

The Image of God: Its Meaning and Implications: National Bioethics Conference Sponsored by LCMS and LFL

Three Lutheran organizations—Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's World Relief and Human Care, Concordia Bioethics Institute at Concordia University, Wisconsin, and National Lutheran for Life—are sponsoring their first nationwide bioethics conference on November 11 in St. Louis, Mo.

"Every day, the news is saturated with cutting-edge technology in the healthcare field. Some of this technology can be used for wonderful things, and some for incredibly evil outcomes," said Maggeie Karner, director of Life Ministries with LCMS World Relief and Human Care. "As Christians, we need to know the facts about what's in the news and what's on the horizon so we can be witnesses of light and hope in this darkened culture." Topics at the conference include: **Arguing About Embryos: The Sanctity of Life in the Biotech Industry and Bioethics: Creating a Case of Disposable People.**

LCMS Life Ministries Brings the Power of the Gospel to Youth Outreach



Maggeie Karner, director of LCMS Life Ministries, speaks at a national youth conference.

To address the root problem of unplanned pregnancies and subsequent abortions, Life Ministries of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has been reaching out to thousands of American teenagers with a message of chastity, promoting the message that life is sacred, and teaching a proper understanding of God's plan for human sexuality. Life Ministries has been able to provide Christian abstinence workshops, resources, and publications that are getting the message out loud and clear.

Life Ministries presented a message of chastity and pro-life education by providing speaker workshops at both the LCMS National Youth Gathering in Orlando, FL, and the Higher Things Youth Conference in Seattle, WA, and St. Louis, MO. At these gatherings, over 1,000 teens crowded into rooms to hear Life Ministries Director Maggeie Karner give a dynamic message for Christian abstinence and to engage in a discussion of today's critical topics: cloning and stem-cell research. In addition, some 35,000 young people at these youth

LCMS Life Ministries Begins Pro-Life Outreach in Russia

When LCMS Life Ministries Director Maggeie Karner visited Russia last summer, she saw tremendous spiritual needs in this vast land where the government has guaranteed religious freedom only since the early 1990s. One such need involves pregnant Russian women who often feel abortion is their only option.

"The best available statistics say the average Russian woman has seven or eight abortions during her life," Karner said. In a country of widespread poverty, families often encourage women to abort their babies instead of adding to "financial burdens."

To help combat a declining birth rate, the Russian government has recently welcomed pro-life outreach. "The time is ripe for our church to

Keynote speakers are Dr. Gilbert Melander, a member of President Bush's Council on Bioethics and the Richard and Phyllis Dusenberger Professor of Christian Ethics at Valparaiso University; Dr. Nigel M. de S. Cameron, president of the Institute on Biotechnology and the Human Future and director of the Council of Biotechnology Policy; Wesley J. Smith, an anatomy and pro-life author on assisted suicide, bioethics, legal ethics and public affairs (he is also a frequent guest on such programs as CNN's *Crossfire*, Larry King Live, Good Morning America and *Nightline*).

The one-day bioethics conference will precede the LFL annual national conference, which continues Nov. 12-13 at the same location. For more information on both conferences, contact LCMS World Relief and Human Care at (800) 248-1930, ext. 1381, or visit <http://worldrelief.lcms.org> or www.lutheranforlife.org.

events had the opportunity to stop by the Life Ministries interactive exhibit where many learned about a child's development in the womb and participated in playing the "abstinence game."

Life Ministries also worked cooperatively with Higher Things Lutheran youth magazine to produce a special edition of this magazine, geared to young people, that promoted a gospel-focused understanding of topics such as abstinence, Christian marriage, post-abortion healing and forgiveness, cloning, suicide, and homosexuality. This publication has already been distributed to over 10,000 teens and young adults at these youth gatherings and through college campus ministries involved in Lutheran Student Fellowship outreach.

