



## ◆ FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE ◆

William Murchison on  
**CANTANKEROUS ANTI-BIRTHEES**

Meaghan Bond on  
**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 AND PREGNANCY**

Margaret Brady on  
**ETHICAL VACCINES ARE BECOMING A REALITY**

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## The 18th Annual **GREAT DEFENDER OF LIFE DINNER**

Margaret Colin • Marvin Olasky • George Marlin

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W.J. Kennedy on  
**THE SAD STATE OF "THIS BLOODY BUSINESS"**

Peter Pavia on  
**SUBMISSION: A PRESCIENT TAKE ON POST-MODERN TIMES**

William Doino Jr. on  
**GLORIA PURVIS: FAITHFUL AND FEARLESS**



## ◆ ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ◆

*Booknotes:* Maria McFadden Maffucci ♦ Jason Morgan ♦ John Grondelski

*From the HLR Website:* Madeline Fry Schultz

*Appendices:* Victor Lee Austin • James Lankford, Josh Hawley, Steven Daines,  
Lisa McClain & Blaine Luetkemeyer • Collin Anderson • Laretta Brown

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE...

... At the 48th annual March for Life on January 21st, the mood was overwhelmingly hopeful that the upcoming *Dobbs v. Jackson* Supreme Court decision will either number *Roe*'s days or end them completely. We marched with Mary Rose Somarriba, editor of our new online feature NEWSworthy (see From the Website for a typical report), who was interviewed in the crowd by Lauretta Brown of the *National Catholic Register*. "I don't know if *Roe* will be overturned or not, but, either way, our country needs a lot of healing, and women need a lot of support in facing their unplanned pregnancies," Somarriba remarked. Pressure to abort "really pushes women into corners more than many people realize and makes them think that they can't have children and careers and success or other passions in life." And Sister Marie Veritas of the Sisters of Life told the *Register*: "To come today, in this time of solidarity and to stand for life, to stand for love with our brothers and sisters here, that's one of the most powerful witnesses we can give to the world, especially this year on the possibility of *Roe* falling, . . . What every person here wants to let women know is that we want to cherish you in your motherhood and support you in that."

There was a great crowd in Washington, despite many indoor events being canceled due to the continuing spread of Covid 19 variants and the vaccine mandates—health issues that cause painful divisions among us. In this issue we bring you information backed up by available scientific data, as well as optimistic news about ethical vaccines and how we can help encourage their production. We welcome three new contributors: Meaghan Bond ("What We Know About Covid-19 and Pregnancy"); Margaret Brady ("Ethical Vaccines Are Becoming a Reality"); and W. J. Kennedy ("The Sad State of 'This Bloody Business,'" about the horrific, active trade in aborted-baby body parts).

Thanks for reprint permission go to: *The Living Church* for Victor Lee Austin's "Why Have Children?" (Appendix A); the *Washington Free Beacon* for Collin Anderson's "How a Liberal Foundation Bankrolled Abortion Pills in the Name of Population Control" (Appendix B); and the *National Catholic Register* for Lauretta Brown's "Pro-Life Families Witness to Dignity of Unborn and Love for Vulnerable Mothers" (Appendix D).

We hope you enjoy the remarks and photos from our 18th annual Great Defender of Life Dinner (p. 70), where we honored Marvin Olasky and Margaret Colin, and remembered our late co-founder Michael Uhlmann. As always, we are grateful for the sparks of mirth generated by cartoonist Nick Downes.

As we continue in this auspicious year, please remember to visit our website often for updated news, thoughtful blogs and essays, spiritual reflections, and special previews: [www.humanlifereview.com](http://www.humanlifereview.com).

MARIA MCFADDEN MAFFUCCI  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



# the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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## INTRODUCTION

Who would have thought it? China of all places is “closing abortion clinics and expanding services to help couples conceive” (see the report in From the Website). Yes, they have a birth dearth in China. So do we, as senior editor William Murchison reminds us in “Cantkerous Anti-Birthers.” And the Supreme Court, he writes, “however heavily stocked with ‘pro-life’ jurists,” isn’t going to reverse it, even if those jurists “put the kibosh on *Roe v. Wade*.” Over the past half-century, “the ideologizing of abortion,” writes Murchison, “has rubbed away the ancient commitment to unborn life as beautiful and nourishing.” The data he cites are grim: “U.S. population grew just 0.1 percent in our miserable Covid year of 2021—the lowest growth rate ever recorded by the Census Bureau.” In 2020, “the number of deaths exceeded that of births in 25 states,” and the marriage rate, he goes on, “is at an all-time low, at 6.5 marriages per 1,000 people.” While from an unexpected corner comes a warning: “Elon Musk,” Murchison notes, “recently told the *Wall Street Journal*’s annual CEO Council: ‘I think one of the biggest risks to civilization is the low birthrate and the rapidly declining birthrate.’”

Like Elon Musk, Meaghan Bond is a scientist, a biomedical engineer who works developing “medical tools to improve care for newborns and mothers in low-resource settings.” In “What We Know About Covid-19 and Pregnancy,” Bond addresses questions that are on many minds these days: Does the pandemic present risks to pregnant women, and are the vaccines safe for mother and child? “I will *not* address,” she states at the outset, “vaccine mandates or vaccine passports, which are policy issues separate from the issue of whether the pro-life community should support Covid-19 vaccine *use* by individuals.” Bond does take up the issue of misinformation, such as claims about vaccines causing “long-term effects on fertility” or “increased rate of miscarriage,” for which, she reports, there is no evidence. And what about damage to the ovaries? “These concerns,” she explains, “originate from a poor understanding or a deliberate misreading of Pfizer data submitted to a Japanese regulatory agency.” Readers looking for a non-politicized review of what science is presently telling us about Covid and pregnancy will appreciate Bond’s comprehensive and carefully annotated article.

“Amid all the controversy over Covid-19 vaccines,” writes freelance journalist Margaret Brady in our next article, “it’s important to know that the technology behind some of the shots—mRNA—represents a significant breakthrough for principled vaccine development.” Unlike Johnson & Johnson, neither Pfizer nor Moderna used cell lines derived from aborted babies to make their vaccines. However, Brady continues in “Ethical Vaccines Are Becoming a Reality,” both chose “an unethical, antiquated cell line [to test] their revolutionary technology.” Why? Especially since, as Dr. David Prentice, professor of molecular biology at Catholic University (and VP Research Director at the Charlotte Lozier Institute), tells Brady, “there are other, licitly-derived cells” these biotech companies could have used instead. In fact, there is “plenty of positive movement,” Brady writes, “with

scientists choosing approaches that are modern, creative and inclusive.” For example, a French company, Sanofi-Pasteur, in 2019 “quietly” started using monkey, instead of fetal-derived cells in its polio vaccine. As a result, “millions of American preschoolers now receive ethical polio protection.”

Why scientists don’t opt for “inclusive” approaches also comes up in “The Sad State of ‘This Bloody Business,’” W. J. Kennedy’s chilling report on the ongoing harvesting of aborted babies that keeps America’s biomedical industrial complex supplied with fetal tissue and body parts. The government watchdog Judicial Watch, writes Kennedy, is using the Freedom of Information Act to pry “stomach churning documents” out of procurement outfits like Advanced Bioscience Resources, one of the companies David Daleiden secretly recorded doing “bloody business” with Planned Parenthood officials. Judicial Watch is also helping Daleiden build a fetal-abuse case against the University of Pittsburgh, a story covered by *Fox News* that caught the attention of Oklahoma senator James Lankford and other members of Congress. “Research using abortive fetal tissue is unethical, wrong, and has also been proven ineffectual,” the legislators wrote in a letter to the heads of the Justice Department, HHS, and NIH this past fall. “Despite being used in clinical research since the 1920s, fetal tissue has not produced a single clinical treatment” (see Appendix B).

In his first essay for the *Review* (“My Pilgrim’s Progress,” Fall 2020), Peter Pavia touched on a controversial bestselling novel by the French writer Michel Houellebecq; in “*Submission: A Prescient Take on Post-Modern Times*,” he gives the book his full attention, focusing on the author’s “withering condemnation of contemporary life” and “startling anticipation of subsequent world events.” The “eerie auguries Houellebecq outlined in *Submission*,” Pavia writes, “were set in what was at publication (in 2015) the very near future—2022—and in case somebody hasn’t noticed, we’re there now.” No, America isn’t “some make-believe future France . . . dominated by Sharia law,” but constituent elements of the novel—including a sequence that “could be an allegory of our own past couple of years, a spooky anticipation of the Marxist violence that marred the American summer of 2020, unrest that in turn led to the populist paroxysm of the January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill riot”—make it “near-impossible to avert our eyes,” Pavia says, from the ways in which Houellebecq’s fictionalized future mirrors “our culturally confused present.”

Gloria Purvis, writes William Doyno Jr. in our final article, “offered her own prediction of America’s dystopian future” in a 2012 talk in which she warned that before long, gender would be “merely an idea in one’s head,” sexual identity “a mere surgical choice,” and marriage no longer a solemn union because “there will be no such thing as male and female.” Delivered as the Obama administration pressed its contraceptive mandate, the talk catapulted her onto the public stage and, as Doyno recounts in his engaging profile “Gloria Purvis: Faithful and Fearless,” she “quickly emerged as a leading Catholic voice.” In 2015, EWTN gave Purvis her own radio show, *Morning Glory*, which, he goes on, “was earning widespread praise” when, five years later, the network “quietly dropped the show, without explanation.” It’s a long story, involving disaffected listeners who, Doyno relates, “accused [Purvis]

## INTRODUCTION

of sanctioning attacks against the police, and even of being a ‘Marxist,’” after she blamed the killing of George Floyd on racism. Defended by Princeton’s Robert George, March for Life president Jeanne Mancini, and a “host of religious and high-ranking Catholic leaders,” Purvis, reports Doyno, “graciously moved on” and is now hosting a successful podcast for America Media.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many people don’t realize that *Roe v. Wade* wasn’t decided in time for Norma McCorvey, a.k.a Jane Roe, to get an abortion. After learning in 2010 that McCorvey had in fact delivered and given her baby up for adoption, journalist Joshua Praeger set out to find “Baby Roe.” He did much more than that: “By doggedly tracking down and meeting Norma’s family and friends,” Maria Maffucci writes in her review of his recently published *The Family Roe: An American Story*, “and spending time with Norma herself, Praeger surely gives us the most accurate picture we will ever get of this complicated figure.” Next in Booknotes, Jason Morgan reviews *One Billion Americans: The Case for Thinking Bigger* by Matthew Yglesias, “an establishment liberal” whose argument for “tripling” the American population, says Morgan, has “big hitches” but also many “intriguing” ideas “not necessarily tied to his big-ticket population scheme.” The problem with the book, however, is that Yglesias “does not place enough value on human beings” and, in a “conventional” and therefore “unmistakable way,” he “repeats the mantras of the culture of death, the predominant culture that values power, things, and the planet over human persons.” John Grondelski also addresses the death culture in his review of *Killing in the Name of Healing: Confronting Medical Holocausts Past and Present*, in which, he tells us, author John Brennan “explores what happens when health care professionals no longer profess an unambiguous commitment to life.” While “Brennan’s analogies between Nazi exterminative medicine and contemporary doctor-administered death will make the book controversial,” Grondelski concludes that “we best remember the tragedy and injustice of medicalized killing, whether in Tuskegee or Tübingen, with an openness of mind that probes whether underlying exterminative attitudes are reasserting themselves in our own time.” Attitudes like those fueling the Packard Foundation, which in the last five years has spent nearly \$350 million to expand abortion access (see Appendix C).

The Human Life Foundation’s annual Great Defender of Life Dinner, cancelled in 2020 because of the pandemic, was on again last October—this issue carries a special section with honoree speeches and photographs from the always soul-stirring event. And we close with heartwarming coverage (Appendix D) of the annual March for Life, cancelled last year but back this past January with tens of thousands of marchers once again filling the nation’s capital with the joy of baby love. “Why Have Children?” Victor Lee Austin asks (in Appendix A). And that brings us back to William Murchison, who quotes Austin’s “challenging answer” in our lead essay.

ANNE CONLON  
EDITOR



# Cantankerous Anti-Birthers

*William Murchison*

**M**y sainted mother (1911-2003), a woman of old-timey Southern graces, was wont to smooth down the edges of her expostulations; e.g., “If it’s not one ‘d’ thing, it’s another!” With embedded “d” or not, I never have diverged much from that magisterial judgment on the human race’s inability to get straight all things needing to be got straight, to understand all things necessary to the flourishing of human pastimes and life.

Get a few things right—one even—and other “d” things go to the dogs. The standards of the 20th century, one found back then, were always running through even tightly closed fingers, like grains of sand. The word “standards” included, naturally, the common sense of the human race—a fabric of common, and seemingly eternal, assumptions and understandings.

Okay. Let’s get down to brass tacks.

The common sense of the human race has in most settings about which I know anything included the understanding that the human race is made to multiply—to be “fruitful,” as the ninth chapter of Genesis would have it; the divine mandate to Noah. Get out there and “replenish the earth.”

It. Was. What. You. Did. Into the world came humanity, biologically and emotionally equipped for the task. Do it!

Unless you are listening with thirsty ear to today’s social prophets and arbiters: those who say, *don’t* do it! Or, if you must, please know that *I’m* not doing it. Not this woman. Not this guy. It’s not “my thing” or “my bag,” as we used to hear back in the 1960s. What’s more, our numbers are swelling. We’re changing the culture. Those old assumptions about “breeding”? Hah! Wait a few decades and see how many layers of dust overlie them.

“Americans,” says Suzy Weiss in an arresting piece republished in the *New York Post* (from *Common Sense*, Bari Weiss’s newsletter on Substack) “are making fewer babies than we’ve made since we started keeping track in the 1930s.” This, before the pre-Christmas tidings that the U.S. population grew just 0.1 percent in our miserable Covid year of 2021—the lowest growth rate ever recorded by the Census Bureau, accompanying, not so incidentally, a 1.8 percent drop in life expectancy.

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**William Murchison**, a former syndicated columnist, is a senior editor of the *Human Life Review*. He will soon finish his book on moral restoration in our time.

Such news likely puts spring in the step of one Rachel Diamond, who, according to Weiss, posts TikTok videos noting her political move away from the authoritarian culture that allowed—encouraged, probably—her father to spank, and thus traumatize, her. No kids for this lady! She has company. “Last year [i.e., 2020],” Weiss says, the number of deaths exceeded that of births in 25 states—up from five the year before. The marriage rate is at an all-time low, at 6.5 marriages per 1,000 people. Millennials are the first generation where a majority are unmarried (about 56 %). They are also more likely to live with their own parents, according to [the Pew Research Center], than previous generations were in their twenties and thirties.”

An existential psychologist—I am not sure what job niche this covers—tells Weiss that young clients are telling him that “humans are the problem.” That’s a big, if not exactly a new, one. I recall a *Newsweek* cover story in the ’80s, making the same point. I wrote a negative, generally well-received commentary on the anti-birth movement. Times have changed. What once was common sense seems to be regarded online and elsewhere as old-hat eccentricity.

With birthrates in the U.S. and most other countries dropping, Elon Musk, always one for the big picture, recently told the *Wall Street Journal*’s annual CEO Council: “I think one of the biggest risks to civilization is the low birthrate and the rapidly declining birthrate. And yet, so many people, including smart people, think that there are too many people in the world and think that the population is growing out of control. It’s completely the opposite. Please look at the numbers—if people don’t have more children, civilization is going to crumble, mark my words.”

We’re back to Genesis, as Mr. Musk could have added for historical context: People—two-armed, two-legged, breathing, ocularly equipped, maybe most of all *thinking*—are the future of the race, as we’d “d” well better acknowledge! We do that—broadly. But why not so broadly and, yes, automatically, reflexively, unconsciously, as of yore?

My guess: We’re into Individualism, and not just here but in most advanced countries, of a kind beginning to unravel before our eyes the worst, most dangerous instincts of the Enlightenment. Individualism is me-ism. I know what’s right and good! Don’t confuse me with supernatural or historical claptrap. The feel of the time and the place is the feel of . . . I would not say liberty, which, in the classical sense, entails responsibility and the habit of looking around to see what others are doing or saying or thinking. The feel of time and place today is the feel of latitude without restraint, without hesitancy, without limits. Remember the ’60s catch phrase? (Maybe not, if gray hair doesn’t sully your cranium.) The phrase I mean is, “If it feels good, do it.” Don’t ask. Do it.



That human common sense of which I spoke at the beginning is no longer instrumental in the lives of the individually empowered. The instinct ought to be: There must be something to this birth stuff. Let's see: I was born. My parents were born. My grandparents also. And so on, back further than anyone alive can see. Is there possibly a plan here? A system? A design? How do I fit in? *Do* I fit in? If not, why not?

That final query is a bit of a stopper, running as it does contrary to physical as well as historical evidence. To deny the necessity of birth is to step outside the world of reality. The human body is constituted (as are animal and avian bodies) for replication. One has only to look, touch. He who says otherwise is to be regarded with the suspicion due the man who (in C. S. Lewis's phrase) says he is a poached egg. Human biology says: Here's how we go on. When the old wears out, the new takes over, as with a tire, a shoe, a light bulb.

Thus far common sense—the sense that reproduction is key to any understanding of the human role in life—talks commandingly. Only radical preference can get in the way.

There are reasons to override and disregard not human liberty but human cantankerousness. I call anti-birth reasoning cantankerous. I call it, in fact, an instance of non-reasoning. Its practitioners are not using their noodles. If a squirrel or a blue jay knows reproduction to be an ineffaceable part of life, surely a Wellesley grad must share that knowledge.

**B**ut here we are: Me first; me always. That is a generalization, yes. But within its dark folds lie damaging implications. There is a human instinct. There is no particular need to examine its point of origin. The Old and New Testaments give evidence of its effects, when aroused. The more secularly inclined will offer their own accounts, and this is fine, so long as we all, upon examination of credible evidence, conclude that virtually all of us like to have our own way! The '60s did not begin this progression. The '60s expedited it. "If it feels good . . ." Etc., etc.

One thing that felt especially good to the denizens of those times was the possibility of personal empowerment. We all should remember personal empowerment. There was a lot of it going around in the Edenic Garden, under the sad, if likely unsurprised, glance of the Creator of All Things.

We moved from there, by stages, to here: restrained not by changes in our nature but by the authority exercised over that nature, and generally accepted, on the say-so of religious leaders, speaking in the name of the Edenic Garden's creator and proprietor, a.k.a. God. There arose what the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial writers (and maybe other sources as well) have named

“guidelines and guardrails”—protections against venturing too far off the trail and incurring harm. However, the spirit of liberation, manifest in the post-World War II years, increasingly neglected the duty of guardrail maintenance, preferring to see ventures outside the rails as healthy and fruitful.

As with abortion. I do not mean this in any mean-minded, clenched-fist spirit. The desire to avoid giving birth cannot be charted across races and faces and times and fears and situations of one kind or another. The ideologizing of abortion—My body! My choice!—is the premise that rubbed away the ancient commitment to unborn life as beautiful and nourishing. “Children are life renewing itself,” says Melanie Wilkes to Scarlett O’Hara at a poignant moment in *Gone with the Wind*. Life as a thing larger and grander and, it can be hoped, nobler than the small bags into which we drop discrete personal wishes: important in themselves but less so, in the large picture, than the ongoing-ness of the human enterprise.

*Roe v. Wade*, in all its permissive, go-right-ahead panoply, proved the sledgehammer that knocked apart many of the inhibitions to Mellie Wilkes’ idea that renewal of life is an urgent matter outweighing personal choice (as with Mellie’s personal, and fatal, choice, in the face of her fragile condition, to bear a second child to Ashley).

And so, after a period of years, and of choices bearing shall we say family resemblances to Mellie’s, we arrive at something quite different: the socially approved judgment that, well, look, you can take this obligation thing just so far. This is after all the 21st century, not the 19th! Society’s general embrace of feminist ideals, predicated on the concept of power for the power-deprived sex, has wrung out the old assumptions and hung them on the line to dry. Paul’s admonition in Titus, for instance, to “the aged women” that they might “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children . . .” Subordinationism, is what the modern age sees in such counsel, and it just won’t do! We’re into equality. We’re into self-expression. No wonder Hannah Arendt could write, during the ’50s, that “[A]uthority has vanished from the modern world . . . most will agree that a constant, ever-widening and deepening crisis of authority has accompanied the development of the modern world in our century.” Self-expression in great and small things alike: It leads to that. The little anxieties crowd into kitchens and bedrooms, making once-automatic decisions, once-inevitable reflexes, less automatic, less inevitable.

Regarding the conception of children there arise dollar-and-cent questions: from the cost of car seats for the beloved brats to the usual parental fork-overs for college degrees and wedding dresses. It can be daunting. Choices, even in our age of abundance—perhaps especially in our age of abundance—

multiply exceedingly, often narrowing instead of expanding the framework of decision. If I . . . well, then; but if I don't . . . I replenish life or I increase the world's exposure to overpopulation.

The framework of decision formerly had a different look than it presently sports. There was understood to be an overall design for life, in line with the purposes of life's Creator, hard as those purposes might prove on occasion to work. The Church had no monopoly on the interpretation of those purposes, but it was understood as trying hard, under the Creator's authority, to shape its interpretation so as to undergird human flourishing. There had to be something in this Life business. It didn't spring up on its own.

Very well: What sort of thing was in it? A challenging answer comes from the Episcopal ethicist and theologian Victor Lee Austin (*The Living Church*, October 17, 2011): "Children are not humanly optional; nor are they a project for the fulfilment of the couple; nor do they exist for the sake of their contribution to the good of society . . . The point of children is that there be more people who know and love God; and precisely in furtherance of those goals, God may give children to the married couple, the husband and wife." He continues: "[C]hildren are not means to our happiness and fulfillment. We who are parents are for them; they are for God" [see Appendix A].

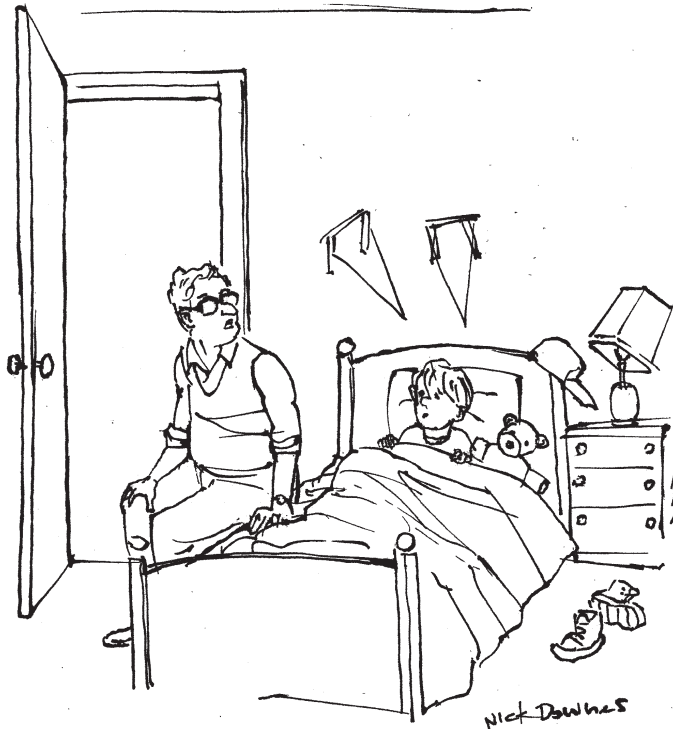
We could all put that in our pipes and smoke it if Elite Opinion still held with tobacco smoked in any receptacle whatever. "They are for God." The wonder of such an assertion, in the age of Rachel Diamond, can be hard to appropriate. God slides uncomfortably into an age where it is smugly affirmed that people are the problem.

A new moral foundation for consideration of life issues would seem essential to the resolving of just such a problem as Elon Musk, apparently, feels he must address from the technological/capitalistic side of the room. Whose exertions to that end we mustn't despise. What are the churches saying? No more than the churches have been saying about disputed moral questions since at least the middle of the last century. Fearful of "overstepping" their rights in a land of religious pluralism, and thus inviting criticism from within and without, the churches have resorted to clucking sounds over bad behavior associated with the assertion of personal causes and prerogatives. Like attempts such as I have described to show birth preference as aligned with the will of God: an obligation natural to the human condition, enriching human life.

How do you build a new moral foundation, surrounded and protected by wisdom and love? I suppose the first thing you do is assert the need for such a foundation: which need ought to exist, as I have implied, in the common sense of the race; the deep, deep understanding of what we're doing

around this ancient place, and how we ought to be doing it, and, most of all perhaps, why? The Supreme Court of the United States, however heavily stocked with “pro-life” jurists, will not, cannot, provide that base—even if the Court’s own determinations put the kibosh on *Roe v. Wade*. No court decision substitutes for a reorientation of human hope, human desire. A moral revolution could do the job: carried on by . . . who knows? The universities? The media? Our political tribes? The churches? Or maybe just the sovereign people, breaking with fashionable distortions of common sense and piety in the face of larger realities?

