

# LifeDate

Summer 2011

*A quarterly journal of life issue news and commentary from Lutherans For Life*

**LFL – Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life!**

## Adopted in Christ

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).

*Join us for our 2011 Lutherans For Life National Conference.  
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# Lutherans For Life

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**Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.**

## God Only Adopts Sons



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

***“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).***

The title to this piece may raise an eyebrow or two, particularly the finer and more attractive feminine brows. “More biblical male favoritism coming through,” some might say. Actually, it is just the opposite. It bestows a high honor upon women (and men) to be adopted by God as sons.

We find this honor expressed first in 4:6, **“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”** Jewish sons and fathers had a special relationship. Being adopted as God’s sons gives each one of us this special relationship. The Holy Spirit enables us to actually talk to God and address Him as Father. “Abba” is most likely Aramaic, and some say it is a more enduring and colloquial form of address. Whether it is or not, however, does not diminish the intimate rapport ascribed here to both women and men who, because they are adopted, can speak to God as Jesus did and call the Creator and Lord of the universe, Father.

Two points about the honor this verse gives to women come out in 4:7, **“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”** Being a son means no longer being a slave, “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world” (4:3b). When he

comes of age, a son becomes “owner of everything” (4:1). No longer enslaved, he can be involved in choices about property and livestock and other business transactions. No longer enslaved, God’s adopted sons can make choices in Christ that are good and God pleasing.

Best of all, being a son means receiving an inheritance. In the Jewish culture of the Old Testament, the norm was that only sons received an inheritance. In Christ’s kingdom, all He adopts are like sons because they all receive an inheritance—eternal peace and joy. Paul makes the same point at the end of chapter 3, **“... there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (3:28b-29).**

Those who would use “children” or “child” to translate these verses may have good intentions of fairness toward women, but, in fact, they miss the entire point for using “sons.” In the process, they actually are being very unfair to women. All of us, women and men, are adopted and seen and treated as God’s sons. We are not even His “adopted sons” but through the adoption process of Christ’s death and resurrection being applied to us by the Holy Spirit, we are His true sons.

By way of example, Lowell Highby, LFL’s Director of Communications, went through a laborious adoption process and adopted his son, Alex, from Russia. But we do not refer to Alex as Lowell’s adopted son or his son from Russia but as his son, his true son.

So, ladies, if you must raise your eyebrows, do so in wonder and awe. No greater honor or blessing could be given you, or anyone, than to be called a son of God in Jesus Christ.

## Called by Name

by Linda D. Bartlett  
www.titus2-4life.org



Abortion does not think about the future. Seventy-six million baby boomers could soon realize that their lives might become a burden because 53 million people who would have supported an aging population were aborted. That's an economic nightmare.

But, there's a more personal side to this nightmare. Each one of the 53 million boys and girls who have been aborted in the U.S. alone since 1973 had a name. **"... I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine"** (Isaiah 43:1b).

Abortion drops a name placed upon a unique and treasured person. It is a name known by God before all eternity for all eternity. It is a name of a boy or girl who would have impacted this world in ways we'll never know.

Abortion drops a name from a teacher's grade book; from 4-H or Boy Scouts or junior olympics; from schools of music, agriculture, or medicine; from the consumer index and first-time home ownership; from the tax rolls; from marriage, parenthood, and genealogies.

Abortion drops a name from baptism, confirmation, and the mission field.

There is an emptiness when a name is dropped by abortion. Women from every neighborhood, family, and congregation who've suffered the loss of an aborted child would explain this if only we'd listen. That's because a mother knows a child created and named by God can never be replaced.

God named each one of this nation's 53 million aborted children. For each

one He had a future and hope. Even though each would have been born into sin, God had for them a robe of righteousness because of what Jesus did on a cross for them. Our world is less because these children are not with us. Our world suffers when people created for purpose and called by name are considered "untimely," "inconvenient," or "fearful."

But, God has also named every mother who feared her child; who failed to see her child's future and hope; who, deceived by other voices, doubted that God is good and can be trusted in every circumstance. He waits with open arms for each mother with a broken and repentant heart. **"[M]y strength was dried up ... I acknowledged my sin to you ... and you forgave the iniquity of my sin"** (Psalm 32:4b-5). **"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool"** (Isaiah 1:18). **"Woman ... neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more"** (John 8:10-11).

A woman who faces the reality of her abortion is in need of someone else whom God has named. That person is you. It is me. We are friends. Comforters. Encouragers. We are imitators of the Good Shepherd who walks beside the heavy-hearted through a dark valley toward "goodness and mercy." A mother who mourns the loss of her child needs a Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18).

You and I must take care not to soften the seriousness of sin. This devalues the magnitude of God's forgiveness, bought and paid for by the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ. At the center of our forgiveness stands the cross of Christ. Forgiveness is costly. Our forgiveness cost the innocent Son of God His life. There is no forgiveness without blood being shed, without paying a price, with-



out the sacrifice of Christ. But, because of Jesus' sacrifice, sin cannot defeat us. Peter, a follower of Christ, sinned greatly, but he confessed his sin and received God's forgiveness. Through Jesus' forgiveness the Holy Spirit enabled Peter to live a changed life. That same power of the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel to change our lives—to enable us to live lives that reflect God's love for us and withstand the temptation of Satan, the world, and our sinful flesh.

You and I can love and accept people burdened by their sin, but only God, in Christ, can heal them. A woman who's suffered an abortion may believe that God has forgiven her, but has difficulty forgiving herself. Jesus is the key that opens the door and sets all sinners free. What was the process for David in Psalm 51? David was sorry for his sin, confessed that sin, turned from that sin, received God's forgiveness, and was restored from sin. Then he rejoiced over God's healing touch of forgiveness and was eager to witness to others of God's great forgiveness. You and I can assure those who grieve that the memory of their aborted child will remain with them, but, **"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"** (Lamentations 3:22-23).

**Word of Hope** knows that God has called each child by name. We grieve their loss, but entrust them to God. We also know that He has called every mother, father, grandparent, and care-giving friend by name. Please pray we encourage all in a manner that honors the One who named us.

*For more information about Word of Hope or its mentoring ministry, Titus 2 for Life, please call Grace at (888) 217-8679 or Linda at (641) 648-3785.*

## Abortion is the Number One Killer of Children in the World



**In the USA alone,  
53,310,822 babies have been  
killed by abortion since 1973.  
The number grows every day.**

Source: National Right to Life Committee



**Every day, women and men  
are left hurting  
and grieving  
due to an abortion decision.**

## Christ and Adoption

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



God only has one “natural” child. He adopted all the rest.

**But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5).**

We were neither conceived nor born as God’s children. We were “illegitimate” children conceived and born in sin. We were children of slavery, “held captive under the law” (3:23) and “enslaved to the elemental principles of the world” (4:3). We were doomed to die as such children.

