos.

Parents pay from 3,000 yen ($300) to 80,000 yen ($800) for a statue, depending on size and material. A priest then writes the mother’s name on the back of the statue and places it in the cemetery. After a few years, the priests remove and burn the old statues so that the children’s souls are free to join Buddha—out go the old statues, in come the new family of statues.

I wasn’t able to talk to any parents, but I found a priest who’s in charge of selling the statues. As I asked him questions (through an interpreter) about the significance of mizuko kuyo, he kept pausing and tilting his head to ponder, as though few have ever asked him such questions before. Abortion no longer
Mizuko-kuyo "eases this hatred and grudge," Kanai said. It also helps the parents establish some sort of emotional intimacy with the deceased child through the bodily ritual of repentance, apology, and appreciation: "We have to save these suffering women who regret later on. If no regret, then no memorial service, you understand?"

"I'm sitting in my room with the drapes closed. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can't go out. What should I do?"

That's a common question Cynthia Ruble and her team at Life Hope Network (LHN), a 14-volunteer group that counsels women with post-abortion issues and unplanned pregnancies, hear often. The voice is usually barely a whisper, sucked of energy and hope. Most of the post-abortion clients are unable to perform the normal functions of life: They cry constantly, suffer nightmares and flashbacks, and contemplate suicide. Some are teenagers, but some are in their 60s, still unable to forget or forgive themselves for what they did 20 or 30 years ago.

Ruble, an American missionary in Nagoya, Japan, founded LHN in 2005 when she realized there was no equivalent of a crisis pregnancy center in the entire country. She partnered with LIFE International, a Christian nonprofit in Michigan that helps start pro-life ministries throughout the world, and tailored LIFE's post-abortion counseling curriculum to fit her Japanese clients' needs. Three years later, she opened up a support line for women dealing with post-abortion trauma, and the phone has been ringing daily ever since.

Today LHN is still the sole post-abortion counseling center in Japan. Many of its clients turn to LHN as a last resort: They can't go to their families for help, since many harbor deep resentment against the boyfriend, husband, or mother who pressured them into having an abortion; they can't go to their friends, since abortion isn't appropriate to discuss; and they don't go to their Buddhist or Shinto priests for counseling. Most have sought mizuko kuyos or professional counselors—but they find no comfort in it," said Ruble: "They are really suffering, and nobody is telling them that abortion is a sin, that their reaction is moral, that it's not odd, that it's normal."

Recently a group of nurses who staff the government-run prenatal support hotline in Tokyo visited Ruble in Nagoya, asking for training: These nurses have been receiving numerous phone calls from women dealing with post-abortion trauma, but they have no idea what to say to them. Ruble told them the one thing she knows: What these grieving women need and deserve is forgiveness, and only the gospel can give them true, complete, liberating forgiveness.

And that's what mizuko kuyo ultimately attempts and lacks: It addresses an innate recognition among the Japanese people that abortion is a moral problem—that it’s murder, an act against natural law, an injustice that demands retribution—and the whole ritual is a public expression of that awareness in bodily and verbal language. But mizuko kuyo also makes the practice of abortion more tolerable, removing it from the legal and political arena and placing it strictly in the realm of a religious institution that most Japanese people follow loosely. It’s an attempt toward retribution, but lacks restitution, said Ruble: "There is no Japanese solution to resolve guilt. There is no concept of forgiveness by God. So these women feel like they have to suffer until they die."

has the bad public image it once had, he said. Still, the parents feel an instinctual need for absolution, so mizuko kuyo guides them in praying for the spirits of the deceased children.

"Does that mean that they believe the fetus is a life?" I asked. The priest paused again to think, then said, "It's my personal belief, and the Buddhist teaching, that the fetus is a human life." But he doesn't condemn women for aborting their children, he added, nor does he ask many questions about it. The parents come, they pray, they leave. I wondered, “But does the mizuko kuyo help them get what they want?” The priest said he doesn’t know—again, he doesn’t ask. He just performs the rites.

If these Buddhist priests sense an incongruity between their teaching on the sanctity of life and their practice of providing guilt-relieving ceremonies for parents who have had abortions, they don’t talk about it. Mizuko kuyo has generated some controversy in Japan, but the contention isn’t over the morality of abortion but the morality of possible extortion by Buddhist temples. Many skeptics ask whether these temples are profiting off women’s guilt, particularly since many temples claim that if the parents don’t perform mizuko kuyo, the spirits of the aborted babies will wreak revenge on them (called tatari in Japanese). Yet even that belief of tatari acknowledges that these unborn children have a soul and feelings of anger, hatred, and jealousy.

Shokai Kanai, a semi-retired priest at the Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada, has helped perform mizuko kuyo for many Japanese-American parents but uses strong words for abortion: “It’s very, very selfish. Abortion is killing a life—yes, a human life.” Now 75, Kanai was almost never born in 1942: His mother, then 29, had a difficult pregnancy and the doctors told her to choose between two options: Either she dies, or the baby dies. She chose to deliver Kanai and died a few days after his birth.

Today Kanai supports the legalization of abortion, though he calls abortion an “unnatural death”—and that’s why he does mizuko kuyo: The spirits of the aborted children, cut too early from life, might develop animosity toward their parents. Mizuko kuyo “eases this hatred and grudge,” Kanai said. It also helps the parents establish some sort of emotional intimacy.

