



## A Pro-Life Religious Outreach Newspaper

### Obama Alarms Pro-Lifers with “Punished with a baby” Remark

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama caused alarm among those who value human life when he remarked that he would not want his daughters to be “punished with a baby.”

During a campaign stop in Pennsylvania March 31, Obama, who has two daughters aged 9 and 6, said he believed in giving children information about contraception as well as teaching abstinence. “But if they make a mistake, I don’t want them punished with a baby,” the Democratic hopeful said.

“He would want his own grandchild aborted. It shows a really callous disregard for human life,” said David O’Steen, executive director of National Right to Life. “This is a window into his soul.”

Day Gardner, president of the National Black Pro-Life Union, said: “The consequences or circumstances a young woman may face with an

unplanned pregnancy need not include the cruel and vicious killing of her child.”

Obama has made clear that he intends to continue to support pro-abortion laws and policy as he has consistently in the U.S. Senate and in Illinois. As an Illinois state senator, Mr. Obama voted against a bill that would have guaranteed medical care for babies who survive abortions rather than letting them die.

Last year Obama told Planned Parenthood Federation, “Well, the first thing I’d do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act.” The FOCA bill would make legalized abortion the law of the land, overturning state pro-life laws nationwide. Douglas Johnson, the legislative director for National Right to Life, stressed that FOCA would be the most aggressively pro-abortion law ever adopted. The measure would go further than *Roe*, invalidating all of the major types of pro-life laws that have been upheld by the Supreme Court in the decades since *Roe*.



Barack Obama (LifeNews photo)

### Non-Embryonic Stem Cell Alternative IPS Cells Reduce Parkinson’s Symptoms in Rats

The breakthrough last fall in which two scientists reprogrammed adult stem cells to become pluripotent stem cells with the same capabilities as stem cells derived by killing embryos, has now enabled scientists to use such reprogrammed cells to treat Parkinson’s disease in rats. The scientists at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research were also able to use the induced pluripotent stem cells (IPS cells) to treat mice with a human sickle-cell anemia disease trait.

Marius Wernig, a lead researcher at Whitehead’s lab, reported in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, April 7, that IPS cells were differentiated into dopamine neurons to treat symptoms of Parkinson’s disease in rats. After the differentiated dopamine neurons were grafted into nine rat brains, the neurons extended into the surrounding brain, and subsequently Parkinson’s related behavior was markedly reduced in eight of the nine rats.

“This experiment shows that [non-embryonic] *in vitro* reprogrammed cells can in principle be used to treat Parkinson’s disease,” commented Whitehead Member Rudolf

Jaenisch. “It’s a proof of principle experiment that argues, yes, these cells may have the therapeutic promise that people ascribe to them.”

In December 2007, the Whitehead researchers treated mice with the sickle cell anemia trait by differentiating IPS cells into neural precursor cells and transplanting them into the brain cavities of the mice, where the cells differentiated into several subtypes of neural cells and functionally integrated into the brain.

“This is the first demonstration that reprogrammed cells can integrate into the neural system or positively affect neurogenerative disease,” Wernig stated.

Jaenisch and Wernig believe these results can eventually be applied to human patients, but explained that there are still problems, such as the use of retroviruses, that need to be overcome before IPS cells can be safely used with humans, and that the best methods need to be developed for successful transplant of neural precursor cells or dopamine neurons.

Wesley J. Smith, bioethics scholar, was excited by the news, commenting, “In one fell swoop, IPS cells rushed past therapeutic cloning without the cloning, since the cells were subject specific and tailor made from the cells of the animal.”

### Scientists Admit Lack of Success in Embryonic Stem Cell Research

The chairman of the UK National Stem Cell Network, Lord Patel, chancellor of Dundee University, told the *Scotsman* newspaper that embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) is simply not working and may never produce new treatments for disease.

Lord Patel admitted that the problems such as development of tumors or rejection by the immune system which stymie ESCR make this therapy too risky in human subjects.

Dr. Willy Lensch of Children’s Hospital in Boston also told the newspaper that it is possible ESCR may never be successful.

“I could not guarantee to anyone that this work will actually lead to improvements in disease as a definite.”

Bioethics leader, Wesley J. Smith, said these admissions are not surprising since the biotech industry has “wildly hyped” the potential of ESCR for cures. “In the process, they convinced Californians--now facing a \$16 billion budget deficit and tens of billions in bond debt--to borrow \$300 million every year to pay for human cloning and embryonic stem cell research.... Well, those cures have not even appeared as distant silhouettes on the horizon yet, and finally, a few in the media are beginning to notice,” Smith said.