I concur with the *New York Times*’s Ross Douthat on the need—as he expressed it in *Plough Quarterly* (in an article reprinted by this journal, Fall 2021) for “a radical conversion of our hardened modern hearts.” It has been for way too long just one “d” thing after another. Time for the wheel to turn, the clock hand to advance.



*“Now, your mother and I don’t mind footing the bill for the time being, son,  
but we can’t be carrying you forever.”*

# What We Know About Covid-19 and Pregnancy

Meaghan Bond

**W**hat does protecting the lives of unborn children look like in the era of Covid-19?

Covid-19 prevention measures have, sadly, become highly politicized. In this article I will address the risks Covid-19 poses to pregnant women and their children and discuss the available safety and efficacy data for Covid-19 vaccines. I will *not* address vaccine mandates or vaccine passports, which are policy issues separate from the issue of whether the pro-life community should support Covid-19 vaccine *use* by individuals.

I write from my expertise as a scientist and my experience as a mother, and I focus on what we know from the data. I hold a doctorate in biomedical engineering from Rice University and currently work as a Research Scientist for the Rice360 Institute for Global Health Technologies, where I develop medical tools to improve care for newborns and mothers in low-resource settings. I am also a mother of four: one wonderful living son and three precious babies lost to miscarriage. I have suffered the pain of infertility and loss and understand the great concerns many pregnant women have about new interventions during pregnancy.

The scientific community has learned so much in the last two years of fighting this new virus. Initial recommendations in early 2020 did not list pregnancy as a risk factor for severe disease, but on-the-ground research has demonstrated that pregnant women and their babies are at a higher risk for complications from Covid than their non-pregnant counterparts. Exactly which complications and how much more at risk they are remain under investigation. One challenge is the timeline of pregnancies, pandemic, and scientific publishing: For example, at the time I'm writing this article, the Delta variant has not been dominant for an entire full-term pregnancy (though preliminary research is showing Delta-variant Covid is harming pregnant women and babies more than previous variants did). The new Omicron variant just began emerging as a significant and growing percentage of American Covid cases as I was completing this article, and there have been no publications on whether and how it may vary in its effects on pregnant women and their babies. Another challenge is that different peer-reviewed studies

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**Meaghan Bond** holds a PhD in Bioengineering from Rice University, and is a NEST Senior Design Engineer & Lecturer at the Rice360 Institute for Global Health Technologies.

are comparing different groups: all pregnant women during Covid, pregnant women with a positive Covid test, or pregnant women with symptomatic Covid, versus asymptomatic pregnant women, non-infected pregnant women, or non-pregnant people with or without Covid; this makes combining studies to draw large conclusions difficult. However, some clear trends are emerging.

### **Effects of Covid-19 on Mothers and Babies**

In general, we are fortunate that the course of the disease among pregnant women seems similar to that of their non-pregnant counterparts, and the small number of newborns who are infected during birth typically do well.<sup>1</sup> Absolute numbers of deaths and adverse events are low, but the converging data indicate that pregnant women and their babies do suffer excess morbidity and mortality from Covid-19 due to pregnancy. As of January 3, 2022, the CDC reports that at least 155,587 pregnant women have contracted Covid in the U.S.; 257 of these women have died.<sup>2</sup> In the Americas as a whole, more than 270,000 pregnant women have contracted Covid and 2,600 have died, making Covid the leading cause of maternal mortality in 2021 in Mexico and Columbia (Covid was linked to more than 25 percent of maternal deaths in Mexico in 2020<sup>3</sup>).<sup>4</sup>

While we know that every fetus of a mother infected with Covid-19 is subject to the elevated risks of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term birth, and NICU admission, hard numbers on how many babies have suffered those effects is harder to determine due to a lack of global data on fetal death. The UN Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation has predicted that Covid infection and Covid-related health system disruptions could cause an additional 60,000 to 200,000 stillbirths per year worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

The data show that Covid-19 infection increases risk of stillbirth, and the risk has been increasing with the growing prevalence of the Delta variant: In the U.S., 2.7 percent of deliveries with Covid-19 resulted in stillbirth when Delta was dominant, compared with 0.6 percent of deliveries without Covid in the same period.<sup>6</sup> Globally, Chmielewska et al.'s review compared outcomes pre-pandemic to those during the pandemic (pre-Delta), and separated high from low and middle income countries (HIC vs. LMIC). The pandemic has resulted in a significantly increased rate of stillbirth (odds ratio 1.28) and maternal death (odds ratio 1.37) in LMICs, and a significantly increased rate of preterm birth (before 37 weeks gestation) in high-income countries.<sup>7</sup> Note that this study merely compares rates of stillbirth and preterm birth before and during the pandemic. It does not distinguish between infected and non-infected mothers, and it thus includes both the effects of Covid-19 infection and Covid-19's detrimental effects on the healthcare system, which have



been especially devastating in resource-limited settings that were already struggling to provide adequate maternal and newborn care.

Covid's effect on miscarriage rate is less clear: Some studies show that Covid infection does not increase risk of miscarriage<sup>8,9</sup> and some studies show a slight increase<sup>10</sup>; however, sample sizes are very limited, and there are few good studies. Cavalcante et al. noted that there may be some evidence for increased miscarriage risk in those with symptomatic Covid infection (as compared to any Covid infection), but sufficient data were not available to conclude this with confidence. There are reasons to believe that Covid-19 infection near conception may cause pregnancy loss,<sup>11</sup> and multiple case reports have reported problems in the placenta following even mild Covid infection,<sup>10,12-15</sup> which can lead to intrauterine growth restriction, miscarriage, or stillbirth.

Sadly, the *stress* of the pandemic has resulted in further loss of life; there were 4,500 more elective abortions in the U.K. in April 2020, following that nation's lockdown on March 18, than in April 2019, the year before Covid.<sup>1</sup>

We must also consider morbidity: How many pregnant women and their babies are suffering devastating side effects from Covid-19? Pregnant mothers tend to have fewer symptoms of Covid than non-pregnant women, but when they do have symptoms, they can be more severe.<sup>1,16</sup> Pregnant women have higher rates of hospitalization (31.5 percent of pregnant women compared to 5.8 percent of non-pregnant women<sup>1</sup>), ICU admission, need for mechanical ventilation, need for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO, that is, oxygenating the blood with a heart-lung machine to sustain life), and death.<sup>16-19</sup> The *rates* of these complications vary depending on the specific population, time in the pandemic, control group, and decisions of the treating physicians. For example, Sankaran et al. found that 1 percent of symptomatic pregnant women required ICU admission compared to 0.4 percent of symptomatic non-pregnant women, while Mark et al. found 11 percent of pregnant women with Covid were admitted to the ICU. In addition, other adverse outcomes have been reported, such as increased rate of C-section due to maternal breathlessness, pre-eclampsia, postpartum hemorrhage, and deep vein thrombosis.<sup>10</sup>

Babies born to mothers who have had Covid-19, especially later in pregnancy, experience higher rates of preterm birth, NICU admission, and stillbirth.<sup>10,16</sup> Allotey et al. report that 33 percent of newborns born to Covid-positive mothers were admitted to the NICU.

Most of these studies were conducted before the Delta variant was dominant, and due to the scientific publishing timeline, we have little information on how Delta has changed the severity of Covid-19 for pregnant women and their babies. Delta has significantly increased transmission and has placed

extraordinary burdens on the healthcare system in many parts of the world; this strain can transform conditions that are ordinarily easily treated, such as gallstones, into deadly conditions due to a lack of space and skilled care—even in the high-resource setting of Houston, Texas, home of the largest medical center in the world.<sup>20</sup> The CDC recently released a report showing an almost five-fold increase in the rate of maternal mortality in Mississippi due to Delta: Before Delta, pregnant mothers died at a rate of 5 per 1000 Covid infections; during Delta, the rate jumped to 25 per 1,000 Covid infections during pregnancy.<sup>21</sup> In Alabama, a small study showed that Delta is significantly increasing the percentage of Covid-positive pregnant women who are symptomatic (84 percent during Delta, 54 percent before Delta), who have severe to critical disease (36 percent during Delta, 13 percent before Delta), who require ICU admission (29 percent during Delta, 8 percent before Delta), and who require a C-section due to worsening maternal status (71 percent during Delta, 14 percent before Delta); the percentage of Covid-positive pregnant women with babies born before 37 weeks also increased substantially with the ascendancy of Delta (73 percent during Delta, 32 percent before Delta).<sup>22</sup> A study in Galveston reports similar increases.<sup>23</sup> In Dallas, Delta resulted in over 25 percent of Covid-positive pregnant women needing hospital admission for severe or critical illness.<sup>24</sup>

A broad sampling of hospitals in the U.S. found that during the pre-Delta period, 1 percent of pregnant mothers with Covid lost their babies to still-birth; during Delta, that percentage increased to 2.7 percent.<sup>6</sup>

I expect larger and more detailed studies on Delta and pregnant women and their babies to be published in the coming months.

Severe Covid-19 is survivable when the health system is able to provide care and support, such as oxygen, mechanical ventilation, C-section, and skilled nursing care. However, those resources are reduced when caseloads soar, which occurred in many parts of the U.S. in the fall of 2021, and which occurs continually in low-resource settings that suffer high maternal and newborn mortality even without Covid-19.

## Vaccines

So what can we do? Three Covid vaccines are currently available to the general public in the United States—but are they safe for pregnant women and their babies, and safer than the infection itself? Happily, we now have significant evidence that yes, these vaccines are safe and effective even in pregnant women, and are significantly safer than infection with Covid-19.

Initial evidence on vaccine safety in pregnancy was limited because of the traditional exclusion of pregnant women from the first round of trials. This

exclusion protects women, their babies, and manufacturers from tragedies that may occur during the testing of newly developed medications; however, exclusion from trials also delays the benefits of research from reaching pregnant women—an especially large problem during a crisis like a global pandemic.

From the initial FDA applications of Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson, we learned that the DART studies (Developmental And Reproductive Toxicity) performed on rats showed no vaccine problems for the mothers or babies, and the handful of women who became pregnant during the human trials had rates of adverse pregnancy outcomes similar to or smaller than the placebo groups.<sup>25-29</sup> In the period since these vaccines were approved under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) in late 2020 and early 2021, more targeted studies on pregnant women have been done.

The most convincing data would result from a randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial, in which some pregnant women receive the vaccine and some receive a placebo. Such a trial is underway for the Pfizer vaccine,<sup>27</sup> but results are delayed due to slow enrollment<sup>30</sup>—few women who wanted the vaccine were willing to risk receiving a placebo shot, and some doctors felt it was unethical to give the placebo after observational safety data indicated good results in pregnancy. To my knowledge neither Moderna nor Johnson & Johnson have a placebo randomized trial going on for pregnant patients. Though a placebo randomized trial is ideal, it is not the only way to achieve confidence in vaccine safety.

Tracking and reporting of adverse effects after pregnant women receive vaccines is ongoing. V-safe<sup>31</sup> is a smartphone-based CDC system collecting reports of side effects after people receive any of the vaccines. Women who report pregnancy at the time of or after receiving the vaccine are invited to participate in the V-safe Pregnancy Registry.<sup>32</sup> Scientists are actively monitoring these reports for any warning signs, and those results are being shared with the public. However, because V-safe contains self-reported data, without a control or placebo group, it can be difficult to tell whether a health event is due to the vaccine or would have happened anyway. Nevertheless, V-safe is one good way to monitor trends in side effects. When the data are analyzed, they are typically compared to pre-pandemic data as a substitute for a placebo control group.

The first publication on this data compared rates of adverse events from before the pandemic (unvaccinated women) to rates in vaccinated (Moderna or Pfizer) pregnant women.<sup>33</sup> The rates are very similar: 10-26 percent miscarriage rate in women before the pandemic; 12.6 percent in vaccinated pregnant women. Rates for stillbirth, preterm birth, small size for gestational age, congenital anomalies, and neonatal death are all similar in non-vaccinated and

in vaccinated women, results that also agree with an Israeli study.<sup>34</sup> Further analysis published in September 2021 examined records of 105,226 pregnancies and again showed no increase in miscarriage rate due to receiving the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines (there was insufficient data to make conclusions about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine).<sup>35</sup> Another study in Norway of over 18,000 women showed a slightly lower miscarriage rate for vaccinated women compared to unvaccinated.<sup>36</sup> While any miscarriage is a cause for grief, these data show that receiving the Covid-19 vaccine does not increase the rate of miscarriage or other adverse pregnancy outcomes.

I will very briefly touch on the data we have for couples trying to conceive. I sympathize with people who are concerned about fertility, and I understand that because the current medical establishment is often focused on preventing fertility, it's hard to trust them when they assert that a new intervention is safe for fertility. However, in this case, the data supports great safety for fertility.

Based on how the vaccines work, scientists do not expect any adverse effects on fertility. The new mRNA vaccines (Moderna and Pfizer) work by giving the body instructions to produce only the spike protein of the Covid virus. The body reacts to this foreign protein by producing antibodies, and the mRNA instructions quickly degrade. There is no mechanism for altering one's genomic DNA.

Many people are concerned that the vaccines may have long-term effects on fertility, but there is no evidence to support this concern. With previous (non-Covid) vaccines, all "long-term" effects have appeared within 2 months of vaccine administration (vaccines are taken once or twice and then never seen again, unlike drugs that are taken daily for long periods of time; therefore, we are more concerned with the long-term effects of those drugs taken over months or years). Two months of initial safety data were required for the vaccines to receive Emergency Use Authorization (EUA); since then, scientists have been monitoring the side effects of the vaccines for over a year with no concerning long-term side effects noted.<sup>\*40,41</sup> There is no evidence, from this vaccine or previous vaccines, to support the concern that fertility could be affected years down the road.

Concerns have been circulating that the vaccine nanoparticles pool in the

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\*Short-term side effects are common with these vaccines and are well-known and well-studied. Common short-term side effects include pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site; fatigue, headache, muscle pain, fever, etc. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has a rare side effect of blood clots (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome); the CDC now encourages people to choose Moderna or Pfizer when available due to this rare risk. The mRNA vaccines (Moderna and Pfizer) have a small risk of myocarditis (heart inflammation), especially in young men, though this risk is less than the risk of myocarditis from Covid-19 infection. These rare side effects are not considered long-term effects: they generally appear within two weeks of receiving a vaccine. People concerned about these risks due to personal medical history should consult with their physician on which vaccine may be appropriate for them.

ovaries and cause damage; however, these concerns originate from a poor understanding or a deliberate misreading of Pfizer data submitted to a Japanese regulatory agency.<sup>37-39</sup> In the study, researchers injected rats with lipid nanoparticles similar to those used in the Pfizer vaccine; instead of mRNA, the nanoparticles carried a fluorescent particle so researchers could watch where the particles accumulated in the body over 48 hours. By far the greatest concentration (24.6 percent and 16.2 percent of the initial dose) accumulated in the injection site and in the liver, exactly where we would expect. In female rats, the maximum amount of particles in the ovaries was at 48 hours after injection and peaked at 0.095 percent of the initial dose. That is a tiny, tiny amount. Additionally, rats were injected with a dose approximately 18-35x higher than that given to humans. This data in no way supports the claim that vaccine nanoparticles target or harm the ovary.

We have other data supporting ovarian health post-vaccination: One Israeli study examined the effect of Covid-19 infection and the Pfizer Covid vaccine on ovarian follicles.<sup>42</sup> Several small groups of women recovering from Covid-19 infection, vaccinated women, and women who were uninfected and unvaccinated were studied when they had their eggs collected for in vitro fertilization. The scientists found anti-Covid antibodies in the follicle fluid in both recovering and vaccinated women, but there were no differences among the three groups in terms of follicle quality (estradiol, progesterone, or number of eggs). Other studies have reported no problems with embryo implantation in women<sup>43,44</sup> or in sperm parameters<sup>45</sup> following mRNA vaccination.

Many women are concerned about the growing reports vaccination produces menstrual changes such as early or late periods, heavier bleeding, or heavier cramping in some women. However, these changes tend to be short-lived, are likely explained by the vaccine's stressful side effects and the endometrium's connection to the immune system, and show no detrimental effects on fertility.<sup>46</sup> Studies on this issue are much needed and ongoing!<sup>47</sup> The first systematic study on this question was published in early 2022.<sup>48</sup> This beautiful study recruited women who had been tracking their cycle lengths via the "Natural Cycles" app for at least three cycles before vaccination (2,403 women), and compared their cycle changes post-vaccination to charting women who did not receive the vaccine (1,556 women). This prospective design produces data of much higher quality than asking women after the vaccine if they noticed any changes (retrospective design). The researchers found an average increase in cycle length in vaccinated women of less than one day (for both doses of vaccine). No change in length of menses (bleeding) was seen in the vaccinated group. Some vaccinated women (approximately 10

percent) “experienced a clinically notable change in cycle length of 8 days or more, [but] this change attenuated quickly within two postvaccine cycles.” Only women with normal cycle lengths (24–38 days) were included in this study; I look forward to further reports on this topic.

As many doctors hypothesized, this change in cycle length was short-lived (returned to normal within two cycles). If these cycle changes affected fertility, we would see evidence in vaccinated women’s conception, miscarriage, or stillbirth rates—changes we are not seeing.

*No* concerning safety data for reproductive-age women, pregnant or not, have been reported. Due to these good reports, multiple groups now *recommend* that pregnant women receive the vaccine, including the CDC,<sup>49</sup> the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists or ACOG,<sup>50</sup> and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine.<sup>51</sup> These sources do recommend that pregnant women who experience fever as a vaccine side effect control it with acetaminophen to prevent adverse pregnancy outcomes; fortunately, pregnant women seem to have fewer vaccine side effects than non-pregnant people. (Since the initial writing of this article, all three groups now also recommend pregnant women and women planning to become pregnant receive a Covid-19 booster shot at the appropriate time following their initial vaccine series. There are no additional safety concerns for the booster shot.)

As of this writing, only a handful of people are currently medically ineligible for vaccines: children under 5 years, people who have allergies to vaccine ingredients (this population is small because the vaccines were intentionally developed without common allergens like eggs), and people who have recently received an antibody infusion to treat Covid.<sup>52</sup> People with concerns about specific rare side effects, like blood clotting or myocarditis, should speak to their doctor; these concerns can often be mitigated by choosing between the two different types of available vaccines.

### **Do Vaccines *Work* for Pregnant Women?**

Initially there were some concerns about whether the new mRNA vaccine platform would induce immunity in the pregnant population, but the data look good. A study followed pregnant and lactating women who had been given Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.<sup>53</sup> The authors found that:

- Vaccines induced similar antibody levels in pregnant, lactating, and non-pregnant women, implying that the vaccines work well even during pregnancy.
- Vaccines produced higher antibody levels in pregnant women than did natural infection with Covid-19, implying a greater protection against reinfection.



- Vaccines generated antibodies in umbilical cord blood of babies delivered during the study and in breast milk samples, implying that babies of vaccinated mothers receive some protection against Covid-19.

Vaccine efficacy in pregnancy is also demonstrated by the comparative vaccination rates of hospitalized pregnant women: In Alabama and Texas hospitals, none of the pregnant patients testing positive had been vaccinated pre-Delta, and only 3-6 percent of those testing positive were vaccinated after the rise of Delta.<sup>22,23</sup> These low numbers indicate that the vaccines give good protection against hospitalization for infected pregnant women, even with the Delta variant.

### **What Do Vaccines Do for Baby?**

Pregnant mothers and the pro-life movement are especially concerned that the vaccine not harm the baby. However, there is growing evidence that the Covid-19 vaccines are not only *safe* for mother and baby, they may also *protect* the baby from Covid after birth.

Multiple studies have now looked at babies who were born after their mothers received the Covid vaccine.<sup>53-55</sup> They found that Covid antibodies transfer to the baby via the placenta. These are antibodies that the mother's body makes in response to the vaccine (not the vaccine components themselves). They flow into the baby's bloodstream and may help the baby fight Covid if the baby is exposed. This is the same process by which, for example, the pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine that mothers are strongly encouraged to get during pregnancy helps protect the baby for the first several months of life outside the womb.

These studies showed that getting a second dose of the two-dose vaccines contributes to better antibody coverage for the baby (44 percent of mothers with 1 dose had babies with antibodies at birth, compared with 99 percent of mothers with 2 doses). They also showed that the longer gap between receiving the second vaccine dose and birth resulted in more antibodies for the baby. Antibodies are also transferred via breast milk, and evidence suggests that receiving the vaccine while breastfeeding is very safe for both mother and baby.<sup>56</sup>

More studies will be needed to confirm that antibody transfer from the mother helps babies *fight* Covid, but I think it is extremely likely based on what we are seeing in adults and what we know from other maternal vaccines. While most infected newborns recover quite well from Covid-19, the added protection of the mother's vaccination will help reduce the small number of infants who suffer severe or long-term effects from Covid.

### **Can Pro-Life Groups Support Vaccines with a Connection to Aborted Fetal Cells?**

All three vaccines currently approved in the U.S. have a connection to aborted fetal cells: All three were tested on these cells, and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is manufactured using these cells. What is a pro-life person to do in the face of the clear threat of Covid-19 to life, the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, and their association with abortion?

We know that pro-life people have differing opinions about the morality of the vaccine due to the connection with abortion of the Covid vaccines in use in North America and Europe. Some proliferers have decided to avoid even a remote association with the use of aborted fetal cells by declining the vaccine. However, the approach of the Catholic Church seems to me to be the most consistent and well-thought-out response from a pro-life perspective.<sup>57</sup> The conclusion of the Church is that we should always advocate for the development of vaccines with no connection to abortion. When alternatives are available and appropriate, we should choose the vaccine with no or lesser association with abortion. When the threat is serious (and I believe Covid-19 clearly qualifies), and the connection with the original abortion used in developing or testing the vaccine is remote, we should use the vaccines to prevent further loss of life, while exhorting the pharmaceutical companies to turn to ethically unproblematic means of production and testing of vaccines, as they have done with many other vaccines [see “Ethical Vaccines Are Becoming a Reality” by Margaret Brady, also in this issue].

### **Conclusions**

Covid-19 threatens the life and health of pregnant women and their babies, as well as other vulnerable populations not discussed here: older adults, people with pre-existing conditions, the small group of people medically unable to get vaccinated, the poor. The data I have reviewed here indicate that the existing Covid-19 vaccines are safe for pregnant women and their babies and help protect them from hospitalization and death.

While most infected pregnant women and their unborn babies do quite well in well-resourced settings, the data clearly show that a significant minority suffer severe complications and death. These numbers increase dramatically in low-resource settings. Prolifera can help prevent their suffering, as well as the suffering of everyone else affected by the pandemic, by speaking with precision and truthfulness about Covid-19 and its mitigation measures. This has been called a pandemic of disinformation, and proliferers ought to do our part to fight false narratives regarding vaccination, fertility, and pregnancy. We can also practice Covid-19 mitigation measures—including vaccines,

masks, and social distancing where appropriate—and encourage others, especially pregnant and nursing mothers, to do the same.

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# Ethical Vaccines Are Becoming a Reality

Margaret Brady

On a cloudy June day in Philadelphia, Dr. Leonard Hayflick leaned over the table in his research lab, wielding a pair of scalpels. His task that morning in 1962 was to process the tissue of two human lungs. After cutting the organs into small pieces, Hayflick poured them into a flask and added a chemical solution that broke the tissue down into its component parts: millions upon millions of cells. He ran the concoction through a centrifuge, then painstakingly used his mouth to suck the cells into a pipette, ultimately transferring them into several small glass bottles. Hayflick placed the bottles into the lab's incubation room and waited. He was convinced that these cells, now quietly growing in his facility, could revolutionize the vaccine industry.

The doctor was right. His work, and the work of scientists who followed in his footsteps, led to vaccines that have saved millions of lives and spared generations of children from profound disability and disfiguring disease. But even as Dr. Hayflick took the first steps into a glorious era of public health triumphs, he tripped at the threshold. The tiny pair of lungs Hayflick cut up in his lab that day belonged to a healthy baby girl, whose life was ended in an abortion performed at 17 weeks of pregnancy. In her book *The Vaccine Race: Science, Politics, and the Human Costs of Defeating Disease*, Dr. Meredith Wadman reports that the Swedish obstetrician who carried out the abortion sent the baby's body away to the research lab without getting her patient's consent, or even telling her what was happening.

In the decades since, fetal cell lines like Hayflick's (which he called WI-38) have become pervasive in the biotech industry. Their ubiquity belies the fact that they all trace their beginnings to a few specific abortions, all performed in the period between the 1960s and 1980s. They are used to study everything from the simplest household medications, like Tylenol, to the most advanced biologic drugs. These antique lines also continue to play a key role in the manufacture of certain vaccines, a detail that has seeped into the public consciousness slowly—and then, in the age of Covid-19, suddenly. “Religious exemption” is now a household phrase, with much of that dissent presumably arising from a newfound awareness of the cells' tragic origins.