But God made an adoption plan for us. Even before time began, this loving plan of adoption was in place. **“He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will” (Ephesians 1:4-5).** Then when everything was just right, when “the fullness of time had come,” the plan unfolded.

It was a loving plan. **“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).** Out of love, God wanted what was best for us; so He sent the best for us, His only Son.

It was a sacrificial plan. **“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).** Jesus humbled Himself to be born under the law and to be **“obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8).**

It was an expensive plan. **“You were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20).** Blood was required. Suffering and forsakenness also went into the purchase price of redeeming those “who were under the law.”

It was a glorious plan. **“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Galatians 4:7).** Adopted sons are no different than

sons. They have an inheritance coming, eternal life with the Father. That’s why “sons” is used here and not “children.” In those days sons received the inheritance. Paul makes the point that those who God adopts—men,

women, boys and girls—all have the full right of sons, all have eternity waiting.

### Christians and Adoption

Adoption is not always seen in a good light. Pregnant teens who are nervously but seriously considering abortion become very adamant when adoption is mentioned. “Oh, I could never give my baby up for adoption!” Even well-meaning Christians may contribute to the problem. “What mother would give away her baby?” The perception is that adoption is abandonment, a bad choice that is not very loving.

There is a need to shed some good light on adoption. Perhaps looking at

Apart from Christ,  
all God’s children are adopted.



it in the light of our adoption in Christ will help.

### **Making a Plan**

Making a plan for placing a child in the loving arms of adoptive parents is not easy, but it is far from abandonment. Often times it is best for all involved. These days, a variety of plans can be made. Adoptions can be as open or as closed as the mother may desire. Even before the child is born, plans can be made for baptism, selecting Christian parents, and setting up the degree of openness desired. Making an adoption plan is not “giving a baby up.” It’s giving a baby the best future possible for him or her.

### **A Loving Plan**

True love, as demonstrated by God in Christ, considers what is best for another before considering what is best for self. Making an adoption plan for a baby is an act of great love. Certainly parenting may be a loving option, especially if there is maturity and levels of support. But love asks what is best for the baby. Often the loving choice of an adoption plan ends up being best for all involved.

### **A Sacrificial Plan**

Lovingly putting others first led Jesus to the great and ultimate sacrifice. Making an adoption plan is difficult emotionally. It requires sacrifice. Other plans may have to be put on hold for awhile as plans are made for a new life and a new future. But just as the sacrifice of Christ ultimately resulted in much good, so the sacrifice of adoption can result in much good. A life is saved, new life is given, a family is found for a child, and the birth mother

can know, that in serving her child and sacrificing for what is best for that child, she is serving Christ. She can move forward in hope and joy.

### **An Expensive Plan**

Practically speaking, adoption can be very expensive these days. Parents wanting to adopt sometimes find such expenses prohibitive. This is where the body of Christ can help. Instead of just promoting adoption as a loving and life-giving option, congregations can make efforts to help fund couples seeking to adopt. They can support agencies that assist in the adoption planning and process. We were worth it to God! Helping birth moms make an adoption plan and helping couples adopt is worth it as well!

### **A Glorious Plan**

The desired outcome of God’s adoption plan for us is heaven. That is the ultimate concern for the Christian as well. When a child is

conceived, whatever the circumstances, a Christian’s first concern is for that child’s salvation. Subsequent decisions and plans need always to bear this in mind. Again, an adoption plan gives opportunity to place a child in an environment that will nurture and uphold that child’s eternal welfare.

There are many perspectives from which to view adoption. Perhaps we Christians will find needed strength and encouragement and hope when we view it through our adoption by God in Christ. Apart from Christ, all His children are adopted. He must know something about it!

*(This article is available in brochure form at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org); Item LFL504B.)*



## The Blessings of Adoption

by Kay L. Meyer



Over the years I've met many adoptive parents, as well as children who have been adopted. They understand the blessings of adoption.

I remember meeting an adoptive father at a fund-raising event some years ago. It took only a few minutes of conversation before he showed me his two sons pictures. He radiated joy and excitement as he talked about how much he and his wife loved them. Later, we talked about their birth mothers. He shared, "I am so thankful that the birth mothers of my two sons didn't have an abortion. I often think about them and how hard a decision this must have been. My wife and I wrote them a letter. We told them how thankful we are that they loved their sons enough to release them for adoption! Our sons are a precious gift from God."

The following is another story about an adoptive father who understood the blessings of adoption.

A Director of Christian Education (DCE) came by our exhibit last summer at the LCMS convention. We quickly learned he was an adoptive father and had an 11-month-old son. He was excited about being a father and shared

with me how he and his wife got their son. "My wife and I had just learned we couldn't have children of our own and had decided to adopt. A few days later I walked into my church and the secretary told me a pastor from a neighboring congregation had called and asked for prayers because he had just taken in a 16 year old pregnant teen. The DCE called the pastor and got his voice mail. He left this message, "You only met me once, but I'd like to know what the teenager you have taken in is going to do? Is

she thinking of releasing her baby for adoption? You see, my wife and I want to adopt a child. We can't have children of our own. I'd love to meet her."

A few weeks later he and his wife met the teen and the pastor. It took time, but eventually this teenager decided to release her baby into this couple's care and allowed them to adopt her child. Of course, they went through an adoption agency. The DCE told me that he

and his wife were at the hospital for the baby's delivery. The adoptive father was the first person to hold him after he was born.

Three days later the baby was baptized at the birth mother's home congregation. You see, the pastor who took the teenager in, the birth mother, and the adoptive father were all adopted themselves. They knew the blessings of adoption and wanted to pass that blessing on. They also understood that through baptism God would make the child His own





and give him faith. The birth mother's pastor performed the baptism. The birth mother, who was Lutheran, knew that she gave her baby physical life. Now she was able to see him receive new birth through his baptism and release him into the loving hands of his adoptive parents. They would love him as she had been loved by her adoptive parents.

Have you ever noticed that adoptive parents are usually the best advocates of adoption? They understand the joys of adoption. They know how much they love the child. Adoption is a wonderful gift for parents and children alike.

God made this child His through baptism. And God makes us His own as he adopts each of us. Our Heavenly Father adopted each of us and made us His children through the suffering, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Here are a few Bible verses that speak of adoption:

**“[Y]ou have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba, Father’”** (Romans 8:15b).

**“[W]e wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies”** (Romans 8:23b).

**“They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises”** (Romans 9:4).

**“[H]e predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will”** (Ephesians 1:5).

**“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who**

**were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5).

As I think about adoption and parenting I can't help but think about Joseph, the father of Jesus Christ. Although he is never referred to as Jesus' adoptive father in the New Testament, he was not Jesus' biological father. But, he was a Godly man and helped Mary raise the Lord's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Although we don't know a lot about Joseph, what we do know shows us that he loved God and listened to Him and the angel, and took wonderful care of Mary and Jesus, even in difficult circumstances.

When the angel told Joseph not to divorce Mary, he listened and did what the angel said. He believed God.

