



# Notes For Life

Volume 5 Issue 1 Spring 2009

*We shall bear witness to the value of life, and against abortion, in every act of mercy.*

– Rev. Matthew C. Harrison,  
Executive Director, LCMS World  
Relief and Human Care

## In this issue:

- “Activism” for Life . . . . . p. 1**
- Advocates for Life . . . . . p. 2**
- Assisted Suicide: Coming  
to a State Near You? . . . . . p. 5**
- In the News . . . . . p. 7**
- Did You Know? . . . . . p. 9**
- How to Subscribe. . . . . p. 9**

## “Activism” for Life



By Maggie Karner  
*Director, Life and Health Ministries, LCMS World Relief and  
Human Care*

Almost every day, someone usually ends up asking my opinion on how the new administration in Washington, D.C., might affect our pro-life outreach in the future. Truth be told, this preoccupied me for quite a while after the election because I felt my work would be profoundly altered by these national changes. I understand and am committed to the important place for civic action and our responsibility to speak for the vulnerable in the secular kingdom of the left. To that end, our LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee members (under the auspices of LCMS World Relief and Human Care) met after this year’s March for Life in Washington D.C., to begin work on our immediate goal: helping the Synod strengthen the church’s pro-life witness in the public square. This is important and visible work in the kingdom of the left.

However, I have never placed my faith in legislative change, but instead I prefer to opt for a lasting change of heart instead. For that simple reason I find it profound that our Synod’s pro-life outreach has found its proper home under the umbrella of LCMS WR-HC. For in this context, support for the sanctity of human life serves as a foundation for everything we do in our diakonic (mercy) outreach. Life issues span a continuum from conception until natural death. There is a lot of “life” in-between those bookends that need God’s grace and mercy.

My personal mantra is that abortion is a complex issue and if we’re going to be pro-life, we had better be “pro-solutions” in every area of the life continuum. Whether we are sending doctors into the Nairobi slums to de-worm children, finding ways for mothers widowed by AIDS to earn a living, finding housing for single mothers in Brooklyn, or supporting a pregnancy center in Russia; these are all ways to proclaim loud and clear that all life is sacred and precious in the eyes of our Savior. Rev. Matthew Harrison, executive director of WR-HC put it this way, “We shall bear witness to the value of life, and against abortion, in every act of mercy.”

That’s why I don’t think our pro-life mission has changed at all, despite change in Washington. Our work must still be one baby, one mother, one frightened and needy soul at a time. That is what pro-life work is. That is what Christian mercy does.

People often categorize “pro-life activists” as those who are praying in front of clinics or working in the crisis pregnancy center. If a person has the inclination and calling to do that, great. But simply living out our vocation with a pro-life mindset is powerful. Being a good parent is pro-life. Telling other people that they are valued and loved by God is pro-life. Our baptismal identity as children bathed in Christ’s redeeming grace and compassion is our springboard to a genuine “activism.” This is



activism that receives a transfusion of strength and courage in the Word and Sacraments to apply compassion wherever needed.

I pray for all of you, dear readers, as you continue your personal activism for mercy and life in Christ.

*Maggie Karner*

## Advocates for Life

Life issues aren't strictly the dominion of LCMS Life Ministries; preserving the sanctity of human life at all stages is fundamental to all of the work at LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Meet directors at LCMS WR-HC who believe that living a pro-life vocation is part of who we are as Christians.

### Darin Storkson, Regional Director of Asia



As the director of WR-HC's Asian ministries, Darin Storkson's work is geographical rather than topical. He's currently managing 26 projects in 10 countries, including everything from disaster relief work to supporting orphanages and schools to microfinancing projects (small loans for impoverished people to start small businesses).

Storkson spends a fair amount of time traveling to oversee projects in process. "Asia is a big place with a huge number of people. Just China and India alone have more than 1 billion people each. There is also a huge amount of poverty, and our partners require a lot of oversight as we help them grow their capacity with which to accomplish things."

