

CHRISTIAN LIFE REPORT

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Jesus and the "FOR" People Principle

by Darryl Wood

A man held a press conference to announce his candidacy for public office. He stated a negative opinion of the incumbent and railed against the current administration's policies. A reporter interrupted, "You've told us everything you're against. Now, can you tell us what you're 'for'?" A religious legal expert asked Jesus what He was "for." Jesus stated simply that He was "for" loving God and "for" loving people (Matt. 22:34-40). Those two things remain the priority for His disciples.

Who can argue against being "for" God? Being "for" people, however, presents a bigger challenge. Maybe that's why Jesus did so many things that illustrate how much He valued human life.

The Gospels overflow with real-life experiences in which Jesus acted "for" people. So what's involved in the practice of the "For" People Principle?

"For" People Christians go against the grain. A Sabbath healing by Jesus irked religious leaders (Mark 3:1-6). He associated with the "wrong kind" of people when He interacted with women, Gentiles, and sinners (Matt. 15:21-28; Luke 15:1-2).

For weeks after the April, 2011 tornadoes, many believers donned work clothes on Sundays to help those in need. This broke with tradition. But desperate people trumped normal routines. Believers minister to people regardless of their skin color, immigration status, or education level.

"For" People Christians advocate for the helpless. Jesus welcomed children (Mark 10:13-16); healed Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-42); and commanded compassion for the poor, crippled, lame, and blind (Luke 14:13-14).



Believers speak for the unborn. We promote quality education and

wholesome home life for children. A pastor friend once said, "Your ministry most exemplifies Jesus when you do something good for a child." Who will protect the abused and neglected if Christians do not?

"For" People Christians get dirty. Jesus cleansed a leper by touch (Matt. 8:2-3). He healed a blind man with mud made from spit (John 9:6) and washed the filthy feet of His disciples (John 13:5-20).

A chaplain walked with me through the putrid smelling halls of a prison for sick and elderly men. He stopped periodically to take the hands of men with communicable disease, dementia, and mental illness. His eyes grew moist as he prayed with them. Believers take risks and get dirty in the process of meaningful ministry.

"For" People Christians offer forgiveness. Jesus forgave the sin of an adulterous woman and sent her away for transformed living (John 8:1-11). He took mercy on a criminal while they both hung from a cross (Luke 23:43) and suggested no limits be placed on forgiveness (Matt. 18-21-22).

C. S. Lewis said, "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." Being a forgiven person releases you to be a forgiving person. Forgiveness frees people to reach their full potential.

Search the Gospels for other illustrations of the "For" People Principle. Then commit to follow Jesus so far that being "for" people becomes your lifestyle.



(Wood is a member of the Christian Life Commission and pastor of Vincent Baptist Church, Vincent)

The articles in this issue were gathered from various sources
The opinions in the Christian Life Report are not necessarily the opinions of the Christian Life Commission



The Value of Life

by A. Eric Johnston

Baby Mack was at his twelfth week of development when he was killed in a car accident as a result of another driver's negligence. The mother sought damages for the loss of her unborn child and the trial court ruled that damages were not available since her child was not viable and therefore, under Alabama law, no recovery could be had. Attorney John T. Stamps, III, representing Baby Mack's mother, believed this an inequitable result and appealed the case.

Until September 9, 2011, if an unborn child was killed as a result of someone's negligence, unless the child was viable, that is able to live outside the womb, there could be no recovery for damages. This has always been a horrible misunderstanding by the courts of the value of human life. Would the dead child's life be more valuable to the mother immediately after viability than before? Unfortunately, the abortion debate snarled the law to such an extent that courts have trouble finding their way through the thickets of judicial explanation of the legal rights of unborn children. Finally, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled in the case of *April Mack, as the Mother of Baby Mack, v. Thomas Carmack*, 2011 WL3963006 (Ala.), that a parent could recover damages for the loss of an unborn child, regardless of his stage of development.

The groundwork for this was laid with The Brody Act which SLI drafted and was passed into law in 2006. It is now codified at 13A-6-1(a)(3), 1975 *Code of Alabama* and provides that a person is a "human being, including an unborn child in utero at every stage of development, regardless of viability." The Brody Act applies to criminal laws. However, the Alabama Supreme Court explained that the purpose of our wrongful death statute was to punish for the homicide of persons and since the homicide of a person definition was changed by The Brody Act, the rule of when a recovery for damages may be available was changed.

Believe it or not, until The Brody Act became law, Alabama's criminal code was based on the ancient common law rule that a person must be born and alive before a crime could be committed against him. Developing embryology in the mid-1800's informed medical science that a separate person was being formed in the womb. While medical science dealt with these facts, law did not. It really did not need to until *Roe v. Wade* was decided. It was only then that the so called "right to abortion" threatened the lives of unborn children. Until then, they were safe in their mothers' wombs. Lawmakers should have acted immediately to protect the unborn. They did not and courts labored ponderously along not recognizing the obvious.