**“[A]n angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod”** (Matthew 2:13b-15a).

Some have suggested that Joseph and Mary may have had to use the gold and other gifts that the wise men had given Jesus to pay for the travel expenses. Later the angel told Joseph it was safe to return, so the family did.

The blessing of adoption is about infants, children, families, and being a part of God's family.

**Adopted in Christ** is the theme of the LFL national conference in Dallas, Texas, August 5-6, 2011. Find out more at [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org).

## Able to Be Adopted



by Russ Krube

One thing that warms my heart is seeing a baby interact and bond with his or her mother. Having a child is a wonderful privilege, and within which a natural God-ordained bond occurs. It is not hard to see that bond as mom and baby are together. This love is the purest state that we will see here on earth. That could be a taste of what our relationships in heaven will be like. This relationship, though, does not best reflect the relationship that we have with our Lord here on the earth. We have been adopted into His wonderful family.

I have worked in a children's home in the central part of Mexico for over 20 years. I live with and see children who have been, for many reasons, broken off from this beautiful parent-child scenario. Children long to be bonded with that pure love mentioned above, but many go through life with an emptiness or a feeling of being unloved. True unconditional love that has its roots in God's word can pass through that hurting place in their hearts, creating solid ground for these little ones to go on in life.

Many homes have this bond broken because of errors on the part of the parents. These broken homes leave children with very damaged little hearts. Some of these children remain in broken homes, with a relative, or in an institution. These options can rarely offer that heavenly bond that exists in a loving, stable home. A few of these children have the opportunity of adoption. This is where the similarities start when we talk about a relationship with God.

The adoption process starts with a couple or maybe a person who is seeking to adopt a child. They have thought it through and counted the cost as they came to their decision to adopt. The desire and love overshadow the challenges of the adoption issue. A deep desire is seen within the adopting parents to have their child. Love is present for their yet unseen or even unknown child. An unconditional love has been born and is now ready to grow.

Most of the adoptable children do not really know love or understand what it is to be part of a loving family. Their concepts of love are distorted. Their lives are full of fear, rejection, and pain. Still, a match is made and the process works through to the end, with the result of a child being given the gift of a new loving home. Now, that new-born unconditional love has come together with an unloved child.

This should be like a "match made in heaven" when that so desperately-needing-of-love child comes into that very thing that he or she is looking for, but sadly it is often a very difficult road that this new family must travel. Curiously, accepting being loved is a difficult thing.

Does this sound to you like our relationship with God? God is like the adopting parent who is so anxious to receive his or her new precious gift. We are like the adopted child who struggles with understanding God's love. Many reject something so much better and stay in their emptiness. God has offered us unconditional love. We receive it through God's gift of faith, or we reject it in unbelief.

Being adopted is not cutting off the old. It is something new added that makes life so much better.

## A Few Faces from the Casa de Ninos Children's Home



Russ Krube has dedicated his life to a children's home in Tepic, Mexico since 1989. Learn more at Russ's blog: [russellalan.blogspot.com/](http://russellalan.blogspot.com/).

## LFL Spanish Resources!

**Amor Real/Vida Real** - This unique x 6" 10-panel fold out brochure (made possible by a grant from the Texas LWML) covers fetal development, abortion facts, love and friendship, teen pregnancy, STDs, purity/chastity and sexuality, and safe choices.

**Spanish: Item LFL615T-S. \$0.75 ea.**



**Tips for Teens On How to Say "No"** – Topics include: making a commitment, things to avoid, planning ahead, values, breaking off a relationship, waiting to date, who to date, and being friends first. **Spanish: Item 602T-S. \$0.25 ea.**



**Watch Me Grow** – This beautifully illustrated brochure documents the growth stages of a baby for nine months in the womb. Appropriate for all ages. **Spanish: Item LFL125T-S. \$0.50 ea.**



**What About the Facts of Life?** – This excellent full-color fold-out brochure will help answer questions about fetal development. **Spanish: Item LFL113T. \$0.70 ea.**

**Order at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org).**

## Ezer Meets Agnostic: A True Story

by Linda D. Bartlett  
[www.titus2-4life.org](http://www.titus2-4life.org)



*Ezer* is the Hebrew word for “helper.” God created woman to be a “helper.” It is, shall we say, a woman’s vocation. An *ezer* is in good company. In John 14:16, Jesus called the Holy Spirit “Helper.” “Helper” or *parakletos* in Greek, means “comforter” or someone who appears on another’s behalf—an advocate. In this story, the *ezer*’s name is Linda.

An agnostic is someone who believes we can neither prove nor disprove God. In this story, the agnostic is a man named Bill who has a PhD in biology. It is the self-defined agnostic who initiates dialogue with a Christian *ezer*.

Who introduced *Ezer* to Agnostic? A chivalrous boy named Joel Northrup. *Ezer*, privately and publicly, had been following the social experiment of girls wrestling boys for many years. When Joel took a stand on his faith and forfeited his state tournament match against a girl, he caught national attention. *Ezer* couldn’t miss the opportunity to post a number of blogs commending young Joel and pointing out that “equal” does not mean “the same.” It was in this way that Agnostic found *Ezer*.

The topic of girls wrestling boys may not appear to be a “life issue.” But, it is. Years ago, *ezer* Linda realized that abortion is, at its core, a fearful and selfish

choice. A woman who chooses abortion often feels trapped and, failing to trust God, is unable to see beyond herself to her tiny neighbor. Abortion is a social experiment mentored by the philosophy of “my body, my choice” and “my rights before others.” Abortion is not natural. It ignores God’s call to “choose life, not death.” It is not a woman acting well in her role of *ezer*. She is helping—but to bring death rather than life. Abortion kills a child, but it also wounds the mother and society as a whole.

Girls wrestling boys is also a fearful and selfish choice. A girl who chooses to



wrestle boys may feel trapped by “unfair” boundaries of sexism and, failing to trust God, is unable to see beyond herself to her male neighbor. Girls wrestling boys is a social experiment mentored by the philosophy of “my body, my choice” and “my rights before others.” But, nature itself does not support girls wrestling boys. This most physi-

cally intimate of all sports requires that two people grope and grapple until one overpowers the other. It disregards God’s design of equal, but different sexes. It is not a woman acting well in her role of *ezer*. She is helping—but to encourage brutality rather than respect. Girls who wrestle boys abuse the relationship between male and female, wound both psychologically and spiritually and, consequentially, take society on a dangerous course.

God’s Word speaks to the issues of fear, selfishness, and distorted male and female relationships. Interestingly



enough, the perspective of Bill, an agnostic, parallels God's Word. He just doesn't know it—yet. So, here is the moral of this story. Ordinary, grassroots people are needed in a confused and hurting world to speak sane and sensible Truth. We are compelled by God's very Spirit to ask the questions that help people think. It's time to think beyond ourselves to consider what we're passing on to our children and grandchildren. With confidence in the Word, gentle persuasion and care for others, we must first listen, then speak and act in ways that help others in Jesus' name and to His glory.