"Given the breadth of what we do out here, it's hard to say specifically what we do in the 'life' arena, but the very nature of the diaconic works of mercy that we do are all geared toward the respect and preservation of the sanctity of life," Storkson says. "That's why we bother with relief work, life-saving work like the pregnancy center we're working to establish, and support for medical teams. In a sense, everything we do is supportive of life."

### Barb Below, Director of Social Ministry Organizations



As director of social ministry organizations, Below manages the process of social service organizations seeking and maintaining RSO (Recognized Service Organization) status through WR-HC, acts as a conduit helping organizations connect their mission and work with those in need, and finds ways in which WR-HC can support their work.

"Most of the RSOs I work with deal with life issues somewhere on the spectrum between prenatal care through end-of-life hospice care. I recently visited an organization that provides a continuum of care to elderly residents. I happened to notice a simple exchange between a staff person and resident that gave me confidence that the agency has built a culture and program that gives elderly residents dignity, respect, and most importantly, value," Below says. "A nurse put her arm around an elderly woman and whispered something in her ear that brought a smile to the woman's face. That simple gesture demonstrated that the employee valued and honored the life of this woman."

### Living the pro-life vocation

Even without a job title like "Director of Life Ministries," you can live the pro-life vocation, too. Our directors share their best advice.

#### Barb Below:

Be intentional about supporting social ministry organizations that value and support life. Find out what they need, and then work with your congregation to help. Serve on their board of directors and challenge the organization to support pro-life efforts and to demonstrate in their services and programs that life is valuable and to be cherished.

#### Rev. Carlos Hernandez:

Go back to your Baptism daily. As Luther says, we daily drown the old Adam and a new person arises, a new life comes up every day. Life is precious, beginning with your own.

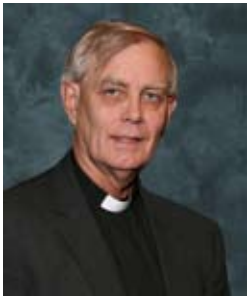
#### Al Dowbnia:

Don't be afraid to speak the truth in love. When given the opportunity, be ready to explain why you believe in the sanctity of human life. Don't shrink from the opportunity to share your beliefs. These opportunities happen all the time, in the workplace, school, and in almost any aspect of day-to-day life – so be prepared.

In the Dominican Republic, Below works with children with disabilities who receive no care, medical treatment, or even the basic human dignities we're accustomed to in America. "Many of the disabled children live tied to their beds, in cages, and are overmedicated and undernourished. Some of the children are not even given a name," Below says. "Our work will hopefully bring these children out of their horrible conditions and into a new life. We do this because we as a church believe that even children with disabilities are valuable children of God."

Below points out that Lutheran social ministry agencies serve a broad spectrum of humanity, and that circumstances are not always neatly packaged. "As Lutherans we can serve in difficult circumstances, because we have the wonderful message of Christ, and Him crucified and resurrected, to give resurrection power to people on this side of heaven."

#### **Rev. Glenn Merritt, Director of Disaster Response**



When disaster strikes, Rev. Glenn Merritt is usually there to help oversee a response from WR-HC. In the past 18 months, he's responded to more than 100 disasters of various types, from tornadoes to hurricanes to fires and floods. Merritt goes onsite with local congregational leaders, helps assess the needs, and provides grants based on how the church, community, and district is able to help those affected. He also provides training for disaster preparedness and pastoral care and counseling to those affected by a disaster.

"Responding to people in the midst of disaster and tragedy accentuates the importance of the sanctity of life," Merritt says. "When people experience a disaster, despair, or desolation clouds their thinking. They forget that life in and of itself is sanctified by Christ. We come in and minister to them body and soul. Our task is to see that their physical and spiritual needs are met, by reminding them that our God is a God of compassion and mercy."

