



From Pastor's Desk Defending Life in a Pro-Choice World

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

This year is the fortieth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. With this in mind, let's discuss our duty as Christian citizens to defend the life of all, even the life of the littlest ones.

It's easy to talk about your pro-life convictions among other Christians. We share a common source of authority—the Bible. But what happens when you talk to friends or teachers who aren't Christian, who don't see the Bible as a source of authority at all? In other words, how do we defend life in a pro-choice world?

Clarify the Issue

The heart of the abortion debate is often overlooked: Are the unborn human? Are the unborn full-fledged, living members of the human race who are just at the earliest stage of development? Or are they just blobs of cells? If the unborn aren't human,

no justification for abortion is necessary. If the unborn are human, no justification for abortion is adequate.

Build a case for life

We meet pro-choice advocates on common ground, using a common source of authority: science. Here biology, specifically embryology (the study of embryos), are our friends. First, the Law of Biogenesis states that (1) life only comes from life, and (2) kinds produce like kinds. In other words, a human being outside of the womb must come from a living human being inside the womb. It doesn't just magically turn into a living human being at the point of birth. Human beings reproduce human beings.

Second, those who study embryos have made it crystal clear: "The beginning of a single human life is from a biological point of view a simple and

straightforward matter—the beginning is conception.” Science has spoken. The unborn are fully human beings. The only thing that separates the unborn from the born are their size, how developed they are, their environment (inside or outside the womb), and how dependent they are. But these differences hardly make a case for the right to take a human life, even those who are not yet born.

Answer Objections

After building a case on science, we answer any objections that our friends and teachers might have. Don't be dismissive, but take them seriously. We are to give the same respect to them that we expect them to give to us. And answer honestly. If you don't know an answer, say so, and promise that you'll look into it. Your goal is not to convince them right there. It would be great if they did, but that's not likely. Make your goal instead to challenge them just enough to get them to rethink their current position, especially this question: What are the unborn?

Common Objections

Q: Are you against a woman's rights to choose what they do with their bodies?

A: We shouldn't take away a woman's right to choose what they do with their bodies. We shouldn't get in the middle of a woman and her doctor. We totally agree. IF the unborn aren't human. If the unborn aren't human, then no justification is needed. But if the unborn ARE human, no justification is adequate.

Q: But what about the poor who can't afford to have another child?

A: Would it be okay for a large family to decide to get rid of its two-year old child to help make the family budget less tight? Of course not! Why? Because the child is a human being. And that's the point. What are the unborn? If they aren't human, no justification for abortion is necessary. But if they ARE human, no justification is adequate.

Q: No one should be forced to raise a child with physical or mental disabilities.

A: Would it be right to take the life of a two-year boy with Downs Syndrome? Of course not! Why?

Because he's a human being. That's the issue. What are the unborn? If the unborn aren't human beings, no justification for abortion is needed. If the unborn ARE human beings, no justification is sufficient.

Q: But isn't a fetus just a bunch of cells?

A: Yes, just like you or me. Just like the fetus, we are a bunch of cells that are all working together to support our ongoing health and maturation as a whole. The only difference between us and the fetus is in how big we are, how developed we are, where we live, and how dependent we are. These are poor reasons to end the life of any human being even those not born yet.

Q: But what about in the case of rape?

A: Rape is profoundly evil. Victims of rape deserve our best spiritual, physical, financial, and psychological care. But there's more to it than that. Would it be okay for mother to end the life of her two-year old daughter who was born due to a rape because she was reminded of the event? Of course not! Why? Because that little girl is a human being. And that is the heart of the issue. Are the unborn, regardless of how they were conceived, human beings? If they aren't, no justification for abortion is needed. But if they are, none is acceptable.

From the President Joy Over Life

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

Joy over life verily leaps off the pages of Holy Writ. It bubbles from the mouth of Jesus. It animates His every action. There is--in addition to specific, pervasive and persuasive texts (Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6; Ex. 21:22-25)--an ethic of the inherent value of every human life conceived, no matter its form or malformity. Simply put, for Jesus there is no "life unworthy of life." In fact, Christ turns the human value system completely on its head (1 Cor. 1:25, 27) to the great delight and joy of the "least."

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped [literally "skipped"] in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy (Luke 1:41-44).

What a remarkable transaction! John the Baptizer "skips for joy" in utero over the greeting of "the mother of my Lord." Two unborns (the Lord Himself and His great forerunner) are each acknowledged as such in the womb! The word (used by Luke more than any other New Testament writer) expresses what is an "outburst of joy." Luke is indeed the "evangelist of joy" and more. He's the "evangelist of the joy over life!"

A peasant, Elizabeth, rejoiced over the unborn Lord (Luke 1:42). The unlikely mother of the Lord, Mary, sang her Magnificat: "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior . . . He has exalted those of humble estate" (Luke 1:46ff.). Elizabeth's friends and family rejoiced with her over her newborn (Luke 1:58). Zechariah's tongue was loosed in praise after the



mute wrote, "His name is John. . . . He spoke, blessing God . . . for he has visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:63). Praise and blessing are the sounds that joy makes!

At the birth of Christ, the angel announced to the shepherds: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10). The whole heavenly host rejoiced over the One who came to bring peace between God and man (Luke 2:14). Feeble, old Simeon beheld this very life--in his own arms, in the flesh and rejoiced! "Mine eyes have seen your salvation . . . Let your servant depart in peace" (Luke 2:29). Peace is joy at rest.