Christians can help build bridges for life when we enter into respectful dialogue on moral and ethical issues—when we appeal to what was once called “common” sense and put aside our agenda and let the Spirit open—or close—doors.

**It is important to find common ground.** Bill, the agnostic, told Ezer, “I believe in self-sacrifice for others, in kindness, in consideration for others before myself. I remember the mantra of our YMCA boys' camp: God first, others second, me third. Today, as we watch boys and girls in violent combat on wrestling mats, that mantra seems to have become ‘Me first, me first, me first.’”

**Common ground provides good soil for growth.** Bill explained, “Even as an agnostic biologist, I think your Christian values are essential to any civilization that wants to live above the animal level of material-sensual gratification.”

**We need not fear dialogue when trusting God.** Ezer recognized that Bill had a natural respect for the equal but different roles of men and women. So, she took the plunge (why not?). She explained to Bill the source of her identity.

**Even when someone is not familiar with the Word, they may see and hear It from those who use It.** Bill explained

to Ezer that he had left the scientific community to become an author. After time passed, he wanted to get back in touch with biologists, so he subscribed to the blog of an evolutionist. “Christianity was dismissed as sheer stupidity,” said Bill, “without any redeeming value.” This made him “uncomfortable in this steady current of arrogant meanness,” so he unsubscribed. Bill told Ezer that he didn't agree with such hatred being poured upon an institution (Christianity) “that embraced all of life, from birth to death, from reason to faith, from beauty and goodness to ugliness and evil.”

This ezer is grateful that young Joel puts the word of 1 Timothy 4:12 into action: **“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set ... an example in speech, in conduct ... in faith, in purity.”** Bill explained that just as he was feeling uncomfortable with the attacks on Christianity, a “wrestling incident occurred.” “Because the young man cited his Christian faith, it catapulted the small, cloistered world of wrestling into the national spotlight and presented to view the grotesque, distorted values that have evolved there. It seems like a microcosm of society at large and the moral decadence we have enshrined as moral good. And against all this, the best aspects of Christianity began to emerge from the smoke—the dignity, the calm, the pure, measured decency of 2000 years of Christian ‘evolution’ (can't help myself!).”

A chivalrous boy, an agnostic biologist, and an ezerwoman. What an unlikely trio! But, in the words of Bill, the agnostic, “there's that persistent God again!”

*(To learn more about the opportunities for ezerwomen in today's world, please visit [www.titus2-4life.org](http://www.titus2-4life.org) or [www.ezerwoman.wordpress.com](http://www.ezerwoman.wordpress.com). Helpful Bible studies for ezers, young and old, include “Dressing for Life: Secrets of the Great Cover-up” and “Men, Women and Relationships. Both are available from [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org) through [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org).)*

## Father's Day

by Rev. John Henderson



The classic image of a father is a man who cares for and protects his family. I know people argue about this, but deep down it seems to be what most men want when they become fathers: to be strong and reliable, and to be there for their children.

Being a father can be pretty tough. Having a child is only a small part of it. It takes years, even a lifetime, to grow into the role of father. You learn on the job, there's no manual, and you make a lot of mistakes. You don't get a complete role description, certainly

not before you start. If you had a good father yourself, then you have a head start. If you struggled with your own father, then it's doubly tough. We tend to model our behavior on our own father or father figure, and act the same way we saw them acting when we were young. If he was a good role model, then it can work out okay. If he was a poor role model, then we are in danger of hurting and damaging the very people we love the most.



One of the most challenging things about being a father is that you have to learn it on your own. So much is unspoken. Things are expected of you, but you aren't always sure what they are. You expect things of yourself—sometimes too much. When should you give in, when should you stand your ground, or when should you negotiate? How much time is it okay to spend at work, or at sport, or at the pub? When should you be with your family, and when is it okay to be away? What about doing all those things

that a man is supposed to do—family life can be good, but it can also feel restrictive. As a father, am I ready to change; to give up some of who I was, for who I need to be now? How much can I adapt to what's going on around me? How much do I

shape it, and how much does it shape me? Perhaps the scariest part, the really awesome part, is watching your children grow to be both like you and not like you. Allowing them to be who they are, to take responsibility for themselves and show glimpses of what is good in you, what you have taught them, while we hope they haven't learned too much of what is not so good. Your children are part of you and you are part of them, but they are individuals with a life of their

own. They grow up to become independent—just like you did.

Ultimately, fatherhood is a sacred role and trust. These days we don't think much like that. Perhaps the best way to understand this sacredness is to watch our reactions when we know that something is deeply, fundamentally wrong. We might not understand what sacred is, but we do understand what it is not. When a parent abuses someone in their care, or when a father takes the life of a child who trusted him, we recoil with horror. We shudder when the sacred bond of fatherhood is broken—it repulses us. Perhaps this shows there is something about being a father that is deep inside. We know intuitively what is involved and when the boundary is crossed.

Fatherhood is more than repeating social conditioning, a physical act, or a genetic code. Fatherhood is a sacred place, a trust we receive. We don't invent it, we receive it, and it doesn't begin or end with us. Human fathers, we know, grow old and weak while our children still seem to be young. We face death just like everyone. There are limits on our fatherhood. We do know of a father, however, who doesn't face these limitations.

Father is one of the main names that Christians have for God. We learnt it from Jesus, God's Son. It's become so commonplace that we don't remember how utterly daring it is to call God "Father." This name means that we have a claim on God, just like children have a claim on their earthly fathers. Just like a human father, God gives His children what is good, the very best He has. This is what we are asking for when we call God "Father"—we want the very best. Just as children share a common identity with their human fathers, so we have a common identity with God! Our heav-

enly Father is part of who we are.

We can claim God, go to God, and ask God. This is just like when our children ask us for what they need. We human fathers want to say 'yes' whenever possible. Loving our children can be so powerful that it hurts, especially when they are hurt. We would gladly swap places with them, even though we know they have to make their own mistakes, and live their own lives. We still want to make everything okay for them.

Just like human fathers love their children no matter what, so God loves us, no matter what. Whatever it is, whatever is wrong, even if it's something we have deliberately done or know is wrong but can't stop doing, God still loves us. The sacred trust between us is the most important thing in the end. It's the relationship that makes all the difference.

This relationship with God remains true even if we deny it, ignore our Father, or cut ourselves off from Him. The reality of God being Father, and us being God's children, is still there. Just as our children are part of us, and we are part of them, so our heavenly Father is part of us, and we are part of Him.

As we celebrate Father's Day this year, we can spare a thought for our Heavenly Father. Better still, spare Him a prayer. Say thank you for all the blessings we have, and ask Him for whatever you need. He will only give you the very best.

*(From [www.facetoface.org.au](http://www.facetoface.org.au), 9/5/10. Used by permission.)*

Men and fatherhood resources from LFL, available through [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org), include *Biblical Manhood* (LFL304B), *Called to Remember* (LFL302BS; *Men, Fathers, Family and Life Issues* (LFL300A; and *For Men Only* (LFL303T).