Don’t perform mizuko kuyo, the spirits of the aborted babies will wreak revenge on them (called tatari in Japanese). Yet even that belief of tatari acknowledges that these unborn children have a soul and feelings of anger, hatred, and jealousy.

Shokai Kanai, a semi-retired priest at the Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple of Nevada, has helped perform mizuko kuyo for many Japanese-American parents but uses strong words for abortion: “It’s very, very selfish. Abortion is killing a life—yes, a human life.” Now 75, Kanai was almost never born in 1942: His mother, then 29, had a difficult pregnancy and the doctors told her to choose between two options: Either she dies, or the baby dies. She chose to deliver Kanai and died a few days after his birth.

Today Kanai supports the legalization of abortion, though he calls abortion an “unnatural death”—and that’s why he does mizuko kuyo: The spirits of the aborted children, cut too early from life, might develop animosity toward their parents. Mizuko kuyo “eases this hatred and grudge,” Kanai said. It also helps the parents establish some sort of emotional intimacy.
COPYCAT CRI
As China steals U.S. technology, American firms fear losing access to a massive market  BY JUNE CHENG
Wind turbine company American Superconductor saw a huge opportunity to tap into the coveted Chinese marketplace after the Chinese government passed a renewable energy law in 2005. Partnering with the Chinese company Sinovel, American Superconductor provided the advanced computer software used to run the turbine, while Sinovel manufactured the turbine exterior.

The U.S. company made sure that the machine’s codes, which the company had spent years and millions of dollars to develop, were safe: Only a few employees had access to the codes, and the company kept them under layers of security. Yet in 2011, engineers were testing a new-generation software on Sinovel’s turbine when they noticed the blades didn’t stop spinning after the test. Looking into the turbine, the engineers found that Sinovel was running a version of the software that they had not yet released.

After an investigation of who leaked the codes, American Superconductor found the culprit: Austrian employee Dejan Karabasevic. The Chinese company had given him women, a nice apartment, and a $1.7 million contract in exchange for the codes. Karabasevic ended up confessing in Austrian court and spending a year in jail.

American Superconductor filed a lawsuit against Sinovel in China for $1.2 billion in damages, and the case is still tied up in Chinese court. CEO Daniel McGahn told CBS’ 60 Minutes that because of the stolen intellectual property (IP), he’s had to fire 600 of his 900 employees and lost $1 billion. Now American Superconductor is working in India, yet Sinovel is undercutting the company as it exports its copied turbines overseas: McGahn said on 60 Minutes the state of Massachusetts purchased a Sinovel wind turbine with federal stimulus money.

U.S. companies working in China have long complained in general terms about IP theft and unfair business practices in China: Counterfeit goods, pirated software, and theft of trade secrets worldwide cost the United States up to $600 billion each year, according to the Commission on the Theft of American Intellectual Property. Even more concerning, hacked designs of military weapons is a national security threat, allowing China to develop a high-tech military quickly. At the 19th party congress in October, President Xi Jinping stated China would have a world-class military by 2050.

In August, President Donald Trump called on U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to investigate China’s IP practices and forced technology transfers, a move that could lead to sanctions on China. Experts believe the investigation is too little, too late, as China is already breaking new ground on the shoulders of U.S. tech. Plus, in order to make a strong case against China, Lighthizer will need the testimonies of U.S. companies in China, and most companies are unwilling to jeopardize their access to the Chinese market by speaking out. As of November, only six companies had spoken out, and most were smaller businesses describing already known incidents, the BBC reported.

IP theft in China comes in different forms, from the stores at Beijing’s Silk Market selling fake Coach purses to China’s J-20 stealth fighter jet, which shares a striking resemblance to the U.S. F-22, to China’s high-speed rail system, which was originally a partnership with Japanese and German companies and is now claimed by China as one of its “four great new inventions.”

Sometimes companies are hacked by China’s army of cyberattackers; sometimes technology transfer is a requirement for entry into the Chinese market; sometimes ideas and brands are flat-out copied and sold in China. Other times entrepreneurial Chinese businessmen squat on the Chinese names of well-known brands, awaiting their arrival into China. Chinese courts tend to side with Chinese nationals.

In 2014, a U.S. federal grand jury indicted five People’s Liberation Army officers of Unit 61398 for hacking 115 U.S. companies in industries such as aerospace, satellite and telecommunications, and information technology between 2006 and 2014. Housed in a
nondescript building in Shanghai, the unit uses more than 1,000 servers and could employ thousands of staffers, according to internet security firm Mandiant.

In the case of the J-20 fighter jet, Su Bin, a Chinese national, helped hack into U.S. defense companies, including Boeing and Lockheed Martin, the maker of the F-22. Su worked with two Chinese military officers who would install malware on the computers of employees. Su would point out which files were useful, translate them into Chinese, then sell the information to Chinese-owned companies.

The U.S. government caught and sentenced Su to nearly four years in prison in 2016: His indictment noted Su stole data relating to the F-22 and F-35 fighter jets and C-17 transport aircraft. As a result, the Chinese-made J-20 fighter jet unveiled in 2017 has technology that would have taken decades for the country to figure out for itself.

