

Bonded Together



#18

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“...that their hearts may be encouraged, knit together in love...” Colossians 2:2

Issue #18, July 2003

Time for the Annual Family Camp

In one month we will reconvene once again in Pine Valley to meet new families, catch up with old families and hear what wisdom Colin and Nancy Campbell have to share with us this year. Each year it seems more important to fellowship with other families and hear what the Lord is doing in their lives. In our various shopping trips and travels it is interesting to watch the expressions on people's faces when they count the children. Some folks come up and commend us or share that they were from a large family. Some of the older ones are pleased as they had a large family themselves. And some folks just plain stare in either shock, disbelief or "hatred". The camp is a chance to meet other like-minded families, some small, some large, but all wanting the same thing; to raise up their children in the ways of the Lord and have a strong family in uncertain times that can stand fast. Not everyone who comes has the same conviction on many issues and each family is different. That's what makes it all the more fun. It's not a bunch of cookie cutter families all saying "yes" and "amen" at the same things. But as iron sharpens iron, we can all learn from each other and see what God would have for our weekend. And don't forget those tax rebates could help make a way to come (last checks will be mailed August 8th). We hope to meet many of you there this year!

Don't Miss Out

Dear, Dear friend,

This is a RETREAT that will change your definition of retreat. This is a retreat that will build your Faith in ways you never thought possible. This is a retreat that will leave you encouraged, built up and rested in Christ. I am so excited that it is so accessible to us. Given the Lord's timing on the delivery of our new baby, I would be soooooo blessed to share this time with you and your family. My family went to their retreat last June (2001 & September 2002 in Pinecrest) down in San Diego and brought some friends. Between the encouragements through the teaching, hearing from both husband and wife, the rich participation, and my personal counsel with Nancy in regards to my marriage and my role in my marriage, my family life will never be the same. Thank God. It was the most restful leading of the Spirit of God that I have ever experienced at a retreat. I also receive their publications and weekly devotions for continued encouragement.

Please trust me on this one and share this with other friends you have that want to move forward in their Faith. It is a retreat for the entire family regardless of children's ages."

~Adrienne Roberts, Hayward, California

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On The Cover: Stephen Carter Brown gives a big four-month old smile for the camera. Check out his birth story on page 3

Lambs Sent from on High

Keith and Jamie Gazaway are proud to announce the birth of their second son. **Jared Eugene Gazaway** was born at home on October 18, 2002 at 10:04 am. He weighed 9' 8" and was 20.5 inches long. Big brother Joel (2.5 at the time) was so excited to see Jared "come out Mommy's baw-boom" [bottom]. We give all glory to God for a beautiful birth and baby (and many praises for our two wonderful midwives, Marianne and Lynn)!



Joshua Christopher Hargett entered the scene January 4, 2003 weighing 10 # 4 oz. and was 23 ½". He joins parents Jim and Deena and siblings Andrew-14, Ryan-10, Laura-7, Meghan-5, Jonah-4, and Grace-2.

Benjamin Cicero was born at home on Feb. 13th at 6:10 a.m. and weighed 8 # 8 oz, 21 ¾" long. His family: parents Jon and Rachel and he joined siblings, Cory-18, Jon Jr.-17, Nicole-16, Justin-16, Daniel-11, Hannah-9, Michaella-6 ½, and Emilie-5.



Adler Reed Cromer (pictured at left). Our 4th addition was born February 22, 2003 at 7:46 a.m. 7lb 12oz 21". Aaron and Kim along with Austin-6, Aidan-4, and Ansel-2.

Emma Grace Smith Born March 16, 2003 @ 5:40am weighing lbs. 3 ounces 20 inches long. Welcomed by Mommy (Lela), Daddy (Billy), McKenna -5 ½, and Ethan-2 ¾.

Luke Michael Lammers was born on March 17th, 2003 weighing 6# 10 oz and was 19 ½" long. Parents Mike and Tracy Lammers and big brother Blake-3. Luke still needs our prayers! He's the little guy that has spina bifida and his parents went against medical advise to abort him

Eden Rose Lee (pictured below) was born March 18, 2003 at 11:04 p.m. 9 lbs. 1 oz., 21 1/4" We got her name from Isa 51:3, because God has turned our desert into Eden, the garden of the Lord, where joy, happiness and songs are! Mason and Julie and Aviel 5 ½, Doran 3.



Sullivan Shae Trejo was born March 20, 2003 to Mark and Karen Trejo. She weighed 8lbs 10 oz. and was 21 and half inches long. She died on March 21, 2003. Please see the Trejo's story in this issue.

Warren & Vyckie Bennett are pleased & proud to announce the arrival of **David Wesley Bennett** - born on Sunday, March 23, 2003 at 9:31 a.m. He weighed 8 lbs. 5 oz. and measured 20" long. "Wesley" is welcomed by his older siblings: Angel (17), Berea (11), Chassé (10), Hazelle (7), Andrew (4.5) and Lydia Jean (2.5). We thank God for little Wesley's safe arrival and ask for continued prayers for healing & recovery as the delivery was by emergency cesarean section. We are enjoying every precious moment with our sweet little one and are continuously rejoicing in the Lord's blessings!

The Bennett Family

Peter Stanford Silliman A seventh son born to Cliff and Jenny Silliman. On Thursday, March 27, 2003 at 1:30 a.m. Weight: 11 pounds Length: 21 inches He had a beautiful home birth and was caught by his 18 year old sister, Valerie and welcomed by big brothers: Dan 20 Dave 16 Mike 12 Josh 10 Steve 5 Luke 3. "At 3 a.m. I gaze deep into his big blue eyes. "So, that's who you are." He gazes back at me and deep into my eyes as if to say in response: "So, that's who you are, Mama." Though we have only just met I feel as if we've always known each other. Welcome Peter Silliman



Samuel Martin McCloud (pictured at left) is also a seventh son, born on April 3, 2003 at 9:06 a.m., weighing 9# 12 oz and 22 ½" to George and Grace. He joins Logan-12, Jeremy-9, Ian-6, Sean-4, and twins, Quinten and Duncan-3

Sara Escobedo was born on April 13, 2003 she weighed 6 lbs 7 oz and was 19 1/2 in long Her brother Victor is 5 years old and Raquel 22 months and her parents are Victor and Addie Escobedo

Luke Isaac Tiscareno, weighed 8lbs 3oz, 19 ½ in. Born April 13 at 5:00 a.m.. Rigo and Connie Tiscareno daughters Andrea 14 years, Sophia 4 years and Olivia 2 years Baby Luke Isaac 4-13-03, 8lb3oz, 19 1/2



Madison April McGlennon was born April 19, 2003. She weighed in at 6# 13 oz. and was 19 ¼". Christina-18, attended her birth and she also joins Janelle-15, Thomas-11, Luke-4 and Jonathan-2 and parents Ron and Lana.

Aarin Mikayla Krawczyk 7 pounds 13 ounces 20 1/2 inches... was born Wednesday evening, June 26th at 9:39 PM. She was welcomed into this world by her father, Tom, who by all accounts made a PERFECT CATCH!! Almost immediately after her birth, a massive fireworks display in her honor was launched over the Detroit River. Some claim

the fireworks were only coincidental with Detroit's Freedom Festival, but we know otherwise. When God does things, He does them BIG! Rachael, who was present for the birth, took a short walk with Tom to enjoy the display while Mom and Aarin were cleaned up.

We welcomed **Jonathan Wesley Carpenter** into the world on my grandfather's birthday - Tuesday, July 1st at 7:06 p.m. He weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz. and measured 20 inches long. He is such a sweet little boy and we are so excited to have a new little blessing to hold and take care of. Thank you to everyone for your thoughts and prayers. We thank God for his wonderful gift of love to our family. Blessings, The Carpenter Family ~ Wes, Shannon, Emily, Sarah, Hannah and Jonathan

Angie and Jose Gomez welcomed their new baby boy **Izrael Alexander Gomez** on April 29, 2003 at 8:58 a.m. He was a big boy at 9 lbs. 8oz. and 21 1/2 inches long. We praise God that she was able to have a very successful VBAC. And an unplanned homebirth at that! He looks just like his big brother, Elijah Ramone, who is 17 months old. We are so very thankful for this blessing of this child.

Denise Cortes writes: The Lord was so good to Angie. Her water broke around 2 in the morning. Labor started getting more intense by that time. All the midwives starting showing up. When they checked her she was a 7 cm. She was able to get some pain relief from a hot shower, back massage and loving support. I was so nervous! It was hard for me to see her in such pain. At one point her mom was anxious to get going to the hospital, so they started putting socks and slippers on her! But, this had to be the Lord because she was having contractions every four minutes and then suddenly she had around 5 or 6 in a row, without any kind of break in between. Del told her if she wanted to get to the hospital, they should leave now.

But Angie did not want to move! Her mom kinda freaked out, but she got over it. So, she was going to have that homebirth after all. We were a little unprepared since she didn't have a birth kit, but God provided some chux pads, towels, etc. Anyhow, she was almost complete but Del said she had a pretty thick anterior lip that we had to wait on. So we waited and we waited. She was able to get some pretty big breaks in between. In certain positions, he would retract, so she had to be on her hands and knees the whole time. When it came time to push, she pushed and pushed for almost three hours. I couldn't believe it! She was making progress, just very slow progress. She was exhausted, too. When the baby started making his way down the birth canal and we could see a bit of his hair peaking out, Angie didn't believe that he was almost out! She thought we were lying to her. Hahaha. She mustered up the last bit of strength she had and began to push his head out. Now, I've had four children of my own, but I've never been down on the other end. It was amazing to see the birth of this child. I got a little weak-kneed, but I was so happy and proud of her. Finally, he came out, perfect and healthy. He is so adorable! His face is so tiny and perfect like a little doll with little swirls in his hair. He was able to nurse right away, too.

What a blessing and what a victory for her to have this baby vaginally when there wasn't an OB willing to give her a true trial of labor. I had such a peace that she would be able to have this baby on her own. Toward the end of her pushing, she told Jose, "That's it, you're never touching me again!" After the baby was born and we were sitting around eating and talking, we all got a good laugh when she asked Del, "If I have another baby, will I have to push that long again?" This is the seventh boy within the family. No girlies yet. Such wonderful little soldiers the Lord is creating here!

Stephen Carter Brown

was born at home on Feb. 18, 2003 at 3:55 am weighing 7lbs 6 ½ oz. This was our first homebirth after 4 hospital births.



In the evening, at 14 days past EDD, I decided that labor was finally starting and called our midwife Genny. She said she would be right out. I told her to take her time as I like to labor alone or with my husband only and I didn't feel like having our family disturbed as this special time started. The contractions were about 10 minutes apart but were long working ones.

Genny was an apprentice midwife and had only delivered one other baby but I really wasn't concerned. Karen, a licensed midwife that Genny was training under as she completed her formal midwifery schooling, would be assisting.

Both midwives arrived around 9 and began setting up. I put Hannah 2 and Aimee 5 to bed. The contractions were still about 10 minutes apart. I was feeling restless so around 10:30, Larry and I left Kaitlyn 10 and Andrew 7 up with the midwives, and took the walkie talkie radios and went for a walk. This was a special time walking around the neighborhood. We would stop for each contraction and I would lean on Larry until it passed. Larry said I was trying to give him pneumonia but it felt great to be moving out in the cold air. While walking the contractions came about 5-6 minutes apart.

When we got home, we sent Kaitlyn and Andrew to bed with a promise to wake them up for the birth. I decided to retreat to my bathtub. Just after I got the tub filled and was settled in reading a devotional, Larry came up to tell me that Karen might have to leave as another woman was in labor and going fast. They were trying to find someone to assist and were not able to reach anyone. Finally they received a call back and a midwife who I had not met before was on her way. I did not want to get out of the tub but did so Karen could check me before she left. I was between 6-7. I was sort of bummed that I had gotten out of the tub and dried off but did not feel like getting back in. I decided to lay down for awhile and that felt great. The contractions spaced back out to 10 minutes again while I was laying down.

A family friend and previous Bradley instructor, Paige, arrived around 1. She was a great help during and after the birth. Then the other midwife arrived with her assistant. They were looking over the supplies and equipment that was set up while I started my pacing. I had done this with my last 2 births and knew I was most likely entering transition. I would go from the toilet to the bed and think about laying down but wouldn't and then would decide to visit the toilet again. I would go back and forth and at the same time downing large quantities of cranberry juice and water. Everyone but Paige and Larry were downstairs. I remember Genny coming up and trying a squatting contraction to move things along but the sensations were so intense for me to labor through a contraction this way.

At about 3:35 I felt pressure and said that I wanted to push. At that exact moment Hannah came out from the other bedroom and the midwives all came up. I got on the bed and had the strange idea that I would nurse her back to sleep and then push out the baby. She, of course wasn't going to go back to sleep with all this activity and the baby was not going to wait. So I tried a push with her latched on. I knew immediately this was not going to work either. Larry had just woken Kaitlyn, Andrew, and Aimee and so Hannah went

without a fuss into Kaitlyn's arms to watch the birth. After a few small, sort of practice pushes, I gave a giant push with a yell and Stephen's head was out. Next contraction and another push and the rest of him arrived. To feel the baby slide out of you is the most wonderful feeling after being in labor.

I did dump quite a bit of blood and his membranes came out trailing behind him but I was so happy holding him that the concerned huddle of midwives did not phase me because our baby was here and he was so beautiful. My first words to him were "I am so glad you are here." Andrew said to Paige in his room before he went back to bed that he could just could not stop smiling. Aimee was not feeling well and went back to sleep right away. Hannah did not want to go back to sleep even though Kaitlyn did so they went downstairs and watched veggie tails as the sun came up. As soon as I was cleaned up and the bed changed Hannah came up and snuggled and nursed back to sleep.

