

# *Difficult Issues*

*Taken from Today's Headlines*



*Bible Answers to  
Issues Confronting  
Christians & the Church*

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# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: CNN Interactive, U.S. News Story Page, December 11, 1997. (Internet story)

## *Girl wounded in Paducah likely to remain paraplegic*

PADUCAH, Kentucky (CNN)

Melissa Jenkins, a high school student paralyzed during a shooting spree blamed on a classmate, is likely to be left paraplegic by a spinal cord injury and could face years of rehabilitation, doctors said on Thursday.

"There is little, if any, substantial possibility or probability that Missy Jenkins will ever walk again," said Dr. Shawn Jones, a family friend. Jenkins told *The Paducah Sun* that she is determined to overcome her injury. "I'm going to keep saying I can, and hope I will walk," she told the newspaper from her bed in Lourdes Hospital in Paducah.

"She's a fighter," her father, Ray, said during a news conference with Jones and Melissa's physician, Dr. Monte Rommelman. The injured girl, who turns 16 on Christmas Eve, was shot in the chest and "has no sensation or movement below the level of

her injuries," said Rommelman, a rehabilitation specialist.

Describing Jenkins as being in "spinal shock," the doctor said her spinal cord is "intact but not functional."

"It will be a matter of long-term rehabilitation for Missy with the anticipation that she will be a paraplegic," Rommelman said. "She can live a normal life, but it will be from a wheelchair."



### ***Faith and e-mail***

The doctors and Melissa's father said the girl's religious beliefs were helping her cope with her situation. Her "faith in Jesus Christ is extremely deep," Jones said. "Her faith is reason why she's not bitter," Ray Jenkins added. He called Melissa "forgiving and a good Christian girl." But he declined to say whether she had forgiven Michael Carneal, a 14-year freshman at Heath High School in West Paducah, who, authorities say, has confessed to the shootings.

## ***Questions & Answers***

1. List 2 scriptures that describe God as all powerful.

1

2

2. List 2 scriptures that describe God as loving.

1

2

3. If God is all powerful *and* all loving, how did He allow this tragedy to happen? Should we question God's goodness or His power given what occurred? Explain.

4. Is it true that "religious beliefs" can help a person cope with life's tragedies? Provide a verse to support your answer.

5. Should Melissa forgive Michael for paralyzing her? Why or why not? Could you forgive him if this had happened to you?

6. What does the Bible say about forgiveness? Provide 3 scriptures below.

7. When Jesus was crucified on the cross, what did He say about forgiveness? Did God grant Jesus' request?

## DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *Who is My Brother?* F. LaGard Smith, 1997  
Cotswold Publishing, Malibu, CA., pages 179-182

### *Elders & Church Sued by Wayward Member*

In article after article in 1984, newspaper articles all across America gave unprecedented publicity to the “Church of Christ.” You may remember what the tabloid headlines were all about. Marian Guinn, a 36-year-old registered nurse and divorced mother of four, had filed a lawsuit in 1981 against the elders of the Collinsville (Oklahoma) Church of Christ, alleging invasion of privacy and the intentional infliction of emotional distress. The suit arose when the elders read a letter to the congregation, citing Guinn for the “sin of fornication” and calling for the members to withdraw their fellowship from her.

From the moment she had walked through the door, Guinn had been extended the warmest of receptions by the congregation, who eagerly looked after her needs and the needs of her children during a particularly difficult time in her life.



However, it all turned sour when the elders were told that Guinn was illicitly involved with a former mayor of Collinsville. Confronted by the elders, Guinn admitted that she and the man were involved sexually. Over a year went by and it was evident that the relationship had not ended. After a second warning, the elders informed Guinn that disciplinary action would be required if she did not publicly repent. Less than two weeks later, the elders read to the church the letter that eventually landed them in court.

The jury...rendered a predictably secular verdict against the church and its elders, awarding actual and punitive damages in the amount of \$390,000.

*Newsweek* quoted Marian Guinn as saying, “What I do is between God and myself. I don’t need the church to work as a medium for me. It was none of their business.”