After massive flooding in Iowa, Merritt met with a family whose home was completely destroyed. They had no insurance on the home or their personal belongings, and both husband and wife had lost their jobs because their employers had also been flooded out and decided not to reopen. They had two adult special-needs children still living at home, plus a young child they had recently adopted. "We were able to provide them with a substantial grant and transitional housing for up to 180 days," Merritt says. "This is an example of how we see pro-life as more than just the beginning and the end."

#### **Rev. Carlos Hernandez, Director of Districts and Congregations**



As director of Districts and Congregations, Rev. Hernandez helps congregations assess and respond to the human care needs of their communities. He also works with pastors and retired pastors in financial crisis, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and older adult ministries at the parish level.

One of Hernandez's biggest projects is to help congregations who feel a call to serve in their community. He trains them to engage their communities and neighborhoods by talking to agencies and walking door-to-door to find out what the critical needs are, then developing programs in response to those needs. Hernandez says in some areas, the needs are truly life and death. At one small congregation in inner-city St. Louis where Hernandez walked door-to-door with church leaders, a family said there's too much tension between the police and the community. "It was me and another elderly man talking to these young guys about kids getting

### **Living the pro-life vocation, continued**

#### **Maggie Karner:**

People think of "pro-life activists" as those who are praying in front of clinics or working in the crisis pregnancy center, and if a person has the time and inclination and calling to do that, great. But just living out your vocation with a pro-life mindset is enough. Being a good parent is pro-life. Telling other people that they are valued and loved by God is pro life.

#### **Rev. Glenn Merritt:**

Because our lives are sanctified through Christ, we can live daily as advocates of life for those around us.

#### **Marie Kienker:**

Cultivate relationships with your neighbor. Everyone has the opportunity to slow down, listen, and form those relationships that are so critical in our world today. When people have this rapport with you, they will ask for your advice. Just by being a friend and valuing a person, you can preserve life and support them. You do things you think are small, but you do them every day.

#### **Deaconess Grace Rao:**

Simply remember that in our own vocations we are His instruments.



into drugs and getting shot,” Hernandez says. “The church can make a difference — education is key, and to do that in a Christian setting is even more of an asset to reversing some of the life and death issues in these communities.”

Hernandez estimates that, while walking door to door, at least one out of every 10 people responds to their queries about how to help the neighborhood by asking questions about the church. “They basically invite you to share the Gospel by asking about what you believe or saying they’ve been looking for a church. My centerpiece initiative is ‘Planting Gospel seeds while serving human needs,’” Hernandez says.

### Maggie Karner, Director of Life and Health Ministries

As director of Life and Health Ministries, Maggie Karner has moved Life Ministries away from a strictly educational arm of the Synod to an organization involved in practical, hands-on work, taking on such projects as establishing pregnancy resource centers in Asia and Russia. In addition, Life Ministries is the synodical voice for life, responsible for educational resources, representing the LCMS at pro-life groups in Washington, D.C., and leading the Synod as a voice in the public square. In Health Ministries, Karner manages the LCMS Parish Nurse Network and Mercy Medical Teams, who volunteer medical care abroad in underserved areas of the world.

“I find there’s a lot of dovetailing between the two jobs, because life is from conception to natural death. Health Ministries takes our theology of life and puts it into practice,” Karner says.

For example, Sherry Prowatzke, M.D., an OB-GYN in Waukesha, Wis., and a member of the LCMS Life Committee, recently traveled with Karner to Madagascar. She worked nonstop to care for women experiencing difficult pregnancies. Many women came from tiny villages, walking or being carried for hours to get care. “Many of these women would have lost their children if they weren’t properly cared for,” Karner says. “It was great to have a doctor with high-level experience to offer this kind of care, which moves the intent of ‘pro-life’ from the heart and brain into practical hands.”

On the Life Ministries front, Karner mentions the women served through Life Ministries’ partners in Russia who run women’s centers. “In a culture like Russia, it’s so commonplace to have an abortion, but many of these women know innately that they don’t want to destroy their child,” Karner says. “There’s so much pressure to eliminate the problem, because it’s what everyone does, and because there are so many handicaps for women who do want to keep a child. When someone steps up and says, ‘We’ll help you,’ they’re so thankful to have someone else value the life of their child.”