As we watch health officials struggle, it's easy to feel frustrated. Sixty years

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**Margaret Brady**, an associate editor at Verily Magazine, is a graduate of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. She writes from the Cleveland, Ohio area.



after Hayflick's breakthrough, where are the ethical vaccines that respect life—and respect the consciences of pro-life people? Public health needs to be inclusive, yet the pharmaceutical industry seems wedded to an old-fashioned industrial process that ends up excluding many of us. Although that discouragement is understandable, it's also based on out-of-date impressions and incomplete information. Because it turns out that innovators in biotechnology are changing the game. Here's how.

### **The Emergence of mRNA**

Amid all the controversy over Covid-19 vaccines, it's important to know that the technology behind some of the shots—mRNA—represents a significant breakthrough for principled vaccine development. Traditionally, to make vaccines, scientists need to use viruses. And viruses need living cells to grow in, whether those cells come from animals, like monkeys and chickens, or from people. Originally, Leonard Hayflick opted for tissue from a healthy aborted infant, because he speculated that cells straight from the pristine cloister of the womb would be “safer” than potentially contaminated animal cells. But with mRNA vaccines, like Pfizer's and Moderna's Covid shots, no cell line is needed at all.

In fact, after the first step of genomic sequencing is done, viruses aren't needed either. Researchers from anywhere in the world can look at the sequence, pick a gene from the virus, and use an enzyme called RNA polymerase to create customized “messenger” RNA. In the case of Covid shots, scientists from both Pfizer and Moderna decided to make their mRNA “recipe” with the coronavirus's spike protein gene, which it uses to attach to its victim's healthy cells. When injected as a vaccine, the mRNA breaks down quickly, but not before helping to teach the human body to recognize the spike protein as an unsavory guest. “It's kind of like the face on the wanted poster,” explains Dr. David Prentice, vice president and research director of the Charlotte Lozier Institute. “The immune system sees that, and it arms itself in case that face with a real virus ever shows up in our system. All done without cells.”

With the Covid-19 vaccines, though, the manufacturers didn't let the new technology stand on its own. Instead, both Pfizer and Moderna chose to test their product with HEK-293 cells, a particularly pervasive line grown from the kidneys of a healthy baby girl who was killed in an abortion in the 1970s. “They didn't have to do it, and they didn't have to use these abortion-derived cells,” says Dr. Prentice, who is also professor of molecular biology at Catholic University of America and serves on the advisory board of the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity.

“There are two tests they do. First, they vaccinate fetal cells in a dish, just to see if they will make the protein they hope our own cells will. HEK-293 is also very good at making pseudovirus particles, so they make some of that pseudovirus. Then, when they vaccinate [lab] animals to see if they make the antibodies they hoped they would, they use that pseudovirus as the target. I understand in some ways why they do that, rather than using [live] infectious virus in their lab. That makes some sense,” Dr. Prentice says. “But there are other, licitly-derived cells that they could use instead.”

Although pro-life leaders from the Vatican to the Southern Baptist Convention have approvingly spotlighted how Pfizer’s and Moderna’s vaccines avoid abortion-derived cells in the manufacturing process, the testing issue is still sensitive for millions of individual consciences. By testing their revolutionary technology with an unethical, antiquated cell line, these biotech companies created a hurdle for public health authorities and dinged their own bottom lines.

Dr. Prentice points out that there is also plenty of positive movement, with scientists choosing approaches that are modern, creative, and inclusive. For instance, the American company Novavax is in the late stages of developing a Covid-19 vaccine that doesn’t use mRNA technology, but does use cells from fall armyworm moths, a lawn-eating pest that typically torments homeowners in the Southeastern United States and other tropical regions. In 2019, the French firm Sanofi-Pasteur quietly changed the way it makes its polio vaccines, choosing to use monkey cells instead of the MRC-5 cell line, which was developed from the lungs of a little boy whose life was cut short in September 1966 during a second trimester abortion. As a result of Sanofi’s switch, millions of American preschoolers now receive ethical polio protection.

The problematic MRC-5 line was also picked by Merck to make its shingles vaccine, called Zostavax, starting in 2006. But as of November 2020, that shot is no longer available in the United States, because rival GlaxoSmithKline has introduced Shingrix, a vaccine that eats Zostavax’s lunch both ethically and clinically. Made using Chinese hamster ovary cells, it boasts an effectiveness rate up to 97 percent, compared to Zostavax’s 50-60 percent. “The Centers for Disease Control now recommends, don’t even bother with the old one that was made in the abortion-derived cells. Go for this newer one,” Dr. Prentice says. “Not only is it ethically produced, it’s better! Ethical science is better science.” In fact, the CDC even urges patients who got Merck’s vaccine to return to their doctor for Shingrix.

“‘Just as good’ works for those who are interested in the ethics,” notes Prentice. “But we really want *everybody* to move away from [abortion-derived cell

lines]. We need something that is not just as good, but something actually better. If you've got something that works better, and is more efficient, that's going to sway them."

#### **Agathos Bio: "Impossible" Bioethics**

One group laser-focused on getting to "better" is Agathos Biologics, a startup that bills itself as "The Good Science Company." The firm was co-founded by a trio with significant industry pedigree at Aldevron, a biotech manufacturing concern in North Dakota that was acquired in 2021 by Fortune 500 company Danaher in a deal worth more than \$9 billion.

"What we saw is an opportunity to create cell lines that are both technologically superior and ethically acceptable," says CEO and co-founder Dr. James Brown. "To some extent, you're limited to work with what you have. These [fetal derived] cells have been around a long time. The drugs they've produced have helped a lot of people, and we don't dispute that, because it's true. We wanted to provide an alternative."

Agathos has just started working on a replacement for those omnipresent HEK-293 cells, and takes an apolitical stance on issues both left and right, keeping a disciplined focus on its core identity as an innovating biotech company. "When we talk to other people that we might partner with, or hire employees, I don't really care what their politics are. I've framed a problem, and if they're interested in solving it, great. That's all they need to do," Brown told me. "We have certain parameters we are going to work with that are a little bit different from another company's. We're pursuing a slightly different path, but once you've decided the path, how you get there is the same way you do any other science."

He compares the co-founders' strategy to that of the celebrated Impossible Meat company, whose plant-based alternatives to beef and chicken have gone so mainstream, they're in the Walmart freezer aisle. "These people are vegans. They're not crazy enough to think that the whole world is going to turn vegan," he says. "But they *are* crazy enough to think that if they have a better product, that people like better, that's great, because that helps solve the problem."

Dr. Brown describes the struggle to market ethical cell lines as a chicken-and-egg conundrum. A potential HEK-293 replacement needs robust data to make it a worthy rival. But labs aren't motivated to try new lines and generate that data when they have an off-the-shelf option they already know so well in HEK-293. Agathos is willing to step in and break that loop. "The ultimate cell line may not be one that we develop," Brown says. "In biotech, sometimes there's 'Not Invented Here' syndrome: *If we didn't invent it, it*

*sucks*. But I've got none of that.”

“A lot of biotech firms are formed around a technology looking for a problem. We have found a problem and we're looking for a technology to address it. So if we need to develop something internally, or if we can get something from somebody else, that's fine too.”

The need to effectively compare fetal cells head-to-head with a superior option led to the difficult decision to essentially use HEK-293 in order to replace HEK-293. The cell line isn't part of day-to-day research, but Agathos does study it to understand its qualities and how they can be beat. “For us, the best outcome would be that we chart a path that others can follow, that they don't have to use these other cell lines,” Dr. Brown says. “We want to do two things: Provide an ethical alternative, and make drugs that help people.”

#### **JPII Medical Research Institute**

At the John Paul II Medical Research Institute in Iowa, scientific director Dr. Alan Moy has been working doggedly on ethical biotechnology for almost 15 years. The Institute's most recent innovation builds on the work of Japanese researcher Shinya Yamanaka, who won the Nobel Prize for his 2006 discovery that mature skin cells could be genetically reprogrammed to act like embryonic cells, which are “pluripotent”—meaning they have the potential to develop into any type of cell in the human body. But Yamanaka's breakthrough had a problem. “Some of the early induced pluripotent stem cells had a safety risk. They could cause tumors,” Dr. Moy told me. “What we worked on was a way to make these iPS cells cheaper and safer. Which we've accomplished, and published. We've filed for a patent, and we anticipate it will be issued soon.”

Researchers are developing an alternative coronavirus vaccine—Dr. Moy is an emphatic skeptic of reputed mRNA miracles—but they're also working on a substitute for HEK-293, leveraging the Institute's legacy stem cell technology to come up with a better product. “These cell lines were produced 50 to 60 years ago, using technology that today would be considered antiquated. Viruses and radiation have been used to chemically change the cell line in important ways, with [implications for] safety and functioning of drugs,” explains Dr. Moy, noting that HEK-293 cells routinely have 64 chromosomes, which in a human being would be a lethal genetic abnormality. To make a superior replacement, the Institute is using the revolutionary gene editing tool called CRISPR to alter ethical stem cells and produce a modern cell line that avoids those drawbacks.

“Because, if we want to change the future of biotech, it has to be better

than just saying ‘it’s moral.’ It has to have features that are going to be disruptive,” he says, echoing Dr. Prentice and Dr. Brown. “The goal is to [influence] the industry to use cell lines that offer scientific advantages for their bottom line, but also address the unmet consumer market.” Beyond that, Moy believes that developing a committed pro-life biotechnology sector that can scale up high volume manufacturing is indispensable. To him, coaxing an industry that doesn’t share pro-life first principles to use better, more ethical products can only go so far.

### **What Can We Do to Help?**

Most people who care about bioethics don’t have terminal degrees in molecular biology or access to state-of-the-art labs. But we can all make a difference in dreaming toward a more ethical future. Education and encouragement are key tools. For those who respect life, there’s no need to feel sheepish about this topic: At its cutting edge, biotechnology is moving on from outdated, hidebound tradition. Dr. Prentice notes that even many researchers aren’t aware of the tragic origins of some of science’s most antiquated cell lines. In that regard, the country’s struggle over vaccine mandates and punishment for the noncompliant (who often cite the abortion-derived cells) has only served to elevate the problem’s profile. “What the government is doing is helping to accelerate that education more than I could ever do on my own,” says a rueful Dr. Moy.

When Sanofi-Pasteur switched to an ethical cell line for its polio vaccines, grateful customers launched a letter-writing campaign to thank them, though the company studiously made no comment on the reasons for its decision. “Whatever reason they picked, I think it’s incumbent on us to acknowledge that they made a good move,” Dr. Prentice told me. “Give them a little encouragement, and maybe other companies will follow. There are only nine FDA-licensed vaccines left that still use those old cell lines [for production]. [We need to offer them] as much encouragement as we can give them to use newer technology, even if it may be a little unfamiliar or cost them a bit in terms of retooling their manufacturing.

“There are opportunities, and alternatives. We need to keep pushing. We celebrate where there are successes, where there’s movement. And we keep pressing. In the end, everyone’s going to benefit.”

# The Sad State of “This Bloody Business”

*W.J. Kennedy*

The most expensive item on the shopping list, at \$515, was an “intact calvarium” (a human skull) of a preborn baby, age 18 to 24 weeks. Baby livers were listed at \$340 each. The seller, California-based Advanced Bioscience Resources (ABR), even had the courtesy to list shipping options for the customer (in this case the Federal Drug Administration) including overnight FedEx for \$50, and the choice of snap (liquid nitrogen) freezing at \$40 per specimen or passive (dry ice) freezing at \$80 per specimen.<sup>1</sup>

There’s a lot more wrong here than the gut punch you get reading a catalogue of aborted baby parts as if they were office supplies or other products available on Amazon. Would you like to add to your cart or proceed to checkout?

The effort that government watchdog Judicial Watch had to exert to wrest from the FDA and National Institutes of Health the shopping list and other stomach-churning documents—public information under federal law—is perhaps the least disturbing part of the story. Attorney Meredith DiLiberto filed FOIA requests in 2018. The documents Judicial Watch first received were so heavily redacted they were unintelligible. The group sued, and in March 2021, Judge Trevor McFadden of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, siding with Judicial Watch, ordered the turnover of names of laboratories that had contracted with ABR, and the unit pricing information of the fetal tissues on offer in what he described in his opinion as “this bloody business.”<sup>2</sup>

In an interview for this article, DiLiberto noted that she is used to dealing with government resistance to transparency. What shocked her, and co-workers who also read the less redacted documents, was the “cavalier” attitude taken by government and ABR employees in discussing the bloody business. “Some of us reviewing the documents had to get up and walk away at times,” she told me. “I’ve had nightmares about it.”

One exchange between ABR procurement manager Perrin Larton and FDA research veterinary medical official Dr. Kristina Howard reads like a sick parody of a dialogue in a B-horror movie. In an August 26, 2015, email

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**W. J. Kennedy** is a graduate of St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, where he studied chemistry. A conservative, he has been covering business and pro-life issues, principally as a ghostwriter, for thirty years. He now lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.



Howard wrote: “As always, we are requesting liver and thymus for each date.” Larton answered: “I’ll put you on the schedule for your requested tissue delivery dates.” Howard replied: “Thanks Perrin! Btw, are you planning to attend the humanized mouse workshop in Zurich in January?” Larton wrote back: “Yes. Linda and I will both be attending. Will we see you there?” Howard replied: “Assuming the gov’t allows me to go, I will be there. I have lots of data!”<sup>3</sup>

DiLiberto explained that Judicial Watch’s FOIA campaign first targeted third parties—like ABR—on the procurement side of the fetal trafficking business. These companies were identified on videotapes of Planned Parenthood officials discussing aborted-baby parts that were secretly recorded by undercover reporters with the Center for Medical Progress (CMP). The tapes, released in 2015, were the subject of extensive U.S. House and Senate hearings over the next two years. These led to some reforms under the Trump Administration—many of which have been reversed under Biden.<sup>4</sup> (More on that later.)

Even more disturbing revelations came to light when CMP’s founder David Daleiden (who is still battling legal action over the tapes brought by then California Attorney General Kamala Harris) approached Judicial Watch for help in obtaining information about a financial arrangement the University of Pittsburgh had with the National Institutes of Health, the money source for most of the fetal experimentation that takes place in research centers all over the country. “In one FOIA, David received limited feedback, and [in response to] the other he received nothing after a year,” DiLiberto said. (Federal law requires government agencies to respond to a FOIA request within 20 business days.)

In April 2021, Judicial Watch filed a lawsuit and, as reported by *Fox News*, uncovered this gruesome scheme: In its NIH proposal for funding, the university wrote that it wanted to “develop a pipeline to the acquisition, quality control and distribution of human genitourinary samples [urinary and genital organs] obtained throughout development (6-42 weeks gestation)”—40 weeks is full term. The proposal referenced a long list of organs, “including liver, heart, gonads, legs, brain, genitourinary tissues including kidneys, ureters and bladders.” The last three were the focus of a research project, known as GUDMAP, for which the university was seeking funding.<sup>5</sup>

It gets even more gruesome. Pitt also told NIH it could minimize “ischemia time . . . to ensure the highest quality biological specimens.” Ischemia time, in the words of the National Cancer Institute, “is the time a tissue, organ, or body part remains at body temperature after its blood supply has been reduced or cut off but before it is cooled or reconnected to a blood supply.” In

the opinion of several OB/GYNs, some of whom have performed abortions, this means that body parts obtained at minimal ischemia time were almost certainly harvested from babies killed just before delivery—or just after.

According to Kathi Aultman, who performed abortions early in her career but is now a member of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG), “the best way to get intact specimens is through induction.” In many abortions, she explained,

... especially in the second trimester, the baby is injected with digoxin to kill it but that ruins the tissue. D&E [another abortion procedure] ruins the tissue because the skull and thorax are crushed, and the baby is dismembered as the limbs are pulled through the cervical opening. So, I have to surmise that they are giving misoprostol [an induction drug] or other drugs to cause the woman to go into labor. The baby is often born alive and the organs can be immediately harvested.

Aultman said that organs may be harvested from babies aborted by D&E if digoxin is not used and if the cervix is purposely over-dilated so that the baby “accidentally” comes out fairly intact. “The abortionist runs the risk of prosecution under the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban, however, if their staff reports them.” She added that yet another way to cut ischemia time would be to “intentionally do an Intact D&E [D&X or Partial-Birth Abortion] but cut the cord or inject the heart with KCI (potassium chloride) at the start of the procedure. The procedure is only illegal if performed on a living baby.”

Dr. Christina Francis, who chairs AAPLOG, agreed that if Pitt is saying ischemia time starts after tissue collection, then that would mean the baby is still alive when they’re harvesting the tissue. “It’s horrific and does not constitute good science or compassionate medical care,” she told me. “As physicians, they know what they are doing,” she said. “They know what they are destroying.” Another OB/GYN, Dr. Ronna Jurow, who once worked at Planned Parenthood and identifies herself as “pro-choice,” told *Fox News* that, based on the statements about ischemia time in Pitt’s NIH proposal, “there’s no question” the fetus would be alive during tissue collection.

The good news is that pro-life members of Congress and the Pennsylvania General Assembly were outraged at the revelations. Chair of the (PA) House Health Committee, State Rep. Kathy Rapp (R-Warren), held a public hearing last May. And in a September 21 letter, nearly 100 members of Congress demanded that the departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, as well as NIH, investigate the procedures that took place and possible violations of federal law, including the altering of abortion protocols to increase the harvesting of body parts [see Appendix B].

The bad news is that the DOJ was the only agency to respond, and its response, received by Oklahoma Senator Jim Lankford (one of the leads on the

September letter from Congress) on October 18, read in part that “because of legal and ethical considerations, and longstanding Department of Justice policy, we can neither confirm nor deny the existence of investigations relating to law enforcement matters.”

The DOJ’s letter, DiLiberto wrote in an email, “is what is known as a Glomar response where an agency may claim that acknowledging the existence of records (or investigations) is detrimental to its mission. It is generally used in intelligence-type situations. Using it for the Pitt situation is ... unusual to say the least.”

The other bad news is that during the May hearing in the Pennsylvania House, the University of Pittsburgh dodged the panel’s questions. It sent a new hire who appeared to know little and said less in response to numerous questions concerning details of Pitt’s contract with NIH, its relationship with Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania (an OB/GYN, Beatrice Chen, is on staff at both places), and its relationship with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), which performs abortions and maintains a human tissue bank.

**D**avid Daleiden, who testified at the hearing, denounced Pitt’s evasion in *Newsweek*: “Despite the serious questions about these experiments and Pitt’s inextricable relationship with Planned Parenthood,” he wrote, “Pitt stonewalled lawmakers with an unprepared, newly hired witness who could not answer basic questions . . . Perhaps Pitt could not send a qualified witness to defend these programs, because what takes place in them is indefensible.”

In the same article, Daleiden referenced a “nightmarish protocol” developed by a Pitt scientist “for harvesting the freshest, most pristine livers from 5-month-old aborted babies in order to isolate massive numbers of stem cells for experimental transplants.” The technique, he wrote, “calls for aborting late-term fetuses alive via labor induction, rushing them to a sterile laboratory, washing them and then cutting them open to harvest the liver.” The scientist who devised it “received \$3 million from the NIH,” Daleiden wrote. At the committee hearing, the Pitt official sent to testify claimed that this experiment was done only in Italy and had ended in 2013. But Daleiden cited the results of a 2019 study that indicated baby livers were harvested in Pittsburgh using the same technique used in Italy.<sup>6</sup>

Members of Congress who signed off on the September 21 letter have an extensive list of questions they want answers to as well. But though Pitt receives state funding, it is exempt from the state’s Right-to-Know Law, as are three other universities: Penn State, Temple, and Lincoln. All four are categorized by the General Assembly as “state-related” schools. According to

an official with the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records, which administers the Right-to-Know law, the universities are required to make some information public—salaries for instance—but little more, since the state provides only a portion of their funding.

There are means available for uncovering some of the answers. For example, the state’s auditor general could examine how Pitt spends state money, and the state attorney general could investigate whether any state laws are being violated. Pennsylvania law, for instance, forbids experimentation on a living fetus; it also requires medical workers to provide immediate care to a child born alive during an abortion.

Rep. Kathy Rapp did write to Auditor General Timothy DeFoor, a Republican, asking him to look into the matter. (A call placed to his office seeking to learn whether it will conduct an investigation was not returned.) Rapp said she would also support legislation to cut off the funding, approved each year as “non-preferred” appropriations, to the state-related schools. For Fiscal Year 2020-21 Pitt received \$151.5 million from the state’s General Fund account. “This money should be going directly to the students,” Rapp said.

In the state Senate, senators Michele Brooks (R-Erie) and Judy Ward (R-Blair) are circulating a co-sponsorship memo to colleagues asking them to sign onto legislation that would require both the auditor general and attorney general to investigate Pitt. And Ward said she is also looking into Pitt’s exemption from Right-to-Know, calling it “horrible.” She added that she would develop a plan of action after the first of the year.

Pitt claims it has done nothing in violation of state or federal law; it contracted with Washington, D.C., law firm Hyman, Phelps & McNamara, which promotes itself as an expert in the workings of the FDA, to perform an audit of its procedures. But the law firm’s findings, released in mid-January, indicating that everything was above board, left many “legal and ethical issues unanswered,” said David Prentice, Vice President and Research Director of the pro-life Charlotte Lozier Institute (CLI).

“They narrowed their focus to just the University of Pittsburgh and not the source of the tissue,” Prentice said in an interview. Furthermore, Dan Bartkowiak of the Pennsylvania Family Institute, said in a statement that “astonishingly, the report reveals that there was no investigation into the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) where the aborted babies are obtained for fetal experiments at Pitt like grafting the baby’s scalp to lab rats.”

“This laughable omission should infuriate taxpayers and every decent human being,” he continued. “And there’s certainly nothing funny about this lack of transparency and the fact that human beings are having their scalps removed and transplanted onto lab rats.” Bartkowiak also noted that the report

failed to cover Pitt's reference to the minimization of ischemia time in its proposal to NIH.

Tara Sander Lee of CLI told *Fox News* for an article published before the release of the Pitt report that full transparency demands more. "If this were truly a transparent and timely investigation, University of Pittsburgh would hire credentialed scientists well-grounded in ethics to review their research, such as the federal Human Fetal Tissue Ethics Advisory Board, which President Biden recently disbanded," said Lee, who serves as a senior fellow and director of life sciences at CLI. "Instead, they've hired a D.C. law firm to lower the cone of silence."<sup>7</sup>

Prentice said that while Planned Parenthood and the third-party firms that act as the middlemen are making some money on the fetal-parts transactions, the real endgame driving the cover-up is the "protection of the ideology behind abortion." "They can't claim any gains in research, because there haven't been any," he said. "Fetal tissue research is antiquated and barbaric, trafficking in aborted-baby body parts for research that modern, productive science has left behind."

Indeed, in their September 21 letter to the federal agencies, members of Congress emphasized that point: "Exploiting the body parts of aborted children for research purposes is repulsive and should stop, regardless of the outcome hoped for by researchers. Research using abortive fetal tissue is unethical, wrong, and has also been proven ineffective. Despite being used in clinical research since the 1920s, fetal tissue has not produced a single clinical treatment."

Studies carried out by the Charlotte Lozier Institute support the letter. The "Fetal Tissue Claims Versus Facts" section of a 2020 CLI peer-reviewed scientific paper published in *Issues in Law and Medicine* debunks the widely disseminated myths repeated as truths (especially in the mainstream media) about medicines and therapies developed from human fetal tissue (HFT). In addition, the study describes existing alternatives that make its use in any medical research unnecessary.

An often-repeated claim, for instance, is that HFT plays an important role in the development of vaccines. The CLI study found that neither primary HFT nor fetal-derived cell lines from abortions are needed to develop vaccines. Fetal cell lines have been used to develop some vaccines, but according to the study, "even continuous cell lines and finite cell strains derived from aborted fetal tissue collected decades ago have never been the exclusive means necessary for development or production of any vaccine." Eleven vaccines use fetal cell lines procured decades ago, but each could be produced without them. In fact, most vaccines in the U.S. today are developed without

fetal cell lines. (The CLI study noted that three vaccine manufacturers in Japan have developed rubella vaccines using either rabbit kidney or quail embryo fibroblast cells.)

The study also debunks the myth of the role human fetal tissue has played in transplants, including as a treatment for Parkinson’s disease. The lead from a 2001 *New York Times* story reads: “A carefully controlled study that tried to treat Parkinson’s disease by implanting cells from aborted fetuses into patients’ brains not only failed to show an overall benefit but also revealed a disastrous side effect, scientists report.” Similarly, an article published in *Nature* in August 2003 was headlined “Parkinson’s transplant therapy faces setback.” Another myth is that HFT was necessary to the development of certain advanced therapies. However, the CLI study concluded, “fetal tissue is not the only means for development of such therapies, like Truvada for HIV.”