## Questions & Answers

1. Was Marian Guinn right or wrong to go to court over this issue? Does the Bible speak about Christians taking each other to court? If so, where is the passage?
2. Define “fornication” and “adultery.” What does the Bible have to say about these sins? Provide *one* pertinent New Testament passage for each.
3. What are the *specific steps* (mentioned in Matthew) to be taken when one learns of a brother or sister who is sinning? Provide the passage and list the steps.
4. Is it the elders’ and local congregation’s business to *discipline* erring Christians? If you were one of the elders and you knew you would be sued, would you do it anyway? What passage in Acts 5 would support your answer?
5. Where is the scripture(s) that tell us to “withdraw” from an erring brother or sister? Why does it tell us to withdraw? In other words, what is the *intent* or *purpose* of withdrawal?

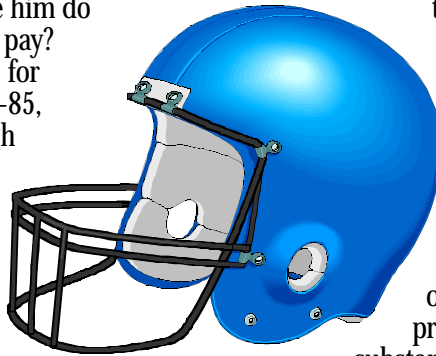
# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *USA Today*, December 29, 1997, Online.  
By Larry Weisman

## ***Courson seeks higher disability payments***

PITTSBURGH - Steve Courson can see the fingers wagging in his face, hear the old arguments again. Nobody forced him to take steroids. Nobody forced him into alcohol abuse. Nobody made him do these things. So why should someone pay?

Courson, 42, played offensive line for Pittsburgh and Tampa Bay from 1977-85, ultimately wrecking his health through the use of anabolic steroids and alcohol. Now he's asking a federal court in Pittsburgh to raise his NFL disability payment of \$21,000 a year and recognize his abuses and weakened heart as football-related. "The thing that rags me is that here I was profiled as one of the strongest players in the NFL, and they had to know I was using those drugs and that those drugs were one of the reasons I was one of the strongest players," Courson says. "Then, when I got sick, they used me as the poster



child for their punitive tests. And then when I try to get benefits, they say it's not football-related."

The NFL retirement plan, administered by the league and the NFL Players Association, handles these disbursements. Courson's current disability status is the lowest of the four categories. It says he became disabled after playing and not as a result of football. Courson's lawyer, P.J. Murray, says the NFL didn't follow its own policies against use of steroids and failed his client by not providing proper medical treatment for substance-abuse problems. Courson's resultant heart condition, he says, "is football-related and he should be getting benefits at one of the highest levels."

The retirement board disagreed, rejecting Courson's petition for reclassification and vetoing an appeal Aug. 11. "In my judgment, the retirement board has acted appropriately and within its authority and within the law with respect to Steve Courson," says Doug Allen, NFLPA assistant executive director.

## ***Questions & Answers***

1. What does the term "responsible" mean? Who was responsible for Adam & Eve's fall? Did they try to blame someone else? If so, who (give verses)? Provide one other biblical example of a person who tried to blame someone else for his/her sin.
2. Who is responsible for Steve Courson's physical problems? Did he know what he was doing?
3. What is the Greek word for "witchcraft" or "sorcery" used in Galatians 5:19-20? (You will need to look this up in *Vine's* or some other English/Greek resource.) What English word does it look like? What does it mean? What can we conclude from this passage?
4. What, if anything, does the Bible say about how we should treat our physical bodies? Provide at least 1 scripture from the New Testament. What does the word "vice" mean?
5. What "body damaging" drugs do people use today? Is the use of such drugs sinful? Complete the chart below, listing the types of drugs you believe fall under each category:

### **Illegal, Sinful Drugs**

--

### **Legal, Sinful Drugs**

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### **Legal, Not Sinful Drugs**

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# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *Screen It*, Entertainment Reviews for Parents Available on the Internet: <http://www.screenit.com>

