



Vera Faith Lord

## Crossing Over

By Vera Faith Lord

“And they crossed over Jordan and their eyes were opened and they saw the Truth.” (From a Sunday School lesson circa 1955)

She came forward slowly from the back of the auditorium, an attractive 40-ish woman, with a teenage carbon-copy of herself at her side. I was surrounded by half a dozen people, asking questions, ordering materials, and taking handouts. She waited until everyone else was gone, looked around to make sure we were alone, and began – “My daughter (a nod in the direction of the carbon-copy) heard you speak at her high school, and she insisted that I come and hear you tonight. I’ve always been pro-choice, all my life. But once you know about Post-Abortion Syndrome and how horrible it is, *nobody* in her right mind would have an abortion – or allow her daughter to have one – no matter *how* legal it is.” She took a breath and went on – “So I just wanted to tell you that, after hearing you speak, I’m still pro-choice, but I’m *not* pro-choice for myself, my daughter, or anybody that I care about. If some other woman that I’ve never met wants to commit emotional suicide, fine – let her go ahead – but I hope she gets to hear somebody like you speak before she jumps off that cliff. And *nobody* that I care about will be making that choice.” – Wow.

Score one (a big one) for our side. Think about the shift that happened in that woman’s universe that night. She’s now on our side, and she doesn’t even realize it yet. She’ll talk about what she learned in that auditorium with everyone in her world. And she’ll really be persuasive because she’s on *fire*, as only an indignant, enraged human rights activist can be. We now have a mole behind the opposing forces’ lines. Do we care that this woman will probably never carry a sign with us on Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>? Of course not. She’s much more effective as a mole.

A young man was driving me to the airport through a heavy rainstorm. I had just spoken to his small-but-active college pro-life group. His handsome 21-year-old face was grim as he gripped the wheel of his ancient Honda. It wasn’t the rain. He was talking about his friends – *all* his friends. “It’s so frustrating,” he said. “They agree and agree and agree – ‘yes, it’s a baby; yes, it’s a human life; yes, abortion’s a terrible thing’ – and you think OK, now I’ve got them, and then you run head-on into that brick wall when they say, ‘*But* I don’t think abortion should be illegal and it’s every woman’s private right to choose’....” His voice rose. “You just want to shake them ‘til their brains rattle, but if you did that, they’d be *sure* you’re one of those ‘pro-life radicals’ – and it’s just so frustrating!”

I waited while he took a couple of deep breaths and calmed down. He said, “Sorry about the outburst – I’m sure you’ve heard it a million times before.” Of course I had – haven’t we all?

The young man’s friends would all describe themselves as “emotionally pro-life” (yes, abortion’s wrong; yes, it’s killing a baby) and “politically pro-choice.” (*But* I don’t want it to be illegal and it’s every woman’s private right to choose).

I used to be just as frustrated as my young friend was on the way to the airport that night. I used to think there was no cure for that kind of infuriatingly illogical thinking.

The woman who came forward in the auditorium with her daughter (and since then, I’ve heard her comments repeated dozens of times) convinced me that there *is* a way out of the “emotionally pro-life/politically pro-choice” quagmire. That lady was raised in the situational-ethics and Secular Humanism grey area of today’s culture. She *knows* that a baby dies in an abortion, and she doesn’t care. Now that she’s learned about the horror of Post-Abortion Syndrome, she *still* doesn’t care if a baby dies, but she cares very *much* if her daughter (emotionally) dies. There you have it. The way out of the quagmire.

I believe with all my heart and all my mind that the so-called “crossover” issues – Post-Abortion Syndrome, Parental Notification, Partial-Birth Abortion, and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act are the way we’ll win this war. Self-interest and self-preservation are stronger motivating forces in our upside-down society today than the protection of innocent life. Here’s how it works:

**Post-Abortion Syndrome** – I don’t want to suffer the emotional and psychological trauma that is PAS – I will not put *myself* through that horror or allow *someone I love* to go through it.