Former President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping agreed to stop commercial cyberespionage in 2015, and according to cybersecurity firm FireEye, the number of attacks from China-based groups dropped by 90 percent from 2014 to 2016. But the dip in attacks doesn’t tell the whole story: Remaining attacks are more focused, selectively grabbing important files rather than whole masses of data, FireEye noted. Other analysts believe military personnel had hacked U.S. corporations to make extra cash selling trade secrets to Chinese companies, and the number of attacks fell because Xi’s anti-corruption campaign scared them away from moonlighting.

Another complaint by U.S. companies is the forced transfer of new technology from U.S. to Chinese companies as a price of doing business in China. Chinese law requires foreign companies in industries such as energy, telecommunications, and automobile manufacturing to form joint ventures with Chinese partners, which leads to tech transfers.

China’s new cybersecurity law requires foreign companies operating in China to disclose information about their network equipment and software to the Chinese government. (Beijing claims the purpose is to fight hackers and keep data safe.) The law also requires companies to store data locally: In July, Apple announced it was building its first data center in Guizhou, partnering with the government-backed Guizhou-Cloud Big Data Industry.

John Frisbie, president of the US-China Business Council, in a statement called the transfer of technology “an acute concern of American companies in key sectors, who often must make difficult choices about managing the trade-off of technology sharing and access to the world’s second-largest economy.”

Meanwhile, the advent of e-commerce has caused the number of counterfeits and fakes to grow exponentially in online marketplaces like Taobao and social media platforms. It’s well-known that clothes purchased from a China-based seller online often won’t turn out looking like the advertised photos, and counterfeitors run free, tricking buyers around the world.

Joe Simone, an IP lawyer who has worked in China for 30 years, said this is a largely unregulated space, as governments don’t police online marketplaces effectively and most brand owners lack the resources to track down all the counterfeitors online.

The Chinese government has only recently started introducing e-commerce...
reforms, including the creation of a blacklist of IP offenders. “It’s a long time coming, and many wonder if it will be too little, too late,” Simone said. A new draft e-commerce law includes provisions that would create a “big hole in protection,” he said, by allowing vendors of fakes to fill out some paperwork and then continue selling their products until their case goes to court. And with the large number of violations appearing online in China, “almost nobody goes to court.”

What do you do about a country like China that refuses to obey international standards? Some in industry hope that as China starts to create its own IP, it will get stricter by itself, and in some cases that is happening. Others, including the Chinese government, believe the United States should use World Trade Organization mechanisms to resolve disputes before resorting to an investigation based on U.S. law. Yet U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross criticized the WTO for not being tough enough on China.

Steven Mosher, head of Population Research Institute and author of Bully of Asia, believes the investigation is a good idea but 15 years too late: “I’m glad we finally got serious about trying to stop the intellectual property theft from China that has resulted in the largest transfer of wealth in human history.” For too long, Mosher said, China has played the developing nation card in order to get favorable trade deals, but then they “violate the deal before the ink is dry on the paper.”

Others fear that the investigation can do little unless U.S. companies speak up. Business associations have spoken up to complain in general terms, but few companies are willing to risk their relationship with the Chinese government and their access to China’s 1.2 billion consumers. Without companies speaking up, the United States can’t take more targeted actions against China.

Instead, tech corporations like Google, Facebook, and Apple are ingratiating themselves to the Chinese government: Apple CEO Tim Cook gushed about working with China at the World Internet Conference, a summit the Chinese government uses to promote its censored internet.

Many companies see losing their IP as a price of entry into China and calculate that it’s worthwhile. In many cases, “companies aren’t forced to give [IP] up, they were willing to take the risk either because they’re naïve or feel like it’s financially worth it to get into China’s mammoth marketplace,” wrote Seattle-based lawyer Dan Harris on China Law Blog. Harris specializes in helping U.S. companies working in China.

In his experience, foreign companies are so eager to tap into the Chinese market they are willing to sign almost any agreement and are often tricked. He spells out the typical strategy a Chinese partner uses: negotiate a weak license, withhold payments until it gets the technology, then when it gets enough tech, stop the payments. In some cases, the U.S. company will sign an agreement with the Chinese partner in both English and Chinese, yet the Chinese portion includes a line that the IP belongs to the Chinese company—a line that is missing in English. The Chinese wording is what stands in a Chinese court.

When Harris brings up these potential problems with the companies, they claim they are certain they won’t be tricked because they have a close relationship with the Chinese company. Yet in China, relationships are just part of business.
THE HOMESCHOOL EVENT OF THE YEAR!

- Grace-filled families encourage you to continue!
- Comprehensive curriculum choices equip you to be the best!
- Speakers and workshops energize you to keep on going!

Whether you’re considering homeschooling, just beginning, or a veteran homeschooler, you’ll find what you need to make your homeschooling journey less stressful and more successful. Visit hsconv.com/2018wng for more information or to register.

Sponsored by World News Group, Save the Storks, Focus on the Family, K12, Homeschooling Today, Cedarville University, Abeka, and Culpepper Law.