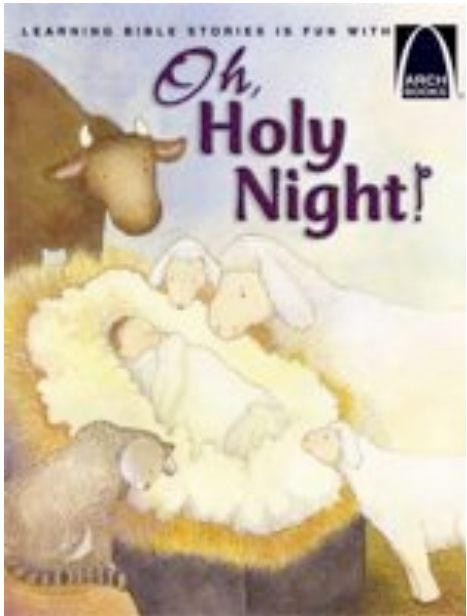


2:26, 46; 5:41; 8:8, 39; 11:23; 12:14; 13:52). "In all things I [Paul] have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Each and every one of these references is a testament etched in stone bearing witness: there is no "life unworthy of living!"

[Excerpted from *A Little Book on Joy* (CPH, 2011), pages 91–95.]

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There is much, much more in Luke's Gospel alone, including all the rejoicing over the prodigal, the lost coin, the great banquet . . . and finally, the greatest affirmation of human life in time for eternity, the resurrection of Jesus. After the Lord's ascension, "They worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God" (Luke 24:52-53). Acts continues the exuberant theme of joy over life (Acts



The Book of the Month
Oh, Holy Night!

Arch Books tell popular Bible stories through fun-to-read rhymes and bright illustrations. This well-loved series captures the attention of children, telling scripturally sound stories that are enjoyable and easy to remember. Each Arch Book presents a complete Bible story in a fun-to-read way.

This Arch Book tells the story of Christmas as told in Luke 2:1-20.

Excerpt

A promised night, a holy night
The tiny Savior came
In a lowly manger bed,
Born man and God-the same.

Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

6 Jan Harold & Irene Wattjes – East
 Donna & Gunnar Campbell - West
 13 Jan Jim Dyer – East
 Joan Vukelich – West
 20 Jan Laverl Byers – East
 Ruth Sims – West
 27 Jan Tim & Teri Pollock – East
 Donna & Gunnar Campbell – West
 3 Feb Jim Dyer – East
 Joan Vukelich – West
 10 Feb Laverl Byers – East
 Ruth Sims – West
 17 Feb Tim & Teri Pollock – East
 Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
 24 Feb Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
 Jim Dyer – West

Coffee Committee

Jan Janet Stumeier
 Feb Harold & Irene Wattjes

Altar Committee

6 Jan Carol Munson
 13 Jan Carol Munson
 20 Jan Carol Munson
 27 Jan Judy Legg
 3 Feb Judy Legg
 10 Feb Judy Legg
 13 Feb Lauren Braaten
 17 Feb Lauren Braaten
 24 Feb Lauren Braaten
 27 Feb Donna Campbell

Elder On Duty – Communion

6 Jan Jack Appleby
 13 Jan Jack Appleby
 20 Jan Steve Hilgendorf
 27 Jan Steve Hilgendorf
 3 Feb Steve Hilgendorf
 10 Feb Josh Whitson
 13 Feb Jack Appleby
 17 Feb Geof Danielson
 24 Feb Geof Danielson

ATTENDANCE			OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
12/2	20	83	\$3,215.00	\$20.00	\$0.00
12/9	34	97	\$1,921.50	\$5.00	\$10.00
12/16	30	80	\$3,100.00	\$0.00	\$55.00
12/23	25	78	\$2,195.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
12/24–12/25	141	47	\$2,637.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
12/30	23	79	\$2,733.75	\$100.00	\$0.00
12/31	24	0	\$230.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Subtotal	297	464	\$16,032.25	\$125.00	\$265.00
Total	761		\$16,032.25	\$125.00	\$265.00

January 2013 Church Calendar

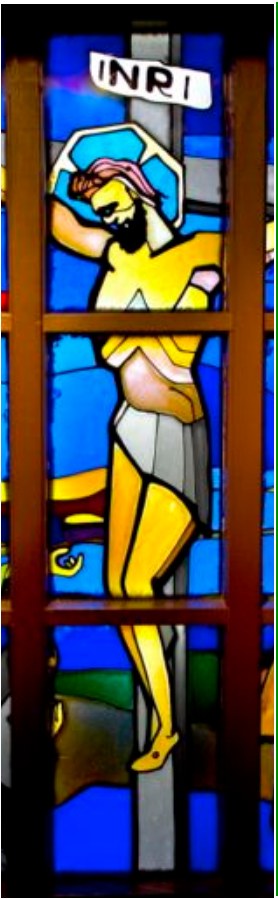
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February 2013 Church Calendar

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<p>17</p> <p>Catechism Recitation Day</p>	<p>7:30 AM Maths 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM Elders Meeting Alberta Dallas</p>	<p>7:30 AM Maths 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Lauren & Coburn Speers Mary Jane Jones</p>	<p>7:30 AM Maths Hayden Ely Mark Ashwell</p>	<p>7:30 AM Maths 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Jerome & Alice Johnson</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Darla Gardner Richard Sommer Tim Probst Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>16</p> <p>5:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>																																																																																																															
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Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.