### Marie Kienker, Executive Director of Lutheran Housing Support



As the executive director of Lutheran Housing Support, Marie Kienker works with congregations to revitalize their communities by providing technical support and critical funding to restore affordable housing in blighted, dying communities. “We tend to work in blighted urban neighborhoods and rural towns, where sometimes churches don’t even have the resources to pay a full-time pastor. There will be an entire neighborhood in disrepair, but it has a diamond of theology and the freeing Gospel in the church,” Kienker says. “The

church usually doesn’t have resources, so we help them get federal and state grants, whatever we can do.”

Kienker says the ministry is without doubt one in support of life. “One of our visuals is a mom holding her child. We provide more than just a house, but a home. This mom needs support in her vocation, giving her a safe place to raise her child.”

### Living a Pro-Life Vocation: Resources in print and on the Web

- Read more about World Relief and Human Care’s ministries online: [www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/ministries/](http://www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/ministries/).
- LCMS Life Ministries Life Library. More than 200 articles on topics including two kingdoms, vocation, and Christian ethics are at your fingertips via our online Life Library. Many articles are lay-friendly, while theological papers offer more in-depth study. All are free and easily downloaded. Visit [www.lcms.org/lifelibrary](http://www.lcms.org/lifelibrary).
- Lutherans for Life. [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)
- Concordia Bioethics Institute [www.concordiabioethics.org](http://www.concordiabioethics.org)
- The Vatican has just released a 32-page [document](#) called *Dignitas Personae* on the ethics of in vitro fertilization techniques, stem cell research, genetic engineering, and related subjects. Rev. Dr. Gene Edward Veith, director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, a Lutheran vocational research institute, encourages all Christians who struggle with difficult life issues to read it.
- *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* by Rev. Dr. Gene Edward Veith explores how God works through us in our daily vocations.
- *Luther on Vocation* by Gustaf Wingren is a classic historical study of Luther’s view on vocation.

LHS also works on social, pro-life programs in these neighborhoods. In Kansas City, Mo., Kienker's team designed an after-school program for kids that involved Lutheran volunteers and others to give kids a structured activity after school. "On Wednesdays the school districts let students out for half a day and the pregnancy rates soared — the kids had nothing to do," Kienker says. In St. Louis, LHS organized a grant for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, providing 37 mentors for kids. "We realize that developing a relationship with kids when they're 13 helps bring the Gospel to them in times of crisis. If they were to get pregnant, we can help them explore options besides abortion. We're lucky to be able to work in the public square to get dollars to our church for these kinds of projects."

### Al Dowbnia, Director of Communication Services



As director of communication services, Dowbnia oversees a variety of communications elements like the Web site, print publications, electronic newsletters (such as *Notes for Life*), audio and video production, donor information, and special projects.

Communications at WR-HC reflects the work the directors are engaged in, from pastoral care for folks in the disaster zone, to deaconesses helping people in need, to writers giving voice to human "life" needs across the globe. "Communicating the Christian message of 'life' is fundamental to everything we do here, whether it's specifically about the sanctity of life or the more general aspects of serving individuals' life needs domestically and internationally," Dowbnia says.

"As Christians we know God is love, and we understand He is the author of life. The Gospel demonstrates God's love for us, and thus the Gospel becomes the motivation for our respect of life," Dowbnia says. "We can demonstrate that respect by protecting and honoring every aspect of life, from embryo to the final, natural stages of our earthly existence. In my work, I've seen wonderful demonstrations of this respect and love in every response we've had to disasters and human care issues, beautifully carried out by my fellow directors and staff."

### Deaconess Grace Rao, Mercy District Contact



As the Mercy District Contact, Deaconess Grace Rao helps spread the word about deaconess ministry to districts and congregations and coordinates programs for WR-HC. She's also the managing editor of *Mercy Works*, a bi-annual publication.