**Parental Notification** – If *my* 15-year-old daughter is having surgery – even if it’s surgery that *I want* her to have – I want to know when and where she’s having it, if for no other reason than to be able to take care of her afterward. It’s *my* right as a parent.

**Partial-Birth Abortion** – This procedure is more physically dangerous to *me*, the mother, than allowing the baby to be born alive.

**Unborn Victims of Violence Act (Laci and Conner’s Law)** – By killing *my* pre-born child, the killer takes away *my* right to choose to have or not to have a child.

I think the auditorium lady is more on our side than she realizes. She may never carry a sign with us in a march for life, but she will never have an abortion, or allow her daughter or anyone she cares about to have one either.

She’s on our side, and I’m glad she’s with us, and I don’t personally care which road she took to get here. If we can win over thousands of people like her – and the crossover issues are the way to do it – we will win this war.

## I Have a Dream Too

By Georgette Forney, Executive Director, NOEL

“I have a dream.” We are all familiar with those famous words spoken by Dr. Martin Luther King in 1963. When we dream about something, we envision how life could be and it inspires us reach beyond the realities of today in hopes of a better tomorrow.

The other day I realized I have a dream too.

I dream of a time when women won’t feel they must choose abortion to deal with their unplanned pregnancy. I dream of the day when no one will allow a woman to feel she has to choose between her life and her baby’s. I dream of a time when people realize that, legal or illegal, abortion is bad for women and their children. I dream of a day when abortion will be unthinkable and unnecessary.

To make my dream a reality, we, as people who value every human life, must begin to envision life without abortion and work towards that goal. We must ask, “Why does a woman feel she must choose abortion to handle an unplanned pregnancy?” The answers will provide a blueprint for us to help women so they will have real choices. When pregnant women are asked that question, they usually respond that they feel they have no choice but abortion. They say they don’t have the emotional support, and/or the financial resources they need to care for their baby.

We, as God’s people who are called to care for the widows and orphans, should be doing more to help them. If we are really serious about ending abortion, we need to get busy networking, recruiting, and developing the emotional and financial resources mothers need. We cannot simply say to a woman, “Don’t have an abortion.” We must also be willing to help her. In other words, we need to focus on helping pregnant moms so they are equipped to care for their babies. We cannot save the child without addressing the needs of the mother.

We need to think about practical problems faced by pregnant women, such as:

□ Can a single pregnant woman in your community find reasonable housing? *Many pregnant women are told they can’t live in their present home if they choose to keep their baby.*

□ Where does a 19-year-old turn to find health care coverage for herself and her baby? *Most young girls fear they can’t pay hospital costs and aren’t*

*familiar with CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Programs) or Medicaid.*

□ How can a young mother learn about her right to collect child support? *Women often aren’t aware of child support laws, or where to go for assistance in collecting support.*

□ Where does a pregnant girl go when her parents, boyfriend, and siblings all tell her to abort? *Finding and trusting complete strangers to support and help her through the pregnancy and motherhood seem impossible and unlikely.*

You may think that helping women is what crisis pregnancy centers do. They take care of the mothers. Yes, but can they handle the 1.3 million pregnant women who annually have abortions without our help? Churches, Pregnancy Resource Centers and all the social service agencies available will need to ‘kick it up a notch’ if we are really to succeed in ending abortion.

I recently read an article by Frederica Mathewes-Green in which she made an interesting observation. She noted that as a culture we have become dependant on abortion to take care of 1.3 million children every year. Employers, universities, singles, couples, and families depend on abortion to take care of “the problem.” Ironically, as I listen to women describe the emotional and physical pain after their abortions and the resulting problems for them and their families, I wonder when we will realize that helping women before they choose abortion is less expensive and easier than dealing with the aftermath.

We talk about ending abortion (which is NOEL’s main goal), and making it illegal, but are we committed to doing what it will take to make sure no more babies die and no more women cry? Some women will still seek abortions even if it becomes illegal. I am not satisfied if even a few women feel desperate enough to abort their babies. Is it okay with you? I do believe if we make ourselves available for God to use to help mothers and save their babies from abortion, we will see the fruit of our labor for eternity.