# Adoption Option Resources from Lutherans For Life

Order at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org).

## BOOKLETS

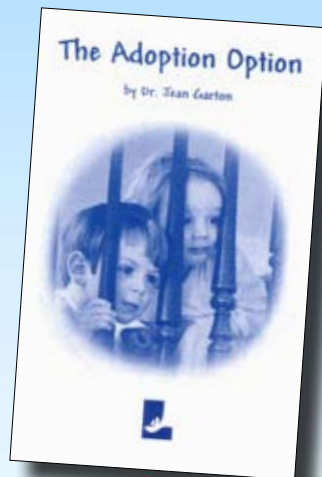
**Adoption: Finding  
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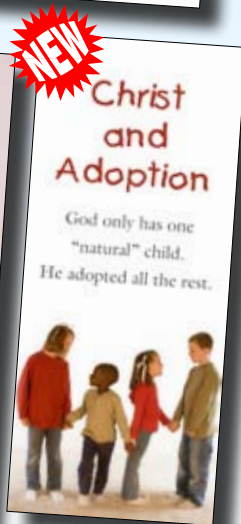
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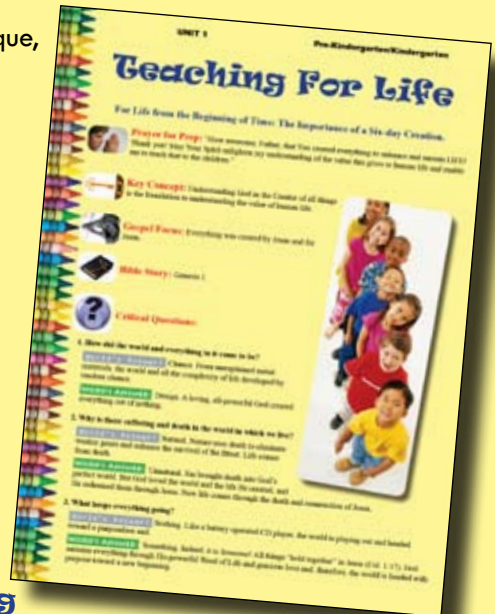
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[www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)



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[www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)

Help apply God's Word to the life issues! Consider purchasing **Teaching For Life®** for your favorite teacher or school!

## When the Going Gets Tough

by Pastor Richard Mau



The Twenty Third Psalm begins with the words, “The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” It would have to be one of the most recognized, loved, and used passages in the Bible. You hear it at all sorts of special occasions, marking milestones in people’s lives. It is memorized by many early in life and is a constant source of strength during their lives. It is recalled by many, when they are sick or dying. As a parish pastor, many of my parishioners have gained much comfort, as together we shared these special words. Even at the age of 99 years, my own mother loved to recite this psalm as we prayed together.

**“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever”** (Psalm 23 NIV).

It has been put to music and is a favorite song and hymn sung by Christians worldwide. It is used at weddings, at

special anniversaries, to encourage and to reassure people of God’s presence in their lives, and it gives comfort and hope to many at funerals, when remembering the one who has passed on into eternal life. For those of you who enjoy watching the *Vicar of Dibley*, it is part of the music used to introduce each episode.

You could think that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm offers an easy and protected life to anyone who follows Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. That Jesus Christ offers to carry his people, like cuddly soft lambs when the going gets tough. But that’s not what this Psalm offers. It is very practical. Our Lord and Shepherd promises to be with us, to help us through the tough times, not necessarily to take them away. So when we are going through difficult times, we don’t have to feel let down and on our own.

The person who wrote these words was a shepherd, who later became a powerful king. When describing his relationship with God, he drew on his experience as a shepherd. He recalled the times when he had to rescue his sheep from attacks by lions and bears.

King David was thinking about the history of his people. Years before, God had rescued them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness, guiding them finally into the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. There, he promised to live among them forever. God had kept and fulfilled His promise and would continue to care for them in spite of their circumstances.

As we are often reminded, life wasn’t meant to be easy. Their circumstances would be tough. They would need to rely on their Lord to survive the tough times. He knew what they needed. A shepherd uses his expertise to locate essentials like food and water and his sheep rely absolutely on him. So God’s people needed

to trust Him. Their journey would take them through the valley of the shadow of death. Enemies would be waiting to attack. Evil was an ongoing reality and they would need to grapple with fear.

This psalm assures us, as people of God today, that we should never for a moment doubt that God loves us, or fail to receive His grace and mercy, so freely offered. He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Shepherd. He has all the experience needed to know and understand what we are going through, no matter how difficult our circumstances might be. After all, He has been through it all, from birth to death. He knows precisely what we are going through and just how tough things can be. The going was far tougher for Him than it is for us. He suffered at the hands of Jews and Romans and was finally deserted by God His father, as He hung dying on the cross at Calvary. It had all been predicted years before by the prophet Isaiah when he wrote: **“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”** (Isaiah 53:3 NIV).

But He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while, we thought His suffering was punishment sent by God.

But because of our sins He was wounded, beaten—because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment He suffered, made whole by the blows He received.

All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the Lord made the punishment fall on Him, the punishment all of us deserved.

After Jesus Christ had paid the price for our sins on the cross, on Easter morn-

ing God raised him back to life. So, we have been delivered from sin’s guilt and its eternal consequences and have been granted everlasting life through the risen Jesus. However, the joy of deliverance does not exempt us from pain and suffering in this life because we still live in a discordant, disjointed, tragic, sin-ridden world. So, until we pass onto the next life in which we will be perfectly united with Jesus, we will need to continue to rely on our Good Shepherd to help us when the going gets tough. The 23rd Psalm assures us that we can trust Him to provide us with the strength to endure the toughest of circumstances. He comforts us and gives us hope as we experience God’s generous provision.

This psalm has been my constant companion through many of life’s struggles. It has also played a major role in the lives of many of the people whom I’ve served as pastor over the years, as they’ve struggled with being faithful servants of Jesus, wherever they were. Sometimes we faced up to and worked through sickness or damaged relationships, or we said farewell to loved ones, as they passed on to eternal life with the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. I pray that it may continue to comfort me with the assurance that when the going gets tough, Jesus, the great Shepherd of his sheep, will also lead me through the valley of the shadow of death here on earth and will one day, lead me into my eternal home with Him, after I die. I pray that you, too, may share that same hope.