Southeast: March 8–10
GREENVILLE, SC
More info at hsconv.com/2018wng-se

Texas: March 15–17
FORT WORTH, TX
More info at hsconv.com/2018wng-tx

Midwest: April 12–14
CINCINNATI, OH
More info at hsconv.com/2018wng-nw

California: June 14–16
ONTARIO, CA
More info at hsconv.com/2018wng-ca

Missouri: July 19–21
St. LOUIS, MO
More info at hsconv.com/2018wng-mo

The Event of the Year
GREAT HOMESCHOOL CONVENTIONS
www.greathomeschoolconventions.com
Sidewalk witness

A YOUNG PRO-LIFER FINDS HER VOICE OUTSIDE MISSISSIPPI’S ONLY ABORTION CENTER

by Kim Henderson in Jackson, Miss.

The Jackson Women’s Health Organization stretches across a corner of prime real estate in a fashionable neighborhood in Mississippi's capital city. Painted a loud-and-proud pink, the stucco structure could easily pass for anything but what it really is—the only remaining abortion center in the state.

But it is an abortion center, and just after sunrise on weekday mornings stoic-faced employees drive through the gate. A security guard sits down in a plastic lawn chair at the edge of the entrance. Volunteers wearing neon pink vests emblazoned with the words “pro-choice clinic escort” chat in the parking lot. Nearby, a trio of Christians pray and pace the sidewalk.

When a silver Ford F-350 rolls up and deposits the first appointment of the day, the pro-life counselors call out: “That’s a beautiful baby. Hey, ma’am, please don’t do this. Will you please just take this brochure? It has our contact information on it.”

The youngest voice belongs to 21-year-old Sarah Statham, a petite blonde who works part time in a medical billing office in the suburbs. Today, though, she’s outside the abortion
center, carrying a worn ESV Bible and a backpack filled with tracts. She’s hoping to save babies’ lives: “They say that this is the darkest place in Mississippi. It’s a fantastic place to come and share the gospel and give hope to people, to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, to be a voice for the voiceless.”

Statham’s part-time schedule means she’s able to participate when other sidewalk counselors can’t: “I’m available, so why not come and be a part of something like this?”

“Something like this”—pro-life work—is a call to which Statham and other millennials are responding. Doug Lane has seen Mississippi’s abortion centers dwindle in number from eight to one during his three decades on the sidewalks. He says lots of new folks are showing up: “Most of them are young—30 years old or younger—and they’re very evangelistic-minded.”

That enthusiasm on the pro-life side has been matched by renewed energy on the pro-abortion side, especially since the election of Donald Trump. Pro-abortion escorts are on-site to walk women from their cars to the center’s main door. As they walk, they pass by hand-painted signs atop wrought-iron fence posts. The signs read, “May the fetus you claim to save grow up to be a gay abortion provider” and “Mind your own uterus.”

As pro-life sidewalk counselors call out through the black screening that interlaces the fence, encouraging pregnant women to protect their babies, the escorts try to drown them out with boom boxes. “They don’t want the ladies to hear us,” explains Statham. “They try to put up as much resistance as they can.”

Until last year the city of Jackson tried to keep pro-life protesters away, but the nonprofit Pro-Life Mississippi sued and won in federal court. A consent decree required police officers to take part in mandatory training in First Amendment rights. It also required the police department to return materials seized and bonds posted because of improper arrests.

Despite that history, Statham’s easygoing nature has enabled her to build relationships with abortion center employees. She’s on a first-name basis with security guards and also reaches out to escorts, including Dorinda, a middle-aged woman with a shock of platinum-blond hair and black biker boots who’s given to demonstrating her hula hoop abilities while holding a sign proclaiming a lack of regret over her own abortion. Statham says she and Dorinda have had conversations about the gospel and even about the Ark Encounter, the life-size ark museum in Williamstown, Ky.: “I actually bought her a book and brought it back to her from there, and she was appreciative.”

The flow of women making their way toward the pink building continues throughout the morning: a woman in a black hoodie, a long-haired teen with her mom, a young couple. When a small sedan pulls up, it’s easy to peer inside and see that the back seat is filled with toddler toys.

According to Statham, the spiritual warfare at the site is palpable: “When you leave this place, you’re exhausted. Even if you’re just standing around, there’s just a lot going on. It’s an oppressive environment.”

She admits getting discouraged “when people just walk in and you feel like they’re not receiving anything you have to say.” But she’s comforted by this Biblical truth: “It’s not us, but it’s Christ who saves. He opens the eyes of the blind, so you just do what you know to do. He doesn’t need eloquent words. He needs human weakness, and He works through that.”
As urban populations grow, so does the need to import fresh food from farms that may be hundreds of miles away. The emerging practice of urban farming could provide city dwellers with fresh, locally grown food without the large environmental footprint and logistical requirements typically associated with grocery chains.

The Plantagon CityFarm, set to open in early 2018, occupies the cavernous basement of a 26-story office tower in Stockholm. Plantagon will grow green vegetables in vertical towers under LED lights whose heat is captured by an elaborate system of water coils and then used to heat the entire building, according to Fast Company. Carbon dioxide produced in the offices is pumped down to the farm, which returns fresh oxygen from the plants to the office spaces.

