

Trends

Presbyterian woman “pastor” Rebecca Todd Peters argues in her new book (*Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice*) that Christians need to trust women to make their own decisions when it comes to abortion. Peters, an ordained Presbyterian minister, claims that not wanting a baby is “an imminently appropriate reason” for an abortion. I guess they rationalize abortion is not murder and the taking of “innocent blood” when they call it “Reproductive Justice.”

- via LifeNews.com

Isaiah 5:20-21: “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”

Sentence Sermons

“Too many people use abortion as a form of birth control. And that’s very wrong. I could never, ever have an abortion.”

—Brooke Shields

“I’ve noticed that everyone who is for abortion has already been born.”

—Ronald Reagan

News & Notes

Pray for one another: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (Jas. 5:16)

Please pray for the success of our upcoming gospel meeting with Ron Halbrook (Oct. 1-7). Also, take some flyers and invited relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Your attendance at every session is IMPORTANT! Support the meeting by being there!

Please pray for one another! “comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

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Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

John 6:68

Does Everything Happen For a Reason?

R. J. Evans



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Based on how often we hear the expression “Everything happens for a reason,” you would think the answer to our title would be a definite “yes.” Some time back, while watching a professional football player on TV being interviewed, and in commenting on his team’s loss, he remarked, “I know everything happens for a reason.” And I can think of many other examples and situations in which this statement is used even by members of the Lord’s church.

If we were able to go back to the 1500s and ask John Calvin the above question, his answer would certainly be in the affirmative. In fact, this kind of thinking that is so common among us today is Calvinism through and through, permeating almost every religious denomination. Calvin’s doctrine of Predestination, not only teaches that only certain ones have been chosen by God to be saved from eternity, but also teaches that every little insignificant incident in a person’s life

“having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,”

Ephesians 1:5

has all been predetermined by God. Some go so far as applying this to finding a parking space in a public parking lot.

Do I believe that certain things happen in a way in which God has designed. Absolutely! He foreordained from eternity that salvation would be obtained through Christ, in His body, which is His church. In fact, Paul spoke of this to the Ephesians: “... having predestined us ... as sons by Jesus Christ ... in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:5, 11; cp. Acts 2:23; Ephesians 3:10-11; 1 Peter 1:20). We serve a sovereign God.

But that does not rule out the fact that some things happen which have no impact on God’s ultimate goals. Thus, while God has decided in some areas what needed to happen, contrary to Calvinistic doctrine, He also allows things to hap-

pen as they may. To prove this point that many things happen at random or by chance, we turn to the words of the inspired wise man: *"I returned and saw under the sun that - The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all"* (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Again, some events randomly occur by simple *"time and chance"* (cp. 1 Samuel 6:9; 2 Samuel 1:6; Luke 10:31).

Of course, another factor would be the providence of God in answering our prayers. He can take bad things that happen in our lives and help them turn out for good. For instance, it was necessary for Paul to appeal to Caesar in order to save his own life. However, while a prisoner in Rome he was able to say, *"But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel"* (Philippians 1:12; Romans 8:28; cp. Joseph's statement in Genesis 50:20).

I am so thankful that, contrary to what John Calvin taught, we have the ability to choose our own eternal destiny. And of our own free will, we can become a member of God's family by obeying the gospel of Christ. In becoming a child of God, we then have the avenue of prayer where, He, through His providence, can intervene and work in our lives. But that is a far cry from the common usage of the expression, "Everything happens for a reason." If that were true of every little, small incident in our lives, then we could blame God and not take responsibility for any of our own actions.

So before you say, "Everything happens for a reason," give it some serious thought and ask yourself if you are using that expression in a scriptural manner. In one sense, there is a reason for everything that happens. For example, a person is in a car wreck. Is there a reason for it? Yes, perhaps the driver was driving on the wrong side of the road, drunk while driving, or a tire blew out, etc. Some huge oak trees fell down in my yard. Was there a reason for this happening? Yes, strong hurricane winds blew them over. But on the other hand, "Everything happens for a reason" with the idea that every detail in one's life has been predetermined by God is the doctrine of Calvinism. The scripture does not teach such. In fact, the phrase "Everything happens for a reason" is not found in the Bible.

Assisted Suicide

Larry Hafley

Under the headline, "Assisted suicide is all about care for the dying," the following argument for the clinical dispensing of death was made:

"A merciful gentle death when continued life is intolerable is a

kindness we routinely extend to pets, point out those who argue for making assisted suicide legal. Do not human beings deserve the same compassion" (Joan Beck, *Houston Chronicle*, January 12, 1997, p. 3C)?

First, the cases are not parallel. Some men do reach out and ask others to kill them. However, when my parents had to put the dearest dog in the world to death, old "Sam" was not requesting their aid. "Sam" was not seeking to kill himself. Further, when whales "beach" themselves and apparently seek their own demise, do scientists rush out to "assist" their "suicide" attempt? No, rather, they do everything in their power to keep the unfortunate beasts alive. According to the *Kervorkian* mentality, the scientists ought to run to the beaches and help the whales untie the knot that binds their spirit to the string of life. But to they do that? No. Therefore, the cases are not parallel.

Second, "we routinely" spay and neuter animals to control their reproduction. Do immoral, women who "routinely" bear children and increase government welfare rolls "deserve the same compassion?" If not, do the fathers? Farm animals are "routinely" castrated, but even when sex offenders ask to be castrated they are not shown "the same compassion." Liberal engineers of social justice go "hog wild" when someone suggests that an animalistic, sexual predator should be castrated (*"natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed"*--2 Pet. 2:12). Since "we routinely" castrate certain animals, should these also not be castrated? If not, then down goes the argument which equates putting a horse with a broken leg to "sleep" with the issue of "assisted suicide."

Third, "we routinely" declaw cats and other animals which destroy property with their claws. Since some human beings use certain of their body's parts to maim and murder, should "we routinely" show them "the same compassion" and cut off their offending members?

Fourth, "we routinely" make animals our slaves. We feed and shelter them and compel them to serve us. If the fact that "we routinely" put animals out of their misery justifies assisted suicide, does the use we have made of donkeys, oxen, and horses justify human slavery?

Conclusion: When men do not recognize their special creation in the image of God, and when they equate themselves with the beasts of the fields and forests, we may expect them to act and analyze accordingly. Some scientists believe that the more common threads we find between ourselves and the animal world, the better we will understand one another. Such "findings" have been used to justify everything from homosexuality to man's "natural tendency" to seek multiple sex partners. "We" contracted it from "them." In other words, "monkey see, monkey do," is that it? Yes, to them that is it. Sadly, for them, however, that is not all. Judgment awaits (Jude 15)!

"to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." —Jude 15