If you would like copies of the special Life issue of *Higher Things* magazine, LCMS Life Ministries is making copies available for no charge to churches and youth groups. Simply call 1-800-248-1930 Ext. 1381 and say how many you need. These will be shipped off to you absolutely free.



Teens at a national youth conference at the LCMS Life Ministries display.

touch lives spiritually and physically," said Karner, who met with pastors and lay leaders of both the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in St. Petersburg and the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Novosibirsk.

She laid groundwork for what Karner hopes will be The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's first life ministries/human care projects outside the United States. One partnership opportunity is with the aptly named Hope Crisis Pregnancy Center in Pushkin, a suburb of St. Petersburg. A Russian Lutheran couple directs a team of other volunteers who offer caring support and encourage pregnant women to find alternatives to abortion—even offering computer classes and helping women find better jobs

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United Methodist Teaching Supports NPRC Statement Opposing Euthanasia Killing of Terri Schiavo

By Rev. Paul Stallsworth, UMC

The United Methodist Church's official moral teachings is compellingly supportive of the NPRC press release. The following three quotations are taken from helpful longer statements located in the 2004 Book of Discipline's "Social Principles" and in the 2004 Book of Resolutions.

- (1) *"The Church opposes assisted suicide and euthanasia."* ("Suicide," 161 N. Discipline, p. 104) This Social Principle indicates that United Methodism officially stands against the euthanizing, the "mercy killing," of Terri Schiavo.
- (2) *"We recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals with mental, physical, developmental, neurological, and psychological conditions or disabilities as full members of the family of God. We also affirm their rightful place in both the [C]hurch and society... We call on the Church and society to protect the civil rights of persons with all types and kinds of disabilities."* ("Rights of Persons with Disabilities," 162G Discipline, p. 107) This Social Principle declares that the brain-damaged condition of Terri Schiavo should have deprived her neither of "full humanity and personhood" nor "civil rights."
- (3) *"Historically, the Christian tradition has drawn a distinction between the cessation of treatment and the use of active measures by the patient or caregiver which aim to bring about death. If death is deliberately sought as the means to relieve suffering, that must be understood as direct and intentional taking of life, whether as suicide or homicide. This United Methodist tradition opposes the taking of life as an offense against God's sole dominion over life, and an abandonment of hope and humility before God..."* ("Faithful Care for Persons Suffering and Dying," 115, Resolutions, pp. 323-324) This Resolution is consistent with the Church's moral wisdom—"Always to care, never to kill"—and allowing the dying to die.

Particularly after the suffering and death of Terri Schiavo, United Methodists have an important role to play in the current public debate on end-of-life issues. This debate, like so many others in American public life, has two sides: One side is tempted to assume and/or to claim that life and the quality of life are ultimate goods; if biological life itself is considered the greatest good in this world, then life has become an idol. The other side is tempted to assume and/or to claim that "the good life" and the quality of life are the ultimate goods. If the goodness of life becomes the greatest good in this world, then the quality of life has become an idol. Resisting both of these idols that tempt the Church discerns in each and every human being God-given dignity. Furthermore, the Church knows every person's life is a gift from God. Therefore, the Church advances this moral principle: "Always to care, never to kill," even while acknowledging that the dying should be allowed to die, even as they are loved by the living.

Russian outreach continued from p. 2)

so they can financially support their children.

This rare and revolutionary program in Russia has touched the lives of more than 16,000 women. Another partnership project is with St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Novosibirsk, a large urban area in Siberia. Workers at this church have opened the region's first crisis pregnancy and post-abortion counseling center in the area's



Russian worker at the Lutheran Crisis Pregnancy Center in Novosibirsk, Siberia, cradles a young child who was saved from abortion.

