

For the

# LIFE of the WORLD

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**Real and Abundant Life - p.4**

**Whatever Happened to the Human Race - p.7**

**Pro-Life Education in Preparation for the Parish - p.10**

**Called to Serve - p.12**



  
CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
P R E S S

# CONTENTS



page 4

page 7



page 10



page 22

page 23

## For the **LIFE** of the **WORLD**

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## FEATURES

### 4 Real and Abundant Life

By Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, President, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Real and abundant life now and forever is God's free gift in Christ. Death is defeated. As Christians walk through a corrupt and dying world, they are called to embody real life, showing Christ to all who are dying. If Christian vision ever becomes blurred, faith in Christ again pierces the darkness with His light and life.

### 7 Whatever Happened to the Human Race?

By Dr. Jean S. Garton, a Co-founder and President Emeritus of Lutherans For Life, resides in Benton, Arkansas

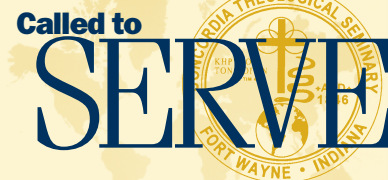
We are responsible not only for what we ourselves do but also for what we allow to be done. Abortion isn't about the right to choose or the right to privacy. Essentially, it is about the decline of human significance. That is why it is an issue for the church. This country desperately needs renewal and restoration, but this country is going nowhere unless the church goes there first.

### 10 Avoiding the Fence: Pro-life Education in Preparation for the Parish

By Mrs. Maggie Karner, Director of Life Ministries for the LCMS World Relief/Human Care, St. Louis, Missouri

This is where our Lutheran theology, with its proper distinction between Law and Gospel and its roots firmly planted at the foot of the cross, becomes so precious. This theology has so much to offer to people who are struggling with difficult life and death issues. It holds out the real hope of forgiveness and reconciliation, and our Catechism provides a wonderful window with which to examine these issues in the light of God's Word.

### 13 What Does This Mean?



### Joys and Challenges of Proclaiming the Word

p. 16

### "They Bear Witness to Me": Christ, the Scriptures, and the New Curriculum

p. 18

### Seminary Professors Serve in Madagascar

p. 23

### Three Examples of Faith and Giving

p. 25

### 159th Academic Year Draws to a Close with Special Services

p. 28





# Avoiding Pro-life Education

By Maggie Karner

A few weeks ago, I spent the day repainting the white picket fence in front of my house. Even though I love the cute little fence in my yard, the job was quite boring. I had time to think a lot—probably too much—about fences. As a pastor’s wife and pro-life worker, I’ve never been very good at sitting on fences—metaphorically, that is. And when it comes to the topic of the sanctity of human life, everybody lands on one side of the fence or the other. Either you protect and defend the sanctity of human life in all its stages or you don’t.

This becomes a problem—especially for pastors—when people from different sides of this fence are found within our own Lutheran parishes. As the Director of Life Ministries for our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (a division of LCMS World Relief/Human Care), I know pastors who deal nobly with this issue and how best to apply Law and Gospel to individual situations.

Unfortunately, I also know of pastors and parishioners who offer up either of the two most common arguments for avoiding this issue in their congregations: 1) “This is a political issue that needs to stay out of the church,” or 2) “I don’t want to offend my parishioners. What if someone out there in the pew has already had an abortion?”

This is where our Lutheran theology, with its proper distinction between Law and Gospel and its roots firmly planted at the foot of the cross, becomes so precious.

This theology has so much to offer to people who are struggling with difficult life and death issues. It holds out the real hope of forgiveness and reconciliation, and our Catechism provides a wonderful window with which to examine these issues in the light of God’s Word.

It is critical that our pastors and church workers understand and make that connection between our theology and the daily issues that arise. That’s why I am so pleased that the faculty at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) has made pro-life education for its students a priority and a commitment.

In my work, I have been blessed to work in partnership with the faculty at

CTS in this effort for life. By serving on our Synod’s Committee for the Sanctity of Human Life, CTS President Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, other committee members, and I are able to keep each other abreast of the very latest developments in pro-life out-

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# the Fence: in Preparation for the Parish

reach and new challenges in the field of bioethics. The Committee also serves a critical purpose for our Synod as it seeks to provide timely and practical resources for the parish.