**“Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”** (NIV).

*(From [www.facetoface.org.au](http://www.facetoface.org.au), 11/14/10. Used by permission.)*

### **The Sydney Anglican Archbishop has used his Easter message to indirectly criticize campaigners for euthanasia.**

In his annual address, Reverend Peter Jensen criticized the campaigner's phrase "death with dignity" by saying death in any circumstance can never be dignified. He says for Christians, the real hope is beyond death in the victory of Jesus Christ. "I can take the idea of a heroic death, a quiet death, an early death, even a peaceful death," he said. "But death with dignity? It just seems like a cover-up." Dr. Jensen says Jesus' crucifixion is an example of the most undignified death. "I can't think of one worse than crucifixion," he said. "It was capital punishment designed to humiliate and intimidate." (*www.abc.net.au*, 4/22; *John Smeaton*, 4/26)

**A girl with brain cancer has been cured using umbilical-cord stem cells, says a stem-cell bank in Spain.** The bank says it is the first such cure in Spain. The use of umbilical-cord stem cells are an ethical alternative to using embryonic stem cells. (*CNS*, 3/8; *SPUC*, 3/10)

**A recent European court ruling could threaten the future of the embryonic stem cell (ESC) industry in the United Kingdom, scientists contend.** The European Court of Justice is considering whether to impose a ban on research using human embryonic stem cells on moral grounds—saying it breaches ethical principles with its immoral "industrial" use of human embryos. Judge Yves Bott, the advocate general assigned to the case, recommended the ban. A group of 13 leading ESCR scientists—including clone pioneer and "Dolly the Sheep" creator Professor Ian Wilmut—published a letter in the journal *Nature*

outlining their concerns. A halt, they wrote, could be catastrophic on the multi-billion pound European biotech industry, the UK economy, and patients. The legal ruling is expected within weeks by the European Court of Justice's "grand chamber." (*www.Guardian.co.uk*, 4/27; *CLR Life News*, 4/28)

**A Dutch pro-euthanasia group (NVVE) plans to open a clinic in 2012 to assist people to end their lives.** The eight-person facility would allow death on demand for 1,000 persons each year. The clinic would welcome those with terminal illnesses, as well as people with chronic psychiatric conditions. The Dutch medical association opposes the clinic. Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands under certain conditions. (*BioEdge*, 1/26; *CLR Life News*, 2/10)



**The International Protect Life Committee, consisting of over 30 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has given Chile an award for the country's success in protecting both mothers and unborn children.** The award

recognized that Chile has the lowest maternal mortality rate in Latin America, at the same time that its laws and policies promote the health of unborn children. Abortion is banned in Chile. Ambassador Octavio Errazuriz was extremely pleased at the award. The ambassador repeated Chile's commitment to the protection of both mothers and unborn children. (*SPUC*, 2/25)



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Learn all about the 2011 National  
Lutherans For Life National  
Conference and register online at  
[www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org).  
Early bird discount through May 31.

## LFL National Conference!



## Be an Ambassador For Life

by Jerilyn Richard,  
RFL Coordinator



To be an Ambassador for Christ seems such a simple request. We have many opportunities to share the “mystery of the gospel.” We live in a hurt and fallen world that needs to hear this message so desperately. How do we effectively touch the lives of those in desperate situations, or even complacency in our own congregation? This can be a challenge for all of us when we strive to connect the Truth of God’s Word to the life issues.

**Renewal For Life®** is in existence to aid in this very mission. Our hope is to provide a wide variety of materials to help pastors and Life Advocates in their mission to “make supplication for all the saints, and proclaim the mystery of the Gospel,” with help through the RFL online library and Forum. Every mission field, whether it’s across the world, or in our own community, should be surrounded with prayer. Connect-



# Renewal For Life

ing the body of believers through prayer can be powerful and life changing. And through the RFL Forum, those connections can be made. Each group (pastors, Life Advocates, etc.) can post a prayer need in the Forum and in return receive support, encouragement, and prayer through brothers in sisters in Christ with the same mission.

RFL’s mission is to “equip congregations to be Gospel-motivated voices for life.” Your mission’s focus is unique to the needs of your congregation. We want to help you determine what that focus is, and once that is established, provide a wide variety of tools and resources to help you be equipped and ready to be an Ambassador for Christ in your congregation.

For more information on how your congregation can become involved in RFL, or if you have any questions, please contact the RFL Team at the Life Center.



“[A]nd take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:17-20).





**Adopted in Christ** is the theme for the 2011 Lutherans For Life National Conference. We're excited to be going to the Dallas, Texas, area to learn more about the ministry of adoption and about our place in God's family as His heirs with all the rights of inheritance!

One way in which funding is raised for our National Conference is by sponsoring a witness message in the conference book.

Witness messages are available in the following sizes: ¼ page for \$60; ½ page for \$100; full-page for \$175; and a two-page spread for \$300.

You can download a Witness Sponsorship Contract at [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org).

If you wish to support the conference with a cash donation or purchase a copy of the Conference Witness Book, provisions for that are included on the contract. If you have any questions please contact Trisha Adams at 888.364.LIFE or [tadams@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:tadams@lutheransforlife.org).

Also available on the 2011 conference page at the LFL website is info on being an exhibitor.

## Give a Life Insurance Policy and Help LFL!

**If you have a paid-up life insurance policy, you might be able to give that donation on a tax-favored basis.**

Many of us purchased life insurance when we were young. Now that we're older, we may not need it. If this describes your situation, you can use that life insurance to make a significant charitable gift to LFL or another charitable organization of your choice. Here's how:

1. Name Lutherans For Life as the beneficiary of an existing policy—either sole beneficiary, or co-beneficiary, or a contingent beneficiary.
2. Donate an obsolete policy, one that you no longer need for its original intent.
3. Or buy a new policy and donate it to a charitable organization like ours, then continue to pay the premiums. The donations to Lutherans For Life for the premiums are generally deductible on your income tax return.
4. Replace a bequest with life insurance, so you can make a substantial contribution now without reducing your family's eventual inheritance.

Life insurance is an asset that allows a donor who doesn't have large estate assets to make a significant gift. To learn more contact Kay Meyer of Lutherans For Life at 515.441.6571.



Lutherans For Life  
resources are now  
available at [www.cph.org!](http://www.cph.org!)



## Making the Best Gift to LFL

*by Jim Schroeder,  
Christian Estate  
Planning Counselor*



“How can I make my best gift to Lutherans For Life through my estate?”

This question is one that you as a Christian steward may ask when you get ready to prepare your estate plan. There are many factors to consider when making this decision. You will want to consider your family situation, the types of assets that God has given you to manage, and the different types of charitable gift instruments that are available to you. I know this sounds like a lot to consider but it really is quite simple when you allow a professional gift planning counselor to assist you with your planning.

As Christians, we believe that God has created a special plan for each of our lives. He adopts us into His family at our Baptism. The Holy Spirit will be our guide as we discover God’s plan for us. We cannot take any credit for this as it is God who is working through each one of us to benefit our families and the ministries that He has put into our lives including Lutherans For Life.

As I visit with you about your goals for your estate plan here are some of the things we will discuss:

**Your Family** – I will ask you to tell me about your spouse if you have one, your children and grandchildren, and even your extended family. We will talk about each individual and your relationship to them. What do you believe God wants you to do for them in your estate plan? How old are your chil-

dren? How will your family manage the assets that you will transfer to them?

