

## News & Notes

Sunday, March 18, 2007

**Remember in Prayer:** Alton Lee Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Matthew Butterfield; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Gwynn Curtis; Carolyn Jordan; Bill Kelly; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Jamie Spence; Kevin Steele; Ruby Tapp; Wayne Tapp; Ron Tega; Calvin Ursery; Rosemary Wilson; Roger Winstead;

**Sympathy** is extended to the families of Garna Shaver and David White.

**Pantry item** for the month of March is trash bags.

Ashland events: Today: Singing at Briarcrest Extended Care at 4:15 PM; the teenagers will have a devotional this evening following services in the dining hall.

**Area events:** March 18-21: The Chapman congregation will have a gospel meeting with William Woodson; March 23: The church of Christ at Southwind will host their third annual gospel singing.

### Sermon in Preview:

AM: To Whom Do You Compare? (Luke 18:9-14)

PM: 1Corinthians: The Contribution (16)

### For the Record (March 11, 2007):

Attendance: 71    Contribution: \$1255.00    Budget: \$1332.00

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#### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

#### Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street



## Who Has the Right to Live?

Brad T. Bromling

There is much about Western civilization that boggles the mind and insults rational thought. So many things seem upside-down, backward, and just plain confusing. The issue of who (or what) has the right to live is a typical example of the moral dilemmas that perplex man. Some people risk life and limb to plead the cause of plant and animal species on the brink of extinction, while the majority of the world sits by idly as millions of children are aborted each year. Such sticky conundrums make mankind appear as silly as the dog that runs himself to exhaustion chasing his own tail!

**IMPORTANT ISSUES.** There can be no doubt that the destruction of Brazilian rain forests will have far-reaching effects upon our future. If the ozone layer is depleted by our carelessness, the planet certainly will be less accommodating for future generations. The loss of animal species diminishes the beauty of our planet, changes in incalculable ways the balance of life, and interrupts the proper functioning of the food chains in which these animals play their roles. Their value to scientific study also is important. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the very species we are eradicating may be the ones that will provide answers to the perplexing medical questions nagging at modern man. Ecological/environmental issues are genuine concerns that should not be ignored.

**PRIORITIES.** These issues, however, must be kept in the proper perspective. God created planet Earth "to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18), and placed all of its varied life forms under man's command (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:6-8). Man is the pinnacle of creation. To place him on the same level as an exotic species of snail or shellfish is absurd. The proper relationship between man and Earth is that of a

caring steward tending and preserving his God-given home — not of a competing species in a vast ecosystem of equally important species.

Sadly, this perspective often is lost, as is evident in the abortion controversy. In order to preserve the bald eagle, stiff penalties are levied against those who kill them. Because of the lucrative nature of the ivory trade, species of elephants have been hunted practically to extinction. Hence, harsh punishment awaits those who are found guilty of killing these animals. These are not misplaced concerns; such animals should be protected. But what about the unborn children who are being slain by the multi-million-dollar abortion industry? Have they no right to live? Should we engender more emotion for diminishing animal species than for the unborn of our own species?

**SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS.** In 1776, representatives of the original United States signed the historic “Declaration of Independence.” These 56 men — doctors, lawyers, farmers, preachers, soldiers, merchants, iron workers, and printers — unanimously affirmed: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Upon these sentiments, a constitution was written and a nation was built. What has changed? How could we have moved so far — from believing that the right to life is an “unalienable” endowment from God, to believing that it is only a privilege of the strong, or those who can speak for themselves?

**RIGHTS?** The question often is raised: “Does not a woman have the right to decide what she does with her own body?” Yes, but the baby that grows within her is not her body. Truly, the eggs are her own and she has the right to withhold them from, or contribute them to, the conception of a new life. Once conception occurs, however, a new person’s life begins. The humane thing for the woman to do is to protect and nurture that child. The Christian thing for her to do is love the child as she loves herself (Mark 12:31). Jesus’ injunction that we should do to others as we would have them do to us should soften our desire to demand our “rights” (Matthew 7:12). Surely these little ones also have the right to live.

To argue against the rights of the unborn, a distinction is made between “humanness” and “personhood.” Accordingly, all “persons” have rights, whereas this is not true of all “humans.” Joseph Fletcher, a spokesman for this modern approach toward life has said:

Humans without some minimum of intelligence or mental capacity are not persons, no matter how many of their organs are active, no matter how spontaneous their living processes are. If the cerebrum is gone...they are only objects, not subjects — they are its, not thous (1979, p. 135, emp. In orig.).

According to this view, the unborn are not “persons,” and therefore have no rights. By the same reasoning, the mentally retarded do not have the right to live either.

**BIBLICAL VIEW OF LIFE.** Within the Bible, however, we find a much different view of human life. Man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), which refers to his spiritual being — not his physical body (see: John 4:24; Luke 24:39). Nowhere does the Bible exclude the mentally undeveloped (or ill) from the class of those made in God’s image. In none of God’s prohibitions against murder (e.g., Genesis 6:9; Exodus 20:13; 1 John 3:15) is there an exception for the mentally deficient. All human life is sacred — at every level of development.

The unborn are not portrayed as nonpersons in the Scriptures. In fact, there is no biblical distinction between born and preborn children. In reference to John the Baptist (who still was three months from birth), the Bible says: “The babe leaped in [his mother’s] womb for joy” when she heard the voice of Mary (Luke 1:44). The Greek word here translated babe (brephos) also is applied equally to children who have entered the world already (see Luke 2:12; 18:15; 1 Peter 2:2, et al.) God’s concern for people extends to the womb (Psalm 139). This was understood by some of God’s great prophets, who claimed that they were called before birth (Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 49:1-5).

**CONCLUSION.** Should we save the rain forests, whales, eagles, and elephants? Indeed we should. But, in our passion to preserve the Earth, let us not forget to save the very ones for whom this world was created!