Georgette Forney

NOEL’s Anglican Angel Project is designed to help you develop an outreach to pregnant women in your church or community. Please contact us for more information.

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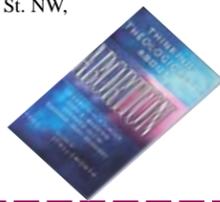
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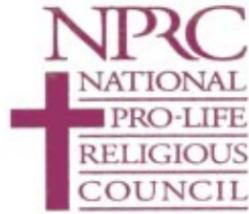
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National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc.

## Uniting For Life

Spring 2004

### Baptist Student Debaters Refuse to Defend Partial-Birth Abortion

Forfeiting a chance to win a debate tournament, four students from California Baptist University (CBU) refused to argue in defense of partial-birth abortion. The tournament's host university debate coach had chosen from current events the topic "Why the U.S. Supreme Court should overturn the ban on partial-birth abortion." The four Baptist students said they could not argue in favor of this position.

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush last November. The bill defines "partial-birth abortion" as any abortion in which the living baby is delivered feet first until the baby's navel is outside the mother's body before being killed, or in which the living baby is delivered head first until the entire head is outside the woman's body before being killed.

"We thought, surely, this is not what they are asking us to defend," reported team member Wendeth Matyas. "We went back to discuss how we could rearrange the topic to find a way to debate it. But there is no good in killing four-to-nine-month-old babies."

The team members wrote to the judges, telling them: "We feel this resolution reflects intolerance and the tremendous lack of respect for those who have chosen a religious point of view."

Captain of the CBU team, Mary Pryfogle, said, "We wanted them [the judges] to know firmly that we did not believe in partial-birth abortion. It's not like theater where you role play and distance yourself from your morals.... We've debated other moral issues that were not as heavy, but Scripture is very clear on this."

Taking this pro-life stand drew congratulations from several members of other debate teams and one of the judges. "It was very admirable," commented CBU communications department chairman John Pate. "They had other students coming up to them all day long telling them they did a good job. There was a win within a loss. More people noticed their stand for losing rather than winning. It stuck with students all day long."

Participants in the debate tournament, which took place in December in Riverside, California, came from both secular universities and other private Christian colleges.

The debate coach, Mike Marsh, a CBU graduate who teaches at California State University, San Bernadino, supported the team's decision. "The students came to me and said they couldn't do it. It was a pretty extreme topic. I haven't seen this [forfeiting] done before, but I try to instill education rather than the winning aspect. I was supportive of their decision."



Debate Team (left to right): Mary Pryfogle, Wendeth Matyas, Marina Fanning, Thomas Gerstheimer  
Photo by Kelli Cottrell

"We are so proud to be a part of this team," Marina Fanning said. "Some other coaches would have said they need to have the win."

The team members said they would make the same decision over again, even though it was difficult to have to lose the round. They said they would not have wanted to be passive and were glad they had the opportunity to take a stand.

"We could've tried to find some advantages but it wouldn't have been right. It should be our natural response as Christians. That's why we are there--to be light," team member Thomas Gerstheimer said.

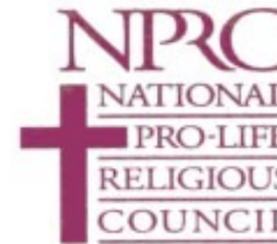
Their example received national attention when Focus on the Family Radio reported their action in December.

(Based on news report in *Baptist News*, Jan 12, 2004).

### President Bush Signs Unborn Victims of Violence Act Into Law, After Dramatic One-vote Win in Senate

WASHINGTON (April 6, 2004) – In a landmark right-to-life victory, President George W. Bush on April 1 signed into law the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, also known as "Laci and Conner's Law."