### Fetal Pain Issue Gets Exposed in New York Times Magazine *Expert Doctor Says Fetus Feels Pain at 20 Weeks*

Neonatal Surgeon Kanwaljeet Anand has testified for several years that the unborn child feels pain by at least as early as 20 weeks, perhaps earlier. He came to this conclusion after observations during surgery on premature babies as young as 22 to 24 weeks of gestational age. Later evidence persuaded him that a fetus feels pain by 20 weeks in the womb, and possibly earlier.

Now New York Times Magazine writer Annie Murphy Paul has focused national interest on the topic in her article, "The First Ache," (2/10/08). While the article presents several viewpoints on the issue, the impartiality of the approach and the seriousness with which it is treated makes a significant contribution to the abortion debate and reflections on the humanity of the unborn child. Such awareness can be persuasive in motivating a mother to reconsider aborting her child. Following is a synopsis of some of the information in her article.

Dr. Anand had observed that pre term infants who underwent surgery returned with the physical evidence of serious stress, requiring him to spend hours "stabilizing their vital signs, increasing their oxygen supply and administering insulin to balance their blood sugar." He found out they received no anesthesia while undergoing major surgery because doctors thought that newborns' nervous systems were too undeveloped to experience pain. Dr. Anand decided to do clinical trials to observe the effects of anesthesia on newborns undergoing operations. The results showed that potent anesthesia reduced stress hormone reactions, unstable breathing, imbalanced blood sugar and other postoperative complications, as well as improving survival rates after heart operations. As a consequence of this work, it has now become a standard medical practice to provide pain relief to even the tiniest of infants, some of whom are only 22 weeks in gestational age.

The growth of fetal surgery has also focused medical practice on this issue. Dr. Nicholas Fisk, a fetal medicine specialist in Australia, used to assume the baby in the womb did not feel pain. But research was showing that fetuses as young as 18 weeks react to invasive procedures with a rise in stress hormonal levels and a movement of blood toward the brain. Fisk did his own research and found that fetuses that receive an analgesic have only half the amount of stress hormonal production and their blood flow remained normal.

Anesthesiologist Ray Paschall of Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville remembers observing in fetal surgery 10 years ago, when only minimal anesthesia was provided to the fetus, that a 25 week old fetus recoiled when feeling the scalpel, and a 23 week old flinched at the touch of an instrument. Thereafter, he increased the dose of anesthetic substantially, and says that in the 200 operations he has assisted with since then, not a single fetus has drawn back from the knife.

Some scientists have maintained that the cerebral cortex must be fully developed before the fetus can experience

pain, something that doesn't happen until the third trimester, perhaps at 29-30 weeks. But Dr. Anand points out that, while the cerebral cortex is not fully developed, a structure called the sub plate zone, a "kind of holding station for developing nerve cells," is operational at about 17 weeks and may be capable of processing pain signals. He believes that the immature physiology of the fetus may make it more sensitive to pain, not less, since "the body's mechanisms for inhibiting pain and making it more bearable do not become active until after birth."



The role of the cerebral cortex has been challenged by the observations of Swedish neuroscientist Bjorn Merker who has studied children born essentially without a cerebral cortex, a condition known as hydrancephaly. In 2004, he videotaped such children aged one to five who are "smiling, laughing, fussing, crying; they appear alert and aware of what is going on around them." These children seem to contradict assumptions scientists have made about where consciousness originates. "The tacit consensus concerning the cerebral cortex as the 'organ of consciousness' may have been reached prematurely, and may in fact be seriously in error," Merker reported in his study published in the journal *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.

A psychologist in Britain, Stuart Derbyshire, has attempted to deny fetal pain by making a distinction between the fetus being "biologically human" but not yet "psychologically human," a status not "bestowed" at conception but "earned with each connection made and word spoken." This is a dualistic philosophical theory that separates the human body from the human spirit and leaves very murky the line at which any human being might "achieve" humanity by someone else's standard. This is a common ploy of those who wish to manipulate other human beings by giving them a sub-human status. There was even a time, according to the article, when some doctors did not give black people anesthetics during surgery because they believed they were less than fully human.

Legislation at both the state and federal level has brought greater awareness to the issue of fetal pain. Five states have passed laws requiring that women seeking abortion be informed that a fetus can feel pain and that they may request anesthesia to be delivered directly to the unborn child. Many other states have introduced similar bills. The Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act has been introduced into Congress several times, but has not yet passed.

Another issue raised is whether pain experienced by an unborn child could have long term effects on their nervous system, perhaps leaving neurological or behavioral consequences. Anna Taddio, a pain specialist in Toronto, has undertaken some analysis of this question, although findings are tentative at this point.