**Your Estate Assets** – I will assist you in making a list of the assets, how they are titled, their value, and any beneficiary designations that you have made for them. We will discuss your goals for these assets during your life and at your death.

**Gift Planning Ideas for Your Favorite Ministries** – I will share with you a few different gift planning ideas to allow you to continue your support for your favorite ministries after you die and go to be with the Lord. I will assist you in deciding which ministries you would like to support and the type of gift you would like to make.

After assisting you in setting your goals for your family and your favorite ministries, I will assist you in completing your plans. This is where the planning process gets bogged down for many families. They are tempted to think that once they have decided what they want that their work is done. I can assist you in scheduling a time to meet with your attorney and other financial advisors. I will prepare a packet of information for you to give to your attorney. If possible, I will go with you to your attorney and help explain your goals for your estate plan. Beneficiary designations are an important part of almost every estate plan and I will assist you in working with your financial advisors to complete that part of your plan.

In many families there will be discussions that need to be held with other family members during the planning process. These discussions are very helpful in safeguarding family harmony and



making a Christian witness. Many families have been torn apart by arguments after a parent dies.

The last question in all of this is how and when should a person get started on their estate planning? My prayer would be that the Holy Spirit is working through me as I write this article and that someone who is reading this will be moved to ask for my help and get started. There is no cost for my help and it is completely confidential.

If you would like to visit with me about developing your Christian Estate Plan contact, me at [jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org) or 877.913.2221.



### ALGS Update

The Abundant Life Giving Society was begun in 2010. The annual giving society recognizes individuals, families, congregations, church groups, and businesses that donate \$1,000 or more annually to support the mission of Lutherans For Life.

In 2010, the founding year, we had 95 ALGS members.

In 2011 we have set a goal to increase this to 140 members.

To accomplish this we need your involvement and support. You and your family can become an ALGS member in 2011.

Your donations can be made monthly, quarterly, or annually. Abundant Life Giving Society members receive a special certificate, signed by our executive director, that they can frame and display at their home, church, or business. This allows them to tell others about LFL. ALGS members are also recognized in *LifeDate* and recognized at the annual conference.

## How Can You Provide For Your Family, Loved Ones, and LFL?

Lutherans For Life has a Christian estate planner, Jim Schroeder, who can offer comprehensive, charitable expertise and services to help you provide for your family, loved ones, and ministries like Lutherans For Life.

Annually, thousands of faithful Christians just like you support a variety of Lutheran ministries through:

- Gift Annuities
- Direct Gifts
- Wills
- Family Gift Funds
- Endowments and Trusts

Contact Jim Schroeder at 877.913.2221 or [jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org).

☐ I would like more information about how I can bless my family and my favorite ministries for generations to come.

☐ I would like more information about how I can support Lutherans For Life.

☐ I would like to have someone review my current will or estate plan.

☐ Send information on: ☐ gift annuities ☐ family gift funds ☐ endowment fund ☐ charitable trusts ☐ bequests ☐ Christian will preambles

Name

Address

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Send to LFL (see address on page 2).

## LFL Speakers Bureau

Do you need a speaker? Check out the Speakers Bureau page at the LFL website to find out more!

A variety of formats are available from a single presentation or sermon to a multi-day series of workshops.

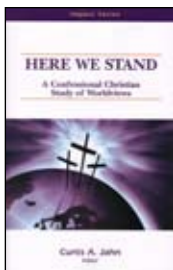


**Staff speaker:** James I. Lamb

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Linda D. Bartlett  
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Daniel M. Domke  
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Carl F. Schroeder  
Diane E. Schroeder  
Ed Szeto

**Booknote!** Several LFL Speakers Bureau members have contributed to an excellent book published by Northwestern Publishing House. It's called *Here We Stand – Confessional Christian Study of Worldviews*, edited by Curtis A. Jahn. Contributors include John Eidsmoe, Ryan Cameron MacPherson, Allan Quist, and Alvin J. Schmidt.



## You Can Make a Difference For Life!

Please call (515.441.6571) or e-mail (kmeyer@lutheransforlife.org) if you would like to learn more about any of these giving options.



Lutherans For Life does not receive financial support from any church body. Your individual gifts provide for the annual and long-term needs of LFL.



### Combined Federal Campaign:

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God made you! Amazing! In the Bible, David said this to God: **“You knitted me together inside my mother. I will give thanks to you because I have been so amazingly and miraculously made”** (Psalm 139:13b-14a *GOD’S WORD*). God also made everyone in your family! It’s true! In the word search below, find the words that describe family members.

R	E	H	T	O	R	B	G	J	G	I		AUNT
R	E	T	S	I	S	C	T	L	H	V		BROTHER
E	T	G	N	I	S	U	O	C	P	I		COUSIN
J	A	M	D	N	A	R	G	X	O	S		FATHER
M	Y	Y	H	D	H	E	A	I	E	C		GRANDMA
U	S	E	I	G	T	N	U	A	I	M		GRANDPA
C	I	L	W	D	M	O	T	H	E	R		MOTHER
C	H	C	T	G	R	A	N	D	P	A		SISTER
B	K	N	L	S	C	B	E	G	Z	P		UNCLE
A	X	U	M	K	X	F	N	G	S	G		
S	S	Z	F	A	T	H	E	R	O	Q		

**Life Thoughts in the Church Year** are designed to help pastors and congregations see the church year through the lens of the sanctity of human life. **Life Thoughts** are based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*.

### July 3 – Third Sunday after Pentecost

Rest from our burdens by taking a yoke upon us? (Matthew 11:26-30) Actually that makes sense because this “burden” yokes us to Jesus! He bears our burdens. Worldly solutions to our problems only increase the burden. True rest for the soul comes from being yoked to Jesus.

### July 10 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

God’s Word does things, guaranteed! (Isaiah 55:11) That’s because God Himself works in and through His Word accomplishing His will. His work through the Word made flesh changes hearts. That is why Lutherans For Life bases everything upon that Word. When hearts and minds are changed, people change. People changed and motivated by the Word can influence and bring change to our society.

### July 17 – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Modern culture deals with suffering by eliminating those who suffer. The Christian deals with suffering with the certain hope that there will be no more suffering. In the meantime, the Spirit of Christ Himself intercedes for us in the midst of our suffering (Romans 8:18-25).

### July 24 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

The assurance of God’s grand and undeserved love (Deuteronomy 7:6-9) comes not from the absence of difficulties but from the presence of His grace in all things. The assurance of His grace comes

from the cross and the giving of His only Son (Romans 8:32).

### July 31 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus’ compassion-driven healing and feeding of the five-thousand remind us of His power to provide for all our physical needs and pictures for us the overflowing abundance of His care for our spiritual needs. No matter what our situation in life, we can trust in Him. (Matthew 14:13-21)

### August 7 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

The power of the Word that brought forth and controls all creation (Job 38:4-18; Matthew 14:22-33) brings forth and sustains faith (Romans 10:17). It is the Word, not the world that lifts us out of our fears and doubts.