Throughout the entire labor and birth I had a feeling of calm that God was working out the events just the way it was suppose to be. Even though there was the midwife change and Hannah waking up at the exact pushing moment there was never any stress involved. In hindsight I am alittle amazed that the midwife change did not upset me in the least.

I feel incredibly privileged that I was able to birth Stephen at home with his siblings present. His birth and especially his presence in our home are gifts from God and remind us of His love. Hannah and Stephen, who are less then 2 years apart, are the babies born to us since we started trusting God with our family size. We cannot imagine them not being part of our lives. We will continue to trust Him and He is and always will be trustworthy and faithful.

~Carol Brown

A Little Funny

*****Noah Evans' wisdom on babies-***"If there are too many boys the world will be full of boys. If there are a lot of girls the world will be much nicer. Too much of a good thing is too much of a good thing."* (Referring to the families with seven sons and one daughter and the one with seven sons and no daughters. Can you guess what he wants this baby to be??? ☺)

*****The Foot Massage-***"One morning as I was passing by the living room with a full laundry basket, I noticed my sweet little five year old Joshua just snuggling on the couch. I put down the basket, sat down next to him and pulled his little feet into my lap for a foot massage. Josh looked at me and said, "Mom when you do that my feet feel RIDICULOUS."* Karen Weiss, Riverside, CA

several years of sleep, does a Mom-of-Many greet her new son with a great big YAWN?

Although I've been through this six times before, baby Wesley is the delight of my heart - in fact, I'm enjoying this little guy more than I did his older siblings. There is nothing softer than baby cheeks, no sweeter smell than a freshly bathed infant, no symphony more harmonious than the sound of tiny baby coos, no earthly pleasure greater than watching a sleeping baby's face - first frowning and pouting, next smiling - always inviting a mother's tender kiss.

The Bible says of woman: she shall be saved in childbearing. I will not attempt to address the theological implications of 1 Timothy 2:15 - but it is clear that childbirth has a profound spiritual impact on every new mother. I have experienced it seven times - and the spiritual lessons aren't over when labor is finished. In fact, as I'm enjoying my newborn, I've been thinking about the Lord almost constantly. Pardon my play on words: but, all I ever need to know about God I learned from my babies. Presence:

As a new mom, I don't do a single thing without first considering the baby. Whether I'm preparing a meal, running errands, working with the older children - even while I'm sleeping, I am aware of him - where is he at? is he sleeping? is he safe? does he need me? I make all of my plans with the baby in mind - his needs come first and my "to do" list is subjected to my primary responsibility.

Would that I were so careful about God! I must confess, in the midst of my very full life - seven children, homeschooling, home business, etc., it's too easy to rush through an entire day without once having paused to consider His presence - does this please Him? is this what He wants me to do? is He speaking to me? Lately, He's been shouting at me through my awareness of baby Wesley - I am convicted that I need to be equally aware of Him in my day-to-day living.

Priorities:

It's incredible how many activities are less important than just being with my baby and enjoying him. After a good night's rest, Wesley awakens around 6 a.m. with a merry heart and a million smiles. I have never been a morning person so at 6 a.m. it's quite tempting to roll over and catch a few more winks before starting another busy day. But one look into his eager eyes and I'm captivated! He's so happy - and all it takes is one word or look of acknowledgement from me to start him grinning and cooing, kicking his fat legs and waving his arms in excitement - he absolutely loves me! How can I turn away? I never do. But even as I watch his charming baby antics I'm thinking of all that needs to be done today - really, I should get up and get started. Still, I linger. I don't want to deprive myself of these delightful moments which can never be recaptured.

How often have I been too tired to keep my daily quiet time? or too busy? I prefer to sleep a little later and when I do wake up - well, there's just so many things that must be accomplished!

And yet, what precious times of encouragement and refreshment do I miss when I neglect my Bible and prayer?

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. ... **My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. (Song of Solomon 2:8,10)** Praise:

I have run out of superlatives to describe my son - cute? precious? sweet? a little doll? One look into his face and all the adjectives in the human tongue are entirely inadequate to express my love and admiration for him. I often make up songs - silly songs, and of course I can't carry a tune - but I can't help but try to express what I'm feeling in my heart towards this absolutely perfect little creature. And this creature has a Creator - it completely boggles my mind to imagine how much greater He must be than His creation.

Of Newborns and their Creator

By Vyckie Bennett

We have a new baby at our house - David "Wesley" Bennett, our second son and seventh child. You might think that by baby # 7 Mom would be rather ho-hum: after all, she's probably already nursed more than 6,000 hours, changed over 20,000 diapers, spent at least 2,000 hours rocking her babies, witnessed approximately 18,000 chubby-cheeked smiles, and heard well over half a million sweet baby coos and cries of "Ma-ma!" So when the seventh baby is born, having already lost

"And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Mt. 21:16)

Passion:

My husband, Warren, is a great fan of spicy foods. But no matter how hot the pepper, his taste buds quickly become accustomed and by the 3rd or 4th taco he's been known to ask, "Did you forget to put jalapeños on this one?" It's called the Law of Diminishing Returns - when a person is repeatedly exposed to a physical / fleshly sensation he soon becomes desensitized and more intense stimulation is required to evoke the same level of initial response.

Unlike most earthly pleasures, enjoyment of a newborn actually works counter to the Law of Diminishing Returns. I have a theory that with each baby a woman nurtures her capacity to love grows. She is in no danger of monotony. Our worship of God works the same way: the more time we spend with Him, the more we enjoy spending time with Him - our hearts do not become callous, our minds are not bored with over-saturation.

In her book, *The Life of Prayer*, Edith Schaeffer writes, "There is sufficient of the marvel of His creation to give us cause, we who are His children through the work of the Lamb, to worship Him and to long to do so in ways which will let Him know of our trust and love." The marvel of His creation ... that's my Wesley. My love for him affords me a small glimmer of the Creator's great and perfect love - all praise be unto Him.

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Vyckie Bennett and her husband, Warren homeschool their seven children in Northeast Nebraska. The Bennetts run a home-based Christian family newspaper and website at www.ncdweb.net.

***We miss Mike the Bike* ®**

Dear Friends,

I wanted to let you know about the MIKE THE BIKE fund which has been set up to help Warren purchase a People Powered Vehicle (PPV). As many of you know, Warren lost his eyesight on the job at age 19. In the past, Warren was given a People Powered Vehicle - a two seater - side-by-side bicycle that looked sort of like a boat on wheels. He had a great time pedaling "Mike the Bike" around our subdivision with all the children piled in and one of the older children steering. It was such a wonderful way for him to enjoy some leisure time with the children and get some exercise at the same time. They rode "Mike the Bike" until the bicycle fell apart - we had it repaired several times, but because it was a very old bike, "Mike" finally gave up the ghost - completely beyond repair.

Please visit the Official Mike the Bike Fundraiser Homepage!

<http://www.ncdweb.net/MikeTheBike.htm>

See how the fund is progressing

Join the official Mike the Bike Fund mailing list

Make a contribution to the Mike the Bike Fund!

We truly appreciate your help in this effort - even if you are not able to give at this time, please join our Mike the Bike Fund mailing list

(<http://www.ncdweb.net/mailman/listinfo/mikethebikefund>) to get updates on how the fund is growing - you can also share your ideas for ways to raise extra \$\$ to help complete the fund. Most importantly, please pass this message on to others who might be interested in helping.

Thanks for reading & God bless!

Vyckie

Sullivan Shae's Birth and Death

By Karen Trejo

It was a Wednesday night just before Karen's due date and all was well. We were up late because Karen was having pretty great contractions and seemed to be moving along. We were not too worried that the baby would come soon because of our history of going three plus weeks over with all the others. Mark leaves for work around 11:30 and says to call him if the contractions got closer or if anything looked different. Well, at 1:00 or so, Karen's water broke. Something that has never happened either. Wow this is what it feels like to do it "normally." Ha! Normal, like whatever that is! Anyway, we called and the midwives arrived, and Mark shortly thereafter, around 2:00 am. The labor was slow and easy. We all went to sleep actually. When we awoke, no baby, and the contractions were spacing.

The midwives kept palpating and talking and talking, and then had a private meeting. Then they came back to the bedroom. "We think the baby has gone back to breech position." Mark and I just stared at each

other. We were amazed that now that we had finally gone into labor on our own, no induction, and on the due date ... now we were breech? Oh Lord! Well, we went into The hospital to confirm. Sure enough, Sully was complete breech. The heart sounded great, and all other factors were in check.

The hospital, of course, said that we had to have a c-section. Mark and I looked at one another and I began to cry. Mark decided that we would go home and pray and think about it. That is when the labor really picked up. The contractions, by the time we got home, were 1 and 1/2 minutes apart and strong.

The midwives we chose were great. One was the charge nurse at the university hospital here in Albuquerque. This nurse, Jaime has seen and done many breeches. She said we could labor and get the baby down into the pelvis and then transport to U.N.M. Hospital to deliver. "They are very familiar with breech, and since you have had six other babies, it should be okay if you guys think, pray and decide to do so." By the time Mark had made the choice, Karen was really in the later stages of labor. Jamie talked us through labor with a breech. It is called the "hour of patience." You cannot push or begin pushing until the baby's body is half way out. If you push too soon, or too hard, the cervix swells and then it closes down around the baby's head. Then you have problems getting the head out, which of course is last. Talk about intense! Waiting and waiting to get to that point without pushing was like trying to hold back the Hoover dam when it is about to break. Ha Ha

Warren & Vyckie Bennett and their children were recognized as "Family of the Year" at the Nebraska Family Council's 2003 Salt & Light Awards dessert banquet. The Bennetts received the award in recognition of their pro-family & pro-life efforts through their publication of a monthly newspaper, the Nebraska Civic Digest. The award was presented to the Bennetts by Governor Mike Johanns who also granted Warren & Vyckie the distinction of Admiral in the Nebraska Navy. Here they are with Governor Johannes.



Ha! Like I know what that feels like. Anyway, the midwife asked if we wanted to go in the hospital or what our "plans" were for the remainder of the birth. I looked at Mark and said "No way am I walking like this to a car, riding in the car and trying to get up to labor and delivery to push the baby out." "She is almost here!" Mark said, well... I guess we are staying here. He said that he had a peace about it and was happy that it was working out this way.

We had a labor tub that helped with the "hour of patience." We had a birthing stool which helped with the birth in that it is the right position to push and deliver the head. It all went so well. The intensity was off the charts, but the birth was fantastic.

She was born pretty quickly. First her body came through, bottom first. Then her left leg and the other, then the arms were born one at a time. I stood up and leaned over Mark and pushed with everything in me and her head was born. WOW! The Lord had done it. She was crying and breathing fine. She took to the breast right away. Her appar was pretty high and the midwives were just ecstatic too. Keely, our oldest daughter, was a huge help with the birth. She was happy and tired, but not so tired to hold her new sister while they got me to the bed to wait on the placenta. Eight pounds ten ounces and twenty-one and a half inches long. All the good eating and doing whole food vitamins had paid off. She was beautiful.

She nursed through the night, and did well to not wake her daddy too much. The next day, Mark and all the boys went shopping to get a few items and some groceries for the family. Around 11:00 am I noticed Sullivan was whining and not wanting to nurse. I tried a couple of things to whet her appetite. Keely took her and walked with her for a while, until about Noon. I called Mark and told him I thought she was droopy. I took her temp and it was a little low. At about 12:45 PM, I put her on my tummy and put a blanket, a towel, and covers over her. I put the heating pad over all of that to warm her up. She pinked up and went to sleep. I then put her down next to me on the bed so I could go use the bathroom. When her arm flopped over, I knew this was not right. I checked for breath out of her nose. I looked for her chest to rise and fall. Nothing. I asked the Lord "Please, please don't let my baby be dead." I began CPR immediately. I yelled down the hall to Keely to call 911. She did. I ran down the hall, put my precious girl on the kitchen table to continue the CPR. I breathed for her and kept up the compressions until the paramedics got there. Mark arrived home just in time to see them take her to the hospital. The children were in shock, as were we. What happened? Mark followed the ambulance. I stayed, because the investigators said that I could not leave without talking to them. They put up yellow crime scene tape around our home. They put all my children in police cars. We could not go into the house until they had gone through and done an entire investigation.

My mind was reeling. Mark was not here, and I had to be calm and pray and walk through this horror scene with my eyes wide open. That is what it felt like. I felt like I had accidentally rented the wrong movie, and now I was being made to watch the whole thing, eyes wide open. Not only

watch but be apart.

From that time forward, our fellowship surrounded us. We had people from California also calling and praying. My sister-in-law came down from Colorado and began running the home. She cleaned, did laundry, and helped with the memorial and burial arrangements. It was all like we were floating through time, and the Lord was holding us and loving us through it all. We took her to Colorado to be buried next to her cousin who also died of SIDS 14 years ago. It is so beautiful there.

We are so honored to have had even the short day we had with her. I am so blessed to have known her for ten months in the womb. We thank God that she came to us, and now waits for us to come be with her. The pain is still real. Our arms are still aching to hold her. Our hearts are still mending and will be for some time. The questions are still in our head. But our hope is still in HIM. We have been in touch with the medical examiner. They have run over a hundred and thirty tests. They have found no reason for death. "She was perfect" they say.

Thank you all who prayed for us and continue to do so. We covet every prayer. We feel the warm blanket of intercession each night as we tuck our family in. The body

of Christ is an amazing group of people. We would have never survived without God's people to love us, surround us, and carry us through this. We have received cards from around the world to comfort us. We have heard wonderful stories about how the memorial has changed people's lives. Thank you Lord for little Sullivan Shae Trejo (Sully) and the lives that she has touched.

We are up for any of you who might have encouraging words or your own experiences with loosing a child. For a while we were not ready to hear anything from anyone. We now feel we can receive the stories with hope. If we can be a comfort to anyone dealing with this experience, please let us know. We especially want to encourage anyone who knows people who are going through a loss. Please do not ignore them. Even if you do not know what to say or how to say it,

ignoring them it is so hurtful and feels like another insult to the existing injury. A simple card or phone call to just acknowledge that you know and that you care. An E-mail to say that you are praying. I know we too have been guilty of just "waiting" for the right time to call or send a card. Then time goes by and we all forget. Nope. The family in mourning saves and remembers every card. The family remembers every phone call, every meal brought to them, and every prayer prayed over them.