“The building owner agreed to give us a free lease for three years, so we don’t pay one single Swedish kroner for the room,” Plantagon co-founder Hans Hassle told Fast Company, noting that finding affordable space is often a challenge for urban farmers. “If you really want to grow things in the city, you have to find new business models that actually make the food not too expensive in the end.”

Indoor urban farms eliminate the cost of transporting produce hundreds or even thousands of miles. Plantagon will grow greens without herbicides or pesticides and says its system will use a fraction of the water of a conventional outdoor farm. It will sell the produce at an on-site grocery store, to restaurants located in the high rise, and to other grocery stores in the neighborhood. The company intends to start 10 underground urban farms over the next three years in Stockholm. It plans to open a 16-story “plantscraper” in Linköping that will grow food throughout the building.

For the millions of people recovering from addictions to opioids and other substances, timely intervention by mental health professionals may mean the prevention of a relapse. But too often, no one is aware that a patient is in crisis until it’s too late.

A Chicago startup called Triggr Health is tackling this problem using artificial intelligence and a smartphone app. A team of recovery specialists works with Triggr Health to monitor patient participants using the app: The specialists collect and analyze data from participants’ smartphones—data showing screen engagement, texting patterns, sleep history, and location. The data help identify patterns that might indicate the need for intervention.

The platform operates around the clock, seven days a week, according to MIT Technology Review. The system alerts the recovery team when a participant’s pattern of behavior suggests he may be relapsing and should be contacted.

Triggr’s machine learning algorithm becomes smarter over time as more participants use the app: Within one year, Triggr’s accuracy in predicting when a client is likely to relapse within three days went from 85 percent to 92 percent.

Triggr won’t divulge how much the platform costs to use. However, some clients told MIT Technology Review it costs them less than two dollars a day. A recent study of 162 academic hospitals found that between 2009 and 2015, the average cost per opioid overdose admission increased from $58,500 to $92,400. —M.C.
Perhaps the most shocking revelation in former Olympic sprinter Sanya Richards-Ross’ book *Chasing Grace* is not that she ran in the 2008 Summer Games just two weeks after having an abortion. According to the four-time gold medalist, abortion is common—if unspoken about—among women in her sport: “I literally don’t know another female track and field athlete who hasn’t had an abortion,” she writes, “and that’s sad.” Richards-Ross’ claim did not garner the same level of media attention that her confession of her own abortion did after the book’s release in June. (Attempts to contact Richards-Ross through the book’s publisher, Zondervan, were unsuccessful.) Moreover, no woman who competes in track and field, or who has in the past, has confirmed or refuted the assertion, and no statistics are available to back it up.

There are multiple possible explanations for this: Getting female athletes who have had abortions to speak about them on the record is likely tremendously difficult due to fears of a public backlash and the loss of sponsors—fears that Richards-Ross once shared. Few would be inclined to name names and face ostracism the way former major league slugger Jose Canseco did after outing fellow steroid users in his 2005 book *Juiced*. Also, many left-leaning types in the media consider abortion to be a private matter: In their view, if a woman chooses not to let an unplanned pregnancy derail her athletic dreams, that’s her business.

Still, Richards-Ross’ claim underscores the need for a cultural shift in women’s sports: As British sportswriter Alison Kervin wrote for the female-centric website The Pool, “Her declaration is very, very sad, but the most uncomfortable fact of all is that it’s not completely unexpected.”

The reason for this, according to Kervin, is that “most sportswomen regard pregnancy as the end of their careers.” This perception exists even though the past two decades of sports history are replete with women who thrived after having children and even while pregnant: Beach volleyball player Kerri Walsh Jennings, for instance, was five weeks pregnant when she won her third Olympic gold medal at the 2012 Games in London. Basketball Hall of Famer Sheryl Swoopes became a sports pioneer when she joined the WNBA’s Houston Comets six weeks after giving birth to her son Jordan in 1997, the league’s inaugural season.

It helps to have a coach who is sensitive to female athletes’ post-pregnancy physical needs and willing to help balance the demands of athletic training with those of motherhood. It would also help to have resources to advise female athletes about how to deal with the financial, physical, and psychological issues associated with pregnancy, Kervin wrote.

For athletes who become pregnant close to major events such as the Olympics, it would help to know that pregnancy can actually be a performance enhancer: During pregnancy, a woman’s heart pumps blood throughout the body at a higher rate and with greater efficiency. This brings a greater supply of oxygen to the muscles, increasing muscle power.

Richards-Ross—who gave birth to a son in August—aborted her first child in part because she feared pregnancy would jeopardize her hopes of Olympic gold in 2008. At the time, she felt abortion was her only option, and the decision haunted her: A physical and emotional wreck, she ultimately settled for bronze in her event, the 400-meter, in Beijing.

Perhaps with greater education and support, athletes in Richards-Ross’ position won’t sacrifice their unborn children on the altar of athletic glory. Female athletes can have the best of both worlds.
Nick and Chelsea Torres couldn’t believe their ears when they heard a heartbeat. An ultrasound three weeks earlier hadn’t been able to find one. At their eight-week appointment, they thought the doctor would say they’d miscarried their unborn child.