### August 14 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

A crumb from the Master’s table, when received in faith, brings life and healing to body and soul regardless of who we are or what we may have done (Matthew 15:21-28). When we as the Church fail to address the life issues, we remove even the crumbs from

those who desperately need them.

### August 21 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sin, and perhaps especially sins against life, can bind us in chains of guilt and shame. Christ gives power to His Church to remove these chains. (Matthew 16:19) May the Church apply this freeing power to these sins as well.

### August 28 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

The admonition concerning Christian behavior given in Romans 12:9-21 needs





to be heeded in the life arena as well. We can justifiably be angry at abortionists and others who profit from the death of the innocent. But our anger should not lead to taking God's vengeance into our own hands. Indeed, the course for the Christian is the example of Christ who overcame evil with truth and good.

#### September 4 – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus' words in Matthew 18:1-14 provide a fundamental reminder why life-affirming Christians do what they do. It is not just because the children—all those vulnerable and in need—are precious. We affirm and value and protect life because the children are precious to God.

#### September 11 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

On this day as our nation rightly remembers the nearly 3,000 victims from the terrorist attacks September 11, 2001, you may also wish to remember those who our nation chooses to forget—the 3,200 victims of abortion each and every day. Approximately 11,680,000 in the 10 years since 9/11. Also, the theme of forgiveness in today's readings

can certainly be applied to the other victims of abortion, those filled with despair over having made this deadly choice.

#### September 18 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Many Christians, especially the frail elderly, share Paul's desire, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:23). There is nothing wrong with such a desire. But we sometimes forget Paul's words in the next verse, "But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account." The critical point here—God decides what is "more necessary." As long as He gives life, He gives life meaning and purpose.

#### September 25 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Death was not God's idea. He doesn't like it. "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn and live" (Ezekiel 18:32). Death is not our friend but our enemy and God's enemy. Turning to death as a friend to solve our problems is turning away from God. "So turn and live" for God has been victorious over death in His Son, Jesus Christ!



Here's how you can  
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## God's Gift of Adoption

by Diane E. Schroeder



"Well, at least I'm not adopted." Words spoken to my adopted son by a fellow 4<sup>th</sup> grader at our Lutheran day school. Crushed, he came home and told me the story.

When I talk to people about the work of a pregnancy center such as CareNet, the issue of adoption always comes up. People want to know why adoption is not chosen more often by young women in an unplanned pregnancy. Those words spoken so many years ago tell the story. "Abandonment." "Giving away." "Putting up." The negativity of the language of our society when people talk about adoption plays an enormous role in the choice women make concerning their unplanned pregnancy.

"Who would want to grow up adopted, knowing that your mother gave you away!" "Isn't abortion a better choice? Better aborted than adopted!"

Although our society claims to like adoption, they see it as a second choice in the route to parenthood. Adoptive parents are praised because "they took these children in." No, I would gently correct rude strangers who would comment on the international flavor of my family. It is my husband and I who are blessed with our children. Or well-meaning friends would say after our first adoption, "Now perhaps you will have your own children." No, these are our children.

There is a societal prejudice to adoption that says adopted children are risky, they may not turn out all right. But aren't all children risky? Look at what happened to God. My children are grown now and

well launched into this world. Although in different parts of the country, we are still a family that God created, His plan for my life.

**Michael:** born 8/21/82, is the Athletic Trainer for the Bridgeport Sound Tigers, part of the New York Islanders Hockey system.

**Liz:** born 3/9/84, is living in Los Angeles and making her way as a costume designer in the film industry. You can check her out at [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com).

**Paul:** born 6/21/85, is a successful stock broker and handles large accounts for Charles Schwab in Indianapolis.

**Rebekah:** born 10/19/89 is a junior at Purdue University majoring in Hospitality and Tourism Management and has been hired for her second internship with Starwood Hotels and Resorts.

Our society has a problem with adoption because we really don't believe that God places absolute value on children and people. We like to put our own acceptance conditions on people. But God didn't do that with us. **"But God showed His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us"** (Romans 5:8). There was no precondition; God loved us in spite of who we are! What a perfect example for us as parents and people living in a culture that places relative value on others. As my children were growing up, they thought that all children were adopted and they were right! Because of our sin, God made an adoption plan so we could once again call him Father! Through what Christ did for us on the cross, God adopted all of us as His sons and heirs

with all the privileges and rights that come with that position.

So how did I handle that 4<sup>th</sup> grade class? First of all the teacher and I worked on educating the children about adoption. Many people have no exposure to adoption, so they really don't understand it. We read books to the children on why adoption occurs; sometimes moms and dad are too young (How would you like to be raised by a couple of teenagers?), war, poverty, etc. We talked about adoption being a loving act.

Secondly, we tried to expand the horizons and acceptance levels of those 4<sup>th</sup> graders. While we were waiting for Rebekah to arrive from Korea, I showed the children her picture and where Korea was located on a map. I explained to the 4<sup>th</sup> graders that although she looked different than them, all the children in Korea looked like her. If they lived in Korea, they would be the ones who were different.

God has blessed me mightily through the gift of adoption. When Michael turned 25, I received flowers with the following note:

*"It's a Boy!!! Congratulations on your 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of parenthood! I love you both and thank God for blessing me with such good people to teach me how to live. The day is yours."*

What wonderful words any parent would relish. But God has given me even more. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, I now have the gift of God's adoption and heaven is my future. It doesn't get any better than that.



**Our Mission** ... Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

**Our Vision** ... Every Lutheran congregation upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.

**Our Philosophy** ... Lutherans For Life believes that the Church is compelled by God's Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless. The crisis of our times is the repudiation of biblical truth manifested in the wanton destruction of innocent human life through legalized abortion-on-demand and the growing threat to the lives of others through legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia. Therefore, as Lutherans For Life, we will strive to give witness, from a biblical perspective, to the Church and society on these and other related issues such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living.

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LFL has 12 state federations, 138 local chapters, 158 Life Ministry Coordinators, and 51 Life Advocates in the United States.

# LifeDate

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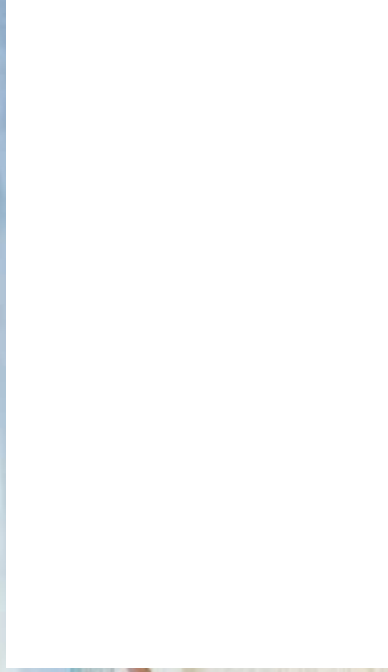
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