I have read four books on loosing a child. In every book the parents all say the same thing. When people reach out and love you, in whatever way, it speaks volumes. When they ignore your situation and pain, the volume is even louder. So the learning curve is for us all. Reach out and love those around you. When they are in need, surround them with God's incredible mercy and Grace. You may be the hand up they were in need of. You may have the word for that day that they needed to hear. Your prayer may be the one that keeps them from harms way for that night. You do make a difference. Just do it. Remember it is all about him, not you. We Love you all! In His Grip, The Trejos, Mark, Karen, Keely, Griffin, Thea, Emma, Aidan and Braham and our little angel in Heaven Sullivan Shae.

We are so honored to have had even the short day we had with her. I am so blessed to have known her for ten months in the womb. We thank God that she came to us, and now waits for us to come be with her. The pain is still real. Our arms are still aching to hold her. Our hearts are still mending and will be for some time. The questions are still in our head. But our hope is still in HIM.

Ministry *"on Hold"*

By Trish Evans

Count it all joy! No Pain, No Gain. Think of the wonderful relationship you can have with your chiropractor in your old age! What better way to minister to your children than by holding them as God holds us. Children who are held as babies have higher I.Q.'s, better neurological development, more coordination, are generally more secure, happy and healthy. But there are tricks to discover as in any trade and each parent needs to find a "holding pattern" that works best for them and baby.

We have five children so far. When our first was six weeks old I went on a hunt for one of those crazy slings that I said I would "never" use. Well, I ended up using that sling the majority of the time as I thought the backpack hurt. With the twins I ended up using the backpack & the sling together since they kept trying to climb out of the stroller & fall on their heads. With Ethan, our fourth child, I used the sling until he was 6 months old and then the backpack because I had free hands to help the twins sit on a toilet when out and also just needed the mobility the backpack offered over the sling. The same with Morgan, our fifth child. Gary, on the other hand, preferred the backpack and all the children enjoyed being up on Daddy's back. But.....the Gerry backpack still hurt both of us with prolonged use so recently I went on a quest for the "ultimate backpack". There are many high priced ones on the market made by camping companies that are better quality and can usually be found on ebay for a reasonable price. I bought a Vaude Pebbles (German, not easy to find here) for my husband with tons of back padding & a Tough Traveler Kid Carrier for me. It really depends on your frame & height what will work for you. TT has several styles, <http://www.toughtraveler.com>. Read their comparison pages thoroughly, some have sternum (chest) straps, some don't. Some have great back support, some don't. You get what you pay for.

Madden USA also looked very comfy, probably the most, but the metal stand part doesn't retract and I was concerned about bumping into people and things from behind, <Http://www.maddenusa.com>. REI makes one, Kelty makes a few & they were comfortable (tried them on at Sport Chalet), but I wanted a sternum strap & the models that fit my short, 5' 2" frame didn't have them. You don't want this thing to look like a house on your back.

I used the Yahoo search engine and checked all the parent reference links that came up for the various brands as well as Yahoo's comparison shopping feature to find

the best price (then bought them on ebay anyways ☺). Search words besides the brand would be "child backpack carrier". If using ebay always check with a seller to make sure it is the model of the brand that you want. Also, don't bid until one minute before it closes and then put your maximum bid. You'll have a better chance of getting something without going into bidding wars driving the price up. Don't bid more than you can afford since there are always new ones being listed.

I wanted a metal stand that would support the child in the carrier asleep when you remove the child at a restaurant or some other location where you'd be parking for a time. As far as slings, I like the Over the Shoulder Baby Holder. Nojo's rings were too stiff for me to loosen to sneak a sleeping baby out of. I also liked metal rings. My mom made me several slings with metal rings We



Even big boys like to snuggle in a sling as Ethan, 4, demonstrates

made two modified ones using parachute buckles, like the ones on hip bags and made legs holes and I used them with the twins for a time. You can't adjust it due to the buckles, but they really feel secure in there. Some of you who are sewing aces might try this. Also, The Maja Wrap company makes a sling that has no rings and is just a pouch. There is an ad at the end of this article from a mom selling Maya wraps. Maybe I'll try one with this next baby.

Recently I have been told that the Baby Bjorn carriers are great and much better than the Snuggli's. The Kelty Koala looks very similar to this. These do however, have lots of buckles and look more complicated to figure out for

quick off & on's. Somewhere I have directions from an old issue of Mothering Magazine for a tie on wrap that is just one long piece of material that you make yourself (no sewing skills necessary ☺). I made one when the twins were younger and it was very secure and comfortable but I didn't use it that much since I was always juggling two children and couldn't quite recall how to tie it each time and had to reread the directions.

Advantages of slings in stores: I have had a child tip my shopping cart over with both baby & toddler in it (hanging off the side) and all the groceries. It wasn't a pretty picture. I do still use a cart, but it's nice to have them safely tucked on your back or under your arm. It does make one sore after a while no matter how good the backpack or sling is. Strollers, plus slings or backpacks are fine for long days out like at an amusement park as you can carry the coolers, water bottles, baby bag, jackets on the top of the strollers and switch the baby and toddler in and out for walking/carrying.

The Bible has many beautiful passages about the way God parents his people and He refers to himself carrying them like a Father with a sling. I would encourage all of you to carry each baby as much as possible, no matter how many children God blesses you with and how old and tired you may get. ☺ Plastic car seats and strollers for very little ones can be used on occasion, but are no real replacement for the loving arms of Mom and Dad.

~Trish

Kostadinka Rose Weiss

Our Bulgarian Daughter

By Laura Weiss

A few years ago my husband and I felt the Lord calling us to adopt. Since he was unemployed at the time it didn't make a whole lot of sense but we began the researching phase of the whole process at that time. After a lot of research we decided on an agency and also on the country of Bulgaria. A few months ago I was looking at the website for a wonderful family who have adopted eight special needs children and have three adoptions in process right now. They are truly amazing people. You can learn more about them on their web site <http://www.theshepherdscook.org>. They have pictures and articles about all their adopted children and a special medical project where they take doctors overseas to perform operations on orphan children who need them. Please pray for their ministry as well.

While at their web site I noticed they have a photo listing of children they are sponsoring. I saw several pictures, one of a little girl that made my heart leap. I saw her age and assumed that my husband would not want to adopt her because she is several years older than what we had discussed. So I didn't say anything to Jonathan but said a quick prayer that the Lord would find a family for her soon. She was twelve and we had discussed adopting a five or six year old. I didn't know then, that family would be us.

At a later time, my husband was at another website looking at photo listings and saw the same picture of the same little girl. He said to me, "I know she is older than we discussed but I

want you to get more information about this little girl!" When I saw the picture I burst into tears and told him I had seen her picture also. So I contacted the agency we had decided on before and we were told they were representing her exclusively and had a good relationship with her lawyer.

Though Jonathan's new job was only paying him eight dollars and hour, in faith we sent in the \$200 registration fee. Within two days he had a new job that paid him more than double that plus commission, and within two weeks 50% -60% of the fees we needed for the adoption came in from various resources. It will cost us approximately \$22,000 including travel and court and government fees to adopt our daughter.

We traveled for our first trip to meet Kostadinka on May 22nd. We spent a week with her there in an apartment and here is a small diary from that

trip.

When we got into Sofia our lawyer met us at the airport with roses and then we took our luggage to the apartment then went to the orphanage to pick up Kostadinka. She came in the room and we were so scared. She looked happy but she wouldn't look at us. She just smiled at her feet and would steal glances over at Jonathan and I every so often. I just kept smiling at her. I was so sorry I didn't know more Bulgarian at that time. I wanted to say something comforting. She smelled so bad, like a homeless person and cigarette smoke, she does not smoke but it seems to be the national past time of Bulgaria. It was stifling to be in the room with her. Apparently the children only get to bathe 2 times a month if that. I felt guilty for thinking that way.

We spoke to the director and the orphanage psychologist who was VERY strange and kept asking me what was on my heart and if the fact she was Roma (gypsy) was going to bother anyone. I didn't even know how to respond to that one, it was such a silly thing to say. I didn't really have my wits about me either. Her being gypsy seemed to be this dirty thing nobody wanted to talk about and everybody kept trying to diminish her by saying she's just a little gypsy. Like we care. I think she is at least half by looking at her, but who knows or cares. It's a plus as far as we are concerned. It is hard for people there to understand why we would want a gypsy child over a Bulgarian child. There is a lot of racism.

We got in the car to go to the apartment and she just smiled and stared at her feet some more. Jonathan reached over and gave her a hug and a kiss on the face and she giggled. I did the same. At the apartment she saw all the things we had bought her on the table and wanted to look at them all. She was very excited and kept organizing them and re-organizing them. Then she told the attorney, Antonia, she wanted mommy to give her a bath. I have to say that surprised me

because she is so big. There was no hot water

The orphanage receives the equivalent of \$0.02 cents a day

to feed the children and the non-gypsy children have priority.

in our part of the city so we had to use these huge metal sticks that plug into the wall to heat the water, it took about an hour to do and they were terrifying. I was so scared I would get shocked by them and by the end of the trip I did!

I went in with her for her bath. I washed her hair and her back for her. She smiled and giggled the whole time. I have never seen anybody bathe so quickly. In less than 2 minutes she was scrubbed done and dressed. She still wasn't very clean and the smell lingered. Over the next few days she took several baths, but kept putting dirty clothes back on so it never really made a difference. The last night we were there she took a two-hour bath and washed her hair four times and her body four times. She knew it would be awhile before she could bathe again.

We took her shopping and bought her some

clothes. The translator we had the second day was awful and bonded more with her than we did, but seemed to have this superiority thing we didn't like so we had her drive us back to the apartment early and said we were fine and to go home. Kosti was a different child when alone with us. She was much more animated and is very funny. She did the funniest things, like cheat at cards to make us laugh and sing her music we bought her really loud. It is terrible music and I'm a little concerned I couldn't read the lyrics, but it made her so happy. I can monitor her choice in music at home easier. We could only judge by the jackets of the tapes.

She was so affectionate and loved to hug and kiss and share food. Which is why I got sick. She had a horrible cold and some kind of skin condition. She had dark circles under her eyes and looked like she had some nutritional deficiencies. The orphanage receives the equivalent of \$.02 cents a day to feed the children and the non-gypsy children have priority. She connected with Jonathan and I on very different levels, She played with him more and wanted to do grown up girl things with me like hair and make up. I wore my hair down the whole trip because it made her happy to play with it. She liked to brush it and put ribbons in it.

When we went out she never asked for anything except a necklace from the church that had the three daughters of Saint Sofia on it. A cross, an anchor, and a heart. They symbolize faith, hope and love. She enjoyed praying with us and a local foundation takes the children to church every week to the Eastern Orthodox church, (<http://www.pokrov-foundation.org>) which I found out is not Catholic like I thought it was. They seem to be very steeped in tradition, I am learning more about them so I will understand what she has been taught before she comes home. I was happy to see there was one here in Riverside.

It was hard to find appropriate clothing to buy her, because she is out of the children's sizes. And all the women's clothing is very revealing or tight or both. Everyone dresses like that there. We bought her a long denim skirt and a pair of jeans, some tennis shoes and three shirts. It was hard because they pretty much told us the other kids would beat her up and steal her stuff now that she has a family and there is nothing anyone else can do about it. There just aren't enough adults to police the children outside of school hours, so the kids are pretty much on their own.

After we complained about our translator we spent the rest of the time with the lawyer who is disabled and paralyzed from the waist down from a car accident. The city is very unfriendly to handicapped people. There are no elevators or lifts or ramps of any kind. She has a hired driver who

carries her chair up and down all the stairs she needs to go on. She said the court building was especially tough because children's court is on the upper floors. She is wonderful and told us she can help us adopt in the future without an agency if we want.

We asked Kosti how long she had been in orphanages and it looks like most of her life. She was not very willing to talk about it. She has vague memories of an aunt and uncle she called mommy and daddy but they never see her. She had a couple of temper tantrums when we were there when Jonathan would say no to something. Not angry ones, but begging pleading ones. She wanted us to keep buying these cheese puffs that had toys in them but she never ate the food, so we said no and we would take her to the toy shop. She started crying and begging, we laughed because it was just so ridiculous, she laughed too, then Jonathan video taped her and she stopped at that. He turned the screen so she could see herself. That works with our other kids, too. She did not like to see herself crying. It was hard not to give in to everything, because we knew she had never had anything, but we felt it was important to establish boundaries from the beginning.

I expected it would take her time to warm up to us, but it was an instant connection. She was so happy to have parents and kept smiling at us and hugging and kissing us. When Jonathan told her he loved her the first time she just walked out of the room and cried. We found out later no one had ever said that to her before, but by the end of the trip she would say she loved us, too. All in

Bulgarian of course. "Obitchem te" is I love you and "yaws too obitchem" is I love you, too. Whenever we would say anything very emotional she would walk away, and blush and be shy. When we were packing to come home she took Jonathan's cologne and asked him to put it on her teddy bear so it would smell like him for her till we came back.

She is very hurt by the lack of affection. The orphanage workers do not form bonds with the children as they feel only their adoptive parents should have those, so the children are completely deprived of affection. We told her we would always love her and were her Momma and Daddy forever and would come for her soon, when we were at the airport. None of us cried until we got on the plane. Antonia, her lawyer and I spoke a day or two later and she said Kosti was shaking and frightened to go to the orphanage and thought we would not come back. We write her often hoping she will not worry too much, but I know the only thing that will convince her will be us picking her up. I miss her so much, my heart is there with her and I don't know how I will survive

We found out later no one had ever said that to her before, but by the end of the trip she would say she loved us, too. All in Bulgarian of course. "Obitchem te" is I love you and "yaws too obitchem" is I love you, too.

the time till I can go get her. It is strange to be adopting while I am pregnant, I feel like I am pregnant with twins or something. I am planning and getting ready for two children of such different ages. I am so grateful to the Lord for bringing her into our lives and our family. I feel no differently towards her than the children I birthed.