The fact is, "viability" was not a legal concept that was considered in any legal context prior until 1973 with the decision of *Roe*. Viability was a judicially made

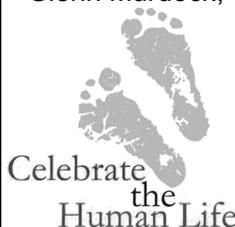
fiction to permit abortion and had no relation whatever to the reality and the importance of the unborn child in his mother's womb. Now retired Alabama Supreme Court Justice Maddox recognized this fallacy and wrote a dissenting opinion in a 1993 Alabama case saying that viability had no place in the discussion for the value of the life of the unborn child. Following his lead, the Alabama Supreme Court has now recognized the incongruity of allowing a tortfeasor to escape liability simply because the child may have been one week in gestation to early for viability.

The turning factor in the *Baby Mack* case was The Brody Act. When The Brody Act redefined personhood for homicide purposes, then it became a catalyst allowing the Alabama Supreme Court to revisit the issue and determine that viability has no place at all in determining the value of human life and that it should be valued at every stage of development.

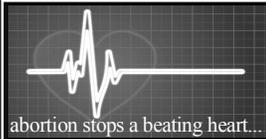
The tortured life of abortion law has created many problems. We all recognize the most significant problem is the "right to abortion" found in the U.S. Constitution by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe* and expanded by its progeny. The *Baby Mack* decision, The Brody Act, and other efforts to recognize the value of unborn life does not change *Roe*. Much work lies ahead.

The Brody Act was a legislative enactment. This emphasizes the importance of Alabama's Legislature in passing laws to recognize the unborn child as a person. Because *Roe* has muddied the waters on unborn personhood jurisprudence, we must persist in our efforts to protect the unborn. The *Baby Mack* case is a good example of how the persistence pays off. We will return to the Alabama Legislature in 2012 with a number of bills that will protect and recognize the rights of the unborn.

Baby Mack should be a lesson to all legislators and to the Governor of the importance of their roles in government. The Alabama Supreme Court has recognized, in its own words, "logic, fairness, and justice compel the application of the Wrongful Death Act to circumstances where prenatal injuries have caused death to a fetus before the fetus has achieved the ability to live outside the womb." We are also pleased to say that every Justice on the Alabama Supreme Court agreed with the *Baby Mack* opinion. Chief Justice Charles Malone, and Justices Tom Woodall, Lyn Stuart, Mike Bolin, Tom Parker, Glenn Murdock, Greg Shaw, Jim Main and Kelli Wise all concurred. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for their wisdom and stated opinion that the unborn child in Alabama has great worth.



(Johnston is president and general counsel, Southeast Law Institute, Birmingham)



A Problem of the Heart

by Jeff Fuller

Recently, a mother came to ask for prayer for her daughter who lives in California. Her daughter was pregnant and determined to get an abortion. The mother was very distraught for her daughter, as well as the future of her grandchild, and over the fact California pays for an abortion even into the second trimester.

As a staunch pro-lifer and somewhat knowledgeable of the abortion issue, I was ready to take a flight to California, promise to take the baby as my own since she did not want the child and make sure she did not go through with the abortion. There would be too many scars, too much terror, far too many memories to haunt this young lady for the rest of her life. I wanted to protect her, as much as the unborn child.

The debate continues, even though the rate of abortions seems to decrease. Government leaders who are pro-abortion continue to want to contribute dollars to the abortion cause; off-setting the cost with matching money to individual states; and all the time claiming the child formed in the womb is nothing more, nothing less, than a piece of tissue which can be disposed of and life will go on happily for the mother. The political leaders talk and talk, thinking this is a social issue; that it is something they can solve with a well-worded, well-impassioned bill brought to the floor, approved, and signed with the stroke of a pen by the president.

Yet, as much as everyone wants to think this is a social issue the government can solve, it is a moral issue that must be changed within the heart of America. We must turn back to God and to His Word, confirming the belief that a child is the handiwork of God, precious in His sight and to be allowed to live, not die at the hands

of an evil society (2 Chronicles 7:14; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13; Job 31:13-15; Matthew 10:14).