Through the financial support and encouragement of LCMS WR-HC, Siberia's first Russian deaconess was educated at Concordia Theological Seminary and did her internship in the U.S. learning about crisis pregnancy center management. Gloria Vinogradova returned to her native Russia to lead her church in opening the area's first pregnancy resource center.

"Deaconesses have various roles to serve by reaching out in mercy to those who suffer and are in need. Life ministry is one of the paradigms we cannot ignore," Rao says. "God's mercy in Christ Jesus is the source of my vocation. The office of the deaconess embodies the church's corporate life of mercy in the world, as the care and compassion of Christ are extended to the hurting and hopeless."

Those who are hurting and hopeless include many people dealing directly with life issues, Rao says. "The needs of God's people in this world are beyond measure. Mercy is something I cannot give away, but can only share; it is something in which I wrap another needy soul. Honoring and preserving the sanctity of life is of utmost importance in today's world."

## Assisted Suicide: Coming to a State Near You?

By Rita L. Marker

Imagine the following:

*You are standing in line at your local pharmacy, waiting to pick up a prescription for antibiotics, when you overhear the pharmacist telling another person, "Take all of this with a light snack and alcohol to cause death."*

*A family member has been diagnosed with cancer. Her doctor has prescribed medication he believes will both slow down the cancer's growth and make her more comfortable. However, when she goes to have the prescription filled, she is told her health care plan doesn't cover that prescription, but it will pay for assisted suicide.*

Impossible?

No.

In fact, assisted-suicide prescriptions are part of the [Oregon experience](#), and Oregon's [suicidal approach to health care](#) includes payment for assisted suicide while refusing to authorize coverage for treatments that patients need and want. Soon, this will take place in [Washington State](#) as well. Both states have transformed physician-assisted suicide into a medical treatment.

## Background

Oregon's assisted-suicide law has been in effect for more than 10 years. When that law first passed, its supporters thought other states would rapidly follow suit. But they didn't. Proposals for Oregon-style laws were made in more than 20 other states. Each and every one [failed](#). Those who favor assisted suicide developed a plan called "Oregon plus One," a strategy to make one more state an assisted-suicide haven.

Led by Compassion & Choices (the former Hemlock Society) and the Portland, Ore.-based Death with Dignity National Center, they decided to select one state to target for a concerted effort, believing that if they could score a victory in just one more state, that would break the log jam and open the way to further progress toward their goal of death on demand.

They [selected](#) Washington State.

Beginning in 2006, the groups went into full gear. First, they poured money into focus groups to hone their message. They hired top-notch political consulting firms. They selected former Washington Governor Booth Gardner as their spokesperson. By early 2008, when they began gathering signatures to put the measure – called the "Washington Death with Dignity Act" – on the November ballot, they had carefully laid the groundwork for what turned out to be one of the most expensive initiative campaigns in Washington State history. Assisted-suicide advocacy groups from across the country and from as far away as Australia provided most of the [funding](#) that resulted in a war chest of close to \$5 million.

Their efforts paid off.

Oregon is no longer the only state that considers assisted suicide to be a medical treatment. Washington State became the "plus one." Within less than a month, a [Montana](#) district court judge, citing Oregon's law and Washington's vote, ruled that Montana citizens have the right to assisted suicide under the state constitution's right to privacy and right to dignity provisions. (The Montana [decision](#) is being appealed.)

Without question, Oregon-style assisted-suicide measures will appear in legislatures across the country and voters in states that permit ballot initiatives will see "death with dignity" proposals in the very near future.

## Expansion inevitable

Oregon's and Washington's laws and the Montana decision provide that assisted suicide is available to terminally ill competent adults who must self-administer the lethal drugs. At the same time, personal autonomy and ending suffering are the two prime reasons given for permitting assisted suicide. But those reasons, in and of themselves, require that the practice not be limited to self-administration by a terminally ill, competent adult.