CLI’s Prentice was a member of HHS’s Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board, established under the Trump Administration. “We rejected 13 of 14 NIH applications for funding for research using fetal tissue,” he said. “The one narrowly accepted application was one where the tissue had already been procured, and was in the lab freezer.” Under Trump, NIH ended internal projects that used fetal tissue from elective abortions and established a \$20 million funding opportunity “for research to develop, demonstrate, and validate experimental models that do not rely on human fetal tissue from elective abortions.”<sup>8</sup>

**T**he Trump administration ended the FDA’s partnership with Advanced Bioscience Resources in 2018. Daleiden believes ABR should be shut down for the illegal behavior revealed in its contracts with the FDA. “The federal court has found probable cause that ABR illegally trafficked baby body parts based on the records publicly available—it’s time for these cases to be filed now and for the human trafficking of aborted infants to stop,” Daleiden told the *Washington Free Beacon* last September.<sup>9</sup>

Back in 2017, the Department of Justice opened an investigation into ABR based on the revelations in the CMP tapes. (The Department did not respond to an inquiry into the status of the investigation.) That same year, two California medical companies were ordered to permanently close all business operations. A local district attorney found they were “viewing body parts as a commodity and illegally selling fetal tissues for valuable consideration.”

Still, CLI has established that funding for projects using human fetal tissue continued in 2018, with an estimated \$115 million spent through NIH grants to research labs. And a September 2020 CLI study, “A Policy and Funding



Evaluation of Human Fetal Tissue Research,” estimated that \$109 million was spent in 2019, \$116 million in 2020, and that \$107 million would be spent in 2021. The authors of the study found that over 50 percent of the projects rely on baby livers and thymuses from ongoing abortions. Others use eyes, brains, urinary tract tissues, intestines, hearts, gonads. Descriptions quoted in the study of some of the proposed projects include the following:

*We will label green and red cone cells in human and fetal eyes using an RNA in situ hybridization technique that successfully distinguishes green and red opsin expression . . .*

*This proposal seeks to advance knowledge of human cerebellar development and malformations using human fetal samples and mouse models . . . . We will conduct the first in-depth analysis of normal human fetal cerebellar development from 4-23 gestational weeks.*

*. . . research will focus on comparisons between rat fetal testis and both mouse and human fetal testis model...*

This CLI study also identified 68 academic organizations that received grants for HFT projects in 2019. The University of Washington, for instance, was funded for seven. One of them, titled “Laboratory of Developmental Biology,” supports the Birth Defects Research Laboratory, a fetal-tissue repository that routinely provides samples to other U.S. researchers. NIH has funded this project for over 50 years, to the tune of \$13.8 million. Also in 2019, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill topped the list, with nearly \$10 million in funding.<sup>10</sup>

It appears that human fetal tissue funding and experimentation will only increase under the Biden administration. The ethics panel that David Prentice served on is gone. And in an April 2021 statement, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra—who succeeded Kamala Harris as California Attorney General and pressed on with the Daleiden prosecution—announced that they had reversed the Trump administration restriction on using HFT for research. There were “no new ethical issues that require special review,” Becerra said.

What continues is the legal and public relations war brought by the pro-abortion camp against the Center for Medical Progress and Daleiden. “He’s been prosecuted and persecuted,” Prentice said. When it was announced that Daleiden would testify at last May’s PA House hearings, the Women’s Law Project released this statement:

*We write to urge you to condemn the House Health Committee’s irresponsible and dangerous decision to use the power and resources of the legislature to disseminate politically motivated, false and malicious accusations about abortion providers and demonize medical research.*

David Daleiden, who was invited to testify before the Health Committee on May 4, 2021, was at the center of a nationwide publicity campaign to destroy Planned Parenthood by falsely accusing them of trafficking in fetal tissue in heavily edited videos.

Except that Daleiden's videos are the real deal. In January 2019, a federal court ruled that the tapes were "authentic" and "not deceptively altered." The court's determination was based on a forensic study of the film commissioned by the Inspector General's Office of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in a case that involved Texas's ending of Medicaid provider agreements with Planned Parenthood.<sup>11</sup>

Daleiden faces multiple charges in the case initially brought by Harris, who ordered his apartment raided in March 2016. The raid came just weeks after Harris met with Planned Parenthood officials, something revealed in discovery as part of a criminal case against Daleiden. One of the charges involves a violation of California's eavesdropping law, which Daleiden's attorneys at the Thomas More Society (TMS), a public interest law firm based in Chicago, argue is a perverse application of the law.

The Thomas More Society's Vice President, Peter Breen, points to an exception in the eavesdropping law that allows for secrecy if a person "reasonably believes" the recordings will show evidence of certain crimes, one of these being felony violence. Daleiden had every reason to believe that violence was being committed, not only against babies but women as well, Breen said in an earlier news story. He cited a case before Judge Christopher Hite of the San Francisco Superior Court, who in late 2019, after a preliminary hearing, dropped six of the fifteen charges that Becerra brought against Daleiden in March 2017. Hite ruled that the charges did not meet the burden of showing probable cause. "There was no rebuttal from prosecution when we presented two expert witnesses [who testified before Judge Hite] that organs, including hearts, are being harvested from live babies after failed abortions," Breen said. "Or in some instances babies are purposely delivered alive so the organs can be harvested."<sup>12</sup>

In response, Thomas More has targeted Kamala Harris with a civil rights lawsuit for "twisting and perverting California's anti-eavesdropping law to persecute a citizen journalist because of his political views." The firm has also filed a defamation lawsuit in federal court in New York challenging Planned Parenthood's claim that Daleiden initiated a "fake" and "false" "smear campaign" against the abortion giant.<sup>13</sup>

For her part, Meredith DiLiberto says she will continue to "follow the breadcrumbs," and through FOIA's work to uncover the full expanse of the baby-body-parts trafficking business. Laying out the truth, she says, also

means taking back control of the phrasing, the “euphemisms and obfuscations” used by the abortion industry to present this bloody business not only as a right but even as something sacred.

“In my first Human Life Issues class at Franciscan University, we were taught that verbal engineering always precedes social engineering,” DiLiberto recalls. “Telling the real story, the story the baby has no say in, will help us change that.”

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Submission:

## A Prescient Take on Post-Modern Times

Peter Pavia

In an essay that appeared in this journal about a year ago titled “My Pilgrim’s Progress,” I explored how moral failure and cultural erosion have produced a nether state where the most affluent among us, the most privileged, are nevertheless a lost and unhappy lot. I also attempted to tie their sorry condition to the so-called progressive thinking that was born in the Enlightenment and has now reached a degree of ascendancy in modern society that has nearly eclipsed any viable counterpoint. My own “progress” included a brief discussion of the 2015 bestselling novel *Submission*, an extraordinary work by the French author Michel Houellebecq. I’d like to return to that novel now, and consider more closely the author’s withering condemnation of contemporary life—and his startling anticipation of subsequent world events.

\* \* \* \* \*

A poet, writer, and government employee, Michel Houellebecq published his first novel *Whatever* in 1994. The book was not without its enthusiasts. A group of them founded a magazine called *Perpendiculaire*, devoted to “depressionism”—a form of art the Urban Dictionary defines as using “social ideas and people’s beliefs to elicit an emotional or intellectual effect on the audience”—and rewarded Houellebecq with a place on the masthead. His next book, *The Elementary Particles*, leaped to the top of the bestseller list in 1998 and launched the public life of its author. Critics didn’t know what to make of it, uncertain as to whether Houellebecq was really a wolf of an old-fashioned dirty-book writer wearing the sheep’s clothing of intellectual pretense. “The [*Perpendiculaire*] staff was,” according to *Paris Review*, “offended by what they saw as his reactionary denunciation of the sexual-liberation movement and booted him from the magazine.”

By 2015, Houellebecq was a well-established provocateur, low-lighted, perhaps, by a sensational fight with his mother over what she saw as her unfair characterization in his writing. That year, on the very day of the terrorist murders at the office of *Charlie Hebdo*—a crude humor magazine that happened to feature a caricature of Houellebecq on its cover that week—his

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Peter Pavia is the author of *The Cuba Project* and *Dutch Uncle*, a novel. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *GQ*, *Diner Journal*, and many other publications.

publisher brought out *Submission*. Naturally, the book generated controversy. Although it might be noted that anything that does not comport with the prevailing left-wing cultural orthodoxy will be characterized as “far right,” *Liberation* (co-founded by the Karl Marx-admirer Jean Paul Sartre) intoned that “*Submission* will mark the date in history when the ideas of the far right made a grand return to serious French literature.” Susannah Black, writing in the Christian journal *Providence*, suggested the book was “a denunciation first of liberalish French intellectual society of the 21st century, a denunciation of the welfare state and the sexual revolution.” But the left-leaning *Guardian* drew a breath and concluded that *Submission* was “both a more subtle and less scandalous satire than the brouhaha surrounding it might suggest.”

The novel is narrated by François, a middle-aged senior lecturer at the Sorbonne who is forced to concede, at least to himself, that his academic career is, in effect, over. He has nothing more to say, and even if he did, he wouldn’t know how to say it. Lust, a reliable diversion that has in the past delivered him from boredom and a *très Française* sense of ennui, leaves him feeling even emptier and more ground down than he does before his various assignations. His response to hunger is a similar cheap fix. In one scene, take-out sushi arrives long after he has reeled into empty-stomached drunkenness; but his usual repast is microwavable, and indifferently consumed in front of the television.

*Submission*’s antics won’t suit some readers, but its sexually explicit set pieces are far from gratuitous. On the contrary, they are stark depictions of François’s increasing inability to achieve any kind of satisfaction, sexual or otherwise, any sense of Aristotelian *wellbeing*. His sins, however, are not limited to those of the flesh. His moral morass stems from the fact that his only concern is for himself. Childless, unmarried, emotionally unmoored, he is consumed with faculty gossip, connected to nothing substantial. His life is at once meandering and rapidly passing him by, and the future, whatever it may hold, can only be bleak. Might as well uncork another bottle of wine.

Whether or not *Submission* is a work of Literature with a capital L only time will tell—and I don’t expect to live long enough to make that call. Many, many books that arrived noisily in their own time are languishing in the junkyard of history, their authors having lapsed into obscurity. One widely accepted test of Literature, as the great teacher Sabina Wells assured our 11th-grade English class, is timelessness, which is to say that a particular book speaks to another time as it did to its own. Again, too soon to tell. We can however consider the novel’s *timeliness*. Set in an easily recognizable yet fictionalized France of the very near future, *Submission* provides uncanny insight into our culturally confused present; it is near-impossible to

avert our eyes from the similarities.

In what may be the fulcrum of this complicated novel, the story unfolds against the backdrop of a closely contested election between the Islamists of the Muslim Brotherhood and Marine Le Pen's right-wing National Front, a heady brew. The Brotherhood has co-opted the forces of the Left, deploying its more thuggish cohort in street-fights against their Nativist, putatively Catholic, counterparts. The violence is tsk-tsked but tolerated, sotto voce, of course, as the media refuse to cover it and, by their low tones, perhaps encourage the disorder.

François, while fascinated by the high-stakes political drama, is at heart disengaged—he can't even be bothered to vote. On the day of the election, he embarks on a road trip without a destination in mind. Stopping for gas, he blunders across a murder scene, which is almost certainly political in nature, but his sole action is to step over the body and get back in his car. Eerily, François loses access to information from the outside world; the car's radio picks up nothing but static; television isn't working nor is there an internet signal at the hotel where he lands. Only later that evening does he learn that the election has been suspended due to widespread attacks on dozens of polling stations.

The sequence could be an allegory of our own convoluted past couple of years, a spooky anticipation of the Marxist violence that marred the American summer of 2020, unrest that in turn led to the populist paroxysm of the January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill riot. It is impossible not to see these events as intertwined. When Trumpian elements trespassed the sacrosanct home of the legislative branch, how could they not have been influenced by the consequence-free mayhem they had witnessed in the nation's streets during the previous six months? The American media—always biased—impose their own blackout on the stories they are loath to tell, for fear of diluting their political advocacy. At the same time, their deafening amplifications go silent the moment a narrative—the story they're straining to spin—falls apart, as it often does, and with breathtaking immediacy.

The week I began this essay, one wholly false concoction exploded in the media's face like a joke-shop cigar. A deranged man murdered eight people associated with two Atlanta area massage parlors, and since six of the victims, some of them working as prostitutes, were Asian, this, according to the media, was proof that the crime was motivated by racial hatred. Law enforcement drew no such conclusion—because there was no evidence to support it—and although the hideous crime spurred nationwide demonstrations to “stop Asian hate,” and although randomized violence against Asians has been going on



for decades, most of it unreported, once any white supremacy angle failed to materialize, the media dropped the story as if it were a molten rock.

Still, the questions persisted. What if the shooter, a self-described “sex addict,” wasn’t acting out of racial animus, but from rank misogyny instead? What elements brought his tortured mind to such a state? Was it his habitual use of prostitutes? He would have had easy access to all kinds of representative depravity the day he got his first computer: At what age did he begin consuming hard-core pornography? Was he eleven years old? Nine? Might that have had an effect on his developing mind? No media figure took the trouble to ask.

Unlike the media today, Michel Houellebecq is curious—and fearless. Although *Submission* tackles the issue obliquely, François is really a porno-formed sex pig. Our narrator’s exhaustive, wince-inducing expeditions for the ideal pornographic image inform the novel’s early pages, and his misdirected urges require two prostitutes at a time to be slaked. But aren’t the young women in his temporary employ—at least according to the laissez-faire attitudes of the dominant social class as it is portrayed in *Submission*—merely asserting their right to agency and self-determination? You know, their bodies, their selves? No judgments, no consequences? Hardly. The nagging takeaway from these scenes is that there’s something horribly wrong—soul killing—in the genital commerce they depict.

There’s no trick to anticipating which way the election, rescheduled for the following Sunday, is headed, and so this isn’t going to spoil the novel for anybody. The Brotherhood prevails, and to prevent the National Front from assuming any rule, the Left joins with the Brotherhood to form a coalition government. And since the Islamists have won the most votes, they can lay claim to the most influential bureaus; as will come as no surprise (although the irony is stinging), the Ministry of Education is first in line for an ideological do-over.

Now, the contemporary Left of the United States is not the Muslim Brotherhood, and the country itself is not some make-believe future France, but credit the Left—and the Democratic Party it now controls—for understanding that the path to genuine and lasting power is through education, for by controlling education victory is not consolidated in the present generation, but in the next one, and in the generations to come.

Consider the American public education system, dominated by militant teachers’ unions—dishonestly and dishonorably led—that are currently seeking to insinuate into curricula from coast to coast, critical race theory, as spelled out in the pseudo-historical 1619 Project, a *New York Times* “educational” undertaking that asserts the real founding of the United States

occurred when the first slave ship landed ashore in the New World. In *Submission*, a takeover of the means to educate is a mere stepping-stone to the establishment of a caliphate. In real-life America today, it's the inculcation of half-truths and falsehoods in pliable young minds that spells permanent power for the forces of so-called progressivism.

We've been living with this leftward tilt for at least fifty years at this point, since the cultural battles that rocked American universities in the 1960s, when spineless administrators joined sit-ins with students flambéed in leftist ideology. Those '60s-era radicals are largely responsible for the academic corruption that's sickened us for decades, and worse, for the corporate cultures we are suffering under today. Witness the non-stop stream of emails originating in corporate PR shops that begin, "We at [e.g., CVS] . . ." and then go on to endorse the leftist cause du jour.

Like their academic predecessors, big business bosses know who their customers are . . . or do they? This past summer, as boisterous school board meetings threatened to turn into brawls, people of all races and backgrounds shoved back against this leftist putsch in the education system. Taking their cue from affluent private school parents who, having had their fill of critical race theory, lashed back in widely circulated letters that were made public, folks once thought of as aspirational started questioning the value of what their children were being taught. And as if on cue, Joe Biden's Justice Department announced plans to brand parents not aligned with Democratic political views as "domestic terrorists." For talking out loud. At school board meetings.

Virginia emerged as a flashpoint, and the issue became central in the state's 2021 gubernatorial race, with the Republican Glenn Youngkin supporting a ban on CRT, and Democratic warhorse Terry McAuliffe casting his lot with the teachers unions. Recognizing a winning idea when he saw one, Youngkin hammered away at what was portrayed as a divide between teachers and administrators and alarmed parents who'd had a year and a half to listen in on what their kids were being taught in Zoom school. Presented with such stark alternatives, keener observers (Houellebecq, maybe) might have predicted the outcome of the race. Although it was hardly a trouncing, Youngkin carried the day. Leftist last-gaspers heard a cacophony of "dog-whistles"—they always do, racism you see—in spite of the fact that the same electorate that chose Youngkin as governor also elevated a black woman to Lieutenant Governor. Those of a less-desperate ideological stripe—including, obviously, some Democrats—spoke of a commonsense revolution, a victory of the sane.

The eerie auguries Houellebecq outlined in *Submission* were set in what was at publication (in 2015) the very near future—2022—and in case somebody

hasn't noticed, we're there now. But despite the novel's positively Cassandra-like qualities (and remember, her prophesies went unheeded), *Submission* is not a work of science fiction, but a novel of considerable literary ambition. As also noted, the book is complicated, though highly readable (one of its many triumphs).

In another crosscurrent, François is an expert in 19th century literature, with a particular attachment to the writer J.K. Huysmans, best remembered today for his novel *À Rebours*, or in English, *Against Nature*. *À Rebours* is about a lot of things, but it is essentially a treatise of opinions and aesthetics, and rolls on unburdened by anything resembling a plot. The novel's main character, Des Esseintes, withdraws to a country manse where he spins a cocoon of art, artifice, and artificiality in order to insulate himself from the horror of mediocrity that is the outside world. François appears to be doing largely the same thing, in his way and according to his means (while Des Esseintes is an aristocrat, François seems mired in the middle class); in place of exquisite teas and masterpieces of art, Houellebecq's protagonist falls back on fast food and porn.

**B**olstered by ethereal prognostications that (seen in a contemporary light) appear to have been realized, Houellebecq's repeated references to Huysmans, to Des Esseintes, and to *À Rebours* make comparisons inescapable. "Huysmans' work," said the critic Alex Preston, "sits palimpsest-like behind *Submission*, marshalling its obsessions and providing a satisfying extra layer to an already complex novel." But although it's fair to conclude that François is to some degree a stand-in for Houellebecq, in other instances that would be a ridiculous assertion. In much the same way, Huysmans deploys Des Esseintes to deliver his most trenchant observations, but also often stands in the wings, mocking his main character. But a more revealing comparison isn't between the writers or even the protagonists of their respective novels, but between Houellebecq's fictional François and the flesh and blood author Huysmans.

Whatever slim reputation François has assembled is built on the back of Huysmans, and he cannot escape the author's shadow. Not professionally—he has contracted to contribute more writing on the subject for an upcoming publication—and maybe more importantly, in spite of himself, not spiritually, either. He sets out on a pilgrimage to Ligugé Abbey, site of Huysmans' final conversion. To François' shock, he is recognized by a monk he had encountered there twenty years before when he visited the abbey to supplement his academic research. François is moved by the beauty of the monastic setting, the simplicity of the lifestyle, the chanting, and the prayers that define the

order of the day. He cannot help but be envious of the monks' contentedness, but he couldn't possibly commit, as Huysmans did, to permitting the Church and her sacred instruction to shape his view of the world. François would love to believe, but he cannot. The hurdle of his intellect, much like the "progressives" we have been discussing here—or maybe it's his laziness—is too high to clear. Plus, the monks don't want him smoking in his room.

Back home in a Paris now dominated by Sharia Law, François the infidel has gotten the sack from his tenured professorship. Reinstatement, however, can be achieved with the recitation of a few choice words. He will be handsomely compensated without the bother of much work, and enjoy the favors of teenage concubines, his lawfully wedded wives. True to his character—weak, shallow, amoral—and representative of the citizens, both real and imagined, of what used to be called the West, in the end it won't be a difficult decision for François to make. Never mind that he doesn't believe the half of it. Those words will get him what he wants.

This complacency and facility in endorsing an abiding falsehood (whether it's an ahistorical academic initiative, the way our rancid media treat a story that is an obstacle to the fable they're fabricating, or the attempted eradication of parental influence over their children's education) provides unfortunate evidence that the ease of lying all too often defeats the hard work of truth, at least in the short term. The divide permeates our era, but the final betrayal, the last capitulation, occurs within ourselves. The question that *Submission* seems to be raising is: Once the truth catches up, will it be too late? Physically (François has a thousand aches and pains), mentally, spiritually—François' ruin is complete. He has submitted. Have we?

# Gloria Purvis: Faithful and Fearless

*William Doino Jr.*

**W**hen Gloria Purvis was twelve, something remarkable happened to her. Praying before the Blessed Sacrament, she suddenly felt a spiritual fire move throughout her soul. It was the kind of thing one reads about in the lives of saints—except that Gloria wasn’t even a Catholic at the time, much less an aspiring mystic.

When she was growing up in South Carolina, her Protestant parents wanted to send her to the best school in town, which just happened to be Catholic. It was there, under the care of the school’s dedicated nuns, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, that Gloria’s original “Catholic moment” took place.

It was not something anyone saw coming—least of all Gloria. Up until then, she had been like a younger version of the protagonist in the film *Ladybird*—a non-Catholic in a Catholic parochial school, appreciating her education, but wondering what this whole “Catholic thing” was about, and occasionally wrestling with it. But the beauty and mystery of the Church’s teachings and liturgy kept tugging at her heart, leading to that indelible moment.

On the day it occurred, Gloria and her classmates had gotten into a food fight, which did not go down well with their teacher, Sister Carmelita. Even though the children quickly cleaned up their mess, Sister didn’t leave the matter there. Gently but firmly, she asked each of the students to stand up and acknowledge their sin, then brought them to the school’s chapel for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as an act of reparation. It was there, during Gloria’s supernatural encounter with the Holy Eucharist, that her life began to change: She was convinced that God was calling her to become a Catholic.

Eventually she announced her intentions to her family. Expecting resistance, she received only love and support. Gloria’s parents, who attended a Methodist Church, respected their daughter’s decision to become a faithful Catholic and actively helped her become one. They drove Gloria to Mass every Sunday and made sure she observed each Holy Day of Obligation. Her Baptist grandmother even taught Gloria how to pray the rosary—not to mention accompanying her to see Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II.

Along with her family and friends, the Church became an indispensable

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**William Doino Jr.**, a contributor to *Inside the Vatican* and *First Things*, among many other publications, writes often about religion, history, and politics. He has published an 80,000-word annotated bibliography on Pope Pius XII, which appears in the anthology *The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII* (Lexington Books), available in hardcover, paperback, and in Kindle format.

part of Gloria's life, and helped her endure the harrowing racism she encountered as a child. As she revealed to a reporter:

I grew up in the cradle of the Confederacy. I remember as an elementary school girl, coming home from Catholic school, waiting on the bus in downtown Charleston, when a pickup truck of Citadel cadets drove by. One guy pretend-aimed at me like he had a rifle or gun and he was shooting me dead. And I just remember the vulnerability of standing out there as a child at that moment and thinking to myself, "Why?"<sup>1</sup>

The contrast between the serenity of her faith and the cruelty of the world was stark, but Gloria drew strength from the Church's teachings on justice, truth, and equality. As Gloria matured, she became such an effective witness for Catholicism that all her siblings also entered the Church.

Today, Gloria Purvis is one of the best-known lay Catholic evangelists in America.<sup>2</sup> Although she never set out to become one, her resounding affirmation of Catholic teaching, especially its defense of human life and dignity, has placed her at the forefront of the pro-life and racial justice movements. Rather than separate the two, Gloria believes passionately that both movements are inextricably bound—and that expanding the pro-life vision, rather than restricting it, will increase its vitality and influence.

That Gloria has achieved such prominence as a woman, an African American, and a Catholic—even while battling misogyny, racism, and anti-Catholicism—speaks to her resilient character. She has never feared proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor let the prejudices of others stifle the joy and hope that is within her.

### **A Second Baptism by Fire**

While Gloria's early Catholic conversion was a pivotal event in her spiritual life, it wasn't the only one. After graduating from Cornell University, she was blessed to marry a man who shared her faith and values; in addition, she soon experienced professional success in the mortgage and finance industry. Just when things seemed to be going exceptionally well, however, another unexpected jolt upended Gloria's world.

Attending Mass with her husband at St. Augustine Church in Washington, D.C., the mother church of African-American Catholics, Gloria was reciting the Nicene Creed. As she came to the part that proclaims, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life," something extraordinary happened. "It was like, 'Boom!'" Gloria recalls vividly:

I heard a voice say, "Are you lying? Are you blaspheming? How can you say you believe I am the 'Lord, the Giver of Life' and yet do nothing to defend my gift of life on earth? How do you expect to receive the gift of eternal life when you have done nothing to protect life as I have given it?"



Gloria fell to her knees and asked for the Lord's guidance. Immediately she experienced an overwhelming desire to better understand Catholic teaching and spread its message far and wide.

