

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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Milestone – 4,000 Dead Five years in Iraq / One Day in USA

As this newsletter was going to press, the news media reported the 4,000th American soldier killed in the five years of the Iraq War. And while we as a nation mourn for these men and women, let us also remember the victims in another war currently being fought in our nation and throughout the world – the war on the unborn. Nearly 4,000 pre-born babies die each and every DAY by abortion in our nation alone. At our mall table we hand out a little card that shows war dead from all wars this nation has fought, and the majority of the card is filled with crosses for the war on the unborn.

The casualties of the war on the unborn will not be buried with honors. In fact most won't receive a funeral at all, but will be incinerated as "medical waste."

They will likely never be given a name, unless the mother, as a healing of the grief at the death of her child, attends a post-abortion healing retreat like Rachael's Vineyard (<http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>)

Every day more babies die to abortion in our nation than in the entire five years we have been fighting for freedom in Iraq. Our nation is founded on the "inalienable rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Without Life, no other right matters.

In the upcoming Presidential campaign the war in Iraq and the 4,000 dead will be a central issue. Let us also remember the 4,000 babies who die each day to abortion, and challenge the candidates on what they intend to do to end the abortion war. This is a critical issue that requires an answer from every candidate.



Word Games

By Nancy Valko

We return to our ongoing occasional reminder of the care and use of words in our pro-life efforts.

Blastocyst or Preembryo vs. Embryo

Creative semantics is particularly obvious in the debate over government funding of embryonic stem cell research. While the term *embryo* does not evoke quite the same emotions as the term *baby*, *embryo* at least does recognize a unique human entity in the eyes of probably most people. The terms *blastocyst* or *preembryo*, however, connote more of an unformed mass of cells.

Ironically, the term *preembryo* (also sometimes called *proembryo*) was originally created "with the development of *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) to describe egg cells (ova) that have been fertilized but not yet implanted into a uterus"¹ The problem with calling IVF embryos by the term *embryo* became clear when couples started custody battles over their own frozen embryos. Since the Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) had redefined the beginning of life from actual conception to implantation of the *fertilized egg* (*embryo*) back in the 1960s, this left the poor embryo in a virtual no man's land, according to some ethicists. Renaming the embryo a *preembryo* or *blastocyst* for the first 14 days after conception or until implantation in the uterus gave both embryonic stem cell research and IVF supporters a mechanism for drawing an arbitrary ethical line on the scale of human personhood. According to this theory, the *blastocyst* or *preembryo* could then be denied even the minimal ethical respect given to embryos.

Of course, these terms also serve to confuse the average person about the reality of the newly conceived human being, which, unfortunately, is a tremendous political bonus to both the embryonic stem cell research and IVF supporters.

Artificial Nutrition and Hydration vs. Food and Water

Back in 1994 I had a chance to speak personally with the now-deceased Dr. Ron Cranford at a pediatrics conference in St. Louis. Dr. Cranford is the infamous neurologist used in such high profile “right to die” cases such as Nancy Cruzan’s and Terri Schiavo’s.

Dr. Cranford had just finished one of his presentations about withdrawing food and water from so-called “vegetative state” patients, and he particularly emphasized the term “artificial nutrition and hydration.”

I asked him to first explain how water was artificial and then to comment on tube feedings using regular, pureed food. He stammered a bit for a while but ultimately admitted that it was a bit misleading to describe food and water supplied through a feeding tube as “artificial.” Then, he went to talk to the media and, of course, once again used the phrase “artificial nutrition and hydration.”

I’ve spoken to groups many times about this issue and I often hear from people who, in their words, don’t want to be “artificially kept alive.” But I have yet to hear anyone willing to give up their safe, processed water or other food items. Only the argument itself is actually *artificial*.

Donation after Cardiac Death vs. Non-Heartbeating Organ Donation

When I first started investigating non-heartbeating organ donation (NHBD) in the early 1990s, I was appalled. This new rationale for taking organs from people who were not even considered “brain dead” really seemed to be an unholy marriage between the “right to die” groups promoting withdrawal of treatment decisions and the aggressive push for more organs to transplant.

But I found that the term “non-heartbeating organ donation” even confused many ethicists when I first told them about my concerns. In the late 1990s, I attended a conference on NHBD at St. Louis University’s Center for Health Care Ethics and the majority of the doctors and nurses seemed to be confused and/or skeptical about the whole idea. But proponents continued to quietly work to increase NHBD’s acceptance as an ethical way to increase the number of organs harvested.

But I noticed that when NHBD became better known and organ-harvesting protocols were being rewritten, there was a major language change. NHBD became donation after cardiac death (DCD) and the few news articles calling attention to this sea change in organ donation ethics started mentioning patients who were “imminently dying.” Apparently, people were already conditioned to the term *brain death* and thus some kind of phrase using *death* was needed and donation after cardiac death seemed to work better than NHBD. And the term “imminently dying” seemed immensely more reassuring than the description of the potential NHBD donor by a Wisconsin organ procurement organization as “a severely neurologically *injured* patient who is *expected* to expire within 120 minutes following extubation.”² (emphasis added)

Physician-assisted Death vs. Physician-assisted Suicide

More than 10 years ago, Oregon became the first — and so far the only — state to implement a law legalizing physician-assisted suicide. Over the years, several other states came close to enacting similar laws but despite initial polling showing widespread support, those proposed measures ultimately went down in defeat. Euthanasia supporters were baffled.

