

## Trends

The share of Americans who identify as atheists has roughly doubled in the past several years. A recent study found that 3.1% of American adults say they are atheists, up from 1.6% in a similar survey in 2007. An additional 4.0% of Americans call themselves agnostics, up from 2.4% in 2007.

- via Pew Research Center

**Psalm 14:1:** "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

## Sentence Sermons

"You can't convince a believer of anything; for their belief is not based on evidence, it's based on a deep-seated need to believe."

—Carl Sagan, atheist

**Hebrews 11:1:** "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

"You keep believing, I'll keep evolving." —Bumper sticker

**Genesis 1:1:** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

## 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 invite 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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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

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

John 6:68

## Abortion: A Symptom of Selfishness

Jim Stauffer



As we discuss a very distasteful practice in current society, it is important for us to observe how we often arrive at things that are sinful in the eyes of God and over time become acceptable to men. Political Correctness may have its birth in something kind and considerate. It may well have demanded we not use vulgar "street language" to describe honorable things. Terms of denigration based on race or ethnicity or even gender are not acceptable nor should they be. Political Correctness has served us well in such areas. It does serve well when based on truth. We should not disparage one another with insensitive remarks or actions. Where it goes astray is the same as many other things and that is when it becomes based on opinion, even the opinion of the majority.

On January 22, 1973 the United States Supreme Court rendered a 7-2 decision granting the right to a woman to abort the life of an unborn child based on the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Bear in mind this was not legislated law with the approval of both the Senate and House of Representatives, it was a judgment by the Court. Essentially law was established by the Court and not the legislative body designed to pass such law. This was the first step in desensitizing this nation to the brutal slaughter of millions of innocent babies since.

While Scripture does not directly by name address the concept of abortion, it does clearly state principles of life and death and the corresponding causes. God gives life and it is to be treated as a blessing and when man takes such a life willingly it is condemned without ambiguity. When Zechariah says, "The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1), he makes it clear the spirit of life comes from God (see Gen. 2:7). Solomon says God is the one who makes the spirit to dwell in the unborn child (Eccl. 11:5).

The Bible condemns even the accidental death of an unborn fetus. Ex. 21:22: "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. 23 "But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." Tertullian, an author and commentator on Scripture who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

centuries in the Roman Province of Carthage said concerning this passage, “The embryo therefore becomes a human being in the womb from the moment that its form is completed. The law of Moses, indeed, punishes with due penalties the man who shall cause abortion, inasmuch as there exists already the rudiment of a human being, which has imputed to it even now the condition of life and death.”

When Mary visited Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist while Elizabeth was pregnant with John, it is said, the baby leaped in her womb at the sound of Mary’s greeting. The exact same word for “baby” is used in Luke 2 to describe Jesus as a baby who was already born. Both John the Baptizer and Jesus are referred to by the exact same word, “baby” (*brephos*), when John was yet unborn and Jesus had already been born. Whether life begins at conception is a point of discussion in our day and time and yet the Scripture has already answered the question for us. An unborn child is a living being designed for life and ultimately death at some time in the future. It is immoral for anyone to take that life when no wrong doing has occurred.

Jesus refers to small children as being innocent and appropriate for entrance into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18&19).

Consider contradictory scenarios posited here. A man can, out of anger, kick his pregnant wife in the midsection and cause the death of the unborn child. He will be charged with a crime and punished to the full extent of the law. Yet a man with an M.D. can take a surgical instrument and with a smile on his face kill the unborn child of a woman and be considered a model citizen.

One more illustration. The Bald Eagle is a national treasure and if one were even to take possession of an eagle’s egg, he has violated the law. Just taking possession, not destroying it. Ask yourself which life is of greater value, the unborn eagle or the unborn human?

Now, to the point of our discussion. What is the motivation for an abortion? Bear in mind we are talking about taking the life of one who has been given life by God. There are circumstances that men have used to justify it. A young woman who made a huge mistake in judgment and therefore should not have her life’s plans upset by the inconvenient intrusion of needing to care for a child. Some speak of situations where rape was the cause of the pregnancy and again, the woman should not be faced with that responsibility. Then there are simply accidental pregnancies with married couples. They had not planned for the child and he is “in the way” of plans they did make for their lives. In which of these cases did the child do something wrong and therefore warrant the death penalty? Anything that happens to me good or bad is not a reason for me to harm another living soul.

To combat this, those in favor of this horrible conduct have tried to argue life does not begin at conception. Medical advances have eliminated that argument, so they revert to the current argument. That is, a woman should have control over her own body and therefore deserves to have the right of choice. As my dear departed friend, Grant Clothier told me several times, she had the right of choice and she made one she now regrets. There is then, no second choice that will please the God of heaven who gave life to that unborn child.

We must recognize it is the self-centered to say, I want my life to be just as I plan it. No deed is more selfish than to refuse to love and care for your

child making all the parental sacrifices normal to that task. Don’t forget, we will give an account. (2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31).

## 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)!