Chelsea was so overjoyed she didn’t notice a second heartbeat. The doctor revealed the image on the ultrasound was conjoined twins, a rare condition occurring once in every 200,000 live births.

Specialists in Boise, Idaho, told the couple, both 24, to abort the babies. Although the Torreses don’t claim religious faith, they’d always been against abortion. But under the pressure from their family, friends, and the doctors, they almost changed their minds.

“For about four hours we agreed that we could do it,” Nick said. But he says Chelsea realized, “It wasn’t… a tiny baby or a tiny blob being extracted. It was me giving someone permission to kill my child.”

At 22 weeks into the pregnancy, specialists at Texas Children’s Hospital advised the couple to abort. They said no.

On Jan. 30, 2017, Chelsea delivered Callie and Carter. The Torreses were prepared for doctors to separate the girls soon after birth, but doctors said at that point the twins were healthier together than apart. Nick and Chelsea brought them home to Blackfoot, Idaho.

Callie and Carter are connected from the belly button down. They share internal organs, including their intestines, kidneys, and reproductive organs, and one pair of legs.

But at 10 months old, Callie and Carter are developing like normal babies in other ways. They roll over, scoot, say “dada,” and will eventually crawl and then walk. While they share bodies, they don’t share personalities. Callie is giggly and easygoing. Carter is cautious and cries around strangers.

Their mother has experienced seessawing emotions. Chelsea was bitterly disappointed that the girls couldn’t be separated—and that turned into postpartum depression and anger.

She found support in a Facebook group of 150 moms pregnant with or raising conjoined twins around the world. While some try everything to give their conjoined twins life, others write they’ve ended their pregnancies. “You have people who literally have tried everything… and then you have people who opt out and say well this is the easy way to go,” Chelsea said.

The Torreses know that choosing life was not the “easy way to go.”

Nick and Chelsea couldn’t find a day care provider that felt comfortable taking care of conjoined twins, so Nick stays home while Chelsea works the overnight shift at Walmart. That’s not what she hoped to be doing. At the time she got pregnant, she was in school to become a vet technician.

Because of the girls’ unique body shape, Chelsea has to sew every shirt or dress they wear. They had to find a tech company to make a special car seat with two sets of head straps.

Callie and Carter’s future is uncertain. They’ve decided the twins will decide when and if they want to separate. Separation would give their daughters independence but a host of medical problems like colostomy bags and only one leg.

Chelsea admits she sometimes feels haunted by the choice she didn’t make—the choice doctors claimed would be best for her daughters.

“I have looked at them and said maybe I should have aborted them,” Chelsea said. “But then I also look at them and notice that they’re not unhappy with how they are. So I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Nick and Chelsea know their daughters won’t have an easy life, but they do have a chance at life: together or apart.
Where you invest can make a difference for the Kingdom and in people’s lives.

We are biblically based investment managers.

At TPM we manage our clients’ assets proactively to be in-step with current market conditions. Additionally, in our portfolios we restrict investment in 8 industries we believe do more damage to our communities than do good, and their products/services conflict with our faith.

Stewarding the resources each of us has been given is a big responsibility. We take that seriously. We work to develop strong, caring relationships with the individuals, families and entities that we serve.

CALL US TODAY TO DISCUSS YOUR SITUATION AND TO LEARN HOW WE STRIVE TO HELP OUR CLIENTS BE TRIUMPHANT.

Fee Only | Performance Driven | Discretionary Proactive Management | Fiduciary | Disciplined Approach

119 Tradewynd Drive, Suite B
Lynchburg, VA 24502-5288
Phone: 434-386-8005 • Fax: 434-319-5265
www.triumphantpm.com • info@triumphantpm.com
Advisory services offered through Sowell Management Services, a Registered Investment Advisor
Thank you for telling my story to a new generation. My heart’s desire is that many more people will be able to celebrate their own weaknesses in light of God’s amazing grace! And thank you for noting Joni and Friends, turning the spotlight on the plight of special needs families and others who are medically fragile.

—JONI EARECKSON TADA / Agoura Hills, Calif.

What a great article by Jamie Dean. Eareckson Tada is a great example of the Biblical truth that “when I am weak, then I am strong.” Like the Apostle Paul, she has a “thorn in the flesh,” but it’s not permanent.

—BOB FRANCIS / Wakefield, Mass.

A Bible study I completed referred to the inability to meet our own needs as “the joy of dependence.” Joni is a shining example.

—NANCY VENEZIA / St. Louis, Mo.

Thank you for telling my story to a new generation. My heart’s desire is that many more people will be able to celebrate their own weaknesses in light of God’s amazing grace! And thank you for noting Joni and Friends, turning the spotlight on the plight of special needs families and others who are medically fragile.

—JONI EARECKSON TADA / Agoura Hills, Calif.

The theory of the GOP tax plan is sound: Reducing taxes and repatriating corporate dollars will improve the economy and create more jobs, resulting in more tax revenue. The argument that the changes will increase the national debt doesn’t take this into account. That’s not to say our debt problem would go away; we are still spending irresponsibly and need to make serious cuts to the federal budget.

—PAUL BIZEAU / Parma, Idaho

Whatever happened to shrinking the size of government as part of a tax plan? And what’s wrong with the flat tax idea?