The biggest export of Bulgaria is it's roses. 85% of the world's perfume is made from Bulgarian roses. When we arrived at the airport our lawyer brought us roses and told us how special they are to the Bulgarian people. Because of this we decided to give Kostadinka the middle name of Rose. Bulgarians don't have middle names. We told her since roses were so important to Bulgaria and she was so important to us we would name her that. She smiled and seemed happy. We bought several bottles of Rose oil to bring home, when I smell the rose it reminds me of my daughter who is so far away.

Now that we are home and have moved into a house large enough for our growing family we are busy completing our home study with the social worker. After that is done our completed dossier of paperwork will travel to Bulgaria. It will cost us approximately \$500. to complete the paperwork here in the US including notary and apostille fees. Then in a few months we will petition INS to make an orphan a US citizen, then six months from the time all the paperwork is in Bulgaria we will be given a court date to travel there and complete the process and bring our new daughter home. We still need approximately \$5,000.00 total to complete the adoption including travel so prayers and or donations are always welcome. Donations can be made directly to the shepherds crook for Kostadinka's adoption, they are a non profit organization.

Please pray that "Kosti" is kept safe until we go get her, that she will acclimate to life in an American family quickly, and most of all that the Lord will continue to watch over us, guide us, and provide for us in this very special journey HE has led us on.

~Laura Weiss, Lolo@littl lambs.org

Finally birthstone jewelry for Moms with lots of children, or grandmothers with lots of grandbabies, it holds up to 15 stones!

<http://www.heartandseoul.com/adoptionjewelry.html>

so I don't want to unnecessarily make a big issue of birth control. This paper is intended to be a persuasive teaching tool that helps you make an intelligent, informed decision concerning birth control (hereafter "B.C."). Once you have made an informed decision, I do not wish to make further issue of it, because B.C. is not a major tenet of our Christian faith.

BIBLICAL BASIS:

God is Sovereign in birth. He opens & shuts the womb; He blesses with children. (The following verses are NOT an exhaustive list.)

It is GOD Who opens and shuts the womb: Genesis 20:17-18; 29:31-33; 30:1-2,6,17-18, 20, 22, 23; I Samuel 1:6, 11, 19, 20;

God helps and participates in the process of bringing forth children: Genesis 4:1, 25; 21:1-2; Ruth 4:13; I Samuel 2:20-21; Psalm 139:13, 16; Luke 1:21-25, 57-58

God multiplies children: Genesis 16:10; 17: 2,20; 22:17; 26:4, 24; 28:3; 41:52; 48:4; Exodus 32:13; Deuteronomy 1:10,11; 28:63; 30:5, Joshua 24:3; I Chronicles 27: 23; Psalm 105:24; 107:38; Isaiah 26:15; 51:2; Jeremiah 30: 19; 33:22; Ezra 36:10-11, 37; 37:26

The Bible nowhere encourages B.C., but everywhere condones fertility!

Pro-child verses: Psalm 127:3-5; 128; I Chronicles 20:4-5; Exodus 23:25-26; Proverbs 17:6

Children are a blessing that comes from obeying God:

Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 28:1-4; 6:3; 7:13; 13:17.

Pro-Fertility verses: Leviticus 20:18 (abstaining during monthly periods increases chance of fertilization after period); Genesis 1:27-28 (the command to be fruitful has never been revoked); I Cor. 7:3-5 (Not compatible with "Natural Family Planning").

Anti-Infertility Verses: Infertile manners of intercourse were condemned: Bestiality (Leviticus 20:15, 16), Homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13), Withdrawal (Genesis 38:6-10, Deuteronomy 25:5-10). In fact, all of these things incurred the death penalty.

There was no death penalty for improper manners of intercourse which were yet fertile (fornication and polygamy).

Semen is referred to as offspring even before it joins the egg: Hebrews 7:9-10; Job 10:8-11.

Childlessness is a curse: Leviticus 20:20-21; Hosea 9:10-17.

Having children is part of the whole picture of a family:

The Father is to provide for his family: I Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 6:4.

The Mother is to work at home and have children: I Timothy 2:15; Titus 2:3-5, Malachi 2:15, I Timothy 5:9,10, 14.

Children are a blessing to parents: Proverbs 10:1; 23:24-25; Mark 7: 10-13.

Parents are to teach children: Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19.

HISTORY:

B.C. has existed for millennia. Ancient Egyptian papyruses have been discovered with references to chemical contraceptives. The IUD was used by ancient Arabic caravan traders. Infanticide has always been widespread in pagan cultures either through sacrifices to appease spirits or through abandonment (i.e. Oedipus Rex).

God's people, **Israel, did not practice B.C.** They WANTED all the children they could get and considered them an unqualified blessing. The one man mentioned as practicing B.C., Onan, was struck dead for it. (Onan's judgement was not due to a simple refusal to raise up offspring for the widow. If he wanted to refuse that duty,

THE CASE AGAINST BIRTH CONTROL

By Nate Wilson

This and the following Bible Study can be found at:
http://www.momys.com/birth_control.htm

PREFACE: This is YOUR decision, not mine for you. I recognize that you can be a Christian and disagree with the position of this paper,

he could have followed the teaching of Deuteronomy 25:5-10, as Ruth's nearest-of-kin did, removed his sandal, and passed on the responsibility to the next-nearest-of-kin--which, in Ruth's case was Boaz. See Ruth 4:1-12. No, the issue was that Onan practiced birth control by spilling his seed.)

Christians have also historically **not** practiced B.C. This is not a Roman Catholic church issue--their practice is a carry-over from a time when ALL Christians did not practice B.C. The Protestant **Synod of Dort** equated contraception with abortion. **Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley**, and many other founders of Protestantism **linked B.C. with murder**. The **Pilgrims** who founded our country considered B.C. **as bad as adultery and disqualified anyone from church leadership** who practiced it. The change of Christians in the U.S. to using B.C. has been concurrent with many other bad trends: feminism, higher criticism, worldliness, abuse of spiritual gifts and church offices, decline of purity in the church, and a lack of evangelism and discipleship. There is more recently, however, a growing movement in the U.S. of Christians ditching B.C. Obviously, we shouldn't base our position on whether or not OTHER people practice B.C., but if the non-use of B.C. has been a universal trend for the vast majority of Christian history, we should not lightly dismiss it, but rather examine **WHY**.

CON'S OF B.C. :

ALL FORMS OF B.C. INCREASE ABORTION.

Contrary to what some doctors say, there is no such thing as a chemical contraceptive (Pill, implant) that does not cause abortion from 2-5% of the time. Although the primary function of most of these "Pills" is to prevent ovulation, they do not prevent all ovulation (people still occasionally get pregnant), so they ALL have a secondary function of irritating the lining of the uterus so that a fertilized egg will not be able to implant, and thus will abort. There are several other pills whose primary effect is to abort fertilized eggs; the IUD also does this as its primary function. Apparently, the body also aborts some pregnancies naturally at very early stages, without provocation, and all methods of mechanical prevention of fertilization (condom, diaphragm, Rhythm, N.F.P.) actually increase the number of these natural abortions by perpetuating the monthly menstrual cycle, which can be suspended if a woman gets pregnant often.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT IS MISSING:

B.C. puts a Christian in the shaky position of Onan, who was killed. I Corinthians 7:3-5 gives the only reason for skipping sex--prayer and fasting, not to avoid children. Leviticus 12:1-5 and 20:18 establish a sexual pattern that actually increases fertility rather than decreasing it!

IT'S INCONVENIENT:

I have never heard a single positive comment about diaphragms and spermicidal jelly or the female condom from people who use them because of what a pain they are to put in place. Using a male condom is not as pleasant as not using them (and condoms are not highly effective at preventing fertilization anyway). And, of course, it's not fun to go without having sex for long periods of time as per the "Rhythm" or "Natural Family Planning" methods; abstaining for long periods of time can contribute to the sin of adultery. Using B.C. methods causes a woman to undergo uncomfortable periods every month, but going without B.C., periods can be rare.

HEALTH PROBLEMS:

If you take the pill, you are five times more likely to die of circulatory disorders. The pill can also cause permanent infertility

and a host of other major and minor problems. The IUD often causes lacerations in the uterus which result in severe pain and permanent infertility. Abortion is a serious cause of breast cancer. It is also a proven fact that the longer child-bearing is delayed, the more likely a woman is to get endometriosis.

OBJECTIONS HOLD NO WATER:

OVERPOPULATION is a local problem in some cities, but it is not a world crisis. If every person in the world today were given one acre of land (therefore families living together would have far more than 1 acre of land), everyone living in the world today could just about fit within the Continental U.S. alone. (According to agricultural studies, an acre would give far more than enough land for living space and food-production for one person!) It is also a fact that humans adapt and create new methods of coping with scarce resources. Over a thousand years ago, thinkers were afraid that the earth was too overpopulated then for the human race to survive, but we have adapted fine!

MULTIPLYING LIKE RABBITS:

The average number of children borne by monogamous couples not practicing birth control is only five!

COST: The scary, high figures you see quoted are based on expensive C-sections, baby formula, baby food, frivolous baby furniture, not getting a baby shower, using day care, etc, all of which is unnecessary. It doesn't take long before children are old enough to become income producers, anyway. Additionally, God provides for His children. See Psalm 23:1; 37:25-26; 84:11; Proverbs 3:33; 14:26; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6, 19; I Timothy 6:6-10.

THE MYTH THAT CHILDREN OF LARGE FAMILIES ARE LESS INTELLIGENT is sheer bunk. 76% of U.S. Presidents came from families of 5 or more children. Almost every famous Classical musician came from a family of more than 7. Comparing an upper-income only-child with the 10 children of a dysfunctional family in the "projects" is comparing apples and oranges; intelligence is based on the intelligence and discipline of the parents, not the number of children.

STEWARDSHIP: Look at the famous passage on stewardship: the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Who decided how many talents each servant could steward, the servant or the Master?

TECHNOLOGY IS GOOD. Not necessarily so. The H-bomb is intelligent, highly advanced technology, but that doesn't mean we should blow up the world with it. Simply because technology (such as the Pill) is available doesn't mean we should use it! We must first evaluate the moral ramifications of its use.

WHAT IF I HAVE HEALTH PROBLEMS? There may be exceptions, but are you looking for an excuse, or are you trying to be faithful to God? Although many doctors won't admit it, many female problems would be solved rather than exacerbated by having children.

BIBLE ONLY FOR AGRARIAN COMMUNITY. No, God's principles apply to all cultures. The famous verse about having a "full quiver" of children (Psalm 127:3-5) was written by a politician in a big city and was written about a soldier. The context is not agrarian at all!

SEX ONLY FOR PROCREATION? No, this is the Argumentum ad absurdum fallacy. Notice that there is a difference between sex to avoid children, sex to create children, and uninhibited sex. We believe the Bible teaches that the last of the three is the best! Besides, no matter which of the three approaches you take, you can't help having pleasure, therefore sex by its very nature is not limited to procreation!

A SOVEREIGN GOD CAN OVERRIDE B.C. Let us apply the same logic to another context: suppose a murderer were to say, "I've

bought a knife, and I'm going over to Fred's house to kill him, but if God doesn't want me to kill Fred in cold blood, He will find a way to stop me." This logical progression is exactly the same as that of someone who says they don't know whether B.C. is wrong or not, but that they will do it anyway and God will stop them if it's wrong. This is not a logical position. It is irresponsible to purposefully not decide whether what you're doing is right or wrong! Here's one more question: "Why would God want to give children to someone who doesn't want them?"

CONCLUSION. Given the Bible's pro-children stance and its anti-infertility stance, given the fact that Christians have historically not practiced birth control, given the problems caused by birth control, and given the fact that reasons for using birth control are not valid, it is a reasonable and good conclusion that Christians should not practice birth control.

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by Randy Alcorn (<http://www.epm.org/~ralcorn>).

BIRTH CONTROL - A Bible study

"Kids are a nuisance," is the prevailing attitude of the world. Is this Scriptural?

GOD'S VIEW OF CHILDREN. Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 6:3; 7:13; 13:17b-18, 28:1-4,11. Ruth 4:11-12.

CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING FROM GOD. Psalms 127:3-5; 128. Proverbs 14:1; 17:6. Leviticus 20:20-21.

Childlessness is sometimes a curse. Hosea 9:11-12,14,16; Matthew 19:14.

How does Jesus feel about kids?

If children are really a blessing from God, why do we try to remain "unblessed"?

WHAT'S THE MAIN PURPOSE OF A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE? Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15. There is only one purpose listed here! Genesis 38:6-10; Deut. 25:5-10.

Onan disobeyed God's command to marry his brother's widow in order to produce a child for his brother. The issue was not whether or not he would give offspring, but that he spilled his seed (i.e., practiced contraception) instead of using the Biblical legal procedure for declining the practice of levirate (throwing off his sandal). This is why he was killed. Based on Malachi 2:15, Christians who purposely prevent the conception of any children appear to be in the same precarious position as Onan.

WHAT ABOUT THE "NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING" METHOD? I Corinthians 7:3-5 -- Birth control is not a good reason to abstain from sex. Also, remember what happened to Onan when he tried to use a variant of the NFP method! Leviticus 12:1-5; 20:18 -- God has His own method of "natural family planning." Abstaining from sex during monthly periods actually increases fertility. Does it sound like God wants to prevent children from being conceived? (See Ezekiel 18:5-6 on whether the Leviticus verses are "cultural.")

