

# CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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## **IVF's Barren Wasteland**

By Judie Brown, American Life League

Every time the subject of human personhood is raised, somebody immediately argues that legal recognition of personhood would mean an end to in vitro fertilization (IVF). It is true that any procedure that has as a byproduct the killing of human beings prior to birth would be outlawed—and that includes IVF. But few want to admit this fact. Apparently it's unpopular to be truthful.

IVF is an unethical practice that not only causes the deaths of preborn babies in the earliest stages of their lives, but is also based on deception. IVF opponents like Thomas Hilgers, M.D. point out, that "IVF approaches the evaluation of treatment by skipping over the diseases...they don't look for root causes." And why should they? There is big money in IVF; it is an industry that is fundamentally committed not to helping couples resolve their infertility by seeking to understand the disease that may be causing it and treating that disease, but rather to tampering with the procreative process through artificial means.

Hilgers, who is a specialist in treating infertility, prefers to cure the problem so that couples can bear children naturally. His teaching staff, all experts in NaProTechnology (natural procreative technology), have trained physicians all across America and in other nations as well. NaProTechnology respects each and every human person.

Addressing this subject, Pope Benedict XVI recently said, "The pursuit of a diagnosis and of a therapy represents the most scientifically correct approach to the question of infertility, but also that which is most respectful of the integral humanity of the subjects involved. In fact, the union of the man and woman in that community of life that is matrimony constitutes the only dignified 'place' in which a new human being, which is always a gift, may be called into existence."

Why? Because mankind procreates, animals reproduce! Processes such as IVF reduce human procreation to an artificial mechanical function.

The intrinsic human rights inherent in every human individual can only be validated when every aspect of human personhood is explained and clarified. This includes accurately illustrating ethical differences in infertility treatments. When such subjects are avoided or are not addressed in ways that make the problematic nature of technologies like IVF clear, confusion persists. It is literally impossible for those who favor IVF to understand why their position is in error when those who know are unwilling to address the subject clearly and with compassion. Everyone has a right to hear all the facts all the time.

In the dearth of evidence damning IVF comes a story of a couple who went through numerous IVF cycles before finally achieving a successful pregnancy. When they wanted to have another baby, they went back to IVF. Yet this time, they were in for a surprise when the doctor told them they were expecting triplets! But, according to the expectant father, three was just too many and his wife insisted, despite his pleadings, on a "selective reduction"—which resulted in two of their three preborn children being killed prior to birth. He relates,

We were told, point-blank, by the doctor who would do the procedure that they would inject potassium chloride into the placenta to stop the hearts. We were told, point-blank, that it was painless. Even then, I knew I was being lied to, but given the choice presented, I agreed anyway. My mantra became "Save one, or save none."

Tragic? Of course it is. Avoidable? Yes, but not in a culture that places a premium on technological advancement while ignoring ethical, moral solutions to human problems like infertility.

Given the stakes in our quest for cultural recognition of intrinsic human rights for every human being from his biological beginning until his death, it would behoove each person engaged in this struggle to be clear, forthright, and consistent. Otherwise the scope of the barren wasteland will increase as the dehumanization of man escalates.

# Artificial Wombs, Not Just Science Fiction Anymore

*Remember the novel Brave New World by Aldous Huxley... well that was just fiction, right? Sadly fiction so often precedes reality.*

British scientists have developed an artificial womb in which they have grown mouse embryos. A Nottingham University team led by professor of tissue engineering, Kevin Shakesheff, has created a new device in the form of a soft polymer bowl which mimics the soft tissue of the mammalian uterus in which the embryo implants. Their research has been published in the journal Nature Communications.

This new method has allowed scientists to see critical aspects of embryonic development that have never been seen in this way before, for just long enough to observe in real time processes of growth during a crucial stage between the fourth and eighth days of development.

The experiments have a clear relevance to artificial reproduction in humans. "We hope this work will unlock further secrets which could improve medical treatments that require tissues to regenerate and also open up more opportunities to improve IVF," says Professor Shakesheff. "In the future we hope to develop more technologies which will allow developmental biologists to understand how our tissue forms."

*For full article see:  
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/03/120302101543.htm>*

## Simple, early blood test tells fetal health, may replace intrusive tests

By Cecelia Cody, Administrative Director

Recently I was sitting in my office when a reporter called asking for a statement on a blood test designed by Stanford biophysicist Stephen Quake that can detect Down syndrome and two other major genetic defects very early in a woman's pregnancy. A similar test is already available from the San Diego company Sequenom, and at least two other Bay Area companies plan to offer noninvasive prenatal genetic testing, so this is a quickly developing field. The simple \$1,200

blood test analyzes fetal DNA in a mother who is 10 weeks pregnant, proving information similar to more invasive tests like amniocentesis, which can't be done until later in the pregnancy.

However the test also has startling social implications -- heralding a not-distant future when many fetal traits, from deadly disease to hair color, are known promptly after conception "when abortion is safer and simpler." (*Safer for who we must ask?*).

The market for this testing is huge: 4.5 million U.S. births a year, of which an estimated 750,000 are "high risk," due to age or family history.