United Methodists should clarify this classical Christian teaching in our congregations. The next step is to go public with the same teaching. Faithfully addressing and practicing these matters in the churches and in the larger society, you will be demonstrating the redemptive character of Terri Schiavo's suffering and death. (PT5)

NPRC Statement to the Press on Terri Schiavo

On March 23, the National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC), to which *Lifewatch* belongs, distributed a press release. It was drafted by Rev. Paul Stallsworth, UMC *Lifewatch* editor, and edited by Rev. Kirk von der Swaugh, a New York City pastor. *Resting on the Church's wisdom outlined above and entitled "Eccumenical Group: Care for Terri Schiavo, Do Not Kill Her," NPRC's press release read in part:*

"The case of Terri Schiavo is complex. First, there is the medical dimension that is filled with technical vocabulary. Then there is the legal dimension and its uncommon procedures. The political dimension involves each claim being quickly met with a counterclaim. With political arguments added to the conflicted medical and ever-shifting legal challenges of the case, it is no wonder that complexity seems to be winning the day.

"According to the complex case of Terri Schiavo, the Great Tradition of the Church universal offers this simple truth: Terri Schiavo, the person, deserves care, not killing. The authoritative traditions of Evangelical and Oldline Protestantism, Orthodoxy, and Roman Catholicism declare in one strong voice that each person is created in the image of God and is invested with human dignity. This God-given human dignity is not erased by debilitating disabilities or enhanced by admirable abilities. This God-given dignity remains constant, despite the condition and the circumstance of the person. This God-given dignity demands the recognition and protection of the state.

"To be sure, Terri Schiavo [was] a severely brain-damaged person. But her disability did not put her in a dying condition. Nor did her disability make her a 'vegetable.' Nor did her disability make her an animal. Rather, Terri Schiavo... [as] a person with human dignity...deserved loving care, which includes food and fluid..."

Akademgorodok university campus area. Single mother and center director Olga Vladimirova, a social worker and Lutheran deaconess student, knows firsthand the pressure Russian women feel to abort their babies—and the rejection that can come when a woman instead chooses life.

"Many people ask me why I did this 'stupid' thing, accepting the baby into the world when I had so many problems, rather than getting rid of it," said Vladimirova, whose goal is to help other women at this center where women can turn for financial and spiritual support when they are forsaken by their husbands and parents. Karner calls her two weeks in Russia life-changing. "God is providing amazing opportunities for Missouri Synod Lutherans to get involved," she said.



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Uniting For Life

Fall 2005

Terry Schlossberg Retires After 20 years of Leadership; Presbyterians ProLife Installs New Executive Director

By Ben Sheldon, *President Emeritus of PPL*

Mrs. Terry Schlossberg, who has served as Executive Director of Presbyterians Pro Life, one of the oldest of the main-line denominational pro-life advocacy groups, retired on Friday, October 8, after almost twenty years of outstanding leadership. During the two decades of Schlossberg's direction, PPL has made a profound impact on the Presbyterian Church (USA), which has an extremely liberal position on abortion. In 1983, the PC(USA) adopted a policy that called abortion "an act of stewardship," but this extreme view was significantly altered in 1992, thanks to the persistent efforts of PPL under Schlossberg's guidance. The PC(USA) actually became the first main-line Protestant group to label "partial birth abortion" a matter of "grave moral concern," again thanks to her brilliant leadership.

Terry Schlossberg has been named the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Coalition. PPL is proud because we know Terry and appreciate her faithful and effective work for the sanctity of life in the PCUSA. We have no doubt that her faithful and effective work will continue with the Presbyterian Coalition.

Mrs. Marie Bowen from Pittsburgh was installed as new Executive Director. Mrs. Bowen is from Pittsburgh and has had a long record of service to the pro-life cause. She will fill the void left by Mrs. Schlossberg's retirement. Following her official installation in October, Bowen will begin preparation for PPL's lobbying efforts at the PC(USA)'s 217th General Assembly which will meet in Birmingham, Alabama, in June 2006. Abortion is expected to be a "hot topic" of discussion and, hopefully, action at this gathering.



Terry Schlossberg

What is Noel Doing Now?