WHO CONTROLS CONCEPTION? The real issue is not birth control but rather our concept of God. Do you really believe God is sovereign over all things? Genesis 4:25; 16:10; 17:2,20; 20:17-18;

21:1-2; 22:17; 26:4,24; 28:3; 29:31-33; 30:1-2,6,17-18,20,22-23; 41:52; 48:4. Exodus 32:13. Deuteronomy 1:10,11; 28:63; 30:5. Joshua 24:3. Ruth 4:13. I Samuel 1:6,11,19-20; 2:20-21. I Chronicles 27:23. Psalm 100:3; 105:24; 107:38; 139:13,16. Isaiah 26:15; 44:2; 49:5a; 51:2. Jeremiah 30:19; 33:22. Ezekiel 36:10-11,37; 37:26. Luke 1:24-25,57-58. These verses say the increase of the people is generally a result of their obedience to God!

POINTS TO PONDER. I Timothy 5:14 -- Satan can gain ground as a result of women trying to prevent God's blessings. Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:25 -- According to our human logic, not using birth control may seem foolish. What do these verses say about human logic?

Q. If God is sovereign over the womb, why does birth control work?

A. If people are sinning by trying to control conception, why would God want to bless them?

ANSWERING COMMON CONCERNS

I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR A LARGE FAMILY.

Psalm 23:1, 37:25-26, 84:11; Proverbs 3:33, 14:26; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6,19; I Timothy 6:6-10. If children are God's blessing to us, would He not provide what we need to properly take care of each blessing? Note, however, that God provides for the righteous. There are no promises here for the ungodly. Does your concept of provision include such "necessities" as a large home, exotic foods, college savings accounts for each child?

WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF WHAT GOD GIVES US. Matthew 25:14-30. The servants had no control over how many talents they were entrusted with. We are supposed to be good stewards of what God gives us. If the servant who received one talent had begged his master not to entrust him with any at all, do you think the master's reaction would have been any different?

I'M TOO OLD TO HAVE ANY MORE CHILDREN. Genesis 17:17; Luke 1:7.

YOU SHOULD SPEND SOME TIME WITH MY KIDS IF YOU REALLY THINK CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING! We will study

this in depth in another session. For now, suffice it to say that the Bible is full of promises that your children will be a blessing if you exercise good stewardship over the gifts God gives you. This

includes disciplining your children, having a good attitude about them, refraining from such verbal abuse as name-calling, etc., and, most importantly, teaching them

God's ways "...when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:7)
WHAT ABOUT GOD-GIVEN INFERTILITY? You need to examine the situation thoroughly: Is God trying to teach you that He is in control or perhaps that you simply need to rest in Him and wait for His timing? Having to wait a long time to conceive a child will greatly increase your appreciation of the child. Maybe you need to learn that lesson before you are entrusted with a child. Is your infertility a curse resulting from your assumption that you control conception? Infertility is sometimes caused by a past sin such as abortion or using a birth control device that destroys your reproduction ability. God will forgive a truly repentant person for such sins, but you may have to suffer the consequences of your sin. However, God is in complete control of conception and may even heal you of your infertility in this situation. Perhaps God has a different purpose for you: Adoption, or frontier missions work where children would be in danger. Many Godly women in the Bible were barren--Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth.

How does Jesus
feel about kids?

YES!

But Not NOW

By Bethany Vaughn

Some of my comments concerning asking God to hold off a pregnancy..... I am not condemning anyone for asking or even thinking about asking God this...I too have thought many times "HOW Lord, am I supposed to do this??? I am overwhelmed as it is..." This is our own human nature, which is limited and unable to accomplish anything of true value and worth without drawing from the only source of living water--Christ himself! We have to be careful in petitioning God for things that are really problems and struggles that we are having with our flesh. For example...pleading with God to "hold off more children" because "I need a break" or "I can't handle it" or "My body is not in shape yet" or whatever the excuse is. It is not God's responsibility to "hold off"--IT is OUR responsibility to develop the character and the fortitude...the strength and courage to do what God has called us to do. This doesn't just POOF into our life and suddenly we are full of strength...it takes feasting upon the Word of God and drawing forth from it true living strength and character that only comes from God.

In our case, here on QF, submitting our fertility and our children to Almighty God is a strong conviction we hold--a conviction that is tested and tried from time to time for most. Granted there are trials and testings of our faith...but in these, should be a heart that is willing to call out to God for strength. It is not up to Him to deliver our request to "hold off". Rather, it is up to us to humbly seek His grace, cry out for strength and be willing to die to our own selfishness and desires. Not my will but THINE be done!

He knows our bodies. He knows our heart and mind. In most cases, we dwell on the negative and confess..."I can't, I can't, I can't" When we serve the one and true God of "I can!" He flung the universe into existence with a word! He parted the sea, calms storms, instantly heals the lame, sick, deaf and blind. With one word, He can bring down or exalt nations and peoples. In our limited human view, we forget who we serve!

I am not seeking to condemn anyone, for I myself, have thought and cried tears of "I can't!" It is in these times that our character can be built. I, for one, can attest to that. Strong Godly character is forged and is not

attained by easy means or else everyone would have it. It is hard work.

May our heart be so tender that when our feet are put to the fire, we stay the course -- Fearing not the fire but allowing it to purify and develop our character. Most people run when it gets tough. It is not natural (in human terms) to do things that are hard--we want fast food and easy money.

But yet we are not called to walk the easy wide path. I only hope to encourage those who struggle now with this issue of "taking a break from pregnancy" to trust God in this and not try and justify the wants of "I, MYSELF". Our life here on earth is but a vapor in time. It seems we get caught up in the here and now and do not think about the Master plan. Children, pregnancy and fertility are not the ultimate goal or avoidance---It is submitting our lives

to our Creator and letting Him use us to accomplish His will.

I encourage myself all the time by thinking about how my children have been made for Greatness and how God is going to use them for His Kingdom. I pray the legacy I leave behind will last for a long time. For those of you who have read A Full Quiver--I love the page (172) about the legacy of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards: a Vice President of the United States, 80 holders of public office, 100 lawyers, 66 physicians, 30 judges, 3 U.S Senators, governors, college presidents and the list goes on.

I know it is easy to get caught up in all the logistics of what it takes to

have and run a large family but, for me, all of this seems to fade away and become as dust in the wind when I think about my incredible opportunity to impact an entire world for Christ. I do not have time to worry with whether or NOT the house is picture perfect, worry about another pregnancy, or pray for God to "hold off" another child. I have husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, Presidents, Senators, governors, doctors and lawyers, preachers and missionaries, inventors, writers, painters and musicians to train for God's Glory! My prayers are "God, help ME become the woman you need me to be for the tasks you have called me too."

~Bethany Vaughn, former co-moderator, Quiverfull Digest www.quiverfull.com

Chronicles 16: 9 "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

Stepmothering 101

By Denise Cortes

Whenever my husband Michael and I are out and about with our five children, we always get two questions: “Are they all boys?” and “Are these all yours?” Of course, we say yes to both questions, even though I have only given birth to four of these handsome little soldiers. When Michael and I met, nine years ago, I was fortunate to get some mothering practice before I actually started my own family. When Michael and I began dating, he was already a young father of a two year-old boy, Mikey. He was an adorable little sweetie, and we got along right away. On our “dates”, we took Mikey to the park, to the movies, hiking, out to lunch—wherever we happened to be going. I just automatically assumed a motherly role with him, and I used to hold his hand, feed him, dress him, change his diapers, make sure he had his jacket buttoned up and had clean hands. He was quick to give out hugs and kisses. If someone had warned me about dating a man with a child, I probably wouldn’t have listened anyway! The fact that Michael was a caring, loving father was one of the main reasons why I was attracted to him in the first place. Growing up in a divorced home with a very busy father, I always wanted a very involved husband and father for my own children, so to see this young guy changing diapers and lovingly taking his son a bath was very touching.

I wish I could tell you everything was peachy in this arrangement. Yes, our relationship was blossoming, but there was one person I was worried about—Mikey’s mother, Veronica. Right off the bat it was obvious she didn’t like me. As a matter of fact, she hated me. She also cursed me, forbade me to be around her son, and tried to physically assault me. She also took her anger out on Michael and tried to keep their son away from him, she viciously cursed at him in front of their child, there were numerous physical attacks, harassing phone calls, police reports and she even threw a big rock at his truck once! I had never met anyone that acted like that and it was really strange to suddenly have an “enemy”. Yet, oddly enough, I tried to overlook all of this and continued to try and build a relationship with Michael and his son. I knew it wasn’t his fault that his mom behaved the way she did, and even though I wasn’t walking with the Lord at the time, I knew she lacked something...she needed Jesus, as my Nana used to say! Sure, she got on my nerves but not being one for confrontation, I just tried to stay away from her as much as I could. I took comfort that she didn’t *know* me, and she would’ve behaved the same way no matter who Michael was involved with. Although he had a troubled family life and his son’s mother had some serious issues, I felt compelled to encourage him, support him and just pour love over him and his son. All I knew was that I had grown to love Michael, and I wanted to be there for him.

After a year of dating, I got pregnant and we decided to get married (wrong order, I know ☺), and I guess I just figured Veronica would change and get it through her head that Michael was permanently taken and had gone on with his life. Then everything would be better. It only seemed to get worse! We moved from L.A. to Riverside to be closer to my family and to preserve our sanity. Michael and I were now faithfully serving Christ, and we tried to deal with Veronica the best way we knew

how. I clung to a verse in the book of *Proverbs 16:7*, “*When a man’s ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*” We tried our best not to let her behavior toward us influence the way we behaved ourselves. When she realized we got married and had our son Noah, she kept Mikey away from us for nearly ten months, saying that Michael already had a new family so Mikey didn’t need him anymore. It was a time of mixed emotions, as we were enjoying our baby’s first year yet missing Mikey a great deal. I was saddened by the fact that my husband couldn’t see his son, and the fact that I now had my own son made it even more real for me. Still, I was slightly relieved. For a short time, there was some peace. I was so tired of battling Veronica. I was growing to hate her for antagonizing my husband so much, hurting her own son and disrupting my happy family life. Sure, it was easy for me not to have to deal with her ravings, but meanwhile my dear husband was weeping from missing his firstborn. This was the first of many times that I would feel torn about the whole situation. I prayed for the Lord to soften her heart toward Michael and myself and for her to accept Jesus. Yet, ironically, I never thought to pray for the Lord to soften my own heart.

Eventually, she began to let Mikey come and visit us. Thankfully, he was still that sweet, loving little boy, now almost four years old. It took us a while to get reacquainted, for him to get used to us again. It took me a while to get used to Veronica again ☺. We now had to deal with her on an almost daily basis, because she used to call us repeatedly with ridiculous

complaints, demands, and harsh words. We were prevented from seeing him consistently so we took her to family court to establish some basic parental rights and a visitation schedule. We thought that would help us but we were puzzled as to how to actually enforce it because the courts function under the assumption that both parents are mentally stable. She chose not to attend court and we were given reasonable visitation rights. The Friday night following the court date when we went to give her the judge’s order, she physically attacked Michael and tried to wrench Mikey from his arms because she was angry that we did not give her enough money. (This is how it usually worked out before—

Michael giving her some money and her letting him see his son). She ripped up the court order and threw it on the floor. As I sat in our car nursing four month-old Diego, I knew it was best to not interfere, but I couldn’t take it anymore! I got out and ignored her screaming horrible words at me and called out to Michael. By now her mother was outside screaming words (in Spanish so I couldn’t understand them anyway). What they didn’t see was their own child whimpering and crying as he was being pulled back and forth. It was so sad! The night ended with the police bringing Mikey to our car and as we drove off, they were escorting his mother out in handcuffs, swearing and spitting out some insults about our “faith”. She stayed in jail for three days, and she still managed to call and harass Michael from jail! Anyhow, that episode increased the tension between us (if that was possible) but it also made her grudgingly cooperate with us every other weekend.

Throughout the years, we had grown accustomed to Veronica and her quick temper, dishonesty, and manipulating. We just kept pressing forward. I won’t say that we poured Christian love over her at every opportunity, but we just endured the fact that we had to co-parent with this woman. At every opportunity, we tried to instill the love of God in Mikey’s heart. We tried to show him how much we loved him and thought of him despite what he was being told. Meanwhile, our family kept growing. Each subsequent child we had was met with much hostility and the snide comment, “How can you have another baby? You can’t even take care of your firstborn!” As far as I was concerned, this

Right off the bat it was obvious she didn’t like me. As a matter of fact, she hated me. As a matter of fact, she hated me.

woman continued to be the only black stain on the cloth of my marriage. Whenever the phone would ring late at night or I would hear her voice on our machine, I would get worked up. When Mikey's Friday would roll around, I found myself dreading the weekend because there was always some kind of static involving something his brothers had that he didn't, his new shoes got dirty (you try keeping them clean living in Mira Loma), why'd we tell him his mom was "going to hell" because she was living with her boyfriend (which, btw, we did not tell him to say!), he was missing his belt--would he even be home for us to pick him up? I know these seem like little issues, but there had been a build-up throughout the years, and I was growing increasingly bitter about the whole thing. For such a long time I had tried to overlook her behavior and not let that influence how I treated her and my stepson. Yet, she was not accountable to anyone and continued with her bad ways. Whether I was nice or hateful, she always acted the same terrible way. I didn't feel like bothering anymore. I prayed, "Why even try, Lord? She still hasn't changed. Look at the horrible things she does to my family and me! Surely you don't expect me to turn the other cheek?!" I tried to justify why I despised her so much by the things she had done. She tortured my husband to the point where I thought he would explode, my boys would cry because they wanted to see their brother...she was lucky she had to deal with a sane person like me, someone who didn't mistreat her son despite all of her antics. She didn't deserve an ounce of courtesy or respect—I was fed up! I must confess to unChristian-like conduct. I badmouthed her. I wished something bad

happened to her. Whenever she called, I was annoyed and rude with her. Of course, this only

made a bad situation worse. Now, Mikey was distancing himself from me too. There was a degree of tension whenever he came to stay

with us. He was now struggling with divided loyalties. There were times when he would get in the car and say hi to everyone else

but me. It also took him a long time to let his guard down and embrace my side of the family because he was always told that they were not his family. It seemed Michael and I would have the most terrible arguments whenever he came over. They were usually about the fact that his mother hated me and had said so many bad things about me, but when she needed a free babysitter I was the obvious candidate, since I didn't have a job and "stayed home and didn't do anything" (her words exactly).☺ Since Solomon's birth, the fact that we now had three other children under the age of three didn't help. I didn't want to take care of Mikey when I knew I had my own plate very full and I would have to deal with her two, three times a day when she called to "check on him". This was a very sore spot for me. However, for my husband it meant more time with his son. I felt bad about it, but I felt it was more important to stand up for my own rights, because my husband obviously wasn't looking out for me! Now, we all know the bad outcome that results from that line of thinking ☹. I asked God for forgiveness and prayed that I would be able to pour love over my husband's child. In my heart I knew it wasn't right, and that I was being selfish. This poor little boy didn't ask to be put in this type of situation, and he deserved to be with his father at every opportunity. *What else did I expect when I signed up for this job? My heart knew that I had to do all things unto the Lord, and not to look for my earthly reward.*

Thinking we might find favor in the eyes of Family court, we decided to take Veronica back to modify our visitation order. It was a last resort. If it was possible, things were getting worse.

