LIFEWATCH
*A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ALLIANCE FOR LIFE INTERNATIONAL*
MARCH 2024

## THE FROZEN EMBRYO, A MOST VULNERABLE HUMAN BEING

A recent Alabama Supreme Court ruling brought to the forefront the issue of embryos coming to life through IVF. A mishandling of three embryos resulted in their death while in storage in a cryogenic tank holding frozen embryos. Their parents invoked wrongful death. The court interpreted the Alabama's Wrongful Death of a Minor Act and concluded that a preborn child conceived through IVF is a "genetically unique human being whose life begins at conception and ends at death [1]." They held that the location of the frozen embryos did not alter their legal personhood [2].

Alabama has enshrined the rights of the unborn in their Constitution. It states: "it is the public policy of this state to recognize and support the sanctity of unborn life and the rights of unborn children, including the right to life," and to "ensure the protection of the rights of the unborn child in all manners and measures lawful and appropriate [3]."

The US citizens living in Alabama have spoken clearly through their representatives and declared that preborn children conceived under their watch would receive meaningful legal protection.

A consensus in favor of protecting early human life conceived through IFV is elusive as evidenced by a storm of protests from Democrats and Republicans alike. We recall how every attempt to experiment on the embryo used to raise prolife voices and prevent the wholesale disregard of their human dignity. It is thus no longer, at least when it comes to IVF, a great offender.

A recent poll showed that 78 percent of self-identified "prolife advocates" and 83 percent of evangelical Christians support IVF [4]. We suspect that ignorance is bliss. Preborn children suffer numerous indignities throughout the IVF process and the majority of them will die during that journey. Let's review the process according to their perspective.

After obtaining several eggs through stimulation of the ovaries, the eggs are placed in a lab dish and mixed with the sperm which will (cont. p. 2)



ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE ARE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, LOUISE ALLARD

## AN UPDATE FROM UGANDA

**We came to Uganda mid-February at the tail end of the dry season, a sort of Indian summer. We were delighted when on the 27, we slept to the sound of rain throughout the night.**

**We are deep into the rhythm of baking bread and pasties for daily consumption. We swithched our production from baking big bread to offering buns and sweets instead, as we were incurring too many losses with bread.**

**Our Pregnancy Resource Center welcomes new single mothers at least weekly. They come to pick a few outfits for the new baby and enjoy tea and pastries, a rare treat. It gives us an opportunity to minister to them,** (cont. p.2)

## THE FROZEN EMBRYO, A MOST VULNERABLE… (CONT. FROM P. 1)

fertilize them. We now have embryos at their earliest phase of development. We shall not call them “fertilized eggs” for they are unique human individuals with all their genetic information. Only growth is usually necessary to lead them successfully outside the womb. Not so with those conceived in a petri dish. Their journey is fraught with dangers through a consistent process of elimination.

First, the preimplantation testing will determine potential genetic abnormalities. Horrible and rare genetic diseases, such as Tay-Sachs disease [5], are often invoked to justify such forays but the process of elimination is real. A preborn child suffering abnormalities will end up as human waste. Most couples opt-out of such testing because results may add weeks to an IVF cycle [6]. We must confess that nature itself usually does not sustain a life similarly affected. But there is a significant difference because in IVF, it is the parents that make the decision.

After a few days, 55 percent of the embryos will have reached the blastocyst stage and will be ready for implantation [7]. Approximately 25 percent will implant successfully [8]. We understand that not all embryos survive because the natural process itself does not bring to life every embryo conceived.

Our main concern with IVF is the storage of sur-numerary embryos, often indefinitely. Parents may choose to discard their embryos, raising property issues. Can we discard human beings? They can give them to another woman, or they can store them for a yearly storage fee.

Eventually, after several years, the clinic will discard them for they can no longer be safely implanted.

Parents can choose to donate their preborn children to scientific research, a most concerning

(cont. p. 3)

**REPORT FROM UGANDA (CONT. FROM P.1)**

encourage communication with the baby to stimulate brain development, and invite them to attend our monthly Single Mothers’ Ministry.