## Bulletin Inserts

**July 6** – As we celebrate the document stating our belief in the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, a document titled *Faithful Citizenship*, issued by the U.S. Catholic bishops, reminds us that, “Calls to advance human rights are illusions if the right to life itself is subject to attack.” U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1999

**July 13** – Because of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, an unborn baby now has a legal status similar to what a black slave had under the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision. As with a black slave in the 19th century, the unborn baby now has no legal rights, and is the “property” of the owner (the mother). In fact, the unborn child is worse off since she can be killed, if the owner wishes, any time before birth. *Today’s Slave...The Unborn Child*, pamphlet by Cincinnati Right to Life

**July 20** – Jean Vanier, founder of the L’Arche communities for people with mental disabilities, calls our attention to what the mentally challenged have to offer “normal” people: “They have an incredible gift to bring to our world; they are a source of hope, peace, and perhaps salvation for our wounded world. If we are open to them, if we welcome them, they give us life and lead us to Jesus and the Good News. *Voices for the Unborn*, 3/97

**July 27** – Abortion and euthanasia represent direct attacks on innocent human life at a time when it is most vulnerable and defenseless, a time when innocent human beings should be able to expect the respect and protection of families and society. (Richard Doerflinger, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, USCCB)

**August 3** – “It is morally incoherent to say that abortion is wrong at some stages, and by some methods, but unacceptable at others. Human life is indivisible in its moral value. Either it is always and everywhere sacred, or it is always and everywhere disposable. There can be no middle ground.” (Father Frank Pavone, Priests for Life)

**August 10** – The argument that the government should not be involved in such a personal decision as abortion is fatally flawed. The government got “too involved” in abortion when it claimed (through the Supreme Court) to have the authority to deprive some human beings of their right to life. Also, when someone’s “choice” destroys someone else’s life, that choice is no longer merely a personal, private matter. (Father Frank Pavone)

**August 17** – Scripture makes clear the challenge before us in deciding our role in the right to life debate. Jesus says, “Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.” (Matthew 25:46) If we do nothing for the protection of the unborn, surely the least among us, then we do nothing for Jesus.” (Culture of Life Family Services Newsletter, 11/07)

**August 24** – While secular science continues to insist that embryonic stem cells are essential to medical progress, new discoveries of non-lethal stem cell sources continue to appear, the latest being a type of stem cell found in menstrual blood that can turn into nine different tissue types in the body. This discovery was made by Medistem Laboratories partly based in San Diego *San Diego Union-Tribune*, March, 2008, p.1 )

**August 31** – On the eve of the Pope’s visit to the United States, it was reported that he had experienced the horror of the Holocaust first hand in the death at Nazi hands of a cousin with Down Syndrome. A Holocaust expert has noted that the medical crimes of the Holocaust “started with the acceptance of the attitude basic to the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived.” (Dr. Leo Alexander, *NEJM* article, 1949)

## Suggested Prayers

**July 6** – For women facing an untimely pregnancy, that they bring their fears and concerns to Jesus who will share their burdens, we pray

**July 13** – That we may truly understand the meaning of God’s Word that commands us to “Choose Life,” we pray

**July 20** – For those who have been involved in abortion, that they may seek the forgiveness of a merciful God, we pray

**July 27** – That all political leaders may turn to God for wisdom and understanding in decisions affecting unborn human life, we pray

**August 3** – For all young people, that they may learn the true value of God’s gift of life, we pray

**August 10** – That the example of Mary, who not only accepted but welcomed her unexpected pregnancy, may be an example for all who consider abortion, we pray

**August 17** – That we may come to see Jesus in those who are different from us, especially those who struggle with mental or physical challenges, we pray

**August 24** – For those who counsel women, that they may offer adoption as a loving alternative to abortion, we pray

**August 31** – That the people of this nation may come to fully understand that abortion means a violent death for an unborn child, we pray

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## Choose Life...

May/June 2008

### More News



**Pope Benedict XVI**  
(LifeNews Photo)

## Pope Benedict Urges Mercy for Abortion's Wounded

At a Rome conference in early April discussing pastoral solutions for parents wounded by the abortion of their child, Pope Benedict XVI spoke to this painful experience with words of mercy and comfort.

While acknowledging the "grave sins" involved, the Holy Father said "The Church has the primary duty of approaching these persons with love and delicacy, with maternal care and attention, to announce the merciful nearness of God in Jesus Christ."

"He is in fact, as the Fathers teach, the true Good Samaritan, who has become our neighbor, who pours oil and wine on our wounds and who brings us to the inn, the Church, in which he

cares for us, entrusting us to her ministers and paying in person beforehand for our healing," Pope Benedict continued.

To women who bear the wound of abortion in their soul, the Holy Father exhorted, "Do not let yourselves be consumed by discouragement and do not abandon hope. Know how to understand rather, that which has happened and interpret it in its truth.

"If you have not already done so, open yourselves with humility and confidence to repentance: The Father of all mercy awaits you to offer you his forgiveness and his peace in the sacrament of Reconciliation. You can offer your child to the same Father and his mercy.

"Only in the attitude of merciful love can we draw near and bring succor and allow the victims to stand up and return to the journey of existence," he concluded.

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