Mikey was no longer eager to come and see his daddy, and he often called to make excuses why he wanted to stay home (birthday parties, new video games to play, Disneyland, etc.). When he was with us, he would act sleepy, withdrawn, whiney, and he would constantly hover around the phone whenever it would ring. To add to that, Michael wasn't allowed to communicate with him at all during the week because he was denied phone access. So, this put even further distance between us. I encouraged Michael to write letters to Mikey, which he always did during their times of separation. I don't know if he ever got them, though. The time came for the birth of our fifth son, and Cyan's debut happened to coincide with Mikey's vacation and the time he usually spent with us. Veronica abruptly decided that she didn't want Michael to be involved in Mikey's life anymore, and she informed him that he wasn't needed as a father. It was a confusing time, and not knowing what else to do. As much as I'd like to say that I was a quiet and supportive wife, eagerly submitting to my husband's decisions ☺...well, I guess I felt my opinions and ideas as to how to handle the whole ordeal were better than his. He let too many things slide! It would drive me nuts to see him stick his neck out further and further to accommodate her, only to have her try to snap it off. But deep down, I knew his stance was right. He was doing what a parent should for their child. This was something I often lost sight of—he wasn't doing it for her, but for his son. I wouldn't have expected anything less for my own sons, would I?

After Veronica refused to accept the court papers that were served to her one night (she denied her identity so the server was forced to

leave the papers outside her door), she bluntly stated that she would not cooperate,

she would not attend mediation or the session before the

judge. The next few weekends Mikey wasn't allowed to come to our house, but one night we got a phone call from Veronica's

mother. She told Michael that Veronica had suffered a miscarriage, and that she was in the hospital hemorrhaging so

severely that she needed transfusions. She wanted us to pick up Mikey and take care of him. When he was with us, he cried and was so worried about his mom. We tried to console him and lift her up in prayer. The amazing thing to come out of this awful situation was that Michael decided to call her hospital room to see how she was doing and she let him pray for her!! Wow, that was a miracle in itself! She was released from the hospital after a couple of weeks but the court date still loomed ahead. She stood by her stance not to attend. She was angry about the stipulations in the court order that we were asking for. We wanted more time with Mikey. We also wanted the judge to order a 50/50 split in all uncovered medical/dental costs and also for her to share in the driving time for visitation (driving back and forth averaged 500 miles a month). She asked Michael to tell the judge she couldn't make it because she was recently hospitalized, but he told her that was her responsibility. On the day of their mediation, she didn't show, therefore canceling out any negotiation. Everything would now have to be decided by the judge, who would probably be biased toward her and decide our fates in a mere matter of minutes. I kind of hoped she wouldn't show for the hearing, because that would make it easy and the judge would agree to everything we asked for if she wasn't there to dispute it—and I wouldn't have to see her face! I sat out in the hall with our youngest, who was now seven months

...but when she needed a free babysitter

I was the obvious candidate, since I didn't have a job and "stayed home and didn't do anything"

old. She decided to show up, although a half hour late. I bit all of my nails off as I sat there, knowing that the judge would do the right thing. Ha! When Michael came out with a bulging vein in his forehead and grabbed the car seat, I knew the outcome wasn't good. Nothing had changed. The judge decided that the original order was still in effect, with the exception of splitting medical fees.

This is where the story gets interesting.

I was a little scared of the whole idea, but I lifted up everything to the Lord. I repented of my controlling and hateful spirit toward Michael and Veronica. I prayed that the Lord would fill me with His Spirit so that I would be able to show kindness to this woman, to their son. In the midst of all this, the Lord brought my own children to mind. They were also suffering and I dreaded

to think about what the future held for Mikey if we continued on the path we were on, and how that would influence four little boys who loved him dearly and looked up to him. Within a couple of days, Michael let me know that he had spoken to Veronica and asked her about going out to dinner the following Friday. Whoa—that soon, Lord?! I was hoping for a little time to get the love flowing!

When the Friday night came, I was a little nervous as I dressed the children and got them ready to go. We thought that taking the children along would ease the tension and that they would enjoy the company of Mikey's little sister, who was close in age to our boys. Believe me, the enemy was working overtime in my head the whole time. I kept seeing Veronica go into one of her rages and start yelling and cursing at us in front of the children, and yanking Mikey out of the restaurant. I didn't want to subject my children to that. Michael eased my mind and encouraged me to have faith that the Lord would protect our family. As we pulled into her driveway, Veronica came out to the car and explained that she was tired and would pass on dinner. I breathed a tiny sigh of relief! When Mikey got in the car, him and his father decided to call his mom one more time to see if she would reconsider. She decided to meet us at a restaurant with her daughter. The Lord provided us with a nice, quiet, and empty (on a Friday night near LAX!) place. We got the children situated and ordered. It was the most totally surreal thing that has ever happened to me. It was almost as if there was a different person sitting at the table with us. The nasty, mean scowl that Veronica wore every time she saw me was gone. She smiled as we ate and chatted about old friends, family and the children. Mikey was evidently nervous too, looking at his mom, then his dad, then me, then back at his mom! I really wanted the evening to be special for him, for him to see that his parents and stepmom could actually be nice to one another. I was quiet, but smiling, and tried to tend to the children who were really excited about the whole event. Noah, my oldest, had prayed diligently for Veronica, that "she would be nice to my daddy and behave and let Mikey come over and to stop arguing all the time". Why wouldn't the Lord honor that sweet, earnest prayer from his pure little heart? Toward the end of dinner, Michael brought up a topic that he knew I would have to comment on—homebirth—right when he decided to get up and take a little walk outside with the children, leaving the baby and me with her at the table. She asked if I actually "wanted" to have my babies at home, or was it an accident! It was at this time that she opened up and shared with me what happened to her during her recent miscarriage. This was her second in a matter of months. She was already five in a half months along and showing when she got up in the middle of the night and started cramping and bleeding heavily. It was so sad

Michael and I talked about our "defeat", and how she would act like she had the upper hand. We had already tried to do things our way, and where did that get us? Wouldn't it be radical to totally humble ourselves and invite her and her boyfriend out to dinner and act like civilized human beings?

to hear her describe how she had to give birth to her tiny son while the nurses were commanding her stop pushing. I felt much compassion for her when she confided how she still wanted to try to have another baby and hopefully stop working to stay home with her children. It was strange, almost as if I was talking to another person. As we drove home that night, Mikey had an unbelievable smile on his face. He looked peaceful. I have to add something else to this amazing tale. Two days after our dinner together, we had to arrange to bring Mikey back home since his mother was going to be at his cousin's birthday party at Chuck E. Cheese. We decided to take him directly there and let the children have more time playing together. Veronica's entire family was there, and they seemed very friendly, encouraging us to sit with them where the party was taking place. I was a little

uneasy having to meet Veronica's sisters and mother. I can only imagine the things they must have heard about me! ☺ Everyone was quite interested in our little family ("Wow? Five boys?! That's it, right?"). As we walked back to our van with Veronica to give her Mikey's Christmas gifts (it was a week before Christmas), we talked about visitation arrangements during the

holiday season. At the van, we pulled out two additional gifts and handed them to Veronica.

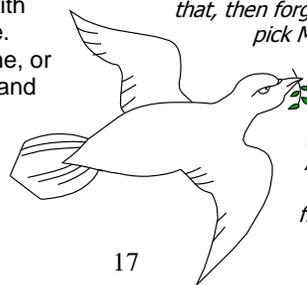
She seemed a little off-guard when Michael told her that one was for her daughter and the other was for her. The day before I was finishing my crafts and such for our family gift exchange, the Lord put it on my heart to make a little gift basket for her. Whoa—when the Lord decides to fill up your cup with love, He causes it to overflow! Even Michael was surprised. It felt good to do something for her, despite all we had been through. I know that had to be the work of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, because anything I could do on my own would be a useless show.

That was five months ago. Things have been going well between us. There has been much cooperation and consideration. I can't say that I am chummy with Veronica, but I no longer grind my teeth and flare my nostrils when I see her name on my caller id. This is a testimony of how the Lord can use nasty, never-ending grievous situations and use it for His glory. I used to think this woman was a thorn on my side. I see now that the Lord needed to expose my own self-righteous attitude. I also needed to realize that He gave me a gift when I became a stepmother because I have gained another son in whom I have the awesome privilege of imparting God's truth and love. To God be the glory!

POSTNOTE;

Here's something very interesting. Right after I emailed that story about the whole stepfamily deal--WHAM--Mikey's mom decides to switch faces (I know she has a trunkload of them somewhere). Due to his working hours, Michael can't pick up Mikey on Friday nights anymore, so he told Veronica that he would pick him up on Saturday morning (usually 6 am because they go hiking afterwards). She refused the Saturday pick-up. She told Michael that the court said Friday night, so if he couldn't do that, then forget the whole weekend. So she is not allowing Michael to pick Mikey up.

Don't know why her attitude has changed after 6-7 months of cooperation. I know! It was that story I wrote! Right after I claim victory in this area, that old sneaky serpent decides he wants to sift the Cortes family! Anyhow, keep us in prayer. Michael is letting the issue go for now, leaving it in the Lord's hands. We're not going to fight with her about it this time.



On Pregnancy, Health & Diet

By Trish Evans

It is probably confusing and frustrating for the average mom to determine what is the best food to feed herself and her family for optimum health. So many diets and health info out there that it could make one's head spin. So much of the information is contradictory as well, that it is hard to reconcile everything. I am truly hoping to offer something here that will make sense and make references to information that provides families with choices to address specific health concerns.

Bottom line: We all need to seek the Lord and His wisdom for what He wants us to eat and feed our children. He created our bodies and knows the unique metabolic makeup of each one of us. What might work for someone else might not work for us, what might work for us might not work for our children or a specific child as our bodies all have different needs. Some of my children ask for protein foods more than grains and others ask for grains and won't touch protein foods.

Some eat a lot more fruit and some will eat raw veggies, but not as much fruit. The US RDA just won't work as a one size fits all for nutritional requirements. There are 100-year-old men and women out there that have smoked stogies and eaten ice cream all their lives and are still going strong. There are 35-year-old men

and women out there that have eaten raw fruits and veggies and top notch grains and are suffering chronic conditions. Why?

"You are what you eat..." Remember this saying from elementary school health class? So many folks out there have decided it's not true, especially many Christians who love to remind us that it's "not what goes into the body that defiles a man but what comes out" and that God told Peter to eat all the unclean foods, even though God was using that to tell him to go preach to the gentiles (Acts). God has not made "clean" most of the junk on grocery store shelves and His principle of reaping what you sow still applies to what we put into our bodies.

So what to eat? Many of you have read about eating all raw foods. There are people whose bodies thrive on that diet. There are a large number of testimonials from those who have been cured from cancer and other chronic conditions eating this way or as per the hallelujah acres diet (<http://www.hacres.com>) which allows for grains and cooked foods for a portion of the diet. But...there are others who have developed other health problems eating this way long term because they were missing nutrients or synergistic components that their bodies required.

Everyone's requirements are different. One such family has started an alternative to h. acres called Weigh of

Wisdom workshop (<http://www.weighofwisdom.com>). They were h. acres health ministers for six years when they started slowing down. Their children were not growing properly and developing problems. Their baby was born with dental conditions that the other pre-meatless pregnancy children didn't have. This is NOT to say that all babies raised on a H. acres diet will have problems. That's where seeking God comes in. Their basic food premise is similar to h. acres but they have added organic, "clean" meats in based on an individual's assessment of need based on how you feel.

Both these eating lifestyles (rather than calling them "diets") are based on eliminating empty foods, refined flours, pastas and sugars and all other foods that have ingredients that you cannot pronounce as well as increasing consumption of real foods the way God made them. La Leche League sums it up best in their recommendation: ***Eat whole foods in as close to their natural state as possible.*** Is grocery store milk "natural"? No. It has been pasteurized at heats that destroy enzymes. It has been homogenized to separate fat particles into tiny things that now go through our bloodstream and adhere to the walls just so it won't



Pregnant Mommy eating breakfast by Noah Evans, 8

separate and have the cream at the top (appearance). The cows have been fed antibiotics and growth hormones. This is no longer a "natural" product. But, if you had a cow in your backyard or knew someone who did and they milked the cow in clean conditions and stored the milk properly to avoid infection and you drank it, it would be a natural product. The same goes for goat's milk, which is easier for humans

to digest anyways. But store bought goat's milk has the same problems. Check out www.organicpastures.com and <http://www.realmilk.com> for info on the difference between store bought and real dairy products. Durham wheat semolina pasta is refined flour. It is not healthy. 100% whole wheat, quinoa, spelt, corn or unrefined brown rice flour pastas are better. Oatmeal made from oats and flavored at home rather than Quaker packets with other stuff in is a better choice.