At the time, Gloria was as sincere a Catholic as she had ever been, but (as she explained to me in an interview), "I was more of an in-the-pew practicing Catholic," not one involved in any Church ministry. That all changed after her "spiritual chastisement," as she calls it, which she describes as a loving but necessary wake-up call from the Lord.

From that day forward, Gloria began living out her faith in a more meaningful way. She and her husband began actively promoting the full complement of Catholic teachings—educating their fellow parishioners about chastity; upholding the sanctity of marriage; combatting the serious sin of racism; defending the poor and oppressed; protecting the environment; leading Catholic youth groups; and organizing pro-life discussions. But that was not all. Committed to Vatican II's "call to holiness" for the laity (and not just for the clergy and members of religious orders), the Purvises went to Confession frequently and practiced the corporal and spiritual works of mercy (such as feeding the hungry and visiting the sick).

Holding firm to the Church's magisterium as authoritatively interpreted by the popes was also essential to Gloria's formation, for it provided the foundation that allowed her Catholic evangelization to flourish.

Before long, word of Gloria's dynamic orthodoxy spread, and she was in demand as a speaker, teacher, and commentator about all things Catholic. She began appearing on major news programs, and her speeches garnered attention. One of her most memorable talks occurred at the Catholic Information Center in Washington, D.C., in 2012, shortly after the Obama administration passed its highly controversial contraceptive mandate. Gloria's response was pointed and effective:

"I am going to talk to you about this from a woman's perspective as a woman's issue, because I think we should talk about that as Catholics, right?" she began. ". . . So let me just start off by saying that this whole idea of contraception, sterilization, and abortifacients as being necessary for a woman's health is actually demeaning to women."

Undergirding this idea, she continued, "is the perception that women, because of our fertility, are deficient and we need 'fixing.'"

Women are told "we need pills to be made whole," yet when the pills fail, "we are suddenly told we need something stronger"—invariably, *abortion*. And women supposedly need to abort their offspring "to be made free, but we know that isn't true."

"The fact that our government is mandating contraceptive coverage be

made available and free to all women further presses this false perception into the American psyche. If left unchallenged, what will be the effect upon future generations?"

Gloria then offered her own prediction of America's dystopian future if these alarming trends continued: The commodification of sex, fueled by birth control, would quickly lead to the commodification of the human person. As a result, the classic conception of human beings would disappear, for gender would no longer be considered a distinct, objective fact, but "merely an idea in one's head." Marriage would no longer be defined as a solemn union between a man and a woman, for "there will be no such thing as male and female"—sexual identity having been reduced "to a mere surgical choice." The biblical conception of marriage would be seriously undermined, as would much of our Judeo-Christian heritage. Nothing stable about the human person or sexuality would remain, as everything would be up for grabs in a brave new world of unending relativism.

Gloria ended her talk with several striking questions: "How much more unhinged from reality are we going to become? And at what cost to our society, to our families, to our nation—and most importantly, to our souls?"<sup>3</sup>

Gloria's talk was delivered a decade ago, but it sounds as if it was given yesterday, for the contraceptive mandate is still aggressively promoted, same-sex marriage has been legalized in all 50 states, and gender ideology has become a new social dogma in Hollywood, the media, corporate America, the academy, and even large segments of our Churches.

Gloria's speech was not only prophetic: It was a breakout moment for her, and she quickly emerged as a leading Catholic voice in America's public square.

At that point, Gloria made a bold decision. Determined to build up her treasures in heaven rather than on earth, she left her lucrative financial job to become a full-time Catholic evangelist. It was not only a spiritually rewarding choice, but one that was liberating, for "the hostility in the business sector toward women who believe in traditional morality, especially those who want to become moms, is just astonishing," she told me. Gloria cannot count the times she was scolded by fellow workers for being a practicing Catholic, or lectured about how oppressive and backward the Catholic Church supposedly was. But she vigorously defended her faith whenever challenged; and left the business world on her own terms, without backing down on her principles.

### **A Big Break and the Miracle of Life**

Gloria's first major break in her renewed walk with Christ occurred when

EWTN, the popular television network founded by the late Mother Angelica, entrusted Gloria (along with Damon Owens and Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers) with hosting a series entitled *Authentically Free at Last*. Over a dozen episodes on topics such as conscience, true love, marriage, and vocations built upon the theme that society confuses *freedom* with *license*. Authentic freedom, the hosts emphasized, means following God's plans for our lives and avoiding the deceptive temptations of secularism, which defines "freedom" as the right to do whatever we want, rather than what we *ought*. By acting morally and responsibly, they explained, we not only avoid the quicksand of sin, but contribute to the common good and overall health of our society.

As winsome as it was educational, *Authentically Free at Last* remains a model of how to evangelize the culture without downplaying biblical truths, but communicating them with love and affection.<sup>4</sup>

### **A Private Cross**

Even as Gloria's work received acclaim, she was carrying a cross in her personal life.

As soon as they were married, Gloria and her husband sought to start a Catholic family. But their dreams were dashed when the couple discovered they were infertile—or so they thought. For fifteen years they tried to conceive without success; what made their pain even more acute was that their struggle to conceive was occurring at the same time they were exhorting other Catholic couples to remain fully open to new life. Some people began whispering behind their backs: Given that Gloria and her husband had no children themselves, were they practicing what they preached?

The Purvises suffered these unfounded suspicions in silence, but they never gave up hope or allowed their difficulties to shake their faith. Nor did they pursue in vitro fertilization, knowing it violates God's plan for marriage. Though they were informed by certain specialists that they would never have a child of their own, the couple continued hoping and praying, even visiting the famous healing shrine at Lourdes. And Gloria eventually became pregnant! After all those years of infertility, Gloria and her husband were thrilled. It was a moment of overwhelming gratitude, and a powerful example of the efficacy of prayer. Yet no sooner did their rejoicing begin than a host of unwelcome forces tried to end it.

### **Running Through the Anti-Life Gauntlet**

When Gloria went to discuss her pregnancy with her obstetrician, she expected warm congratulations and compassionate counsel. Instead, she received a heavy dose of the culture of death. The doctor said little about

nurturing Gloria's unborn child—but dwelt on everything that could go wrong with her pregnancy, given her age and medical history. Frightening scenarios were described. Then the doctor revealed her real agenda: to advise Gloria to have an abortion, since that would be “the most loving thing one could do” to avoid the suffering brought on by a “problematic” child.

Gloria was shocked. “The medical establishment says it believes in a woman's choice, but my experience taught me that it believes in choice only when the human lives involved are ‘perfect,’ according to their worldly standards.”

Gloria told her doctor that she and her husband had no fear of a child with special needs, were well-insured, and would spare no expense to sustain her pregnancy. In addition, they would never consider any child of theirs imperfect, much less a “problem.” Still the obstetrician pressed Gloria: “What might your husband think about having a severely disabled child?”

At that point, Gloria, barely containing her indignation, did not hold back. “Doctor, you don't want me to leave this room and tell my husband that you want me to kill his firstborn—believe me, you don't want to go there. And neither will I.”

The doctor, stunned and embarrassed, quickly changed the subject, saying, “OK, thank you very much; the appointment is over.”

But Gloria's pregnancy was not over, nor were her battles with other doctors and ultrasound technicians who also discussed “termination” of her pregnancy. Gloria had to fight the anti-life gauntlet—as many expectant mothers do—right up to the day of her delivery.

But what a day that was! Her new baby girl, “Lourdes Grace,” was born perfectly healthy, and her parents named her after the famous grotto where they had prayed for her conception.

A few months after the birth, Gloria revisited the obstetrician who had campaigned for Gloria to undergo an abortion. The moment the doctor saw Lourdes, “you could see that she was visibly chastened,” recalls Gloria. After gathering herself, the doctor finally exclaimed, “She's so beautiful!”

“Yes,” affirmed Gloria, “and more importantly, she is a child of God.”

Yet Gloria expresses only good will for her former doctor today: “My hope is that having seen firsthand the miracle of Lourdes' birth, she will never again counsel a woman to have an abortion—however bad things may look.”<sup>5</sup>

### ***Morning Glory and the Cost of Discipleship***

While embracing her role as a new mom, Gloria spent a period of discernment, awaiting her next opportunity to evangelize. When EWTN offered her one that allowed her ample time to raise Lourdes with the help of her husband, Gloria welcomed it. In 2015, the network gave Gloria her own early

morning radio program, designed to speak to contemporary Catholics. Entitled *Morning Glory*, it was a lively wake-up show covering current events inside and outside the Church, in-depth discussions of theological and moral issues, and light-hearted segments on cooking, travel, and entertainment. Each program began with a reading from Sacred Scripture and ended with a prayer of thanks to God. While the show benefited from several thoughtful co-hosts, including numerous priests, Gloria remained its irreplaceable constant, offering robust Christ-centered commentaries to her global audience.

When Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers, whom Gloria had worked so well with on *Authentically Free at Last*, became her permanent co-host, *Morning Glory* hit its stride. Five years into its run, the radio show was earning widespread praise as one of EWTN's best programs.

Its popularity and success, however, were thrown into controversy in 2020, when the Texas-based Guadalupe Radio Network—EWTN's largest American radio affiliate—"temporarily suspended" the show for an alleged "spirit of contention."<sup>6</sup> The announcement came as a complete surprise to Gloria and her hosts, who remained the best of friends, even when they had respectful disagreements on air. Although EWTN initially gave *Morning Glory* a vote of confidence after Guadalupe's decision, pledging that the show would continue on EWTN's main airwaves, there was a sense that, from that moment on, *Morning Glory* was on thin ice.

It wasn't lost on many observers that Guadalupe's announcement suspending the program came shortly after the brutal police killing of George Floyd—which Gloria had powerfully condemned on *Morning Glory*, describing it as symptomatic of the history of racism and police brutality in America. In addition, the two "contentious" episodes Guadalupe cited in suspending *Morning Glory* were precisely the ones in which Gloria had addressed these topics frankly.<sup>7</sup> She also spoke forcefully on the show about the history of racism in Christianity—including in the Catholic Church, which once had leaders who owned and sold slaves, held segregated Masses, and barred blacks and other minorities from entering religious orders. Many Catholics have little or no knowledge about this tragic history, because it was never a part of their public (or even parochial) curriculums—an omission Gloria consistently tried to remedy on *Morning Glory*, recommending historical works and many Church documents against racism.<sup>8</sup>

Gloria's overriding theme in all her discussions on race-relations was and is that *racism is a life issue*, and that resisting and opposing this grave sin is as much a pro-life imperative as defending the lives of the unborn.<sup>9</sup> That is why, after watching the agonizing nine-minute video of George Floyd's murder, she compared the experience to "watching an abortion"—a comment that

directly challenged both those who abhor racism, but not abortion, and those who passionately protest abortion, but not racism.<sup>10</sup>

“If we truly believe that everyone is created in the image and likeness of God and that everyone has an intrinsic worth and dignity,” she told me, “then that applies to all human beings without exception—no matter what their stage in life, and no matter what they may have done.”

One of the most disturbing aspects of George Floyd’s killing is how many self-described proliferers attempted to minimize his death by citing his previous arrest record, as if that somehow lessened the gravity of his gruesome murder. “It was an effort to dehumanize George Floyd and erase the flagrant violation of his human rights,” Gloria says—something that, to their credit, proliferers never do when the victims are the unborn, the elderly, and the disabled. “Unless we condemn the radical evil of racism as strongly and consistently as the radical evil of abortion,” she continued, “we will betray our principles and contradict the Gospel of Life.”

As for speaking honestly and openly about the Christian community’s complicity in racism, past and present, it may be uncomfortable or even painful at first, she says, but it is the “responsible and moral thing to do—and the first step toward a heartfelt racial reconciliation between all peoples.”

Evaluating the history of American racism through a deep spiritual lens, Gloria asserted, “If we do not call out racism whenever we see it, then we let the devil continue to confuse and divide us. . . . Can you imagine going to Confession and saying, ‘Father, there is something I know which is very sinful, and which I’ve been a part of, but I don’t want to talk about it?’ I mean how else are we going to rid ourselves of the sin of racism unless we name it, repent of it, make amends for it, and ask for God’s forgiveness and His grace and blessing in helping us not commit it again?”

If anyone expected that Guadalupe Radio’s effort to undercut *Morning Glory* would go unnoticed or impede Gloria’s mission, they miscalculated. No sooner did Guadalupe make its announcement than something remarkable happened, revealing how unifying and respected a figure Gloria was. Catholics across the theological and political spectrum—from the *National Catholic Reporter*’s Heidi Schlumpf and *America* magazine’s Fr. James Martin to March for Life President Jeanne Mancini and Princeton’s Professor Robert George—rallied to Gloria’s defense. So too did a host of religious and high-ranking Catholic leaders. The day the suspension of Gloria’s show was announced, Bishop Michael Sis, whose San Angelo, Texas, diocese encompasses the headquarters of Guadalupe Radio Network, tweeted: “I hope the beloved *Morning Glory* program with Gloria Purvis and others will soon return to the GRN. As we confront the sin of racism, we must fully



acknowledge the hurt and injustice, listen in a spirit of mutual respect, and seek more constructive ways to live with one another.”<sup>11</sup> Samuel Aquila, the Archbishop of Denver, followed with his own wholehearted support: “Gloria, you are helping Catholics and society see the sin of racism as an attack on human life! You are a great witness to the culture of life, the dignity of every human person no matter their color, & you are a beloved daughter of the Father! Persevere! Blessings!”<sup>12</sup>

For her part, Gloria continued to express her Catholic beliefs on *Morning Glory*, including the Church’s teaching against racism. This unsettled some listeners and even pushed some over the edge. After Gloria discussed the need to reform certain police departments that had notorious records against minorities, she was accused of wanting to *abolish* the police; and when she expressed qualified support for the black lives matter movement—sharply distinguishing between the radical organization that holds views antithetical to Christian beliefs, and the far broader peaceful movement which simply wants to defend the fundamental civil rights of blacks—she was accused of sanctioning attacks against the police, and even of being a “Marxist.”<sup>13</sup>

The first charge carries no weight, and the second is manifestly absurd, but detractors have not hesitated to twist her words and misrepresent her. Like Pope Francis, Gloria is an ardent advocate for the rights of minorities, but an equally strong opponent of political violence.<sup>14</sup> Gloria has both relatives and friends in the police force, and strongly supports them. In 2016, after five police officers were ambushed and brutally murdered in Dallas, she called their killings “horrific,” and declared that “violence against police must stop.”<sup>15</sup> She confines her criticism of officers and departments to those that engage in reckless, immoral behavior, and calls attention to their crimes because she has such high expectations for their calling—to protect the common good and uphold the public trust.<sup>16</sup>

Gloria’s support for police officers who serve honorably, combined with necessary reforms and accountability for those who don’t, reflects what Dr. Clarence Jones, one of Martin Luther King’s closest advisors, recently advocated. As *Catholic San Francisco* reported:

The man who helped Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. draft his historic “I’ve Got a Dream” speech in 1963 called George Floyd’s killing a “tipping point,” but said racial injustice will not be healed without acknowledgment and accountability. . . . He called King America’s “preeminent apostle of love, non-violence and commitment to the pursuit of personal excellence and social justice.”

Despite calls from some activists to defund police, Jones said he is not a proponent. However, he said, police budgets should be reviewed to see if they are “rational” given the other needs in African American communities.

“There is nothing in my work and legacy working with Dr. King that suggest we don’t want police,” Jones said. “Let’s get sensible and real,” he continued. “The African American communities, we need the police. I want the police to be in our communities. I just don’t want them kneeling on our neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds and killing us.”<sup>17</sup>

As for the far-fetched allegation that Gloria is a Marxist, her Catholic credentials speak for themselves. In addition to her appearances at many Catholic venues, she has been a board member of the Northwest Pregnancy Center and Maternity Home in Washington, D.C.; an advisory member of the Maryland Catholic Conference’s Respect for Life Department; a member of the National Black Catholic Congress’ Leadership Commission on Social Justice; and the Chairperson for Black Catholics United for Life. She is also a Third Order Carmelite who spends many hours in prayer cultivating her interior spiritual life, drawing sustenance from saints like Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales, and Catherine of Siena. Gloria Purvis is no more a Marxist than are the Little Sisters of the Poor.

In a world that has become excessively polarized and politicized, she has striven to place her faith above ideology. “I’m not a conservative. I’m not a liberal. I’m just Catholic,” she affirms.<sup>18</sup> “When I talk about racism, it isn’t because I am ‘woke,’” she declares. “It is because racism is a sin and people go to hell for it.”<sup>19</sup> She has exhorted Catholics to “expel this demon of racism” through fasting and prayer.<sup>20</sup> Talking to the *New York Times*, she denounced racism in biblical terms: “Racism makes a liar of God. It says not everyone is made in His image. What a horrible lie from the pit of hell.”<sup>21</sup>

For expressing such views while still hosting *Morning Glory*—and notwithstanding her impeccable record of defending traditional Catholic teachings that “progressives” stridently dissent from—Gloria told me that she continued to receive “terrible” messages of abuse from self-proclaimed devout Catholics.

In response, Gloria reached out to her misguided critics, appealing to their better angels: “I sincerely pray that people consider that what they opposed was not me but rather an invitation to broaden their view of the human family to include Black people and to love us as they love themselves in accord with God’s plan.”<sup>22</sup>

I would like to report that Gloria’s heartfelt appeal won her critics over, and that *Morning Glory* was restored to its rightful stature on the airwaves, but its run did not end happily. Ignoring Bishop Sis’s appeal to resume airing the program, Guadalupe Radio Network turned its “temporary” suspension into a permanent cancellation. Ironically, Guadalupe’s home page on the internet highlights Bishop Sis’s 2014 endorsement of their network—without

mentioning his more recent hope that *Morning Glory* would continue.<sup>23</sup> By the end of 2020, EWTN also quietly dropped the radio show, without explanation.<sup>24</sup> Just like that, Gloria's years at the network were forgotten, and she became *persona non grata*. The price Gloria paid for speaking out against racism, in the manner she did, compelled by her conscience, recalls what Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great Lutheran theologian, wrote about "the cost of discipleship."<sup>25</sup>

Gloria, however, has no second thoughts about taking her stand against racism, any more than she regrets championing the rights of the unborn: "I will never, ever, ever have regrets for shining the light of the Gospel on a situation that was surrounded by darkness."<sup>26</sup>

### A Welcome Return

Never one to hold grudges, Gloria graciously moved on after EWTN cancelled her show.

In May 2021, Gloria announced that she would be starting a new weekly podcast, *The Gloria Purvis Show*, produced by America Media, the Jesuit communications ministry that includes *America* magazine. Not surprisingly, Gloria has hit the ground running; she has already aired podcasts on topics ranging from abortion, racism, capital punishment, religious liberty, and human sexuality, to sin, violence, seminary formation, and proper reception of the Holy Eucharist—thankfully, without interference from her employer. America Media knew when they hired her that they would be getting nothing less than the full-dimensional Gloria Purvis.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to reclaiming much of her old audience from *Morning Glory*, Gloria has attracted a new generation of followers who are eager to hear an independent Catholic voice like hers, and she is excited and appreciative to engage them.

Recognizing her achievements, *Our Sunday Visitor* named Gloria one of their "Catholics of the Year" for 2020; and in 2021, the University of Notre Dame's Office of Life and Human Dignity appointed Gloria their inaugural Pastoral Fellow.<sup>28</sup> Despite all the efforts to "cancel" her, Gloria's witness is stronger than ever.

Throughout it all, Gloria has retained her immense gratitude for the Lord's guidance, and humility about her own accomplishments. "I'm just an ordinary Catholic encouraging people to reject sin and get on the path to holiness," she told me, after I expressed an interest in writing about her. "There really isn't anything special about me."

But that is one comment her admirers might respectfully contest—for Gloria Purvis's whole life and witness testify to the transforming power of the

Gospel; and there is no one quite like her on the American scene today. She is a gift to the Catholic Church and a tremendous asset to the pro-life and racial justice movements, knowing how to combine the two with eloquent persuasion. Faithful and fearless, Gloria is a true inspiration to proliferate everywhere—and will be, no doubt, for many years to come.

## NOTES

1. From Gloria's interview with Brian Fraga in "'I Honestly Think Racism is Demonic,': Despite Critics, EWTN'S Gloria Purvis Not Afraid to Call Out Injustice," *Our Sunday Visitor* online, June 25, 2020.
2. For a moving first-hand account of how Gloria became a Catholic and why she remains one today, see her introduction to chapter two, "Knowing and Loving the Body of Christ," in *That Nothing May be Lost: Reflections on Catholic Doctrine and Devotion* by Rev. Paul D. Scalia (Ignatius Press, 2017).
3. See "Gloria Purvis—HHS Mandate Is Anti-Woman: Catholics Need to Speak Up," on YouTube, March 7, 2012; and Gloria's more recent podcast, "The Transgender Movement," Real Presence Radio, #9234 (available online). Gloria has always expressed compassion for those with gender dysphoria, while firmly upholding Catholic teaching on the sexes, affirmed in "Male and Female He Created Them," issued by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, on February 2, 2019.
4. The whole series of *Authentically Free at Last* is still available to purchase from [www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com); and also [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
5. Quotes and details for this section of my essay ("Running Through the Anti-Life Gauntlet") are from Gloria's extensive interview with me and three excellent articles: "A Voice for Life" by Katie Bahr in *The Arlington Catholic Herald* online, April 24, 2013; "EWTN Personality Gloria Purvis Shares Her Story of Life at St. Gianna Benefit" by Patrick J. Buechi, *Western New York Catholic* online, March 1, 2018; and "Purvis Delivers Keynote on Racism, Abortion and Medical Care," *The Iowa Standard* online, no byline, October 7, 2019.
6. See "EWTN's largest radio affiliate drops *Morning Glory*, as host Gloria Purvis continues to speak out about racism" by Brian Fraga, *Our Sunday Visitor* online, June 26, 2020.
7. The two *Morning Glory* episodes in question aired on June 17, 2020, and June 25, 2020, and are still available on YouTube: see, "*Morning Glory* 06/17/20," YouTube; and "*Morning Glory* 06/25/20," YouTube.
8. Gloria frequently recommends that Catholics—and not just Catholics—study such important works as *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* by Cyprian Davis (Herder and Herder, 1995); *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migrations* by Matthew J. Cressler (NYU Press, 2017); *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* by John T. McGreevy (University of Chicago Press, 1998); *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960* by Stephen J. Ochs (Louisiana State University Press, 1990); *Uncommon Faithfulness: The Black Catholic Experience* by LaReine-Marie Mosely, et al. (Orbis Books, 2009); *Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood* by Michael Heinlein (*Our Sunday Visitor*, 2021); *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* by Douglas Blackmon (Anchor, 2009); *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* by Richard Rothstein (Liveright, 2018); and the PBS series' *Eyes on the Prize* and *The African Americans* (by Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr.); along with the individual and collective pastoral letters on racism by America's Catholic bishops, especially their most recent collective one, "Open Wide Our Hearts" (2018, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).
9. This was the theme of an important panel discussion at the University of Notre Dame, "Racism Is a Life Issue," including Gloria Purvis as a participant, available for viewing on YouTube, July 28, 2020.
10. See Gloria's comments on the George Floyd video in the roundtable discussion "Racism in Our Streets and Structures," hosted by Georgetown University, available on YouTube, June 5, 2020; and "For Black Catholics, Fighting Racism Means Putting Faith in Action" by Sophie Martinson, *The Angelus* online, June 30, 2020.
11. Tweet by Bishop Michael J. Sis, June 26, 2020.
12. Tweet by Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila on June 26, 2020.