—JOHN B. STONE on wng.org

Charity is a result of the Spirit, not the tax plan. I think most people who already give will continue to give at the same level, although some may give more or less with changes in their wallet sizes. Let each of us give according to what God gives him.

—BRENDAN BOSSARD on wng.org

When they talk about tax reform, congressional leaders always seem to forget that Americans are taxed twice at the federal level: the regular income tax and the dreaded “payroll taxes” for Social Security and Medicare, for which there are no deductions or exemptions.

—DAVID WINKLER / Austin, Texas

Tax deductions absolutely are a factor in my giving. I constantly seek out ways to route my gifts through charities; that’s good, practical stewardship.

—GREGORY SAMSON / Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

It is disgusting that Solutions for Change cannot accept HUD funding because Solutions requires drug testing for residents to remain in their houses, while shelters that leave the homeless on the public dole or on the street keep HUD money. Only a government too big to fail would operate such a travesty.

—DAVE DAHLKE / Port Orchard, Wash.

Kudos to Sophia Lee for her fascinating series on a problem that is increasingly difficult to solve.

—JANET PICCIONE KLEPPER on Facebook

May this outstanding article bring more awareness of homelessness and hope to the precious least of these.

—LAURIE STRUMPFER MOTZ on Facebook

Giving a handout to homeless people makes you feel that you’re doing something but doesn’t require nearly as much time or effort as programs that work. We need more programs like Solutions for Change.

—CAROLE JOHANSEN on Facebook

Another successful model encourages churches and synagogues to adopt a single homeless family that is ready to move into permanent housing and take responsibility for their own lives. One agency here in California provides...
a case manager and a “faith team” for mentoring, accountability, and relationships.

—JOHN WIESTER / Buellton, Calif.

‘The church that birthed America’

Mindy Belz suggests that Begijnhof’s English Reformed Church “birthed America.” I would point out that the first legislative assembly in the New World met at the church in Jamestown, the first permanent English colony. There our American heritage of representative government, and thus America as we know it, was born.

—JOE BONORDEN / Canyon Lake, Texas

On a visit to Amsterdam I was thrilled to see the stained-glass window in the English Reformed Church depicting Gov. Bradford reading his Geneva Bible on board the Mayflower. When my wife and I visited Plymouth, Mass., the following year, we viewed his well-used Bible in the local museum. That completed the journey for me.

—TERRY PRUETT / White City, Ore.

Bradford’s quote about the “hideous and desolate wilderness,” with no mention of the Indians who helped the Pilgrims survive, is another reminder of how American history is so often one-sided. Subsequent massacres of Indian villages and the exile of “praying Indians” to nearby islands during King Philip’s War show another side to the country’s development.

—GORDON WOOLARD / Hollywood, Fla.

‘Protecting the flock’

Thank you for presenting the case for armed security at church. I would argue that concealed-carry by members of the congregation, combined with emergency planning, is a good option, especially for small churches that can’t afford to hire security.

—JULIANNE PATAKY / Munith, Mich.

Correction


Read more Mailbag letters at wng.org

LETTERS and COMMENTS

Email: mailbag@wng.org
Mail: WORLD Mailbag, PO Box 20002, Asheville, NC 28802-9998
Website: wng.org
Facebook: facebook.com/WORLD.magazine
Twitter: @WORLD_mag

Please include full name and address. Letters may be edited to yield brevity and clarity.
‘It’s now or never’
PUTTING THE FLESH TO DEATH WHEN TIME IS SHORT

’Tis 2018 by the clock, and “salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11).

The experience of time passing is either pleasant or unpleasant depending on one’s readiness. I had planned, in days before the Christmas guests arrived, to clean the house, adorn the tree, bake bread, and print copies of *A Christmas Carol* for group reading.

As the date and then the hour approached, there was an increasingly frenetic—sometimes instantaneous—abandonment of items on the list, not unlike the shipwreck scene in Acts when hope of safe arrival in Rome with men and cargo intact began quickly to evaporate: “Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. And on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands” (Acts 27:18-19).

Nothing concentrates the mind like crisis. On another occasion, guests were about to appear at the door, people with whom my husband and I wanted to share the gospel, that they might be saved. But we were fighting in the kitchen, a bit of acrimony that happened to be about whether it makes sense to answer a question that presents two choices with the words “Yes” or “No.” (I was holding down the negative side of the debate. If I say, “Should we steam the green beans or should we boil them?” do not reply to me “Yes,” because it is not at all obvious that the second tendered option is the one you mean.)

The Word of God has good advice for couples: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26). But that gives you a good 10 hours some days. My husband and I had maybe five minutes. God says: “Keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25); “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and we had literally moments to get there. For we were begging great favors of the Lord, and the “double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” “must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:7-8).

What I am saying is that all those Scripture commands about crucifying the flesh and preferring one’s brother to oneself and becoming Christ-like—which we were happy to entertain in many a Bible study klatch as sweet love songs about graces to be ours in the sweet by and by—must be ours by 6 p.m. sharp. This present moment contains all moments. If I will not put to death the flesh right now, in the kitchen, over this syntax argument, I deceive myself to think that I will ever do it.