On pregnancy and diet. A friend of mine has written an article following on her recent experiences. Please take note of how one doctor's advise could have cost her her life.

On Adkins. I know many have lost a lot of weight on this diet, but is it healthful for the long haul? Jesus said He was the Bread of Life. He ate lots of bread during his earthly ministry. God gave the recipe for Ezekial 4:9 bread (I guess I don't need to give the scripture reference for that one ☺) Does God say bread is bad? I don't think so. Should you live on it? Probably not, although Jesus' reference to Himself would imply you could since He is all we need. God gave manna in the wilderness. The quail

was to satisfy their meat cravings. The manna was all they needed nutritionally.

On Fit for Life diet: Their premise is fruit only until noon to help elimination, eat meat or carbs with vegetables and not together at same meal for swifter digestion and better absorption. Excellent recommendations, although Jesus ate bread and fish together at the same meal so while the diet will help greatly, it is not God's mandate for life.

I have people ask me if I eat 100% on any of these diets. No. 100% implies no variation. It says I go to Chuck E. Cheese for a birthday party and have a salad with olive oil on it. Not. I eat pizza, cake and ice cream and enjoy the party. I have mud pie and greasy appetizers when at Claim Jumper. What about at home? I eat pretty much along the lines of the Weigh of Wisdom principles for the most part. I also incorporate some Fit for Life; I have fruit smoothie and carrot/celery/parsley/apple juice before lunch. As I am pregnant (due in December) I also eat along craving lines. I'm not having food aversions per se, but there are some things that sound good at certain times and then in two weeks it's not something I want. For example: Chips with salsa & either cream cheese or sour cream mixed together were mighty tasty for a couple weeks. Granted these were Trader Joe's organic tortilla rounds, and organic salsa, cream cheese, and sour cream so it's not as unhealthy as it might sound. Organic cheeses were very tasty for a few weeks, now it's back to take it or leave it and this is from someone who doesn't crave cheese under normal circumstances. Tamales with a dollop of sour cream were great for a time. Potatoes are a biggie for different times during my most recent pregnancies. This all probably sounds high fat and unhealthy, but keep in mind we are talking about someone who is drinking a gallon of fruit smoothie and carrot juice daily along with at least one salad. Trust your body's wisdom, unless it's telling you to have ten Kit Kats (I admit I've had a few, but I try to keep the chocolate cravings in check or at least eat a more "healthy" chocolate, without all the other ingredients ☺).

On liver flushes: I did two liver flushes before getting pregnant. I passed gallstones, lots of them. I have not had hardly any nausea and have not barfed at all this time around. I highly recommend it. The AMA medical journal says the majority of women of childbearing age have gallstones, whether or not they are suffering any symptoms. Gallstones are bile and cholesterol adhered together. They resemble green peas when passed. Many people are squeamish at the thought of doing a flush, but let me tell you, it sure beats the alternative. Having morning sickness for months on end or having your gallbladder removed doesn't sound fun. The flush I did was a mere two days. There are some that are slower and not as intense, but one has to be more disciplined to follow through for longer time periods. This flush is recommended even for those that have had their gallbladder removed because it is still great for the liver

and colon. Full details can be found at <http://www.drkelley.com> and more great info and flush recipes at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/curezone/>. This is a great place to read health info and what has worked for a variety of people with different health concerns.

I hope this has helped eliminate some confusion. Seek the Lord and serve whole foods. Ask your children what their preferences are. I know that some families say everyone should eat what is served them because mom is not running a restaurant but at least see where choices can be offered at each meal to accommodate different needs and desires. We are not all from the same cookie cutter model and shouldn't eat that way. "Food is for the body and the body is for food, but both will be destroyed in the end", but this is not to say that eating according to needs and preferences within healthy choices will not produce happier, healthier children and families. As for us moms, we need to eat well, exercise and stay on top of the game to be at our best for our families since so much seems to be riding on our health and attitudes and it is so affected by our general health.

Toxemia and pregnancy

By Laura Weiss

Toxemia is a very serious illness of pregnancy, which has three factors. High blood pressure, swelling (edema) and protein in the urine. During my 17th week of this pregnancy I started having high blood pressure. I knew something was going on with me because I was seeing "stars" and felt very tired and out of breathe with little activity, I was also having chest pains. I went to the hospital to get checked out and they told me my blood pressure was 167/98 this is extremely high for me. My normal blood pressure is 117/60.

In my previous four pregnancies I followed Dr. Brewster's diet advice and have never had problems of any kind during pregnancy or delivery.

I went to my obstetrician's office. He told me to go on a very extreme diet of no carbohydrates, no fruit, no sugar, no fats and no salt. This is more extreme than even the Adkins diet which allows 30 grams of carbohydrates a day. I did it because he told me I could possibly die if I did not follow his advice. After a few days I began to suffer from extreme headaches where I would see "stars" and have severe nausea and vomiting. They were unbearable and when I asked my OB's advice he gave me a prescription for Vicodin (hydrocodone APAP) and said they would get better with time. After two or three more days I woke up in the morning and my children told me my breath smelled like orange juice. Having a diabetic father I knew this was a very bad sign and an indication of Ketosis. I tested my blood sugar (fasting), which was high at this point. Something I have never experienced before.

Expect to eat more if expecting boy

A report in the current BMJ medical journal says that male babies signal their mothers early in pregnancy to begin eating more. A Research study based on 244 pregnant women found that women carrying boys took in 10% more calories, 8% more protein, 9% more carbohydrates, 11% more animal fats and 15% more vegetable fats. Testosterone given off by male babies might be the signal. The extra calories did not affect maternal weight gain but the baby boys averaged 3.5 ounces more than the girls.

shredded wheat, wheat germ, oatmeal, buckwheat or whole wheat pancakes, corn bread, corn tortillas, corn or bran or whole wheat muffins, waffles, brown rice.

6. Two choices from: a whole potato (any style), large green pepper, grapefruit, lemon, lime, papaya, tomato (one piece of fruit, or one large glass of

On the advice of a friend who also happens to be a Bradley instructor I called Dr. Tom Brewer at <http://www.blueribbonbaby.org> He spent over two hours on the phone getting a complete medical history from me and asking me detailed questions about my previous pregnancies and my miscarriage from last December. He asked me what my dr. was doing for me and when I described the diet he then told me the list of symptoms I was having. He told me that because I had deprived my body of all sugars and carbohydrates my glycogen had shot up and that's what was happening.

He was a little surprised that I had followed his diet before and was not doing it this time, basically I got off track through family stresses and a trip out of the country. I know now to take it more seriously and to be more diligent.

A word about the carbohydrates. Dr. Brewer said to me "Yes I want you to eat carbohydrates but that doesn't mean I want you to eat white breads and pasta and rice". He stresses the importance of calorie dense foods. Those who have a lot of nutrients per calorie, not just empty calories. He recommended Ezekiel \$9 bread and whole grain pastas and brown rice in five servings daily.

Here is an outline of the Dr. Brewer for Low-risk and High-risk pregnancies. You can also find it on his website with a lot of other god health information.

Every day of the week, you and your baby must have:

1. One quart (4 cups) of milk. Any kind will do: whole milk, low fat, skim, powdered, or buttermilk. If you do not like milk, you can substitute one cup of yogurt for each cup of milk.
2. Two eggs.
3. One or two servings of fish, shellfish, chicken or turkey, lean beef, veal, lamb, pork, liver or kidney.



Asaph's Orange

Alternative combinations include:

- * Rice with beans, cheese, sesame, milk
- * Cornmeal with beans, cheese, tofu, milk.
- * Beans with rice, bulgur, cornmeal, wheat noodles sesame seeds, milk.
- * Peanuts with: sunflower seeds, milk.
- * Whole wheat bread or noodles with: beans, cheese, peanut butter, milk, tofu.

For each serving of meat, you can substitute these quantities of cheese:

Brick	4 oz.	Longhorn	3 oz.
<u>Camembert</u>	6 oz.	Muenster	4 oz.
Cheddar	3 oz.	Monterey Jack	4 oz.
Cottage	6 oz.	Swiss	3 oz.

4. One or two servings of fresh, green, leafy vegetables: mustard, beet, collard, dandelion or turnip greens, spinach, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, kale, Swiss chard.
5. Five servings of whole grain breads, rolls, cereals or pancakes: wheatena, 100% bran flakes, granola,

juice).

7. Three pats of butter.

Also include in your diet, in addition to the above (i.e., don't count one food in two categories):

1. A yellow- or orange-colored vegetable or fruit five times a week.
2. Liver once a week, if you like it.
3. Table salt: SALT YOUR FOOD TO TASTE
4. Water: Drink to thirst.

A word on milk and salt, there are good articles on his website explaining his views on milk and salt and other alternative food selections. He also has an article on the use of rice milk or soy milk instead of cow or goat milk. But for someone who has never eaten healthy, it is better just to have her buy milk of any kind than none at all.

Dr. Brewer also stated that in case of high blood pressure in pregnant women it is important to order a kidney and liver function test to rule out nephritis before diagnosing it as toxemia. (A close friend of mine lost her kidneys to this terrible disease) Also the high blood

pressure alone is not enough to diagnose toxemia but needs to be coupled with the edema and protein in the urine. A trace amount of protein is usually OK and perhaps only an indication that protein needs to be boosted slightly in the diet.

He asked me to stress to other women if they had any questions at all to feel free to call him on his hotline. He answers the phone himself and is a very loving and caring man.

Pregnancy Hotline: (802) 388-0276

After following Dr. Brewers suggestions for a week my blood pressure has returned to 117/65 and energy and stamina has increased, the headaches are slowly going away and I am sleeping better.~*Laura Weiss*

Vitamin C Reduces Labor Pain By Half!

By
Jenny Silliman

VITAMIN C REDUCES LABOR PAIN! Excerpt taken from the book: "**Prescription for Nutritional Healing**" 1933, 1990 by Dr. Balch, Page 269: "Nutritional Health in Pregnancy". Vitamin C, suggested dosage 1,000 to 4,000 mg each hour before delivery [during labor] Comments: Large doses of Vitamin C taken before delivery may help reduce labor pain by 50

percent."

I wanted to share about this wonderful "home remedy." You might want to consider taking Vitamin C for your next baby's birth--or pass on this remarkable help for someone you know who is expecting. Vitamin C is harmless as it is water soluble and any extra, that your system doesn't need, simply comes out in your urine. I bought a big bottle of Kirkland Vitamin C at Costco and took 3,000 mg every hour on the hour when labor began. It was so terrific for me and my friend that we both felt we wanted to tell the world!!!

MY FRIEND'S VITAMIN C STORY! A few weeks before I was due with Luke (who is 3 years old now) I had Vitamin C recommended to me by my friend, Kathie Niclas. She told me her story in her lovely New Zealand accent: "Vitamin C actually made labor quite bearable. When I was in labor with our 6th child I took Vitamin C every hour and I didn't think I was really in active labor yet. My husband and I walked the halls of the hospital and I felt I could walk a mile. My husband finally insisted I get to the hospital bed. About ten minutes later I delivered Katie Clair!"

RECOMMENDED BY MIDWIFE! I checked it out with a very experienced midwife of about 25 years in central CA that is also an herbalist. She gave her recommendation for Vitamin C during labor and explained why it worked. Apparently the Vitamin C inhibits the release of prostaglandins--though this does not have any adverse effects on labor, baby or mother. It is nice to understand WHY it works! Also was good to know there was only the one side effect of possibly loosening the bowels. (This may be beneficial and enhance labor anyway.) Her name is Terri Snyder if you want to e-mail her: termar@sierratel.com She is a Christian full of faith and trust in the Lord Jesus for the natural birth process. She writes for Shonda Parker's health magazine.

JENNY'S VITAMIN C IN LABOR STORY! When I was due with Luke in 1999 our friend, Kathie Niclas, shared about the wonderful effects of Vitamin C in labor. We read the information for ourselves in the book "Prescription for Nutritional Healing." My husband and I prayed about it and talked to our midwife, and felt peaceful about it, so we decided I would go ahead and use Vitamin C. When I started labor mid-day on October 25th, every hour on the hour I swallowed 3,000 mg of Vitamin C.

During early labor I puttered around the house and took an afternoon nap with our 2 year old. I woke up with steady contractions, but they were still the kind you could talk through so I thought things weren't progressing very fast. At about 6 o'clock I made some phone calls to share the exciting news that I was in labor and to ask for prayer. I was on the phone for about an hour and was not very uncomfortable, though the contractions were steady and sometimes I would pause and take a deep breath.

Our daughter called me to the table when dinner was served at 7 p.m. I sat at the supper table with my family (5 sons and 1 daughter) and I even ate a little bit. The labor pains were then hard enough I would have to ask for quiet and stop for a minute and close my eyes and concentrate on relaxing. As I labored right there at the table our boys were full of questions. In between contractions I explained how labor is like squeezing a sock to push out a cantaloupe. (Sometimes it feels more like a basketball!) I remember telling my family how labor wasn't progressing very fast and I thought I would labor into the night. I said: "I'll probably have this baby after midnight so the birthdate will be tomorrow's date." I had had six home births and from my experience that's how it seemed to me!

The boys did the dishes and Cliff and Valerie went into the

bedroom to get things ready with a woman friend who was helping us. I got up from the table to use the restroom to have a bowel movement and I almost didn't make it out of the bathroom as I discovered I was in transition! At eight o'clock the boys heard a baby cry and looked at one another in amazement and disbelief.