Currently tests only seek major abnormalities on three chromosomes: 13, 18 and 21. They can also tell whether the baby's gender. However within the next five years "it seems likely that a simple blood draw from the pregnant woman will be able to provide genetic results for a fetus relating not just to Down syndrome but cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, Tay-Sachs disease and a host of other diseases." According to Stanford University law professor Hank Greely, who studies the legal and ethical implications of emerging technologies.

Quake became interested in this approach in 2004 when he first became a father; he stumbled across a 1948 discovery about free-floating fetal DNA in maternal blood -- called "cell free DNA." But scientists in the 1940s could not measure the genetic material precisely enough to make a diagnosis.

The new test counts the millions of DNA molecules from both the mother and baby and can detect excessive genetic material that signals a birth defect.

So what was "our response" to this media reporter? I tried to explain that we would welcome the test if it is an avenue to give parents time to prepare for the birth of a special needs baby. As an example, parents could plan to deliver at a hospital having the special equipment, if the baby would need special neo-natal intensive care upon birth.

However if it's a search-and-destroy mission, where the baby is aborted, we would of course be against the testing, as life begins at fertilization.

**Do you know someone who might be considering abortion?**

**Make sure they get the facts first!**

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The reporter asked a follow-up question about how I felt about handicapped babies/people, to which I responded, "I don't think the world is a better place without these babies. It's getting close to Nazi eugenics, isn't it, to decide who lives? If a baby is shown to have a cleft palate, do they die?"

The follow-up question was more disturbing to me than the advance in technology of the tests. Are we sliding down the slippery slope, degenerating into a society that eliminates the "less than perfect?" And who decides what is "less than perfect?"

*Anyone interested in considering being a part of our media interview team, please contact this office for further information.*

## Every Life is Beautiful

As I write this article we are only a couple days away from the opening of another wonderful movie proclaiming the Gift of Life. On March 23rd, *October Baby*, a much anticipated pro-life film, will be released. And through *October Baby*, the fictional life of an abortion survivor will be hitting the big screen, and hopefully touching people's hearts.

Certainly, the message of *October Baby* is so much more than just about surviving an abortion. Viewers will find hope, joy, forgiveness, and love, and they will experience through the film the impact that abortion has on all of our lives, while also experiencing how love and forgiveness set us free.

*October Baby* is poised to be a life changer for so many people, and hopefully a game changer too, when it comes to abortion. Although the life of Hannah is fictional, the reality is that there are a number of people around the world who can relate to Hannah and what it's like to be an abortion survivor. There are a number of people who are the non-fictional equivalent of Hannah in *October Baby*; they are abortion survivors on the biggest screen of all: real life.

Through a website [www.theabortion survivors.com](http://www.theabortion survivors.com), you will find the most current information that exists about abortion survivors—whether it be statistics, news stories about survivors around the world, testimonies of individuals who wish to remain private

yet still have the opportunity to share their story with others, or through the testimony of survivors who are engaged in public ministry, this website is the most comprehensive, up to date site with abortion survivor information. Consider taking some time to read these stories, read these articles and educate yourself.

Did you know that based loosely on figures by the *Centers for Disease Control*, there are an estimated 44,000 abortion survivors in the United States alone? (visit <http://realchoice.blogspot.com/2011/10/why-not-ask-people-who-really-know.html> for more information on this data).

Yet abortion providers and supporters routinely attempt to discredit and dismiss these stories on the premise that they "can't be real," the people telling them "must be lying." What these individuals fail to read through or acknowledge is that a number of survivors featured on the website, have the medical records that document the abortions meant to end our lives. Others have the information as it was passed onto them by their family members, often their own mother who tried to end their life through an abortion. It is important that we educate ourselves, in order to educate others.



In addition to providing this information for the general public, this website is attempting to provide a network for survivors around the world. Whether survivors wish to share their story or not, Melissa Ohden, an abortion survivor

commented, "I have found that most survivors would simply like to know that they are not alone and would like to have the support of others who can understand what it's like to be in their shoes.

What can you do to educate others about abortion and abortion survivors? First of all, you can kick back with some popcorn (okay, more like a box of kleenex for this one) and catch *October Baby* at a theatre near you. Bring others with you to the movie who you think need to hear its message. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone who you think could benefit from seeing the movie!

Secondly, you can visit *The Abortion Survivor Network* ([www.theabortionsurvivors.com](http://www.theabortionsurvivors.com)) to learn more about survivors so that you can better educate others. These abortion survivors weren't "just a clump of tissue or a blob of cells," when they were unsuccessfully aborted, they were and are the very same people that they are today, just in a different developmental stage.

And lastly, if you, or someone you know is an abortion survivor who would like to be connected with other survivors, or would like to share their story, whether anonymously or publicly, have them visit the website.

### ***Calendar of Events***

*Visit [www.calendarforlife.org](http://www.calendarforlife.org) for the most up to date information on activities and events happening in your area. Have you visited the website lately? It is totally "remodeled" to be even more user friendly.*

**United for Life – 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner**  
Saturday April 21 5:30PM-9:00PM  
Irish Cultural Center – 2700 45<sup>th</sup> Ave San Francisco  
Guest Speaker: Ronald G. Connolly MD  
For further information contact Catherine Conway  
415-824-6541

### **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.

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