God's Word clearly teaches us that the unborn child is being "knitted together" in the womb of the mother. This simply means from the day of conception God is in charge of the making of the child. Scientifically, the man contributes sperm and the woman an egg, but God is in charge. If this is the case, then to abort a child even in the first few weeks of determining the pregnancy is murder. It is taking away God's handiwork and selfishly destroying the work of God. The wise man of Proverbs said, "The Lord hates...hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:16-17). In the Old Testament book of Numbers, the people are told that to permit the murder of the innocent pollutes the land (Numbers 35:33-34). God's Word speaks to the abortionist-doctors and nurses who ply the trade of Planned Parenthood, as well. Deuteronomy 27:25 tells us that the man who accepts money to kill an innocent person is cursed.

Hard words from the Word of God, but we are talking about a subject which carries with it huge implications. An abortion does not just affect the mother and the unborn child; it is devastating and demoralizing to the family and friends of the woman, the world and to the church. Therefore, God's people need to stay on course, fight the good fight, submit ourselves to God, and pray for our beloved America seeking renewal and revival in the things of God.

(Fuller is a member of the Christian Life Commission and pastor of Rockford Baptist Church, Rockford)

FACTS & ISSUES

*Compiled by Joe Bob Mizzell, Director
Office of Christian Ethics/Chaplaincy Ministries – Alabama Baptist State Convention
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SMOKERS

Smokers are twice as likely to quit if they receive supportive text messages. People who had been sent five motivational texts a day for five weeks and then three texts a week for 26 weeks were twice as likely to be smoke-free after six months as people who had received texts thanking them for participating in the study.

*Caroline Free, PhD, Clinical Lecturer,
Bottom Line Personal 11/15/2011*

"IT'S LIKE GOING FROM ZERO TO 60..."

...Miami attorney Elizabeth Schwartz on the rapid increase in the number of homosexuals adopting children. According to the UCLA School of Law, the number of adopted children living with same-sex couples increased from 8,310 in 2000 to 32,571 in 2009.

WORLD Magazine, November 19, 2011

ALCOHOL

\$224 BILLION is the annual expense of excessive drinking in the United States, largely due to lost productivity, health care and criminal justice costs.

TIME Magazine, October 31, 2011

CHILDREN

A child born in 2010 will cost about \$226,902 over the next 17 years (excluding college). The biggest cost increases included child care, health care and transportation.

*Report from the US Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, DC
Bottom Line Personal 11/15/2011*

WORK FROM HOME

86% of employees say they work more productively at home than in the office. And 40% would be willing to take a pay cut to be able to work from home.

Staples Advantage, www.StaplesAdvantage.com

The Sanctity of Human Life

by Dusty McLemore



In our church at Lindsay Lane, we strive to teach our congregation to adopt a Biblical Worldview especially in the area of preserving Human Life. People often ask the questions "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" God addresses both of those early in the scriptures. In Genesis 1:26 we read, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule.'" Again in Genesis 2:7 the Bible says, "the Lord God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." Thus, the Bible states that we are created in the image of God and endowed with the very breath of God. If we ever lose sight of the value God places on human life, we are susceptible to the temptation to destroy that life He designed. Therefore, all life is sacred! When life is innocently destroyed, we lose the impact and value of a life that could have enriched our lives and brought glory to God.

Many Biblical examples of the sanctity of life are referenced in Scripture. In Job 27:3 - even while in the midst of his afflictions, Job notes that God created him to live. The Apostle Paul while speaking to the men of Athens explains that God is the giver of life (Acts 17:25). The Psalmist vividly details in 139:14-15 that God weaves life in the formation of humanity. And in Isaiah 44:24 the prophet is told that the Lord formed us in the womb.

It has often been noted that murder, abortion and euthanasia are only the symptoms of a greater problem -- that our society no longer recognizes or values the

sacredness of human life! Mother Teresa once said, "Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching the people to love, but to use violence to get what they want. That is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion." St. Augustine understood that we were made to fellowship with our creator. He said, "You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you."

I recently read an article written by Abby Johnson who worked as a clinic manager for **Planned Parenthood** in Texas. Mrs. Johnson witnessed the murder of an infant boy in **what Planned Parenthood outrageously refers to as a mere "product of conception"**.

The atrocity of killing innocent human life led to her pro-life conversion. She quit her job at Planned Parenthood and now speaks out as a pro-life activist while working with the Susan B. Anthony List in Washington DC. Mrs. Johnson writes: "I sat there and watched a little boy get murdered. Almost two years later, when I close my eyes, I can see him trying to escape and I can see him shriek in pain when it happens. It sickens me, as it should—but by sharing my story with others, I can help save unborn lives. I can help make sure more little boys and girls aren't killed the same way."

What a tragedy! Please pray and support the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.

(McLemore is a member of the Christian Life Commission and pastor of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens)



Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

January 15, 2012

On the *third Sunday in January*, churches are encouraged to focus on the sanctity of human life. Emphasis is given to a broad range of life issues, including abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, health care, child abuse and eldercare.



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