We praised God for His gracious provision of Vitamin C and such a beautiful home birth. I WAS SO AMAZED AT HOW THE PAINS WERE LITERALLY CUT IN HALF! Our baby weighed over 11 pounds, I was 41 years old and he's our seventh child, but hands down, believe it or not--this birth was the EASIEST of all. Vitamin C also eased the afterbirth pains (which are sometimes SO painful.) Terrific!

PASS IT ON! Cliff and I have shared our story with anyone who would listen--the pregnant woman at the bank, women at church and friends far and near and they all say the same thing. "Wonderful!" or "It worked!" "We should tell everyone about this!" So that's exactly what I'm doing. Pass this info on to anyone you know who is expecting a baby. If you try it, e-mail me your experience, ok? By the way, we would consider it an honor if you would let Cliff and I pray for your birth. E-mail me with your due date.

Feel free to call us any time of day or night, ok?

Love in Jesus, Jenny jennysilliman@juno.com Phone: (360) 681-2611 www.jenny.hwmagazine.org
Cliff and Jenny Silliman, 931 S 7th, Sequim, WA 98382
Dan 20 Val 18 David 16 Mike 12 Josh 10 Stephen 5 Luke 3 and Peter born 3-27-03. Jenny is 45 years old, has been birthing and mothering for over twenty years, and is delighted to share anything in her life that is an encouragement to other mothers. All eight children have been home birthed and the Sillimans home school and home church also. To receive Jenny's e-newsletter simply send a blank e-mail to this address: jennysjournal-subscribe@associate.com

Immunizations and What's In Them

By Sharalyn Griffin

Hello, and thank you for taking a minute to read this article. (okay, it may take 5 minutes) As the title suggests, this article is about immunizations, but before you commence the eye-rolling and sighing, please press on and read the whole article - a few minutes of your time is all I ask. I promise to stick to the documented facts and keep this short. If you are like me, you are diligently protective of your child(ren), and you may have already begun the daunting task of researching all the immunizations every doctor tells you your child cannot live without. If so, great - this is a highly debated issue, and you likely found as many pro-immunization articles as you did anti articles. If not, this should prove eye-opening. In either case, please do not only refer to this article in your research. Check up on what I have written and protect yourself in any decision you make. For us, the astounding amount of pro vs. anti - immunization information was overwhelming. We debated for weeks and months over our decision, and every time we decided, we found yet another article that disputed

our decision. Let me share with you the information that finally made the choice clear for us; information provided directly by Merck - the biggest pharmaceutical company and largest producer/distributor of childhood vaccines.

After all the arguments and clinical studies, in the end, we asked a simple question, "what exactly IS in these shots?" Boy did we open another can of worms. Thankfully, this can only had one side: no disputes, no arguments, no difficult to understand clinical trials, just facts. In the interest of time, I will just highlight a few of the ingredients: Formaldehyde (used in embalming), thimerosal (nearly 50% mercury and linked to autism), aluminum phosphate (toxic and carcinogenic), antibiotics, phenols (corrosive to skin and toxic), aluminum salts (corrosive to tissue and neurotoxic), methanol (toxic), isopropyl (toxic), 2-phenoxyethanol (toxic), live viruses, and many, many others. In addition, each shot must have a medium: for this, makers use chick embryos, washed sheep red blood cells, porcine (pig) pancreatic hydrolysate of casein, VERO cells (a continuous line of monkey kidney cells), freeze dried polysaccharide antigens from Neisseria Meningitidis, fetal rhesus monkey lung cells, or my personal favorite, human diploid cells (originating from human aborted fetal tissue). This last ingredient concerns me the most, since the inclusion of such cells is, to us,

morally wrong. According to Merck, two "fetuses" (babies) were aborted in the early 1960's for the purpose of harvesting their cells to create vaccines. These two cell lines still exist, with diploid cells being grown and harvested over and over for the manufacturing of said immunizations. I compared the dates once, finding that these babies were aborted before Roe v. Wade, which makes it illegal, as well as ethically wrong.

Finally, According to IVAC, (Illinois Vaccine Awareness Coalition 708-848-0116) all vaccines contain monosodium glutamate even if not listed in product insert. According to numerous sources, all vaccines contain thimerosal (mercury). Manufacturers have declared that it is not possible to produce any vaccine without these two components. If you would like these facts for yourself, Merck has provided a phone number: 1-800-672-6372. Ask for a list of the ingredients in their vaccines. You might

also try Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories at 1-800-934-5556, SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals at 1-800-366-8900 ext. 5231, Connaught Laboratories at 1-800-822-2463, Lederle Laboratories at 1-800-934-5556, and Medeva Pharmaceuticals at 1-888-MEDEVA. (716)274-5300. I strongly recommend that you keep a professional tone. These people will be so much more cooperative if they don't feel accused. You are simply gathering information and you wanted it directly from the source.

"Great." you say. "What now?" I suggest that you go to war for your kids. Proverbs tells us that "a wise man sees trouble coming and prepares for it." Let's get wise about our children, but we must do it within the laws of our land. The following advice I got from an article by Dr. Joseph Mercola (www.mercola.com):

1) "Nobody, anywhere or any time and under any circumstances has the right or power in this country to immunize you or your children against your will and conviction."

2) "Child neglect is the one legal point you want to avoid at all costs. No legal parent or guardian can be charged with neglect unless he shows complete lack of concern or action to be more informed. Stripped of legal jargon, this simply means that if you can show that you have investigated the

situation, have come to a specific decision concerning immunizations, and have informed the authorities of the same, no neglect charge can be brought. Neglect can be brought only when it can be shown that you have failed to have your children immunized, not out of respect for their medical or spiritual integrity, but only because you were too concerned with other matters."

3) No school can deny your child(ren) enrollment based on immunizations, but "you must send a letter to the school to inform the education officials of your stand. A phone call is not legal. It can be a note from your doctor, minister, or a notarized letter from you stating your sincere objections to the immunization."

My personal recommendation? Educate yourselves on

New book, Vaccines Derived from Abortion - Making an Informed Choice is now available for ordering at: www.cogforlife.org In this explosive 390 page book author Jameson T. Taylor tears down the veils of secrecy concerning vaccines cultivated on aborted fetal tissue in an astonishing story of scandal, lies and deception. The book also takes a look at vaccine injury, politics and greed of the pharmaceutical industry and federal officials

Dr. Sherri Tenpenny's new video, "What CDC Documents & Science Reveal," has finally arrived! This video is a must-see for anyone who wants scientific backing for choosing not to vaccinate. It is an excellent reference for defending your vaccination position with teachers, in-laws and the family pediatrician! The 120 minute studio presentation includes:

- Why vaccines have never been proven safe.
- How studies done on vaccines are flawed.
- The illnesses vaccines contribute to, including auto-immune diseases, allergies, ear infections and more.
- Vaccine ingredients and contaminants and how they can be a detriment to your health.

Here is what professionals are saying:

"Dr. Sherri Tenpenny has excellent insight and a unique ability to organize and present material regarding the very complex picture of vaccine safety." --Dr. Stephanie Cave

"Dr. Sherri Tenpenny's reputation as a leading expert on vaccine issues is well-deserved. This presentation contains truths you absolutely need to hear to protect your health and the health of your loved ones." --Dr. Joseph Mercola

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behalf of your children. If you choose to abstain from immunizations, please protect yourself. We wrote a letter containing our concerns, our research, and our findings. We gave a copy to our daughter's doctor, and it stays in her file. We go to all of her appointments, and sign that letter every time. Our doctor wants us to have her immunized, but he agrees that CPS can do nothing since we have shown ourselves to be informed and concerned.

God bless you for reading this. I cannot and will not tell you what to do. I have merely passed along some disturbing yet helpful facts so that you may be better informed. May the Lord keep you and direct you in all your paths! ~Sharalyn Griffin

WHERE DID THOSE CELLS COME FROM?

From Phyllis

"...The fetus was aborted due to a mother who had the measles while she was pregnant. She was talked into aborting the fetus and then giving its body to science for research. From this fetus that have made cultures of the Rubella vaccine. Each vaccine that states on the package insert that there are **recumbent cells**, this means that the cells are coming from another animal or a human.. So in the case of the Rubella vaccine the package insert states that the ingredients are among other things, **human recumbent cells**.

All vaccines are grown on some medium or another, eggs, cattle serum or the tissue of the kidneys or the lungs or the brain of a monkey, mouse, pig. The DNA/RNA of these animals or humans are now part of the vaccine that is being injected into your child. The adjuvant of which are "sticking" agents just as gelatin, aluminum or other vaccines themselves in the cases of multi-vaccines, are placed there so that the vaccine is not rejected from the system quickly.

The body's first line of defense it to set up an allergic reaction that will surround the components and then release them through the lymph system to the heart and then the kidneys or the bowels. Because the vaccine is giving an artificial immunity, it is not really addressing the disease as such, thus the body is on high alert at all times, in a "fight or flight" response. The DNA/RNA and the adjuvant are wrecking havoc upon the body because it can never settle down to a normal cycle as it would had it experienced the natural disease. It is on constant "high alert" fighting battles it can never win, and the individual is always losing time to recuperate and rejuvenate and recreate and reconstitute the immune system.

Then more and more vaccines and adjuvants, with more and more DNA/RNA that is foreign to the system, is introduced. These individuals are in "over load" all of the time. There is bound to come a day when the immune system can no longer handle this and sooner or later the system fails. The amount and the type of "system failure" depends on the organs effected and whether the organ is a weak one or a stronger one for that particular individual as to the manner in which the damage is experienced.

Animal vaccines are worse, due to the fact that they have shorter life spans and their generation are every 2 years rather than 20 years. The collateral damage can be certainly devastating. The vaccines that their parents were given are just as loaded with mercury, aluminum and other animal DNA/RNA as the ones they are receiving. This compounds the amounts of heavy metals in the system of the offspring. They get far too many vaccines and they are always at the weight level of an infant baby getting the same doses over and over again. This is so toxic that it is the reason why our domestic pets are now dying of the same diseases that are being diagnosed in humans in this day and age.

I do not remember any of our dogs or cats dying of anything but old age when I was a kid. Now they die of diabetes, and other pancreatic diseases. Hip dysplasia is rampant in many larger breeds. If this were true in the past, these breeds would not have been continued because they could not do the work that was required of them. The German Shepard and the various retrievers were working dogs. It would have been tolerated 100 years ago when the animals were not pets but working members of a farm or a hunting family. The Shepards are very closely related to wolves. Wolves do not get hip dysplasia.

It is common sense.. Do not vaccine anything with the goal of preventing disease and death. We are all going to die, that is a given, but don't allow your pet to suffer some debilitating disease because you want to prevent a viral one. Homeopathy can do quite well for so many of these ailments. Find a good homeopath and ask them if they will work with animals. There are also several homeopathic veterinarians. Look for them. They will help you through many of these diseases such as Parvo and Distemper, Kennel cough, and Strangles in Horses. I kept one of my cats who had feline leukemia alive for over 6 years with homeopathy. And none of my other cats had the disease from him and none of them were vaccinated against the disease.. "

Bonded Together is published 3-4 times a year by Trish Evans, with careful, scrutinizing proofreading by Gary Evans. Its purpose is:

- To Glorify God through encouraging parents in raising their families for Jesus Christ and retreat coordinators in ministry.
- To support the ministry of **Above Rubies** magazine and Colin and Nancy Campbell through the publishing of Above Rubies retreat information
- To have a forum where mothers (and dads, too!) can share their experiences, joys, struggles and ask for help and prayer from others.

The opinions expressed in **Bonded Together** are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of Nancy Campbell or **Above Rubies** magazine (or even the editor for that matter) Suggested donation for **Bonded Together** is \$7 per year to Trish Evans. To submit articles, birth announcements, recipes, etc. email: gkdz@empirenet.com or P.O. Box 381, Norco, CA 92680



Above Rubies Family Camp

August 22-24th, 2003 in Pine Valley, California

Lodge and Dorm rates are for two night's accommodations and Friday night dinner through Sunday lunch. You must provide your own bedding for mattresses. Bring your own towels. Private Lodges have one double bed, one twin bunk bed and a bathroom and can sleep 3-6 people depending on ages/sizes of children. Lodges with a shared bath (between two rooms) and dorms (each dorm has its own bathroom) can be used for larger families.

Families with three children or less will be placed in *private* bath lodges until full. Then they will be placed in *shared* bath lodges. There are doors on both sides of the bathrooms separating the rooms. **Dorms** have six twin bunk beds (12 beds in all) and are available for families coming with five or more children. There are a limited number of dorms available and will be first come, first served. Please contact us first for availability before registering for this option.

Dad & Mom-\$248.00 for private bath lodges, \$235 for shared bath (double room) lodges \$200 in dorms. Children, 2 & under: Free; 3-5: \$21; 6-8: \$32; 9-12: \$47, 13 & up: \$92 in shared lodges, \$99 in private lodges, \$77 in dorms. Day Rates (for those not staying overnight): **\$5 per day + \$20 conference fee and meals; Breakfast \$5.50, Lunch 6.50, Dinner \$6 ea.**

Registrants coming without a spouse and/or children are half the couple rate and will be roomed in lodges or dorms based on number of others attending this way. A group of moms can request a room together. RV's pay the same as dorm rate. There are no hookup sites or separate showering facilities. **Add \$10 late fee to adult rate if registering after July 20th.** Installation payments in order to reserve space are accepted and encouraged. Please make checks payable to: **Trish Evans, P.O. Box 381, Norco, CA 92680**

Total Enclosed _____

Parent's/Mom's Names _____

Address _____

phone _____ email _____

Names of children attending & ages at time of retreat _____

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The following information is for a listing of all the registrants that each family will receive at the camp. If you'd prefer not to have any or certain information included, please indicate this. For those who do not fill out questions in this section your registration information (names, address, phone, email, children) will be listed unless otherwise requested. If you need more room, feel free to attach a sheet of paper.

Special interests or hobbies _____

Special needs or ministries _____

Husband, children's names & ages if not registered _____

Bonded Together

P. O. Box 381
Norco, CA 92680