Emily and I co-hosted our radio program, *Life Matters.* We shared the results of a fifty years economic and social study which found that happiness can be found in marriage primarily. The gap between marital happiness and satisfaction from other sources such as education, income, career, race, and gender, among others, is greater by up to 40 percentage points. We will report on this study later on because it is fascinating [11}. These past few weeks, Emily addressed nutrition, budgeting, the dangers of alcohol, and family planning.

We are still processing our NGO re-certification. We just completed access to Uganda Revenue Authority after many attempts and the 2023 financial audit is coming shortly.

The St Raphael Hospital Project is waiting for the completion of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, a very important and complex study. (Cont. p.3)

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Experimenting on live human beings for the benefit of others but not to benefit a specific embryo, should concern us all.

Besides suffering the indignities of experimentation, the preborn child will always die in the process, and he will never be allowed to implant in the womb of his mother.

REPORT FROM UGANDA

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One important item remains: the assessor needs to meet with the Ministry of Health, a major player.

Once the study is complete, we will review the findings and seek to implement its recommendations. The architect and his team will develop drawings for the foundation according to soil studies and prepare for construction, while the St Raphael team plans for the ground breaking event.

We ask for your continued support as we enter this new phase. We would like to apply for major funding from Alice Walton, a Walmart heiress. Ms. Walton has financed a university medical center based in Bentonville, AR. Most foundations do not accept requests. We must come recommended by someone within their organization. That's where you come in if you know Ms. Walton. We appreciate your prayers.

Thank you for your donations to support our first love, the Pregnancy Resource Center and its related programs. Mothers and babies can never thank you enough.

destination. Medical research has earned our respect and admiration. However, experimenting on live human beings for the benefit of others but not to benefit a specific embryo, should concern us all.

Besides suffering the indignities of experimentation, the preborn child will always die in the process, and he will never be allowed to implant in the womb of his mother.

Following the Alabama decision, the Mississippi legislature considered a bill that would federalize IVF and force states to allow it while also legalizing "human cloning, gene-editing to produce "designer babies", the creation of animal-human hybrids ('chimeras'), surrogacy, and the trafficking and destruction of human embryos [9]." Thankfully, Republican U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith blocked this bill dead in its track. Literally.

As you notice, the devil is in the details. IVF is a process that has allowed many couples to welcome a highly desired child. These children are precious and their lives marveled at. However, the process is almost always deadly to their siblings not chosen for implantation. Their lot is suffering in the cryogenic chamber for weeks or years on end, in subzero temperature, a fate that could not compare to the womb welcoming other human beings.

We did not even discuss the fact that many children born through IVF may never know their true identity, even though it should be their right to consider their genetic parentage. In the worst-case scenarios, they came through donated eggs and sperm and borrowed wombs, the ultimate commodification of human reproduction.

The Catholic Church has spoken courageously and consistently throughout the years in documents such as *Donum Vitae and Dignitas Personae.* Fr. Shenan Boquet from Human Life International conveys its message: "[they] guide us concerning reverence for the dignity of the human person from the moment of conception and respect for the marital act in its unitive and procreative dimensions [10]."

The Alabama court decision is a good opportunity to shed light on IVF and its inherent and appalling treatment of preborn human beings.

# Alliance for Life International

Trusting God with Life
March 2024

Alliance for Life International is a Catholic Christian, non-profit educational and charitable organization committed to assist and encourage States in building cultures of life in which preborn children are welcome and the lives of those who are vulnerable are protected. The lack of essential medical care in Uganda is a reflection of health disparities found in socially disadvantaged countries. We are leading and cooperating with church partners to bring modern medical care in Uganda.

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**Website: https://www.allianceforlifeinternational.org**

**Alliance for Life International**
**P.O. Box 1314**
**Lake Forest, CA 92609-1314**

**Shipping Address**
**555 Street Address**
**City, State 55555**