Jesus tells of a man who is running out of time. About to be fired for mismanagement of his master’s affairs, he rouses all his erstwhile dissipated strength and hatches a plan to deliver himself from impending destitution. The master, learning of this laudable quick action, commends him. Jesus does too.

When large numbers of New England Congregationalists of the late 17th century dragged their feet about repentance and new life, the dithering was formally codified in a 1662 institution named the “halfway covenant.” But history professor Clair Davis says a very different tone than this indulgent one was set at deathbeds by the clergymen who came to call: “It’s now or never! Change your ways and come to Christ!”

We never got around to playing parts in Dickens’ tale around the living room; I just ran out of time. But I was blessed to ponder on my own the turnabout of Ebenezer Scrooge when he had seen the light and never turned back to the dark.

The passage that starts this column continues like this: “So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:12). God takes the guesswork out of New Year’s resolutions. The man who does so “is not afraid of bad news,” for “his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord” (Psalm 112:7). The woman who does so, “Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come” (Proverbs 31:25).

‘A Brighter Shade of Pale’

FROM PROCOL HARUM TO PRO-LIFE

Kids, put your hands over your ears! Mash-up Marvin is back.

Five years ago I had fun with the words of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” (“Take every song captive,” Dec. 29, 2012). Some loved my Biblically optimistic version. Others thought it a desecration of the best-known song by my favorite singer-songwriter. You can judge for yourself by asking on YouTube for “Hallelujah cover by Brian LoPiccolo” or “Hallelujah cover by Nathan Petersheim.”

Now I turn to another beautiful tune, “A Whiter Shade of Pale,” recorded by Procol Harum in 1967. The music itself was a melding of rock and Johann Sebastian Bach, with echoes of the great composer’s Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major, his organ chorale prelude “O man, lament your great sin,” and his cantata “I stand with one foot in the grave.”

“A Whiter Shade of Pale” was one of the rare singles to sell more than 10 million copies. Its combination of musical beauty and financial success, in an industry known for cheap thrills, is astounding. It’s an elegy that touches something deep inside me and others. I think the secret sauce is that one-foot-in-the-grave resonance.

In some way, though, the words—which deal with surface phenomena like drinking and playing cards—don’t rise up to the tragic splendor of the music. Leonard Cohen agonized over each syllable of “Hallelujah” and produced multiple versions, but Procol Harum lyricist Keith Reid said his wording “was just another bunch of lyrics. I had the phrase ‘a whiter shade of pale,’ that was a start, and I knew it was a song. It’s like a jigsaw where you’ve got one piece, then you make up all the others to fit it.”

Good for Reid: The music primarily made the hit. Procol Harum’s original music video used a church building to give it a Bach-like feel. Annie Lennox three decades later made the song a hit once again: Her video has her reeling as if drunk or stoned, and the song seems less tragic and more a hangover. But if all we’re mourning is a mixed-up night, where’s the pathos?

The Bible speaks of the bond between mother and child. So, with the imminent arrival of the 45th anniversary of a notorious Supreme Court decision, I wrote some words tying the elegiac music to our continuing tragedy. Picture Everywoman, a Jane, reeling as she confronts an unconfessed sin. Picture her new husband responding to an evangelical appeal, but Jane holds back as she thinks a holy God could never love a person like her.

Here’s “A Brighter Shade of Pale,” a tribute to Procol Harum—the first three lines are straight from its hit song, and the others stick close to the cadence—but a bigger homage to the God who created music and every human life:

We skipped the light fandango, turned cartwheels ‘cross the floor, / I was feeling kinda seasick, but the crowd called out for more.

The room was humming harder, as the ceiling flew away. / When soon the heavens opened, but we knew not what to say.

And so it was that later, as the Preacher told his tale, / That Jane’s face, at first just ghostly, turned a whiter shade of pale.

He said, ‘Our life is seasons, and our plans are vanity.’ / Then he taught us from the Bible. He would not let us be. Preached Ezekiel and Jonah—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. / In time my eyes were opened, but Jane’s stayed tightly closed.

And so it was for months more, through rain and snow and hail. / Her face remained so ghostly—still a whiter shade of pale. Jane finally told her story: Killed a baby in her womb. / So we read Ecclesiastes, and played this mournful tune.

A time to kill, a time to heal, a time to pray for grace. / Then she looked at me so sadly, while tears streamed down her face.

And so it was that later, as Jane wrote out this tale, / That her face, a long time ghostly, turned a brighter shade of pale.

I’ve sung it, but you wouldn’t want to hear my caterwauling. Please let me know if you take a crack at it on YouTube or elsewhere.
Send your student to a Worldview Academy Leadership Camp.

She'll come back with life-long friends, an unstoppable faith, and the devotion to live boldly for Christ.
See their video at mychristiancare.org/stories

“Medi-Share covered me in prayer in ways they didn’t even know.”
— Vanessa

Medi-Share
Affordable, Biblical Healthcare

More than 300,000 Christian members across America
Options for singles, families, groups, and seniors*
About half the cost of insurance
No enrollment period—you can join any time

VISIT Medi-Share.org OR CALL 844-34-BIBLE FOR A FREE INFORMATION GUIDE

Medi-Share is not health insurance. *Seniors must have Medicare parts A and B to qualify.