



“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053

WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO LIVE?

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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!

“IF”

IF a man can be saved outside the church of Christ, then why did Christ die for the church (Acts 20:28)?

IF a man can be saved and not assemble with the church, then why are we commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25)?

IF a person can be saved without faith, then why did the writer of the book of Hebrews teach a person must have faith in order to please God (Hebrews 11:6)?

IF people can become Christians by simply believing, then why was King Agrippa not a Christian (Acts 26:27,28)?

IF a man can be saved without baptism, then why is it commanded (Acts 10:47,48)?

IF sprinkling and pouring constitute scriptural baptism, then

why did the apostle Paul say there is **ONE** baptism, and it is a **BURIAL** (Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 6:1-6; Colossians 2:11,12)?

IF the kingdom of Christ has not come, and is yet to be built, then why did the inspired apostle Paul say he was in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13)?

IF men have authority to make laws and set them in the church, then why did Christ say He has **ALL** authority (Matthew 28:18-20).

IF instrumental music is to be used in the worship, then why did Paul **OMIT** it and command us specifically to **SING** (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)?

IF there are many churches, then why does the Bible say there is only **ONE** (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18)?

Observations and Concerns

February 22, 2023

Welcome Visitors! You are our honored guests!

“For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.” (Romans 11:36).

Expression of Gratitude: Because physical life is difficult and short, be sure to thank God for the promise of eternal life.

The theme of the annual Oologah lectureship this year is “**Hold Fast**” and is scheduled for March 24-26. Men, there is a sign-up sheet for speakers in the foyer.

There are several sign up sheets in the foyer for various opportunities to serve.

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ **Dicie Jackson** is feeling better after having pneumonia.
- ▶ **Nelda Hudson** learned her heart is not pumping properly, causing episodes of defibrillation.
- ▶ **Ed Dindy**, father of Tia Swearingen, is scheduled to begin radiation treatments soon for his cancer.
- ▶ **Debbie Earl**, mother of Russ Earl, had foot surgery and will be in a boot for several months.

Extended Prayer List: **Joyce Cash** – ongoing health difficulties; **Dan & Marcella Dennis** – ongoing health issues; **Bill Dilks** – undergoing cancer treatments; **Sammy Gray** – continual health concerns; **Chuck Northrop** – blood disorder; **Vance & Darla Smith** – extended health problems; **Pat Taylor** – ongoing health issues; **LeAnna Shafer** – undergoing chemotherapy treatments; **Betty Jackson** – prolonged health issues; **Sam Orr** – extended health concerns; **Amanda Georgakus** – struggling with cancer.

The **Sonshiners** will not be meeting on Sunday evening, February 26, 2023.

Schedule of Services	Assignments		
	Wednesday, Feb. 22	Sunday, Feb. 26 AM	Sunday, Feb. 26 PM
	Announcements	Russ Earl	Paul Praschnik
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen
	Prayer	Paul Praschnik	Doyle Jackson
Bible Classes. . . 9:30 AM	Lord's Supper (speaker)	Russ Earl	
Worship 10:30 AM	Lord's Supper	Ross Swearingen	
Worship 5:00 PM	Lesson	Chris Nelson	Russ Earl
Wednesdays	Prayer / Door Attendant	Paul Praschnik	Chris Nelson
Bible Classes. . 7:00 PM			
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