Consider the following:

If personal autonomy is the basis for permitting assisted suicide, why would a person only have personal autonomy if he has been diagnosed (or misdiagnosed) with a terminal condition?

If assisted suicide is proclaimed by the force of law to be a good solution to the problem of human suffering, isn't it both unreasonable and cruel to limit it to the dying? Once we have changed assisted suicide from a bad thing to be prevented to, at least in some cases, a good thing to be facilitated, isn't it easy to see how the early

## Contact Your Elected Officials

For the name of your U.S. representative or senator, contact your local elections officer or call the **Federal Citizen Information National Contact Center** at (800) 333-4636.

For the most recent information about elected national officials, log on to these Web sites or call the following Capitol switchboard numbers:

### Senators

(202) 224-3121

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

### Representatives

(202) 225-3121

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

### To contact the White House

Comments (202) 456-1111

Switchboard (202) 456-1414

Fax (202) 456-2461

**TTY/TDD phone numbers for hearing impaired only:**

Comments (202) 456-6213

Visitor's office (202) 456-2121

### President Barack Obama

[president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

### Vice President Joe Biden

[vice.president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:vice.president@whitehouse.gov)

Updates on pertinent legislative activities and public policy are available by subscribing to MercyNotes, another e-newsletter from LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Subscribe online by registering at [www.lcms.org/enews](http://www.lcms.org/enews). Select Mercy Notes from among the "LCMS World Relief and Human Care" newsletters.

“safeguards” could be seen as obstacles to be surmounted?

On what basis could one deny a good and compassionate medical treatment to those who are suffering from chronic conditions? Or from children? Or from those who never have been or are no longer competent?

If a lethal dose of drugs is considered a good medical treatment, isn't the requirement of “self-administration” both illogical and overly restrictive? What about the person who is physically unable to self-administer the lethal dose? After all, is there any other medical treatment that a physician can prescribe for, but not administer to, a patient?

Contrary to what some may believe, talk of expanding assisted suicide is not a notion that originates with its opponents. It is actually the leaders of the right to die movement who have discussed that goal, often openly. For example, in his 1991 book *Final Exit*, Derek Humphry, cofounder of the Hemlock Society, explained that restrictive laws would eventually encompass people with disabilities. Humphry wrote, “When we have statutes on the books permitting lawful physician aid-in-dying for the terminally ill, I believe that along with this reform there will come a more tolerant attitude to the other exceptional cases.”

In a December 2007 [cover story](#), the *New York Times Magazine* explained that former Washington Governor Booth Gardner, who headed up the campaign that legalized assisted suicide in that state, acknowledged that he envisioned his campaign as part of a larger agenda. “Gardner’s campaign is a compromise; he sees it as a first step. If he can sway Washington to embrace a restrictive law, then other states will follow. And gradually, he says, the nation’s resistance will subside, the culture will shift and laws with more latitude will be passed ...”

In the 2008 book, *Giving Death a Helping Hand*, Margaret Battin (an advisory board member of the Death with Dignity National Center) wrote that she doesn’t believe assisted suicide should be “safe, legal and rare.” Rather, she said it should be available, “as a preemptively prudent, significant, culminative experience.” In the same book, Battin spoke approvingly of a situation in which two young men were planning a fishing trip several months in advance. One of the young men made certain that the trip would not conflict with his father’s scheduled death.

### What can be done?

Do we want to have a society where assisted suicide is common, where it is considered normal? Do we want to go from a situation where, initially, people are horrified by assisted suicide, but then tolerate it and, finally, accept it? Do we want to see a time in the not too distant future when people feel guilty for *not* choosing assisted suicide?

That is what we’re leaving for our children and grandchildren if we don’t prevent its spread.

So in case you are wondering about what you can do, I would ask you to become aware of this.



Many people in Washington, including those who voted for the “death with dignity” initiative, didn’t have a clue about its implications. All of us need to help others know what legalized assisted suicide really means. That is the only way that we can prevent its spread.

We must work to prevent assisted suicide from becoming the American way of death because not only our lives but the lives of our children and our grandchildren depend on it.