By Georgette Forney, *NOEL Director*

[NOEL is the pro-life organization for the Episcopal and Anglican Churches worldwide. If you know anyone attending these types of Churches please pass along word about NOEL.]

NOEL is developing a program called "Anglican Angels." The goal is to equip people in local churches to help mothers facing unexpected pregnancies resource centers or act as a substitute in communities where no center exists. For more information about the program or NOEL, visit NOEL.org.

NOEL is also co-sponsor of the *Silent No More Awareness Campaign* along with *Prisets for Life*. We recently developed a new billboard that can be ordered from Heritage House for use by your group or organization. The goals of the *Silent No More Awareness Campaign* are to raise awareness of the pain of abortion, offer help to those hurting from abortion and encourage those who have experienced healing to join us in speaking out.



For more information see: www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org

This fall, NOEL is holding a special **Celebration of Life Dinner** at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA to celebrate the lives of some pro-life heroes and hear testimony from Actress **Jennifer O'Neill** and Gospel Singer **Meiba Moore**. The dinner will take place at 5 pm on **Friday, November 11, 2005** during the spectacular *"Hope and a Future"* Conference on North American Anglicanism sponsored by the Common Cause Coalition. (AnglicanHope.org)

Associate Membership Application

Yes, I would like to become an Associate Member of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc. Enclosed is my fee of \$25.00 for membership as: _____ an individual _____ a church _____ a group I would like to make a tax deductible donation of \$ _____ to help NPRC with its important work.

Mail to: NPRC c/o Development Office, PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306-9811

Contact Person _____
Church or Group _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Denomination _____
Phone () _____ (w) () _____



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Uniting For Life

A Christian Pro-Life Newsletter

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Sending Out Pastors "Two by Two" For Pro-Life Encouragement

By Fr. Frank Pavone, *National Director of Priests for Life*

Using the Biblical model whereby Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs, Priests for Life has been sending members of its pastoral team out to cities and towns "two by two" to encourage the Churches to bear courageous witness to the Priests for Life cause. The teams, consisting of a Catholic priest and a lay associate, visit each of the Churches in a particular territory. No appointment is sought and no advance warning is given. The team simply shows up and asks to visit with the pastor and talk for a few minutes about how the Church can respond to the abortion tragedy. In the course of conversation, helpful resources—such as homily hints, bulletin inserts, suggestions for Church activities, and other pro-life educational material, are offered free of charge to the pastor for his or her congregation.

Close to a thousand such visits have been completed to date. These visits, to Churches of all denominations, have been overwhelmingly well-received. The Priests for Life team finds that the pastors appreciate some time of fellowship with other clergy, and an opportunity to visit with someone who is not asking them to solve a problem, but rather is seeking to help and encourage them. Invariably, pastors welcome the pro-life materials that the team brings, grateful that someone has made their job a little easier by giving them ready-to-use materials for their congregation.

Among the many advantages of "two-by-two" visits is the fact that nothing replaces personal contact. Many organizations seek to "reach the clergy," and do so by sending out mailings, faxes, or e-mails. All of those have their place and are valuable. But there is no comparison between the impact of a personal, face-to-face visit, conversation, and handshake, and the impact of an unsolicited envelope in the mail.

Save the Date! January 23 Monday Morning Prayer Service at the U.S. Capitol

The National Memorial for the Pre-born and Their Mothers and Fathers, an interdenominational prayer service, will be held on **Monday, January 23, 2006 starting at 8:45 AM** in the United States Senate, Washington, DC. (Doors will open at 8 AM. The service will be held in a Senate Room to be announced.) NPRC is co-sponsor of this prayer service.

Let us pray together for an end to abortion, for our national leaders, and the victims of abortion. All are invited. No reservations are needed. There will be inspirational music, prayer and homily. Invite your pastors, youth ministers, Respect Life and Pro-Life groups, Social Justice committees, and everyone to come with you! Young people are especially needed and welcome.