As a part of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, the Department of Life Ministries has also been engaged in some exciting cooperative pro-life projects with the students and faculty at CTS. Following my recent trip to Novosibirsk, Siberia, regarding a grant request to establish a woman's crisis pregnancy center, LCMS World Relief and Human Care was able to work in conjunction with CTS to bring the Russian director of this project to study in the Deaconess Program at the Fort Wayne Seminary. Following months of theological study and practical, hands-on training at the local Fort Wayne Crisis Pregnancy Center, she will return to Siberia this summer to begin this new Russian center as a part of her deaconess internship.

To complement this effort, Dr. Arthur A. Just Jr., the Director of Deaconess Studies at CTS, has been diligent in designing the curriculum to emphasize the practical applications of our Lutheran doctrine upon our acts of mercy—especially within the context of life. By cooperating closely with local pro-life workers within the Fort Wayne community, Dr. Just has discovered many valuable, and hands-on, educational opportunities for the women in the Deaconess Program. With training in crisis pregnancy counseling, post-abortion healing, and end-of-life issues, these highly-qualified women are being made aware of the intense need for Lutheran workers in these areas.

And in today's post-modern world, I am pleased to know that men and women at CTS are also given the opportunity to study in the emerging field of bioethics. Cloning, embryonic stem-cells, euthana-

sia, and other end-of-life issues are all topics with which our church workers will be faced in the years ahead.

Prof. John T. Pless teaches the "Theological Ethics" course, which is required of all fourth-year Master of Divinity and deaconess students. In this course, they examine ethics in the framework of Lutheran theology—specifically within the framework of the Catechism. The structure of the Catechism gives students a fine perspective to view life issues in light of the First Commandment and the Creed. Prof. Pless feels that, "a dishonoring of creation undermines the Gospel, for God's Son took on our fleshly life to redeem us in body and soul. Lutheran pastors will honor the bios in bioethics for the sake of the Gospel."

Another of my co-workers, LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee member the Rev. Dr. James Lamb, who serves as the Executive Director of National Lutherans For Life, echoes the need for Lutheran pastors and church workers to understand these sometimes complex issues. Dr. Lamb feels that, "These are not political issues. Primarily, these topics are grave spiritual issues that have been politicized by a culture that is focused on death. The wonderful gift of our theology serves as a critical 'tool' for pastors and church workers to educate and serve their parish and the culture around them."

To this end, the top priority of Lutherans For Life (LFL) is to educate and equip seminary students with resources to help them address these issues in the parish. By sponsoring an annual seminary banquet to encourage and educate students, and by supplying fourth-year candidates and deaconess students with a large three-ring binder packed full of resources, LFL executes this goal on the campus of CTS and other Lutheran seminaries and colleges around the United States and Canada.

After their graduation, both LFL and LCMS Life Ministries remain committed to serving these workers in their Call to the truth and faithfulness of the Gospel.

The church has a public teaching responsibility—especially for the sake of its members. We must speak forcefully and directly in those circumstances when fundamental moral principles are at stake, because when we're silent, we deny souls—both in the world and in our pews—the opportunity to receive the Gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation. And there is no more tragic offense. Martin Luther put it this way:

*If you see anyone who is condemned to death or in similar peril and do not save him, although you have the means and ways to do so, you have killed him. It will be of no help for you to use the excuse that you did not assist their deaths by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from them and robbed them of the kindness by means of which their lives might have been saved. (Large Catechism)*

As a pastor's wife, I see firsthand the difficult challenges pastors face in this area, and I am increasingly thankful for the wonderful pro-life education that has been, and continues to be, provided for seminarians and deaconess students at CTS. I am thankful for the grace that freely flows from our confessions. And I pray for God's continued blessing, strength, and peace for these students as they enter a world that so desperately needs to hear the message—and "life"—of the Gospel.

*Maggie Karner is the Director of Life Ministries for the LCMS World Relief/Human Care, St. Louis, Missouri.*