Rita L. Marker is an attorney and executive director of the [International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide](#).

## In the News

### Lutheran Forum on “Planned Non-Parenthood”

“Will Adam Go AWOL? Will Eve?” This is the motto of a unique forum on science and theology at Concordia Seminary’s Werner Auditorium on March 26 at 7 p.m. Prepared by the Center for Lutheran Theology and Public Life (CLTPL) and co-sponsored by LCMS World Relief and Human Care this event will be the second in a series of conferences called “Male and Female He Created Them (Genesis 1:27).”

“Last year we looked at the role of women in God’s order of creation,” said CLTPL Director Dr. Uwe Siemon-Netto. “This year, Dr. Robert W. Weise, a professor of practical theology, and a cellular biologist, will discuss the theological, social, and scientific ramifications of procreation technologies without recourse to sex. The issue here is the probable emergence of a new post-human species bred in test tubes without the involvement of parents. Hence the conference’s provocative subtitle, ‘Forum on Planned Non-Parenthood.’”

“Already 422 fertility clinics in the U.S. are involved in the ongoing industry of removing Adam and Eve—and their sexual activity — from alarming techniques of procreation,” Dr. Weise said. “The goal is to construct ‘human tools’ shaping human embryonic commodities to be bought and sold on the open market through surrogate wombs, donor sperm, and egg brokers.”



"In a world that has moved from procreation to reproduction to cloning, Adam and Eve will be Absent Without Leave," Weise warned. "The result will be an article of trade that can be fashioned to meet desired specifications, such as heterosexuality or homosexuality. If an embryo produced by the fertility industry does not meet expectations it will simply be deemed 'defective' and ultimately destroyed."

This being the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth, Weise will alert the audience to a "Natural Darwinian" quest to enhance society by melting the human species with the computer. This development is called "Transhumanism." "Eventually the union of human and computer will usher in a post-human (and subsequently singular) individual who will be more computer than human being. This raises the question of whether he can then still be considered a 'creation in the image of God.'"

"Given the complexity of this topic CLTPL decided to engage Dr. Weise as the only speaker for this evening, and then give the audience sufficient time to ask questions and discuss this issue with him," said Dr. Siemon-Netto.

The CLTPL is an affiliate of Concordia Seminary. Its mission is to project Lutheran thought into the secular realm. Dr. Weise holds The Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis Chair in Pastoral Ministry and the Life Sciences, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

Registration by March 19 is required. Admission is free. For more information or to register, contact the Office of Continuing Education and Parish Services, Concordia Seminary, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105; 314-505-7486; [ce@csl.edu](mailto:ce@csl.edu); or visit the Concordia Seminary Web site at [www.csl.edu](http://www.csl.edu).

### AUL Denounces Montana Court's Assisted Suicide Decision, Urges Appeal

Americans United for Life condemns a Montana trial court's ruling that persons in the state have a right to die by assisted suicide, and urges the state to appeal the decision to the Montana State Supreme Court. Dr. Charmaine Yoest, AUL President and CEO, stated, "This ruling begins the descent toward euthanasia and even a duty to die in Montana. We have already seen cases in Oregon where patients are denied state insurance coverage for life-saving treatments and are told instead the state will pay for their suicides. Assisting someone in committing suicide is never a compassionate choice." Full story: <http://blog.aul.org/2008/12/08/press-release-aul-denounces-montana-court%E2%80%99s-assisted-suicide-decision-urges-appeal/>.