The President's action culminated a five-year campaign by the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) to win enactment of the legislation, which recognizes unborn children as victims when they are injured or killed during the commission of federal or military crimes of violence. The President's action came just one week after the bill (H.R. 1997) survived a showdown in the U.S. Senate by a single vote – 49-50. The anticipated Democratic presidential nominee, Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.), interrupted his campaigning to make a rare visit to the Senate to vote against the bill.



# Uniting For Life

A Christian Pro-Life Newsletter

Spring 2004

National Pro-Life Religious Council, 109 2nd St. N.E., Washington, DC 20002

website: [www.nprcouncil.org](http://www.nprcouncil.org) e-mail: [mail@nprcouncil.org](mailto:mail@nprcouncil.org)

## National Pro-Life Religious Council

The National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC) is a Christian coalition which acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and works to encourage every Christian denomination to affirm and witness to the biblical standard of the value, dignity and sanctity of human life, and to foster ministry to those vulnerable to the violence of abortion or euthanasia.

### Member Organizations

Alpha Omega Life

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC)

International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC for Life)

Lutherans for Life (LFL)

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)

National Clergy Council (NCC)

National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL)

Presbyterians Pro-Life (PPL)

Priests for Life (PFL)

Religious Outreach, National Right to Life Committee

Task Force of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (TUMAS)

United Friends for Life (UFL)

## Kerry vs. Catholic Teaching *I Am Catholic vs. I Live the Teachings of My Faith*

John Kerry is coming under increasing criticism from various leaders of the Catholic Church for his public position and voting record on abortion. The controversy has escalated to the point that it was featured in the April 5, 2004 issue of *TIME* magazine – showing a two-thirds page photo of Kerry on Ash Wednesday complete with ashes on his forehead.

*"No public official, especially one claiming to be a faithful and serious Catholic, can responsibly advocate for or actively support direct attacks on innocent human life."*

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998.

The core of the argument is that Senator John Kerry proclaims himself to be a practicing Catholic while he also proudly espouses his strong and unyielding support for the continuation of abortion on demand. In effect Kerry is trying to be on both sides of the fence at the same time – implying Catholicity while appearing at NARAL functions and maintaining an almost perfect abortion rights voting record in the United States Senate for the past 20 years.

The Catholic Church's position on abortion is clear and unambiguous. Abortion is wrong! Not only wrong, but it is a serious sin for anyone who knowingly has an abortion, procures an abortion, performs an abortion, or assists in an abortion. This includes those who advocate, promote, and vote for the continued legalization of abortion on demand and governmental funding of abortions.

Catholic Church leaders have consistently asserted the Church's clear teaching on the sanctity of innocent unborn human life. However, Church leaders are now also increasingly stating that "Catholic" politicians who publicly support abortion may face some consequences regarding their participation in the

sacraments. In February, during a campaign trip to Missouri, newly installed Archbishop Raymond Burke publicly warned Kerry "not to present himself for Communion."

Boston's newly installed Archbishop Sean O'Malley, who is Kerry's own archbishop, has also spoken out on the issue. According to *TIME* magazine, "O'Malley has said that Catholic politicians who do not vote in line with Church teachings 'shouldn't dare come to Communion.'"

In addition, the *TIME* article quotes, a Vatican Official, who is an American: "People in Rome are becoming more and more aware that there's a problem with John Kerry, and a potential scandal with his apparent profession of his Catholic faith and some of his stances, particularly on abortion."

*Kerry is apparently willing to escalate the controversy by deliberately pursuing a confrontational course with the Catholic Church. He told TIME, "I certainly intend to take Communion and continue to go to Mass as a Catholic." He also said "I don't tell church officials what to do, and church officials shouldn't tell American politicians what to do in the context of our public life."*

All of which begs the question: what is required for one to call himself or herself a practicing Catholic? In the eyes of the Catholic Church, if you want to call yourself a Catholic, then you must accept Catholic Church teaching on doctrinal and moral issues. Picking and choosing beliefs on major moral issues – especially the fundamental issue of the sanctity and protection of innocent unborn human life – will not be well-received by the Catholic Church. Common logic dictates that it is impossible to be on both sides of the fence at the same time.