

For the

# LIFE of the WORLD

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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

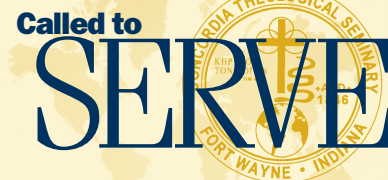
We are responsible not only for what we ourselves do but also for what we allow to be done. Abortion isn't about the right to choose or the right to privacy. Essentially, it is about the decline of human significance. That is why it is an issue for the church. This country desperately needs renewal and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

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# Whatever Happened to the Human Race?

Dr. Jean S. Garton



Almost 30 years have passed since I sat in the balcony of the Academy of Music in Philadelphia to view the film series, “Whatever Happened to the Human Race?” It was the premier showing of a stunning visual experience that eventually toured 20 major cities. The text and narration of the five-episode seminar were provided by Francis Schaeffer, an internationally acclaimed theologian, and by C. Everett Koop, then chief surgeon at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and, later, the Surgeon General of the United States.

Their combined expertise exposed the subtle but rapid loss of human rights through the growing acceptance of legalized abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Yet, even they could hardly have anticipated the rapidity with which America would embrace still more destructive policies and barbaric procedures. We now have partial-birth abortion, a cruel but legal method that would be criminal if used on animals. There is cloning by embryonic processes in which human life is created specifically for exploitation and eventual termination. The biological comingling of human and animal

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**The apathy of so many “good people” has eased the way for America to “move with the times,” but while that may have made life more efficient, more technological, and more economical, it has made life less human and less humane.**

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parts is a field of research rapidly evolving into even more exotic and unsettling mixes of species.

Great civilizational shifts usually require decades or even centuries of development. Almost overnight *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 abortion ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, discarded an entire structure of moral reasoning, legal precedent, and cultural conscience. A “right to choose” became the highest moral and political good, and “choice” took (and continues to take) precedence over religious teachings, traditional values, and even truth. Choice, however, has proven to be terrible when there is no duty to guide it, no responsibility to regulate it, no character to curb it, and no truth to test it.

A number of years ago Louis Evans Sr. observed that 75% of Americans don’t think, 15% think they think, but only 10% actually think. (And he said that before television, the mind-numbing plug-in drug!) Today it is estimated that only 3% of Americans are able to think critically. Thinking means connecting things, and while legalizing abortion 32 years ago was an attack on truth, it was also an attack on the mind. Many problems today that relate to human life don’t suffer from a scarcity of solutions. They suffer from a scarcity of truth and a scarcity of thought. In the 1959 play by Eugene Ionesco, a human being turns into a rhinoceros. However, as the play progresses, that same transformation is undergone by all but one of the human characters. The heroine, who witnesses a man turning into an animal, provides the key to the drama’s message. “Just before he became a beast,” she says, “his last words were, ‘We must move with the times.’”

When the highest court in the land chose to “move with the times” by making abortion a woman’s choice (at any time and for any reason), it provided the soil for the sexual and familial issues we face today. The government chose to “move with the times” by endorsing condom distribution in public schools. The medical profession chose to “move with the times” when it opened the door to assisted suicide, euthanasia, and embryonic stem cell research. The American public chose to “move with the times” when it opted for accommodation in response to practices and policies that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier.

The apathy of so many “good people” has eased the way for

America to “move with the times,” but while that may have made life more efficient, more technological, and more economical, it has made life less human and less humane. Our acceptance of death solutions to life’s problem has taken a toll on our ability to feel horror or shame, much less guilt. It has coarsened our moral sense and, as a culture, we have become increasingly desensitized to violence and to the admonitions of Scripture concerning “the least” among us.

There are also practical implications for having adopted a utilitarian view of human life. With the elimination of over 40 million unborn children through legal abortion, why are we surprised that we are experiencing a shortage of teachers, doctors, nurses, and church workers? We have aborted more babies than the total population of Canada; more than twice the population of Australia; more than the combined population of 12 U.S. states. Thirty years ago there were 23 workers for every retiree; today there are only three. Could the 40 million fewer Americans be a con-





What if we were to observe a single second of silence for each unseen, unheard, unknown aborted child? We would have to be silent every day, around the clock, for a year and three months. What would a field of 40,000,000 empty chairs look like?

I think it was Voltaire who once said: “We owe respect to the living; to the dead we owe only the truth.” We owe it to the 40 million aborted children to tell the truth about their humanity. To the living we owe respect *and* protection regardless of their age or condition. There are some 180 million Christians from all denominations in the U.S. Many of them describe themselves as pro-choice despite repeating the Apostles’ Creed every Sunday. “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” Those words affirm a familial relationship between God and humanity, a recognition that it is He who made us and not we ourselves. So then, by what authority does anyone claim “the right to choose” to tell God which of His creations we will or will not allow to born? What prerogative gives us license to kill human embryos to obtain their stem cells? By what right dare we condone actions that will end the life of human beings simply because they are old, weak, infirm, or handicapped? G. K. Chesterton rightly said, “The survival of the fittest leads to the survival of the nastiest.”

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.

A pastor friend tells of one night when (after stories, drinks, and threats) his children were ready to say their bedtime prayers. His five-year-old prayed with unusual intensity and length. The boy’s list of things he was thankful for almost exhausted the animal kingdom, included all known relatives, and named every friend he had ever had. Then came the climactic moment when the little boy said, “But, most of all, Lord ... most of all, thank you for ...” Before he finished, the father, being a clergyman, puffed up with pride, certain *his* son would say something wonderfully spiritual. Instead, what the little boy said was, “But, most of all, Lord; most of all ... thank you for ME!”

We forget how much children simply enjoy themselves; enjoy God’s world; enjoy just being alive; and because of all of us who work together, sacrifice together, pray together, and witness together to the sanctity of human life, more and more unborn children will have the opportunity one day to say, “Thank you, Lord, for me!”

tributing factor in the current concern for the viability of Social Security?

The nation recently observed the ten-year anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing. News coverage featured photos of the national memorial built on the site of the demolished federal office building. The memorial, named The Field of Empty Chairs, consists of 168 bronze and stone chairs, 19 of them child-sized, each one bearing the name of a person who perished in that brutal, senseless act of violence. As part of the ceremony, one second of

silence was observed for each victim of what the media called “the worst act of domestic terrorism in U.S. history.” But is it?

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