### The Radical Effects of The Freedom of Choice Act

Advocates on both sides of the abortion battle acknowledge The Freedom of Choice Act, introduced by Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), is a powerful bill that would overturn abortion laws across the nation. States' conscience protection regulations for health care providers, bans on partial-birth abortions, parental involvement rights, and many other laws governing abortion would be eliminated. Full story: [www.frc.org/papers/focus-on-foca](http://www.frc.org/papers/focus-on-foca). For a statement from LCMS Life Ministries on the dangerous piece of legislation, visit here: [www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/ministries/life/Freedom\\_of\\_Choice\\_Act\\_20090201.pdf](http://www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/ministries/life/Freedom_of_Choice_Act_20090201.pdf)

### President Bush's Pro-Life Legacy

LifeNews.com — In an Oval Office interview with pro-life syndicated columnist Cal Thomas for the Town Hall Web site, President George Bush defended his pro-life philosophy during his two terms as president. "I have, as you know, been a strong

## Will Adam Go AWOL, Will Eve? A Lutheran Forum on "Planned Non-Parenthood"



The absence of Adam and Eve in the formation of a new post-human species will be the troubling topic of a forum on science and theology at:

Concordia Seminary  
Werner Auditorium  
801 Seminary Place  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
March 26, 7 p.m.

Admission is free. Register by March 19 at 314-505-7486 or [ce@csl.edu](mailto:ce@csl.edu).



Presenter: Rev. Dr. Robert W. Weise, professor of practical theology and a cellular biologist



Sponsored by Center for Lutheran Theology and Public Life and LCMS World Relief and Human Care



defender of the culture of life. And I believe that's an important part of our party's future," Bush said. According to the pro-abortion research group Alan Guttmacher Institute, a former Planned Parenthood affiliate, abortions were at historic lows under Bush. Full story: [www.lifenews.com/nat4711.html](http://www.lifenews.com/nat4711.html).

## Did You Know? Asia Update

In January 2008, LCMS Life Ministries kicked off an ambitious campaign to raise funds for a pregnancy resource center to be developed in conjunction with our church partners in Asia. Our goal is to provide positive life choices and real hope for women around the globe. With prenatal services, job training, economic counseling, and support through caring pregnancy centers, mothers will be able to choose life for their children and find comfort in the loving guidance of our Asian brothers and sisters in the faith.

Our partner churches in Asia have received invitations to submit project development grant proposals to LCMS World Relief and Human Care for evaluation and an eventual targeted site choice. This February, LCMS Life and Health Ministries director Maggie Karner traveled to Indonesia to lead a Mercy Medical Team for clinic work in Jakarta and Banda Aceh. While there, she spoke with church partners about their interest in beginning this type of ministry outreach in Indonesia.

We are three-fourths of the way toward our project campaign goal. Please pray for us as we move forward with this life-affirming mission. You can join us in this campaign to raise needed funds for international services for women and children in strategically targeted areas of Asia by logging on to [www.lcms.org/jazz4life](http://www.lcms.org/jazz4life).

## Coming up: The New Administration

Barack Obama is still in his first 100 days of the presidency, the benchmark for evaluating a president's early success, when new presidents push critical and pet issues through Congress while still on their honeymoon. How has President Obama performed on life issues? We'll analyze and dissect the administration's policy in the spring *Notes for Life*. Don't miss this important issue! Know a friend who isn't a *Notes for Life* subscriber yet? See "How to subscribe" on this page and tell your friends how to get this great, FREE, pro-life resource directly to their in-box!

### Support LCMS Life Ministries

LCMS Life Ministries is an outreach of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. All programs of LCMS Life Ministries are funded by donations from caring people like you. No dollars come from the Missouri Synod's unrestricted budget.

Your generous gift to the international and domestic work of LCMS Life Ministries will make a tremendous difference and help to uphold the message of Christ's mercy to all in body and soul. [Click here](#) to give.

### How to Subscribe

To subscribe to Notes for Life, register online at [www.lcms.org/enews](http://www.lcms.org/enews). Select **Notes for Life** from among the "LCMS World Relief and Human Care" newsletters.

*Notes for Life* is published quarterly by:

LCMS World Relief and Human Care  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, MO 63122

*Notes for Life* may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

- Executive Director:  
Rev. Matthew Harrison
- Life Director:  
Maggie Karner
- Editor:  
Gretchen Roberts
- Designer:  
Chrissy Thomas