13. Gloria mentioned this in my interview with her; for additional details, see “Paying the Price for Anti-Racism Work” by Heidi Schlumpf, *The National Catholic Reporter*, July 1, 2020.
14. See “Pope Francis Condemns Death of George Floyd, Calls U.S. Unrest ‘Disturbing’” by Valentina DiDonato and Delia Gallagher, CNN online, June 3, 2020.
15. “What’s Missing from the National Conversation on Race, Violence, and Lethal Force? You,” by Gloria Purvis, *Catholic News Agency*, July 14, 2016.
16. See Gloria’s comments in “The Role of Catholics in Fighting Police Aggression” by Adelaide Mena, *Catholic News Agency*, October 18, 2016.
17. See Jones’s comments in “USF Speaker: Racial Reconciliation Futile Without Accountability,” Catholic San Francisco online, no byline, June 24, 2020.
18. See “Gloria Purvis: I’m Not a Conservative. I’m Not a Liberal. I’m Just Catholic,” her introduction to her new podcast, America magazine online, May 11, 2021. See Gloria’s comments at the American Solidarity Party’s “Faith and Politics” discussion at its 2021 National Convention, available on YouTube, July 8, 2021.
19. Gloria Purvis on Twitter, May 28, 2020.
20. See “How Catholics Can Work to ‘Expel this Demon of Racism,’” *Catholic News Agency*, July 1, 2020.
21. See “Racism Makes a Liar of God” by Elizabeth Bruenig, *The New York Times*, August 6, 2020.
22. Gloria Purvis on Twitter, April 21, 2021.
23. See Bishop Sis’s 2014 letter to the Guadalupe Radio Network in the “Bishops Endorsements” section of Guadalupe Radio Network’s main website, at <https://www.grnonline.com/en/documents/parish/5-bishop-of-san-angelo-letter/file>
24. See “*Morning Glory* Officially Out at EWTN” by Nate Tinner-Williams, *Black Catholic Messenger*, December 30, 2020; and “Gloria Purvis’ Radio Show *Morning Glory* Pulled from EWTN’s Airwaves,” by Christopher White, *The National Catholic Reporter*, December 30, 2020.
25. See Bonhoeffer’s classic work *The Cost of Discipleship* (Touchstone, 1995).
26. See “Former EWTN Radio Host Gloria Purvis Has No Regrets Talking About Race” by Mark Pattison, *Catholic News Service*, January 5, 2021.
27. See “Gloria Purvis to Host New Podcast on America media” by Mark Pattison, *Catholic News Service*, May 12, 2021.
28. See the University’s online press release, “Notre Dame Office of Life and Human Dignity Welcomes Gloria Purvis as Inaugural Pastoral Fellow” by Anna Bradley, October 13, 2021. In her new role, Gloria will be developing new programs for the Church to enhance respect for human life and dignity, “particularly around timely and pressing issues like racial justice.”

## BOOKNOTES

### THE FAMILY ROE: AN AMERICAN STORY

Joshua Praeger

(W.W. Norton and Company, 2021, hardcover, 655 pages, \$35)

*Reviewed by Maria McFadden Maffucci*

Norma McCorvey, the “Jane Roe” of *Roe v. Wade*, died in 2017 at the age of 69. In 2020, after the documentary *AKA Jane Roe* was released, the liberal media triumphantly declared her celebrated conversion to the pro-life cause a “con.” From Michelle Goldberg in the *New York Times* (May 29, 2020):

In the documentary’s final 20 minutes, McCorvey, who died of heart failure in 2017, gives what she calls her “deathbed confession.” She and the pro-life movement, she said, were using each other: “I took their money, and they put me out in front of the cameras and told me what to say, and that’s what I’d say.”

But the headline—that she “did it for the money”—was itself a con, according to the man who spent a full decade in pursuit of the truth about Norma McCorvey. In his hefty new book *The Family Roe: An American Story*, Joshua Praeger writes of Norma’s “deathbed confession”:

Norma had not, in fact, been paid to become pro-life. She’d simply been paid to give speeches after her conversion—just as she’d been to speak before it. Despite the headlines, she’d said nothing to the contrary. The filmmaker, however, had asked Norma if her pro-life turn had been “an act,” and Norma answered yes—one more improvisation in a life that had for so long been a sort of performance art (p. 469).

Indeed, writes Praeger, Norma’s life story “resisted rendering”:

She had cloaked it in lies; her two autobiographies were fiction. Among much else, she wrote that a nun raped her, that a cousin raped her, that a trio of strangers raped her, that her husband beat her, that her mother kidnapped her child, that she went to an illegal clinic to get an abortion, only to find it caked in blood, . . . that she helped to perform unsafe abortions. None of it was true (p. 483).

When once I pointed out to Norma that she had just lied, she’d replied with a smile: “They’ll take anything you say.” Norma enjoyed telling stories (p. 470).

The one truth about Norma, writes Praeger, is that “she had been forced by law to birth a child she did not want.” He recalls that after learning in 2010 that “*Roe* had been decided too late for Norma to have an abortion,” he “wondered about the baby she’d placed for adoption forty years before” and decided to look for him or her (p. 3). It was “Baby *Roe*” who led Praeger to write this book.



His interest spread to all of Norma's children, three daughters, each adopted by a different family. Over the course of his investigation, Praeger not only finds "Baby *Roe*," but reunites her with her family—partially. Baby *Roe* herself, Shelley Lynn Thornton, refused to meet Norma, her biological mother, face to face. (Shelley has only recently been "outed"; her identity was revealed in September 2021 when *The Atlantic* ran an adapted selection from Praeger's book.)

By doggedly tracking down and meeting Norma's family and friends, and spending time with Norma herself, Praeger surely gives us the most accurate picture we will ever get of this complicated figure. He also becomes part of the story: Norma's three daughters, "delighted that I had brought them together," invited him to important occasions "and kept in frequent communication." Praeger was privy to the most intimate details of Norma's final struggles and, along with her daughter Melissa, was present at her death.

From his interest in the "Roe" family, Praeger became hooked on the wider story: movement leaders on both sides of the issue whose lives intersected with Norma's, the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself, and the issue of abortion in America—thus the size of this book! While the reader will "meet" many persons on both sides of the debate, Praeger decided to profile "Three Texans" (Part II) in depth: Linda Coffee, the attorney who argued the *Roe* case with Sarah Weddington; Curtis Boyd, an abortionist since pre-legal days who currently performs late-term, partial-birth abortions in New Mexico; and Dr. Mildred Jefferson, who was the first president of the National Right to Life Committee. While people were familiar with these figures, Praeger writes, even "if they knew something of their work, they knew next to nothing of *them*" (p. 481).

That was my experience with Mildred Jefferson. As someone who has been in the pro-life movement for most of my life, I've admired Jefferson as a pro-life hero—and trailblazer: She was the first African-American woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School. However, I had no idea of her troubled story, details of which Praeger uncovered through her papers at Harvard, her FBI file, divorce record, and ex-husband, "sources it took me years to find" (p. 482). Jefferson's life was one of contradictions: Because of the racism and misogyny she'd experienced, she vowed never to have her own children. She was also a secret but dangerous hoarder, something that contributed to the break-up of her marriage. But her opposition to abortion was absolute. Though he never met Jefferson, Praeger seems to have become especially attached to her story, writing about her with respect and compassion.

Praeger said in a television interview that his aim was to humanize the story of *Roe*, and I'd say he does: Abortion and pro-life advocates alike are

described in the context of their personal stories—with warts galore, but also with an understanding that real people aren't one-dimensional. (Having said that, the chapter on Curtis Boyd, presented frankly yet with no palpable moral disgust at Boyd's zeal to do later and later abortions, I found hard to stomach.) Norma's own story is sad from the beginning: persistent poverty, lack of education, abuse, alcoholism, depression. It's clear that she was used by some on both sides of the abortion issue, but she was all too willing to be used if it meant something better for herself. Despite obviously having had sex with men, Norma was a lesbian; her most lasting relationship was with a woman, Connie Gonzalez—but she would go on frequent sexual adventures and her treatment of those who did care for her was sometimes callous. As for what she really thought about abortion, the best guess is she was ambivalent, at times depressed over her role; at times supportive of a woman's choice.

Joshua Praeger says he is “pro-choice” but “not an advocate . . . . I am a journalist. And writing this book, I strove to be as sympathetic to the pro-life as the pro-choice” (p. 480). Overall, he does a commendable job, though there are glaring exceptions. He gives short shrift to the Catholic Church's comprehensive and rich teaching on human life and sexuality, which intelligently informs its position on abortion. He mentions St. Augustine's doubts about abortion being “homicide” before “quickening,” but he neglects to add that St. Augustine (as well as the Church) regarded abortion at any time during pregnancy as a serious sin. More importantly, instead of acknowledging the Church's scholarship, its teaching about the dignity of each human being, and attention to the developing science of embryology, he intimates (pp. 39-40) that the eventual position of the Church on abortion was arbitrarily decided. For such a massively researched book—the notes alone take up over 100 pages—the Catholic Church's solid stance in opposing abortion—and Christian pro-life scholarship in general—is given inadequate attention.

Similarly, Praeger rejects out of hand any claims that abortion has negative health consequences for women. For example, he writes there is a “nonexistent link between abortion and breast cancer” (p. 357) and that abortion has “no more risk to the psychological health of a woman than pregnancy or birth” (p. 440). Yet there are *scores* of women, doctors, and scientists who disagree. He might have included in his *Notes* a reference to the 2015 documentary *Hush*, where independent filmmaker Punam Kumar Gill, herself pro-choice, interviews experts across the ideological spectrum and concludes that women are being denied important health information because of the politics of abortion. Praeger's glib, abortion-has-no-negative-effects-for-women attitude is out of place in a book that purports to examine the massive effect legalized abortion has had on so many aspects of American life.

These caveats notwithstanding, *The Family Roe* is an eminently valuable read for anyone who wants to understand the history of the *Roe v. Wade* decision—and its tragic aftermath.

—*Maria McFadden Maffucci is the Editor in Chief of the Human Life Review.*

## **ONE BILLION AMERICANS: THE CASE FOR THINKING BIGGER**

Matthew Yglesias

(New York, NY: Portfolio/Penguin, 2020, 288 pages, hardcover, \$24)

*Reviewed by Jason Morgan*

Canadian journalist Doug Saunders' 2017 book *Maximum Canada: Why 35 Million Canadians Are Not Enough* is about growing Canada's population in order to amplify the nation's presence on the world stage. At the end of *One Billion Americans* (on the very last page, buried in the Acknowledgements), *Vox* co-founder and Beltway pundit Matthew Yglesias writes that his book "owes a vast inspirational debt" to Saunders and *Maximum Canada*. "In tweet form," Yglesias says, "this whole book [i.e., *One Billion Americans*] is simply '*Maximum Canada*, but for America'" (p. 267).

What precedes this curtain-call hat tip is a somewhat haphazard menu of policy items that Yglesias would like to see implemented in and by the United States. Yglesias wrote his "maximum America" prescriptions during the Covid pandemic, at a time when few in the U.S. or around the world thought that the American government was getting a lot right at any level. Yglesias, however, is undaunted. America may be going through a rough patch, he acknowledges, but he is optimistic that Americans can overcome the hard times and make their country—or the federal government, at least—great again.

Despite this book's grandiose title, its contents are mostly less than fanciful. As an establishment liberal living in the Washington, D.C., area, Yglesias is given to proposing many of the ideas one is likely to encounter on *Vox* or one of the other left-of-center publications run by the garden-variety wonks and anti-Trumpers who throng our nation's capital. Yglesias wants to rebuild failing cities and string them with efficient light-rail networks and stud them with high-efficiency buildings. He wants to bring in more immigrants. (A lot more.) He wants to repair infrastructure, especially roads. He wants research parks, universities, punitive congestion fees, and better health care. If this

sounds familiar, it should. Many of the policy vignettes Yglesias advances in *One Billion Americans* come from *Vox*, or from the *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, and other reliably left-leaning journals of influence.

This is not to dismiss *One Billion Americans* outright. Far from it. Many of the ideas in this volume are not bad. Nor is Yglesias irresponsible in much of what he proposes. Yglesias does not just throw out a list of wants, he plots a course (mostly) to achieve what he proposes.

For example, Yglesias suggests that the U.S. issue “National Renewal Visas,” a variation on the “Heartland Visas” that other thinkers have proposed (pp. 175-176). Under this program, immigrants would be welcomed not to the United States as a whole, but to a particular location in need of more people, such as Detroit or Philadelphia or, as Yglesias suggests, Toledo (p. 176). Yglesias also gets into compelling specifics about zoning laws, showing how many of the problems facing urban areas—such as traffic jams, shoddy housing, and lackluster tax revenues—can be traced back to poor municipal planning and local political logjams. (Yglesias’ 2012 book, *The Rent Is Too Damn High*, was a foray into many of the problems and solutions that he considers in *One Billion Americans*.) Yglesias may perhaps be accused of indulging in a bit of reverie in proposing that the population of the United States be tripled (the same formula that Doug Saunders prescribed for Canada). But many of his ideas are not necessarily tied to his big-ticket population scheme, and even when they are, they are mostly worth considering in their own right.

There are some big hitches to *One Billion Americans*, though. For one thing, Yglesias does not seem to have much of a feel for culture. In a key section in the middle of the book on the Mariel boatlift, for example, Yglesias wades into the academic debate between University of California, Berkeley professor David Card and Kennedy School of Government professor George Borjas over the repercussions of the massive influx of refugees from Cuba in 1980. To sum it up for the home audience, Card states that wages remained basically unchanged even though “the size of the labor force in the Miami metropolitan area increased by 7 or 8 percent within six months” (p. 114). Borjas, to put it even more succinctly, disagrees (pp. 115-118).

This debate has big ramifications for Yglesias’ argument, because he needs to convince skeptics that bringing in a lot of foreigners won’t drive down take-home pay for people already in the labor market in the U.S. (He makes the same case using the Bracero program, which brought in farm workers from Mexico to help with seasonal labor [pp. 119-121].) Yglesias is arguing here (as he must if he wants his billion-Americans program to succeed) that immigration is a net positive, and that those who adopt anti-immigration

stances have little or nothing to fear, and plenty to gain, from rapid population increases.

Perhaps. But while I was reading these and many similar passages in *One Billion Americans*, I was thinking of places like Minneapolis and Los Angeles, where multiculturalism has tended to produce not a melting pot but a pressure cooker of ethnic tensions and ill will, enclaves of immigrants and their progeny who may branch out and join the big American pageant, but who often remain inside their respective compasses. In Miami, Yglesias admits, the Mariel boatlift drove up the murder rate and precipitated a “three-day riot in some of Miami’s Black neighborhoods partially inspired by perceived labor market competition with the newcomers that left thirteen people dead” (p. 114). To put it mildly, this greatly complicates the rosy picture on immigration that Yglesias is trying to paint.

Maybe such problems really do work themselves out over time. But then again, maybe you have Watts.

Yglesias downplays tensions caused by suddenly transplanting people from one culture to another—in Yglesias’ case, many millions—perhaps hundreds of millions—of people. But in reality, tripling America’s population by relying on foreign influx is bound to come with the hidden cost of importing many of the tensions riling various places around the world today. Anti-Asian hate, anti-Jewish attacks, anti-Black rallies, anti-white marches—these are all painful to see, but in their own way they attest to the fact that groups are often not so culturally malleable as governments would like to believe. Harmony takes time—hundreds of years in America’s case, and we’re still working at it. Yglesias wants a billion Americans, but he seems to have entirely too much faith in the predominant culture, or entirely too little appreciation of cultural differences in general. Humans are much, much more complex than he appears to allow.

In this mention of the predominant culture we glimpse an even bigger problem with Yglesias’ book. *The* problem, in fact. It is not just that Yglesias places too little value on culture. He also does not place enough value on human beings. In a conventional, but for that very reason unmistakable, way, Yglesias repeats the mantras of the culture of death, the predominant culture that values power, things, and the planet over human persons. This is the great irony of his scheme, and the reason why I am skeptical about the kinds of proposals Yglesias details here.

Take the planet, for instance. Yglesias is no environmental ideologue, to be sure, which is a refreshing change from much of his colleagues’ rhetoric these past ten years or more. He spends much time considering climate change, but in the end decides that more people will not necessarily be a bad

thing despite his concerns about global warming. “One billion Americans” is an optimistic goal, and I certainly welcome anyone’s bucking the current anti-natalist trend that sees would-be, or even current, parents lamenting additional births because of the strains that extra people will place on our allegedly distressed atmosphere. If anything, I think Yglesias disposes of the planetary considerations far too breezily given the opposition he is likely to face to his population-increase plans from his climate-justice peers. I am much more of a skeptic about global warming than Yglesias is, but even I came away much less than convinced that he really has it all figured out when it comes to squaring the corners between more people and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases.

But this example demonstrates the weakness of Yglesias’ approach to his thesis. The argument, even when it works out in a seemingly pro-population-growth direction, is framed in a distinctly anti-human way. If we want more people, then we shouldn’t have to justify their existence using greenhouse gas actuarial tables. *One Billion Americans* takes just this kind of quantifiable view of humans, even when discounting what the tables might seem to say. For Yglesias, people appear to be subordinate to policy goals. A person takes up space, produces carbon dioxide, consumes resources, innovates, invents, pays taxes, and so forth. Even in the aggregate, however, these do not make up the miracle of a human life. Not by a billion light years. In the end, Yglesias does not want a sprawling fecundity in America. He still desires control over reproduction and population, the same control that Washington liberals have been preaching for decades. He just swerves this control in a surprising direction to argue for increasing the American population rather than decreasing it.

Therefore, and as should be expected, Yglesias carves out big caveats for the usual orthodoxies on birth control and abortion (p. 52). The meaning of people circles back to affordability, not in terms of carbon but in terms of dollars—which is a distinction without much of a difference. Yglesias explains that the reason people stopped having children is that it costs too much to raise a child (p. 53). By the same token, he advances the argument that couples had many children in the past because infant mortality was higher and parents wanted to “ensure that a few would survive into adulthood” (p. 52). Yglesias assumes that economics is a given and that it explains fertility, but this is arguably something only a late-American Beltway liberal could so glibly avow. “People should be equipped with the tools they need to avoid pregnancy and childbirth,” Yglesias writes, “but also with the kinds of social supports that are needed to have and raise children. And that means recognizing that the natural evolution of the market economy really is making this



approach harder and harder” (p. 57). So “one billion Americans” is a way to use people to control the vicissitudes of capitalism. What Yglesias wants, ultimately, is not life, but bodies. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Yglesias, following Saunders, has come up with a kind of Cloward and Piven strategy in reverse—instead of using “the weight of the poor” to collapse the federal government, Yglesias wants to use the heft of the childrearing middle class to empower the federal government to extend its rule more efficiently over the North American continent and beyond. (With a bit of a backhand compliment to a mere one hundred million Canadians, perhaps.)

In the background of this Washington chauvinism is not Ottawa, though, but the People’s Republic of China. Yglesias knows that China is big and undemocratic, and he wants the United States to outstrip the Chinese behemoth by matching population density to policy savvy. But here, too, Yglesias’ anthropology is pretty thin gruel. His vision of America boils down to a numbers competition with China, and his idea of American history, by extension, is predicated on having had “enough economic mass to take down [America’s] rivals,” such as the Axis Powers during World War II (p. 4). In the new standoff with the People’s Republic of China, Yglesias thinks that we need to beef up census figures in order to throw more geopolitical weight around and once again take out some illiberal empires shouldering in on America’s righteous supremacy. People make the government strong, in the end. This is a kind of natalist nationalism that was common in Japan and Germany during the war eighty years ago, but which I suspect grates American ears outside of the I-95 corridor in a very weird way. Does Yglesias want more people because he is pro-people, or because he is pro-policy and ultimately pro-political? I wish I could say it was the former, but I think, unfortunately, that it is probably the latter.

While there are many intriguing policy ideas in *One Billion Americans*, and while I applaud Yglesias for thinking beyond the knee-jerk anti-human stance of so many of his peers on the left, in the final analysis it seems that Yglesias is aiming for one billion citizens, and not one billion human beings. There is a big difference, and Yglesias may very well understand it, but there is little in his book to suggest that he takes the difference seriously.

—Jason Morgan is associate professor at Reitaku University in Kashiwa, Japan.

**KILLING IN THE NAME OF HEALING: CONFRONTING  
MEDICAL HOLOCAUSTS PAST AND PRESENT**

William C. Brennan

(Catholic University Press, 2021, hardcover, 299 pages, \$40)

*Reviewed by John M. Grondelski*

The 75th anniversary of the Nuremberg Doctors Trial (Dec. 7, 1946–August 20, 1947) reminds us that medicalized killing is most frequently associated with the Nazis. But doctor-administered death, argues William Brennan in his new book, has strong affinities with an earlier 20th-century eugenics movement as well as with the subsequent promotion of abortion and euthanasia as social goods. Brennan, professor emeritus at St. Louis University, is also the author of *Confronting the Language Empowering the Culture of Death*, part of Catholic University’s “Studies in the Thought of John Paul II” series.

In *Killing in the Name of Healing*, Brennan explores what happens when health care professionals no longer profess an unambiguous commitment to life. The book is divided into three parts. Part I, titled “The Technology of Exterminative Medicine,” draws parallels between Nazi practices and contemporary counterparts, for example, lethal injections to stop heartbeats: carbolic acid, as in the case of St. Maximilian Kolbe, who was killed at Auschwitz, and digoxin, which is administered to third-trimester unborn children in “legal” partial-birth abortions.

Brennan details how medicalized killing—another example being the imposed death by starvation and dehydration of Terry Schiavo—became a “science,” complete with protocols for precise lethal dosing, how to handle those who fail to die on the first attempt, and getting rid of the bodies. There was an early Nazi debate, he notes, between ideologues who wanted mass graves as “proof” of their “noble” work and realists who favored cremation as a way of eliminating the evidence. An analogous disagreement is found in the vehement opposition of abortionists to recent efforts by some states to require burial of abortion victims.

Brennan also analyzes the slippery-slope logic (“they’re going to die anyway”) that encourages exploitation of victims’ bodies for research, whether it be Dachau’s air pressure and cold-water experiments on prisoners or the use of frozen embryos and aborted fetal parts in today’s biomedical industry and university laboratories. Another chapter in this section looks at how medical professionals rationalize their participation in exterminative medicine—through

peer support, pride in skill proficiency, belief in beneficent and/or altruistic contributions, or alcohol indulgence.

In Part II, “Rhetoric in the Service of Medical Mayhem,” Brennan builds on another earlier work, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives* (Life Cycle Books, 2000), pointing out parallels between Nazi eugenics rhetoric and today’s manipulation of language to promote death-dealing policies. Mass killing, he states, requires ideology. He then quotes Solzhenitsyn to make his point: “The imagination and the spiritual strength of Shakespeare’s evildoers [Macbeth and Iago] stopped short at a dozen corpses. Because they had no *ideology*” (p. 110, emphasis in original). The ideology that led to the Nazi killing, Brennan says, was born in the cultural embrace of “life unworthy of life,” a notion rampant in Germany long before Hitler. It assumed dehumanizing labels—“subhuman,” “nonperson,” “lower animal,” “parasite,” “vegetable”—all of which recur in today’s defense of abortion and euthanasia. The killing itself is pronounced to be “benign,” if not outright “humanitarian.”

Part III considers ways of “Challenging Destructive Medical Rhetoric,” including a valuable review of the thoroughgoing post-World War II effort to expose the evil of medicalized killing through the mass media (video and photographs of concentration camps) and the legal system (the Nuremberg Trials). Here Brennan directs a special appeal to physicians to take back their profession, noting how the American Medical Association did so in 1859 and 1871, when it advocated for state laws to protect the unborn.

Brennan’s analogies between Nazi exterminative medicine and contemporary doctor-administered death will make the book controversial, although he repeatedly stipulates that he is not arguing for any one-on-one correspondence. The Holocaust was unique. But medicalized killing itself predates the Holocaust; and it goes on today, albeit in different forms. Critics are free to reject the affinities that Brennan discusses, but they cannot be the sole gatekeepers of historical lessons drawn from past episodes when doctors were sanctioned to kill. We best remember the tragedy and injustice of medicalized killing, whether in Tuskegee or Tübingen, with an openness of mind that probes whether underlying exterminative attitudes are reasserting themselves in our own time.

—John Grondelski (Ph.D., Fordham) was former associate dean of the School of Theology, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. All views herein are exclusively his.

**THE 18TH ANNUAL  
GREAT DEFENDER OF LIFE DINNER**

**OCTOBER 7, 2021**



*HONORING*

**MARGARET COLIN AND MARVIN OLASKY**

*Marvin Olasky:*

Thank you, David. I will treasure being called a Great Defender of Life, even though the great is an exaggeration. Back in 1990 I profiled two great defenders who had recently written articles in *Human Life Review*—Henry Hyde and Nat Hentoff. They were men of character but they were also characters, unique individuals.

Henry Hyde was a devout Catholic. His inner office in Washington was very neat and tidy. It included one portrait of Thomas More, two busts of Abraham Lincoln, but three statuettes of Don Quixote. He knew that keeping the Hyde Amendment would always be a battle. He was ready to joust.

The office of Nat Hentoff two miles south of here was extremely untidy. He reviewed jazz albums when they were on vinyl, and threw many on the floor. You had to walk carefully to avoid going crunch, crunch. He was an atheist but he could not accept killing babies.

It takes all kinds of people to make a movement. The pro-life movement is filled with reputable people. But sometimes, in God's mysterious providence, unborn children benefit from disreputable people. That's the story I want to tell you tonight. It's the first time I am telling it publicly.

Until three weeks ago I thought I'd give you the talk I've given at many pro-life gatherings over the years. It's an OK stump speech. But we're only several blocks from Broadway. You deserve more than a road show. So, this is the world premiere of some research in



*Marvin Olasky joined us via ZOOM*

progress. It's not a smooth presentation but you will be the first people to learn the truth about someone I turned into a Great Defender of Life. You will learn that the results were great, even if he wasn't.

The story is also worth telling because this month is the sesquicentennial—the



150th anniversary—of the conviction of an abortionist who was the villain in the drama.

Here's some backstory. In 1986 I was an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin. My wife had founded the Austin Crisis Pregnancy Center two years before. We had just had a young woman going through a crisis pregnancy live with us for nine months. That story had a happy ending. So I wanted to write about abortion. I also had to publish a bunch of journal articles to get tenure.