According to Wesley Smith and Rita Marker in their March 2007 *National Review Online* article,³ the group Compassion and Choices (formerly known as The Hemlock Society) commissioned research and polling that showed the term *suicide* gave people a negative impression.

In an effort to get the word *suicide* out, Compassion and Choices sent a formal request to The Oregon Department of Human Services suggesting such name changes as “aid-in-dying,” “directed dying”, or “assisted dying”. (Future litigation to affect the change was apparently implied.)

Oregon blinked and on October 16, state officials announced that the new term would be “physician-assisted death.”

However, some objected to the phrase because of its ambiguity and Oregon finally settled on using the cumbersome and ultimately silly phrase “persons who use the Oregon Death with Dignity Act.” But euthanasia supporters were thrilled and Compassion and Choices’ director of legal affairs, Kathryn Tucker, was quoted as saying “This will be a sea change because how you speak of things strongly influences how you think of them.”

The old cliché “The pen is mightier than the sword” is proving true in the realms of political spin and death rhetoric. It is up to all of us to educate ourselves and use our own words and pens to publicize the truth and expose the deceptive language utilized by the culture of death.

Notes

1 “Proembryo” from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Online at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proembryo>

2 “Development of the University of Wisconsin Donation After Cardiac Death Evaluation Tool”, *Progress in Transplantation*, Dec. 2003 by Lewis, Jonathan, Peltier, James, Nelson, Helen, Snyder, William, et al. Online at: http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4117/is_200312/ai_n9306068

3 “When Killing Yourself Isn’t Suicide — Word games may win the day in the battle of physician-assisted suicide” By Rita L. Marker and Wesley J. Smith. *National Review Online*, March 5, 2007. online at: <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NGYwNWM4Y2EwODRjOTViZjI4ZTJjZTQ0M2Q4NWRhZjI%20=>

Nancy Valko, a registered nurse from St. Louis, is president of Missouri Nurses for Life, a spokesperson for the National Association of Pro-Life Nurses and a Voices contributing editor.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(For the latest information, see www.calendarforlife.org)

Empowering Pro-Life Student Groups Students for Life Conference April 19 - Stanford University

"California Students for Life will be holding their Seventh Annual Celebrate Life Conference. This year’s conference is entitled "Empowering Pro-Life Student Groups" on April 19, 2008 9AM-4PM Building 200 - Stanford University.

The purpose of the Celebrate Life Conference is to facilitate dialogue among students and community members, as well as to celebrate the splendor of every stage of human life.

Speakers, include Students for Life of America Executive Director Kristan Hawkins and Leadership Institutes's Steve Bierfeldt, who will emphasize the sacred, intrinsic value of human life and will provide resources for the rising leaders of the pro-life movement.

For further information and to register, go to: http://www.stanford.edu/group/ssfl/clc08_registration.html. Or visit California Students for Life website: www.castudentsforlife.org

The Mercy Seat Saturday, April 26, 2008 9AM - 4PM Supreme Courts across America *Will you join with thousands as we cry out in united prayer?*

Our justice system legalized abortion, and on April 26 –Saturday in the Passover Season - we will gather at those courts in prayer to cry out for mercy and apply the blood of Christ to the doorposts of our national guilt.

The event is free, and everyone is invited to attend in whatever way their schedule allows. Come for a part of it or the whole day! Groups will be gathering at every Supreme Court from 9 AM to 4 PM. Leaders and arrangements for each location are already in place.

For detailed information on your court please and to register
<http://www.bound4life.com/themercyseat>

Humanae Vitae: Cornerstone of a Culture of Life August 9th, St. Mary's College Moraga *A Conference Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Humanae Vitae*

The papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was published on July 25, 1968, provoking a dramatic response. Today, many Catholics know of the encyclical’s proscription against artificial contraception; very few are properly acquainted with Paul VI’s prophetic teaching, either in its necessity for any consistent defense of life or its positive celebration of married sexuality as elaborated in John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. Join the St. Anthony of Padua Institute and

the Diocese of Oakland for a conference that will present an explanation and defense of the encyclical, and address primacy of conscience, the Theology of the Body, “reproductive” technologies and women’s health, chastity, and coercive population control. The conference is scheduled for August 9th, at St. Mary's College in Moraga. Confirmed speakers include the Most Reverend Raymond L. Burke - Archbishop of St. Louis, Dr. Janet Smith, PhD, Fr. Brian Mullady, OP, and Dr. Mary Davenport, MD.

There will also be a pre-conference banquet on August 8th, at which Ralph McInerny, PhD, will speak.

For registration or for more information, please go to www.cornerstoneconference.org,

WHO IS CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE?

This is the newsletter of **California Right to Life Education Fund**, a 501-c-3 organization established to educate the public about pro-life issues. Donations to the EDUCATION FUND are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0343.

California Right to Life **Committee, Inc.** is a 501-c-4 organization providing information on legislative issues affecting the right to life, and pro-life political advocacy. **CRLC, Inc. is not permitted**, under IRS regulations, to offer a tax deduction for donations. \$24.99 annually is requested for a subscription to the CRLC legislative email updates list and can be sent to 1920 Monument Blvd #309, Concord, CA 94520.

Both are affiliates of American Life League, headed by Judie Brown, and share the same “no-exceptions, no excuses” beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the single-cell stage to natural death.