The solution: I wrote academic journal articles about newspaper coverage of abortion over the years. In doing so I could praise pro-life people. I don't know if that would be possible now, but it worked. One person I brought to life was a reporter named Augustus St. Clair. I didn't realize then that it was only his name *sometimes*. His day job put some abortionists in jail. I didn't realize then that his night work could have caused some abortions.

In 1871 he wrote a great series of articles about abortion called "The Evil of the Age." If you look him up on the internet, you'll find articles that are probably there because of my research: He had largely been forgotten. I made him a two-dimensional hero—but while researching the new history of abortion that I'm writing, I have seen the third dimension.

Here's what I now understand to be the real story, in brief. William Augustus Doolittle Jr., later known as Augustus St. Clair, is born in New York in 1839. At age 19 he marries a beautiful woman, Mary Byington, also 19.

At age 20 William Augustus becomes the rector of an Episcopal church in Yonkers. Too much too soon. He fights with the congregation. The vestry demands that the bishop remove him. The bishop complies. Doolittle is bitter and becomes a Congregational minister. He and his wife have three daughters by the time they're 26, in 1865.

Then in 1867 he's gone 150 miles north and is pastor for a half-year at First Baptist Church in Hoosic Falls, near the Vermont border. He doesn't last long because he becomes sexually involved with the wife of a deacon. He eventually confesses.

William Augustus Doolittle legally changes his name to Augustus St. Clair. He becomes a newspaper reporter in Troy and then Newburgh, N.Y. in 1870 and 1871. According to court documents, he becomes sexually involved with a Mrs. Jenny Erkenbrach. The *New York Sun* reports she is "a woman of unusual personal attractions."

Let's review. Fired from at least two pastoral jobs. Caught in at least two adulteries. But he's picked up some journalistic experience. The summer of 1871 is extraordinarily busy at the *New York Times*. On July 12 Northern Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics clash on Eighth Avenue. Members of



the National Guard start shooting. Three Guardsmen plus more than 60 civilians, mostly Irish laborers, die.

So, at least 63 deaths. Meanwhile, the *Times* is in a big battle with Boss Tweed, the corrupt Tammany Hall master manipulator. *Times* editor Louis Jennings is looking for another way to poke at corruption. His regular reporters are busy. But look—here’s Augustus St. Clair hungry for work. Sure, let him spend a couple of weeks visiting abortionists. See what he can produce.

That is Augustus St. Clair’s one shining moment. Here’s the headline and subhead of his story, published on August 23, 1871: “THE EVIL OF THE AGE. Slaughter of the Innocents,. . . Scenes Described by Eyewitnesses.”

That last emphasis on eyewitnesses is important. St. Clair is not just spouting off, opining. He visited abortionists and reported what they said. He includes vivid specific detail: “Human flesh, supposed to have been the remains of infants, found in barrels of lime and acids, undergoing decomposition.”

**T**he story would have been better had he included some human interest about what one of the women coming for an abortion looked like. Say someone—I’ll quote here—“about twenty years of age, of slender build, having blue eyes, and a clear, alabaster complexion,” plus “long blonde curls, tinted with gold.”

Reporters from the 1830s on had used the looks of abortion seekers and adult victims as a way to generate reader involvement. The looks of that particular woman are relevant because three days after the publication of St. Clair’s big story, a baggage handler at the train station smells a horrible odor emanating from a trunk to be shipped to Chicago. He opens it and finds the corpse of that 20-year-old. The autopsy shows an abortion killed her.

The “trunk murder” receives coverage throughout the United States. Four days later St. Clair writes a follow-up story in the *Times*. Early in *this* story, not the first, he provides the description of the young woman that I read to you. Near the end of *this* story, he says he had happened to see her *twice* in the office of the abortionist who killed her. He finishes with a flourish, in italics: “*I positively identify the features of the dead woman as those of the blonde beauty, and will testify to the fact, if called to do so, before a legal tribunal.*”

Well. Thirty-five years ago, I thought St. Clair seeing that particular woman was an unlikely coincidence, but in reporting, coincidences do happen. I tried to find out more about St. Clair but came up dry. You all know that the *Times* is now strongly pro-abortion, so its pro-life role 150 years ago was a good story. I went with it.

Last month, using the resources now available through the Internet, I took another shot at learning more about St. Clair. Something happens soon after St. Clair’s scoop that discredits him among New York journalists. The

*Brooklyn Eagle* calls him “eccentric” and a “much pulverized reporter.” St. Clair defends a corrupt government official in a way that leads some journalists to conclude St. Clair is corrupt himself.

That may have been a political dispute, but in October, 1872, St. Clair demolishes any remaining belief in his honesty when he testifies during a sensational murder trial. Famed businessmen Jim Fisk and Edward Stokes quarreled over a girlfriend, Josie Mansfield. Stokes shoots and kills Fisk outside a hotel about two miles south of here. After a mistrial, St. Clair, in a subsequent trial, shows up to testify that he saw a pistol in Fisk’s hand, so Stokes purportedly fired in self-defense.

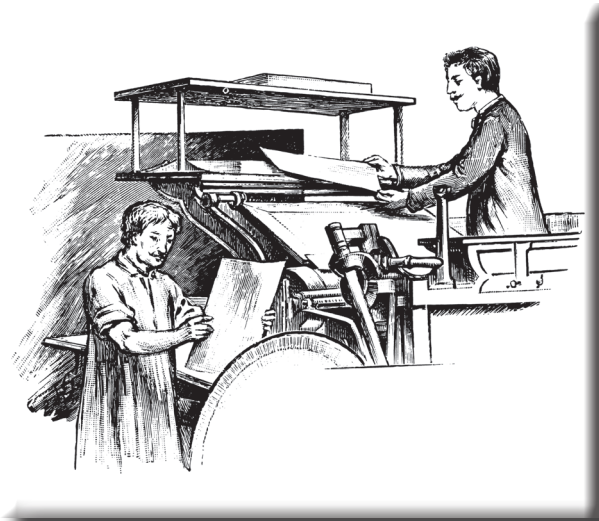
Others did not see a pistol. The *Boston Globe* declares, “Those who claim to know the witness [St. Clair] say that he is not a man worthy of belief. . . . He would not hesitate to swear to more than he knew, for a consideration.” The *Charleston Daily News* says, “St. Clair’s story bears the strongest evidence of having been manufactured.”

The *Vermont Gazette* reports that four men from Hoosic Falls, where St. Clair had ministered—particularly to the deacon’s wife—were ready to swear “that they would not believe St. Clair under oath.” The *Chicago Tribune*, the *Nashville Union*, and others all say St. Clair is a liar.

St. Clair in 1874 snags a public relations job for the Liquor Dealers Protective Union of Brooklyn. He arranges travel and hotel reservations for booze dealers arriving at a state convention. In 1875 he is a toastmaster at a Long Island hotel. During the rest of the decade he writes advertising booklets for hotels, with words like these: “Visitors will experience complete satisfaction

not only in respect to the refreshments they obtain, but in the charges they pay, and the handsome treatment they will invariably receive.”

In the 1880s he sometimes reuses the name Augustus Doolittle. He appears in this article from 1884: “Henry Van Bunckle, a traveling salesman living at Union Hill, N.J., on Sunday found his wife in company with Augustus Doolittle sitting on the piazza of Tallon’s



19th-century illustration of the process of newspaper printing

Hotel . . . He gave Doolittle a severe thrashing and then drove away.”

Over the next 15 years St. Clair apparently picks up some short-term editing jobs in Elmira, New York City, and St. Joseph, Missouri. He briefly does some public relations work in 1898. Census reports show him as still married in Mount Vernon, N.Y., but his wife often appears as “head of household.”

When she dies in 1906, her obituary (as Mary C. Doolittle) says, “Four daughters survive her.” It says she “was at one time considered one of the most beautiful women in Westchester County.” It says nothing about a husband. St. Clair was still alive, though: He died in 1915 in Brooklyn and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

The facts of St. Clair’s life make me doubt the truthfulness of the dramatic ending to his second story: “*I positively identify the features of the dead woman as those of the blonde beauty, and will testify to the fact, if called to do so, before a legal tribunal.*” If he had improbably seen her, that detail would probably have been in his first story.

Here’s another clue: Police arrest the abortionist whose operation led to the young woman’s death. Prosecutors have to prove her presence in the abortionist’s house. They do so, but the case is not a slam dunk. You’d think St. Clair’s testimony would be crucial—if prosecutors think he’d be a credible witness. It seems they do not. He never testifies.

It also seems the *New York Times* within a few months decides he is not credible. I do not know whether St. Clair’s name change and his adulteries had anything to do with that. I suspect editors, once they have time to ask hard questions, become suspicious. That’s what happened a generation ago when *Washington Post* editors took a closer look at the stories of Janet Cooke, and *New Republic* editors looked closer at the stories of Stephen Glass. Coincidences do happen, but when a story seems too good to be true, it usually is.

But, so what? I have about four minutes left to answer a key question: “Who cares what happened 150 years ago?”

First, I do. I got it wrong. Yes, 35 years ago it was hard to read lots of old newspapers without traveling all over, but a journalist should always admit and correct mistakes. One reason I did not ask some hard questions: I assumed a good guy on life issues would be good. Not necessarily so.

I also thought a reporter and an editor who produced pro-life stories would be pro-life. But to the best of my knowledge, St. Clair never wrote anything about abortion before 1871 and never did again. His editor, Louis Jennings, wrote one good pro-life editorial headlined “The Least of These Little Ones”—but I read last month a book about America he wrote just before becoming editor of the *Times*. In it he says nothing about abortion.

Nevertheless, Jennings and St. Clair had a big pro-life impact. New laws and compassionate programs emerged. A series of prosecutions commenced. Some abortionists went behind bars, although usually for not very long. Others were scared straight. Publishers put out more books about abortion, including one in 1875 by Elizabeth Evans, *The Abuse of Maternity*. She documented post-abortion syndrome.

I suspect the *Times* published “The Evil of the Age” because Jennings wanted to show one more way in which city officials were corrupt. Abortionists regularly bribed police and prosecutors to leave them alone. Jennings talked with a hungry freelancer, Augustus St. Clair, about getting a story with all the right elements: human interest, crime, corruption, vulnerable women, death.

Such stories are still all around us, but they are no-fly zones at major newspapers. The *Chicago Sun-Times* ran a dramatic series about abortionists in 1988. To my knowledge no one has done it again during the past 33 years. As the dead push up through the soil, reporters say “Nothing to see here.” In July 1990 one brave journalist, David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times*, documented massive press bias in a 4-part series. Little has changed since then, but major newspapers don’t admit it.

In 2013 major media had another chance to take abortion seriously. Jurors, after a lengthy trial, convicted Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell for murdering just-born babies. The evidence of killing tiny humans with scissors following botched abortions was grisly, but the Media Research Center found that during the 55 days of the trial, ABC ran 70 segments on shocking criminal cases but nothing on Gosnell.

A vibrant story like “The Evil of the Age” shames much of modern journalism: Now, abortion ideology overrules opportunities for dynamic street-level reporting. But it also shames our entire crazy culture. The Me Too movement has had some good effects. Men should not inappropriately touch women, let alone go much further. But what about a man who impregnates a woman and then says “get lost,” or tosses on the bed a few crumpled-up bills and an abortionist’s address?

We need those who truly are great defenders of life. We also need ordinary reporters and editors who don’t turn their backs on extraordinary stories, just because they are ideologically inconvenient. And I thank all of you who have not turned your backs on the least of these little ones.

*This talk will turn into a chapter in a book on American abortion history scheduled for publication by Crossway Books in January, 2023.*

***Margaret Colin:***

Wow! Thank you so much! What a ridiculously gracious introduction. So, I was thinking a lot this week, these weeks, about what I could talk about. This is a very intellectual group. There are a lot of lawyers and politicians and really smart people here. Bye! [Starts walking off podium, laughter, returns.]

But what I can offer is what it's like to be pro-life and an actor. I come from a family of pro-life people. My mother was pro-life. I really, truly don't believe she knew what abortion was till *Roe v. Wade*, and that made her very political. So she joined Saint Christopher's, where there was this renegade priest, Fr. Lisante—who is right here [gestures to her table]. Yes! They helped to form a very viable, politically active, community-oriented pro-life group. From there they went on to work all over Long Island, and I believe that they were also part of creating the New York State Right to Life Party, which was for several years the third largest party in New York State, and I'm very proud of that.

I would like to thank everybody who gave me this award—especially Maria, and of course, Carol Crossed and Feminists Choosing Life of New York, with whom I have worked, and Feminists for Life with Serrin Foster, for whom I have worked. And I would like to thank Fr. Lisante for having me several times on *Personally Speaking*,\* because that is the way that I, as an actress, am able to convey my message.

So when I go to work, people meet me as an actor . . . because I got the job. And then we go to work. And then we figure out what our job is and how to work and as we go along, they discover that I'm pro-life because we hang out. And so now, I'm not one of "them," I'm one of "us," and we can dialogue. And I am a very firm believer in dialogue. Sometimes dialogue is



\**Personally Speaking* is a podcast hosted by Msgr. James Lisante (Enlighten Productions, LLC).



almost impossible, so then I try to meet them with love. People I can't agree with, I try to meet with love. And find an area where pro-choice (ugh) and pro-life can meet together in supporting women who make the choice to keep their babies, and give them the resources they need so that they don't have to choose abortion.

I've been acting since I was nineteen. I've worked in television and film, on-stage on Broadway, off-Broadway, in China, in London, in LA, in—where else, who knows? But I'm really grateful. I've been in blockbuster films like *Independence Day*. So I love it when you all come up to me and say: "Oh, you've worked with Tom Selleck!" Yes, three times! *Three Men and a Baby*, on his show [*Magnum P.I.*] and in—with the gun in my crotch—his latest, *Blue Bloods*. So yes, I am really blessed to work a lot—soon to be released, *Road to Galena*—independent films, blockbusters, soap operas, commercials and one musical (that will do it) a few years ago, *Carousel*.

I cannot say that I have lost work because I was pro-life. I cannot say that. I can say that people were horrified at rehearsal when I was called to come to the White House when President Bush was advocating for making stem-cell research more humane. I was invited there with Patty Heaton. And we went, and I was proud to go. But they were shocked in my rehearsal hall at the Manhattan Theater Club that I was pro-life, and one actress literally *backed away from me*. Which was kind of hard, but I was really glad that I came back and went to work. And they accepted that there was one of them in their midst, and it was "hail-fellow-well-met"—that's what I experienced.

Also, I went to work on *Veep*. I've won an award in the supporting actor category from the Screen Actors Guild [for *Veep*]. I like winning awards, and I'm so grateful for this one tonight. I'm really grateful and hope to live up to being a Great Defender of Life. I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to live up to it.

So I worked on *Veep*, and I played—do you know the show? Do you watch the show? They're not good, not nice people. But they're well-drawn characters. They're really funny, and they reflect on our political condition. So because of my social media, they know I'm pro-life. The show's liberal and democratic, and I am pulling for my Democrats for Life friends. But these are not they. So, when I went to work for them, it was, again, hail-fellow-well-met. Here's the material, let's get to work. You are one of us. Let's go. Your opinions are welcome. In my experience, there has been no prejudice because I'm pro-life.

The opening episode of a season of *Veep* that I had a regular role in was broadcast at Lincoln Center. And one of the women characters had an abortion. The callous way that the father of her child referred to the abortion, the



callous way it was carried out, the desperateness of the woman character having this experience—it was devastating. There was silence at the end of the episode. Silence. That’s how they premiered the episode.

So in my mind—and I want to hear what you think of this afterwards—that was a very successful show. Because it was horrible. It was agonizing. And I talked to them afterwards, and everybody knew how I felt being pro-life, and so that’s what I want to offer to you. Because a lot of people ask how I was being treated as an actress in the business, and I’m saying, that’s how I am treated. This was a very effective show about the horrors of abortion.

I wouldn’t be up here if it weren’t for my mother [she pauses, momentarily overcome with emotion]. I guess none of us would be here if it weren’t for our mothers.

I base my arguments when I talk to my friends at work on the arguments clearly laid out by Serrin Foster in her much published speech [“The Feminist Case Against Abortion,”] in this book [holding it up], *Women’s Rights*. Don’t laugh. There are women’s rights. It’s not an oxymoron. This is an old joke in my family. I have sons, only sons.

I argue the rights of women as the early American feminists did. That they have always considered abortion an abomination, infanticide. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony—Carol sing along with me! [addressing Carol Crossed from the podium]. All of them, all said it was an abomination against women and children. Our movement has been co-opted, since the ’60s, by people who put abortion first. You don’t agree with them. I don’t agree with them. It’s ridiculous.

And that is how I meet my friends at work—with that argument. I don’t offer that I’m Catholic, because people like to dismiss it: “Oh, you’re religious.” Just like trying to get you into bed: “Oh, you’re religious.” But that was then.

So my mother was pro-life, my father was a police officer. They brought us to the marches. They turned our recreational vehicle into a pro-life wagon that went all over Long Island. Yes, she interrupted our weekends and tried to save lives all over Long Island. She did. She put up posters and handed out literature and offered the support that women in crisis, young girls in crisis pregnancies need. So that’s how I became a part of it. [Applause]

I have learned so much from my pro-life friends. I continue to learn from them. I’m not as intellectual as this group clearly is. I’m passionate about defending life, and I’m grateful to be in your company and really grateful for the support.

I thank my husband Justin Deas and my son Joseph Deas and my other son Samuel Deas for putting up with me and listening to all this *everywhere we go*. And thank you.

***George Marlin: Remembering Michael Uhlmann***

Thank you, Jack, for your kind words. I should point out that Teddy Roosevelt, Bill Buckley, and I have one thing in common. We all ran for mayor in New York, and we all came in 3rd place. So I've had good company. But tonight I am particularly pleased to pay tribute to a man I had the privilege of calling a friend for 45 years, and most recently had the sad duty of being executor of his estate; and that is Mike Uhlmann, who was one of the founding editors and board members of the *Human Life Review*. Representing his family tonight is his niece Aurelie Uhlmann Cunningham and her husband, the man who gets our blood pressure cooking every morning, Mark Cunningham, the editorial page editor of the *New York Post*. So, thanks for being here this evening.

Some thoughts about Mike Uhlmann. He was a Catholic kid who grew up in Washington. His father worked for the government down in DC. He was a scholarship kid at The Hill School, Yale University, the University of Virginia Law School. When he was at Yale, he was present at the creation of the modern conservative movement—at Bill Buckley's place in 1960, where he co-authored with M. Stanton Evans the "Sharon Statement," which was the founding document of Young Americans for Freedom and a list of principles of the modern conservative movement.

When Mike was at the University of Virginia Law school, he went to a conference, I think it was in Chicago, and met probably one of the great political philosophers of the 20th century, Harry Jaffa, who is noted for his writings on Abraham Lincoln, but is most remembered as the man who wrote Barry Goldwater's acceptance speech given at the 1964 Republican Convention. So impressed by Jaffa, so taken by him, Mike, after finishing law school, went out to Claremont Graduate School of Political Science, where he studied not only under Jaffa but under that other great political philosopher Leo Strauss. Mike earned his PhD in political philosophy there.

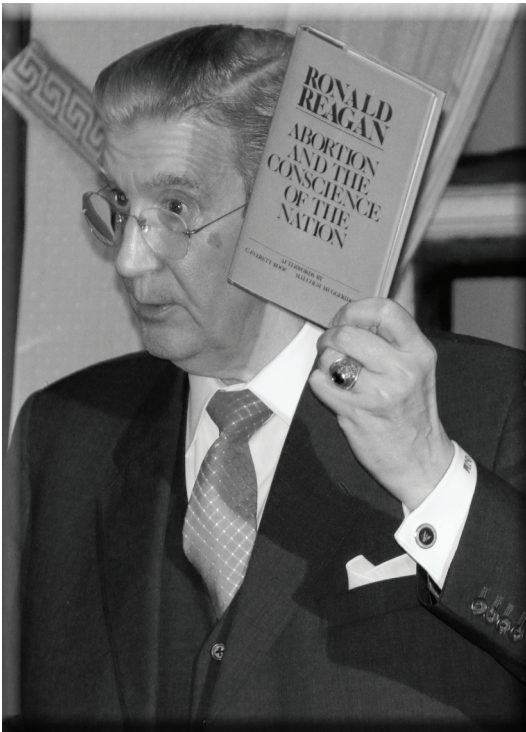
From there he went back to Washington and became the chief counsel to the Senate minority. And back in 1969, when the House of Representatives actually voted to eliminate the Electoral College, Mike wrote the minority report defending the Electoral College; and, to get an understanding of it, shortly after Mike died, in the Winter 2020 edition of *National Affairs*, a quarterly scholarly journal, Chris DeMuth wrote a piece titled "The Man Who Saved the Electoral College." And, when it was coming up for a vote in the Senate, several liberal senators—most notably, Sen. Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, who as you remember, forced LBJ out of the 1968 presidential race—he called Mike in and said, I read your treatise and you're right, and

I'm going to vote to keep the Electoral College. And that's how it was saved. And, hopefully, you can find that paper on the internet and it should be read and handed out to all quarters as they are trying to take it down again.

From there, in 1971, he became counsel to the sainted junior senator of New York, James L. Buckley. And after *Roe v. Wade* came down, it was Mike who drafted the Human Life Amendment that Jim Buckley introduced into the U.S. Senate. Several years later, in '74, he led the transition team for President Ford and for the Justice Department, where he was the Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs. He became very tight with another Assistant Attorney General, whose name was Scalia.

In 1980, President Ronald Reagan appointed Mike Special Assistant to the President, Executive Secretary to the Cabinet for Legislative Policy, and Director, White House Office of Policy Development. In the White House, Mike was the keeper of the flame of the pro-life movement. And when I was cleaning out his house out in California, I came across this great loose-leaf binder, which had all of Mike's memos on the subject of abortion that went through the White House. He also discovered a guy who was his deputy and later pushed him for Attorney General of the United States—that was Bill Barr, who I have had the privilege to call a friend for many years.

One of the things you should note: You may recall that the *Human Life Review*,



when Reagan was in office, published an essay that he wrote. Mike Uhlmann worked with him on that piece, titled “Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation,” which was later published in this book. [He holds up a copy of *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation*, published in 1984.] And I think this was the first book published by a sitting president since Woodrow Wilson that wasn't just a collection of the usual speeches and stuff. And it was Mike who assisted the president in putting that piece together.

In 1989 when President George H. W. Bush took office, Mike got a call from Boyden Gray, who

was then White House counsel to the president. He told Mike Bush would be nominating his first court appointment—it was the Washington DC circuit. He said the president wanted to put his first best step forward and nominate him to that post. Mike at the time had five kids for whom he needed money to educate, so he was hesitant about taking it. But he told me that he was walking through the Capitol and a guy who was Chairman of the Judiciary Committee—I think his name is Joe Biden—you may have heard of him—came up to him and said, “Hey, Mike, I hear the President is going to be sending down your name. I can’t wait to subpoena all your memos from the Reagan White House.”

And so Mike turned down the nomination because he was afraid he was going to get “Borked,” and he didn’t want to embarrass President Bush. But he recommended in his stead a guy by the name of Clarence Thomas. And if you read Clarence Thomas’s memoirs—I met him at a dinner several years ago in Philadelphia. I’ve been Chairman of the Board of the Philadelphia Trust Company for the past 23 years, and Mike was on my board for 20 years. So, I went up to Clarence Thomas and I said, you know, I’m a good buddy of Mike Uhlmann. And he looked at me and said, if it were not for Mike Uhlmann, he would not be on the U.S. Supreme Court. So, Mike turned it down and gave it to Clarence Thomas, which I don’t think is a bad day’s work.

Afterwards, Mike was the senior vice president of the Bradley Foundation. And then, from 2003 until his death in 2019, he was professor of Government at the Claremont Graduate School of Political Science. Mike trained a generation of young conservatives who are now working in government, teaching in universities—and we have one in Washington by the name of Senator Tom Cotton. There’s some talk of him running for president of the United States.

So, when we look back on his life: He was a founder of the *Human Life Review*—he and Jim McFadden were great comrades. And with his behind-the-scenes work in Washington, Mike was truly one of the unsung heroes of the conservative movement.

And you have a copy [in guests’ gift bags] of my new book called *Mario Cuomo—The Myth and the Man*, which I was delighted to dedicate to Mike. Mike went over the two chapters on Mario as a public intellectual, which is sort of an oxymoronic term but . . . I was very pleased he finished that shortly before he died. However, to remember Mike, I have this on the dedication page: If you google his name under “Uhlmann’s Razor,” you will see pictures of Mike come up with this statement: “When stupidity is a sufficient explanation, there is no need to have recourse to any other.”



Mike Uhlmann, an unsung hero of the conservative movement, may his soul and all the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Thank you very much.



*National Anthem sung by  
Christina Angelopoulos*



*GDDL live-streamed for first time so  
friends could attend at home*



*Invocation given by  
Reverend Victor Lee Austin*



*Master of Ceremonies Jack Fowler*



*Marvin Olasky introduced by  
David Bahnsen*

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<https://humanlifereview.com/great-defender-life-dinner/special-event-great-defender-life-dinner-2021/>

## FROM THE HLR WEBSITE

### CHINA CLOSES ABORTION CLINICS AMID CONTINUED FALLOUT OF ONE-CHILD POLICY

*Madeline Fry Schultz*

With its infamous one-child policy, China discouraged births in the country for more than 30 years. Now, the *Wall Street Journal* reports, the country is facing a low (and declining) fertility rate and finding it difficult to suddenly encourage the births of more, not fewer, babies.

Though China's one-child policy ended in 2016, it has had lasting effects. Several cultural and societal factors could be playing a role in the declining fertility rate, including delayed marriages and fewer women of childbearing age.

Another problem is that many women have already had multiple abortions, which can affect fertility and make it difficult to bear a child later on. China has a higher infertility rate than the rest of the world (18% compared with a global standard of 15% of couples of reproductive age, according to Peking University researchers), which some attribute to its aging population, and others pin on the prevalence of abortions.

To encourage population growth, China is promoting services for couples hoping to conceive, including in vitro fertilization, and even closing some abortion clinics. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that “the number of family-planning centers, primarily used for abortions, sterilizations and insertions of intrauterine devices, has dwindled to 2,810 across China in 2020, less than 10% of the number in 2014.”

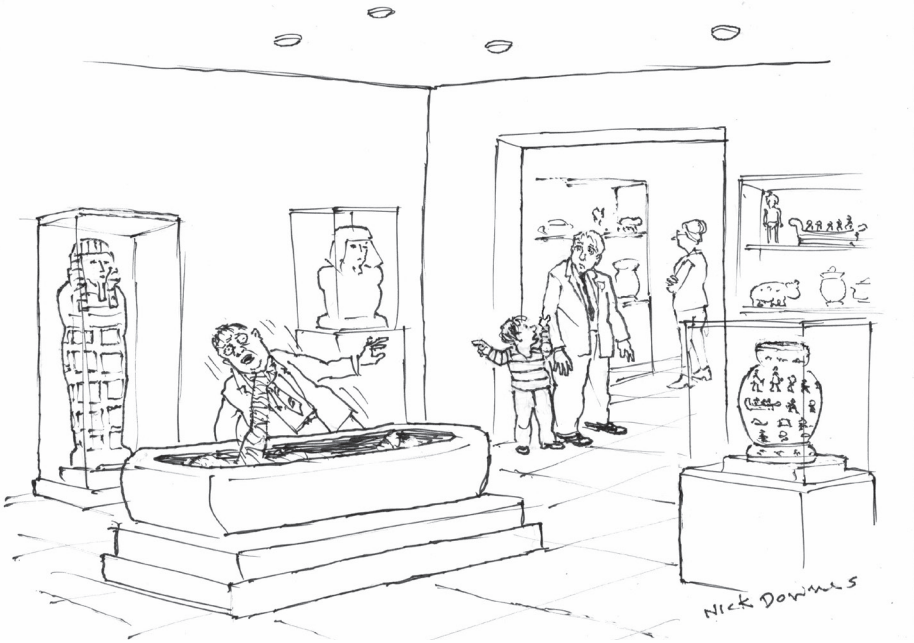
Although China's reasoning for limiting abortions and encouraging births is practical, rather than principled, its push to replace its aging population will certainly be a good thing for couples and newborns.

Here in the United States, the fertility rate is also declining, a trend that Pew Research notes “likely reflects the lingering effects of the Great Recession, as well as longer-term demographic changes such as increased educational attainment among women and delays in marriage.” But the good news is that, although there is no federal push to shut down abortion clinics, abortion rates are also falling; in the past few years, abortion rates fell to their lowest level since *Roe v. Wade*.

Still, according to Worldometer, the global number of abortions performed in 2021 was more than 42.6 million, a number greater than post-birth deaths by any single cause, including COVID-19, cancer, AIDS, or car accidents. Since fertility rates across the globe are below replacement levels, i.e. more



people are dying than being born, the BBC reports, 23 countries including Japan, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Thailand, and South Korea will see their populations cut to half their current size by the end of the century, with China's cut nearly in half. While China struggles to restore birth rates, perhaps the rest of the globe can begin to see the lasting destructive effects of federally endorsed abortion.



*"Is that supposed to happen?"*

## APPENDIX A

*[The Rev. Canon Victor Lee Austin is theologian-in-residence of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas, Texas. This column was published in The Living Church on October 17, 2021, and is reprinted here with permission (livingchurch.org).]*

### Why Have Children?

*Victor Lee Austin*

The point of having children is to increase the number of the saints. In the 1979 Prayer Book—which in this regard sets forth a more traditional exposition than its U.S. predecessors—children are one of the three intentions God has for marriage. “The union of husband and wife . . . is intended by God . . . when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord” (BCP p. 423). It is significant here that God’s intention is not merely that children be procreated but that they be nurtured to know God and also to love God.

This is a profoundly counter-cultural claim. Children are not humanly optional; nor are they a project for the fulfilment of the couple; nor do they exist for the sake of their contribution to the good of society (through taking care of their parents and/or through Social Security contributions). The point of children is that there be more people who know God and who love God; and precisely in furtherance of those goals, God may give children to the married couple, the husband and wife.

**Children are not humanly optional.** It is perhaps most counter-cultural of all to think that whether to have children is not an option. It has surprised me to find socially conservative young Christian adults—men and women who, for instance, see sexual intimacy as belonging only to the marital union—who do not know this. They simply assume that whether they have children, once married, would be entirely their choice. They know, of course, that just because a couple tries to conceive a child does not mean they will be successful; they know about infertility. But whether to make the trial, whether to be open to the conception of children—this they think is their own decision to make.

Christian tradition says otherwise. The hope of having children is built into the structure of Christian marriage. In the marriage service, we ask God to “Bestow on them, if it is your will, the gift and heritage of children, and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and to serve you” (BCP p. 429). This intercession is optional, as was a similar prayer in the 1662 Book that God “assist with thy blessing these two persons, that they may . . . be fruitful in procreation of children”; in 1662 the instruction is to omit the prayer “where the Woman is past childbearing.” (In my judgment, in addition to being past childbearing, the possession of dangerous genetic scenarios could render it licit for a couple to marry without intending to have children.)

If it turns out that children, although desired, are not conceived, a couple has no obligation to seek out medical assistance. If doctors can find the cause of infertility and if that can be cured, well and good (provided the burdens of treatment are proportionate). But most of what is on offer, medically speaking, is not a cure for

infertility but a workaround. And Christians need to be clear that there is no godly obligation to seek workarounds for infertility; to the contrary, many such paths are morally questionable. In vitro fertilization, for instance, does not cure infertility. (For further on this, see Oliver O'Donovan's now-classic *Begotten or Made?* and a more recent and pastorally oriented book by his sometime student Matthew Arbo, *Walking Through Infertility*.)

**Nor are children a project for the fulfillment of a married couple.** If God gives you children, that gift is not for you! This means something hopeful for involuntarily childless marriages: they are no less truly marriages than any other. Divine Providence is often inscrutable and perplexing.

As a young priest, I visited a married couple who told me, "Children are not part of our lifestyle." They saw some people as needing to have children in order to fulfill themselves. They were not such people.

But children are not about self-fulfillment. Yes, parenting can be deeply satisfying; I know a man who says that rearing his children is the most creative thing he has done in his life. But all of us also know people who are frustrated with their children. The place of Christian wisdom is to accept gratefully the joys and sit lightly with the frustrations, in both cases remembering that children are not means to our own happiness and fulfillment. We who are parents are for them; they are for God.

Children are not for the future good of society. It is true that society receives many benefits from children, including their contributions to society in all its manifold complexities. We need always to have new people joining in society to do old things that still need doing and to see new things that could be initiated. People age and die, and new people enter in to take their place. All this is true.

But just as children are not for the sake of their parents' good, nor are they for the sake of society's good. Sometimes children turn out brilliant, but sometimes they don't. Sometimes they become good neighbors and encouragers of their friends, other times they don't. I would say that on average or collectively, sure, children are for the good of society. But that's not their ultimate purpose, and therefore we have a place in our hearts (in society's metaphorical heart) for every child regardless of whether we can see social benefit coming from that child.

The point of children is that they know, love, and serve God. The most important thing parents do is to instruct their children in the truths of Christianity. We can do this through teaching Bible stories and prayers (that increase in complexity as the child grows). We do this also through being ourselves people who study Scripture and attend to prayer.

Knowledge of God is related in a circular, mutually reinforcing manner with knowing God himself. An amazing aspect of knowing God is that it is impossible to know him without loving him. Augustine famously begins his *Confessions* with just this question: Can we love God without knowing him? But can we know him without loving him? Knowledge and love enter and grow together.

And that leads to a certain quality of life, a life marked by service of God. Children can be taught to see the day-to-day things of life as ways of serving God—thus learning how to tie together Christian knowledge and Christian living.

## APPENDIX B

[The following letter, cited in W.J. Kennedy's article "The Sad State of 'This Bloody Business'" (page 30), was sent to Attorney General Merrick Garland, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, and NIH Director Francis Collins on Sept. 22, 2021, and signed by Senators James Lankford (R-OK), Josh Hawley (R-MO), and Steve Daines (R-MT) along with Reps. Lisa McClain (R-MI) and Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO). It was co-signed by 59 other members of Congress.]

### **Letter on Illegal Fetal Tissue Research**

*James Lankford, Josh Hawley, Steven Daines, Lisa McClain, Blaine Luetkemeyer*

September 21, 2021

Dear Attorney General Garland, Secretary Becerra, and Director Collins,

We are alarmed by public records obtained from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) which show that the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) may have violated federal law by altering abortion procedures to harvest organs from babies who were old enough to live outside the womb. We ask for a complete investigation into the activities of this organization and a full report of findings and any remedial measures necessary.

The NIH documents detailing Pitt's grant request were obtained in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from the Center for Medical Progress. Between fiscal years 2016 and 2020, NIH awarded approximately \$1.5 million to Pitt for a project related to the GenitoUrinary Developmental Molecular Anatomy Project (GUDMAP) program. The GUDMAP program was intended to provide the scientific and medical community tools to study "congenital diseases of the genitourinary tract (kidneys, bladder, ureter, urethra)" by obtaining such organs from aborted babies for research. In its application for funding to be a GUDMAP "tissue hub and collection site" Pitt states that its Health Science Tissue Bank (HSTB) has been involved in procuring and disbursing the body parts of aborted babies for years, noting that "the fetal tissue IRB [Institutional Review Board] has been in place since 2005." The application contains references in several places regarding the HSTB to the Pitt Institutional Review Board (IRB) but also states that the IRB forms are in the process of being altered and the IRB review is pending.

First, Pitt's application raises concern that it has failed to comply with federal law prohibiting the alteration of abortion procedures solely for the purpose of obtaining fetal tissue, which states that an attending physician may have "no part in any decisions as to the timing, method, or procedures used to terminate a pregnancy." It is not clear that Pitt has complied with these legal requirements based on the following statements on Pitt's grant application:

- Pitt states that “ischemia time is minimized” when it obtains fetal tissue. NIH defines “ischemia” as “time a tissue, organ, or body part remains at body temperature after its blood supply has been reduced or cut off but before it is cooled or reconnected to a blood supply.” It would be illegal for Pitt to alter the “timing, method, or procedures” of the abortion to minimize ischemia time.
- Pitt states that it “tailor[s] [its] collection processes on a case-by-case basis to maximize the needs of investigators.” It would be illegal for researchers to have any part in the decisions surrounding the obtainment of fetal tissue from elective abortions.

Second, if the organs were harvested from babies born after induced abortion, we are concerned that some of these babies were born alive, could have survived with appropriate care, and may have died as a result of having their organs harvested. Pitt’s application states that it can obtain access to the organs and tissues of unborn babies between 6-24 weeks gestation, but it partners with another organization to obtain unborn babies between 25-42 weeks’ gestation. Babies as young as less than 22 weeks gestation have been known to survive outside the womb with appropriate care. The statements about “warm ischemia” raise questions about the cause of death for these babies. As noted above, Pitt states that it sought to minimize the time between when the blood supply to an organ was reduced and when the organ is cooled or reconnected. If the organs are harvested from a baby born after induced abortion, it is possible the baby was delivered alive, and the removal of the organs was the cause of the baby’s death.

Exploiting the body parts of aborted children for research purposes is repulsive and should stop, regardless of the outcome hoped for by researchers. Research using abortive fetal tissue is unethical, wrong, and has also been proven ineffective. Despite being used in clinical research since the 1920s, fetal tissue has not produced a single clinical treatment.

Based on these considerations, for the federal awards given the project number 1U24DK110791, please provide full and clear responses to the following information requests going back to the beginning of the grant project period to today:

- The number of cases at each gestational age involving abortion, miscarriage, stillbirth, and neonate utilized in the GUDMAP program during the grant project period;
- Detailed protocols for Dilation & Curettage, Dilation & Evacuation, and Labor Induction followed to obtain fetal tissue for the GUDMAP program;
- The detailed biospecimen collection IRB application and approval for the Health Science Tissue Bank;
- Documentation to verify the physiological status of babies delivered by labor induction upon tissue harvest;
- The number of fetal tissue collection procedures from babies delivered by labor induction;
- Documentation of the number of babies delivered by labor induction that

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were deceased, and cardiac activity had ceased prior to fetal organ and tissue collection;

- Documentation of when “warm ischemia” time was recorded with reference to death when collecting organs and tissue from abortion, miscarriage, still-birth, and neonate;
- Documentation on the specific steps that were taken to minimize warm ischemic time when collecting organs and tissue from abortion, miscarriage, still-birth, and neonate;
- Details on how specimens are collected and transferred to the Tissue Hub and the personnel involved at each step;
- Documentation of how compliance is ensured (including any reporting and oversight mechanisms) with regard to each of the following statutes and regulations:
  - The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act (18 U.S.C. 1531);
  - Research protections for pregnant women and fetuses (42 U.S.C. 289g, 289g-1, and 45 C.F.R. 46.204);
  - Research protections for neonates (45 C.F.R. 46.205); and,
  - Prohibitions regarding fetal tissue (42 U.S.C. 289g-2, 45 C.F.R. 46.206).

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt and thorough response to each of these requests. We ask for a response by the date of October 12, 2021.



## APPENDIX C

[The following article was first published on Jan 4, 2022, in the Washington Free Beacon (www.freebeacon.com) where Collin Anderson is a staff writer. It is reprinted here with the website's permission.]

### **How a Liberal Foundation Bankrolled Abortion Pills in the Name of Population Control**

*Collin Anderson*

Roughly a decade before his death in 1996, tech titan David Packard issued a controversial directive to his children. Skyrocketing birth rates, the Hewlett-Packard co-founder wrote, could one day cause “utter chaos for humanity.” As a result, Packard asserted, his multibillion-dollar foundation must hold one priority above all others: population control.

Packard—a Republican who served as deputy secretary of defense under President Richard Nixon—did not see eye to eye politically with his three daughters, one of whom succeeded him as chair of his foundation following his death. His liberal offspring took the billionaire's desire to curb population growth as a jumping off point. While the foundation is unbound legally to honor Packard's policy wishes, they found a way to embrace his views and pursue their own liberal activism—through expanded abortion access, a mission toward which they devoted nearly \$350 million in the last five years alone, according to a review of the foundation's financial disclosures.

Those expenditures have allowed Packard's successors to deliver significant victories in furthering the late billionaire's anti-natalist agenda. Take, for example, the Food and Drug Administration's December decision to ease the process for getting a chemical abortion pill. The Packard Foundation played a central role in the deregulation fight, funneling millions to liberal advocacy groups that spearheaded the legal and political push to remove the FDA's abortion pill barriers. The foundation meanwhile invested millions of dollars into GenBioPro, the only company that makes a generic form of the abortion drug.

In 2017, the Packard Foundation gave \$1,000,000 to the Reproductive Freedom Project, a division of the American Civil Liberties Union that works to “ensure that all in our society have access to” abortion. That year, Reproductive Freedom Project attorneys sued the FDA to challenge its abortion pill restrictions, which required patients to receive abortion pills in person from specialty clinics.

Months later, in 2018, the foundation invested \$500,000 in GenBioPro. The Nevada-based private company makes the generic form of mifepristone, an oral drug used to cause an abortion. It invested an additional \$1.5 million in GenBioPro in 2019, the same year the company's generic abortion pill received FDA approval and hit the market.

At the same time, the foundation spent millions of dollars on political campaigns promoting increased access to abortion pills. From 2017 to 2021, it awarded liberal dark money network New Venture Fund more than \$3.7 million in “reproductive health” grants. The Packard Foundation specifically earmarked \$1 million of the contribution to All Above All, a New Venture Fund project that has advocated abortion pill deregulation. New Venture Fund also manages Abortion on Our Own Terms, another spinoff group that is dedicated to expanding abortion pill access and envisions a future where abortion pills are available over the counter nationwide.

The Packard Foundation's vast abortion pill advocacy network began paying dividends more recently, thanks in part to both the coronavirus pandemic and President Joe Biden's election.

After receiving an additional \$700,000 from the foundation, the ACLU in May 2020 again sued the FDA over the agency's abortion pill restrictions. Unlike its 2017 suit—which challenged the regulations on a permanent basis—the ACLU's 2020 legal challenge sought to allow patients to receive abortion pills via mail on an emergency basis during the pandemic.

New Venture Fund seemingly bolstered that effort by launching a “maternal health” congressional lobbying campaign, which ran from January to June of 2021. In February, 11 House Democrats sent a letter asking the FDA to lift its “medically unnecessary in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone” due to the pandemic. After the agency obliged in April, more than 70 House Democrats followed up with an August resolution demanding the FDA allow abortion by mail on a permanent basis. In December, those lawmakers got their wish—the FDA announced it would permanently lift its restrictions on abortion pills, allowing them to be prescribed virtually and delivered via mail.

GenBioPro, which did not return a request for comment on its relationship with the Packard Foundation, will undoubtedly benefit from the decision. In the FDA's online explainer of its new abortion pill regulations, the agency noted that GenBioPro's generic pill “can be safely substituted for” the brand-name version of the drug, Mifeprex. The Packard Foundation also helped bring Mifeprex to market, providing its manufacturer, Danco Laboratories, with a \$14 million loan in 1996.

Asked about its GenBioPro investment and whether it stands to make a profit if the company increases in value, the Packard Foundation pointed the *Washington Free Beacon* to an online statement detailing its investment program. That statement acknowledges the foundation “take[s] risks in pursuit of impact while seeking overall return of principal” so it “can recycle capital to maximize impacts over the long-term.”

The foundation declined to comment on its GenBioPro investment specifically. Neither New Venture Fund nor the ACLU returned requests for comment.

The Packard Foundation's grantees celebrated the FDA's abortion pill deregulation decision. ACLU senior legislative counsel Georgeanne Usova called the move “a major step forward that will enable many more patients to get this safe and time-sensitive medication as soon as they are ready.” Abortion pill advocates were quick

to point out, however, that their fight is far from over.

“While the action today will go a long way for people seeking care, other barriers remain and must be lifted once and for all,” All Above All co-president Destiny Lopez said in a statement. “The FDA must permanently lift all restrictions on medication abortion and states with politically motivated bans on medication abortion, particularly via telehealth, must reverse these policies so people can get care in a way that makes sense for them.”

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## APPENDIX D

[*Lauretta Brown is the Washington DC-based staff writer for the National Catholic Register, where this story was published on Jan. 22, 2022. Lauretta Brown: © 2022 EWTN News, Inc. Reprinted with permission from the National Catholic Register—www.ncregister.com.*]

### **March for Life 2022: Pro-Life Families Witness to Dignity of Unborn and Love for Vulnerable Mothers**

*Lauretta Brown*

WASHINGTON—During last Friday’s March for Life, participating families talked about why the issue is so important.

“I just want it to end,” Christina Bogdan said of abortion with visible emotion Friday as she and her 11 kids joined the many other families in the nation’s capital participating in the March for Life 2022, protesting the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion.

Like many of the families in the crowd, Bogdan has a personal connection to the issue.

“They wanted us to abort him 20 years ago,” she told the *Register*, gesturing to her son Andrew, who has Down syndrome. Bogdan has been joining in the March for Life for 35 years, bringing her children to witness for life. They traveled from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to participate this year.

The Supreme Court’s possible willingness to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Health* case has given her a lot of hope. “I never thought I’d see this day, that we’re so close, despite everything that’s against us; we’re so close, and look at how many young people there are,” she said.

She added that the many young people at the march are a source of renewed energy: “The young people are aware the truth is there.” She said parents “need to speak up” to their kids about the importance of the pro-life issue.

Charbel Rizk, a Maronite Catholic from Raleigh, North Carolina, made the six-hour journey to march this year with his five children. “It’s the most fundamental issue—right—it’s life,” he told the *Register*. “Everybody seems to be fighting for justice, and so this is the most fundamental. If you don’t have the opportunity to live, what else matters?”

Regarding the possibility of *Roe* being overturned, he said that he was more concerned with reaching hearts and minds on the issue. “I’m more focused on really getting people to care enough. Laws always reflect the majority of society, so when the majority in this country realizes that abortion is wrong ... the Supreme Court is no longer relevant anymore.”

#### **Supporting Mothers and Babies**

Mary Rose Somarriba traveled from Cleveland to march alongside her husband,

Gabriel, and two of her four children. Her 9-year-old daughter, Inez, marched beside her with a handmade sign that read: “A baby is a person in and out of the womb.” Her son, Vinny, was balanced on his father’s shoulders, carrying a sign that said: “Babies Need Love.”

“I’ve come over the years to stand up for unborn lives because the babies can’t speak for themselves,” Somarriba said.

“I did think it’s a big year to march and show our support.”

Regarding the *Dobbs* case, she told the *Register*, “I don’t know if *Roe* will be overturned or not, but, either way, our country needs a lot of healing, and women need a lot of support in facing their unplanned pregnancies.” That’s because pushing abortion “really pushes women into corners more than many people realize and makes them think that they can’t have children and careers and success or other passions in life,” she said. These women “deserve compassion and support, and they deserve a chance at reaching their goals and living beautiful lives.”

“Everyone deserves a chance at life, and the babies in the womb, if they could speak, they would want a chance at life—just like everyone else,” Somarriba said. “So we need to find a way to not tear down one in the effort to provide for another—we need to find a better way forward.”

Katherine Michael, a medical student from Virginia, spoke with the *Register* near a “Love Them Both” sign outside the Supreme Court at the end of the march. She was holding her two young daughters, who she had while in medical school, and said she wanted “to be an example that it’s possible and that it’s actually fighting the negativity of the society, allowing us to embrace our fertility and motherhood, while still contributing and doing other things really well.”

“I’ve been coming out for a few years now, and we really like standing with other people and letting them know that pro-life people exist and that we’re here, whether abortion is legal or illegal, to support and protect women and children,” she said.

Michael, who is specializing in maternal and child health, said that while she is a Christian now, she first became pro-life from a secular background.

“It was just my moral compass that brought me against abortion initially,” she said, “realizing that it wasn’t serving women the way I had thought it was, when I was younger. And then I came to Jesus and realized even more that there’s so much more to life and so much value in life, that it’s important.”

### **Being People of Life**

The Sisters of Life, whose order is devoted to the pro-life cause and provides resources to vulnerable abortion-minded women, participated in the march this year with a lot of prayer surrounding the case before the Supreme Court.

“We’re praying for the end of *Roe*. We’re praying for the *Dobbs* case to be successful,” Sister Marie Veritas, who traveled from the Bronx, told the *Register*. She added that “no matter what happens with legislation, we still need to be people of life and for life and really helping women, to give them a lot of the support they need—not just to choose life, but to flourish.”

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“To come today, in this time of solidarity and to stand for life, to stand for love with our brothers and sisters here, that’s one of the most powerful witnesses we can give to the world, especially this year on the possibility of *Roe* falling,” she said of their participation in the march. “What every person here wants to let women know is that we want to cherish you in your motherhood and support you in that.”

Sister Faith Marie told the *Register* that while this year “there’s a poignancy with *Dobbs* in the air,” regardless of the outcome of the case, “we love coming to actually show the dignity of every human person is worthwhile.”



*The Somarribas at the March for Life*



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“Although pro-life leaders from the Vatican to the Southern Baptist Convention have approvingly spotlighted how Pfizer’s and Moderna’s vaccines avoid abortion-derived cells in the manufacturing process, the testing issue is still sensitive for millions of individual consciences. By testing their revolutionary technology with an unethical, antiquated cell line, these biotech companies created a hurdle for public health authorities and dinged their own bottom lines.”

—Margaret Brady, “Ethical Vaccines Are Becoming a Reality”