## *The Movie Titanic: A Review*

Of any real life event that seems perfect for dramatizing, the sinking of the luxury cruiser *H.M.S. Titanic* in 1912 certainly rates among the best. There's the tragic and still not completely resolved sequence of errors that led to the impact with the iceberg, and the delay of nearby ships to come to the rescue. The arrogance of the builders, and society in general, to proclaim the ship unsinkable – and thus not have enough lifeboats for everyone on board – is also a good dramatic element. Finally, there's the sinking of the ship itself. Taking several hours to finally disappear under the icy cold North Atlantic waters – where fifteen hundred people perished – you can't



match that for a tragic ending, especially considering this was her maiden voyage. Being a film about a sinking ship, there are obviously many tense and suspenseful moments that may be too intense for younger viewers. There are two scenes with sexually related material – one that's more sensual with bare breasts, the other is where Rose and Jack have sex. Apart from the ship sinking and people dying, there is some human generated violence and even more bad attitudes of the rich toward the poor. Since many teens will probably want to see this film, we suggest that you examine the content to determine how appropriate it is for them, you, or other members of your family.

*Titanic* is rated PG-13.

## Questions & Answers

1. Should Christians go to movies or watch TV? Why or why not? What famous OT character was enticed by a woman's nudity? Who was at fault, the man or the woman? Why?
2. Given the review of *Titanic* above, is this a movie that Christians should go to see? Why or why not? Find at least 3 Bible verses that would give us some guidance on whether we should or should not see it.
3. When viewing a movie or watching TV, what should be a Christian's response if something comes on that is *not* fit to see?
4. What do the following movie ratings mean (G, PG, PG-13, R, X)? Which of these types of movies would it be okay for a Christian to watch? What verse in Psalm 101 would apply?
5. Would you want your children to see the movie *Titanic* after having read the review?  yes  no  
List 3 guidelines you would give your children about watching any movie or TV show:

**Guideline #1:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Guideline #2:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Guideline #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *USA TODAY* Online, Opinion – 01/30/98

## *Karla Faye Tucker Faces Death Penalty*

It looks like curtains for Karla Faye Tucker, sentenced to die for the 1983 pickax murders of an ex-boyfriend (she wanted to steal his Harley) and a woman who witnessed the crime. Tucker admits to the killings, so there's no doubt of guilt. And the crime was indisputably hideous.

Worse for her, Tucker did the crime in Texas, a state in which the Board of Pardons and Paroles hasn't recommended a commutation in 10 years and where, in 1997, not one of the Board's 18 members cast even a single vote for clemency in 16 appeals. Governor George Bush has permitted 59 straight executions. Texas, with 421 men and seven women on death row, has executed

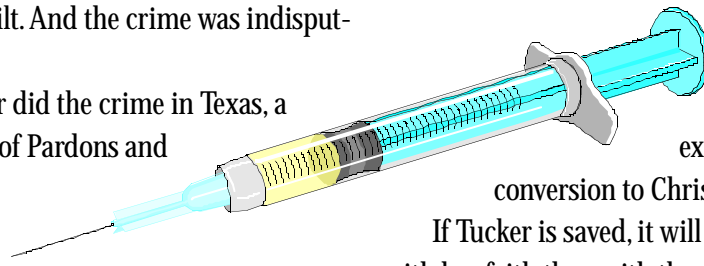
a league-leading 144 since 1976.

Despite the evident long odds, Pat Robertson, the conservative evangelist and death-penalty supporter, is actively lobbying for Tucker's reprieve. He says she is

“not the same woman” who committed the crime. That she has experienced an “authentic”

conversion to Christianity.

If Tucker is saved, it will probably have less to do with her faith than with the way her sex disturbs society's complacent attitude about capital punishment. It's no coincidence that although women account for 13% of all murder arrests, they account for only 2% of all death sentences that are imposed, 1.5% of all people on death row, and only 0.2% of those actually executed since 1976. It's easier to execute men.



## *Questions & Answers*

1. Are you for or against capital punishment? List arguments for and against below:

### Capital Punishment is Right Because

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### Capital Punishment is Wrong Because

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

2. Is capital punishment authorized by God or not? Find at least 3 verses to support your position.

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3. What does the word “clemency” mean? Should clemency be shown to Karla Faye Tucker? Why or why not?

4. Why do you think woman are less likely to be executed than men for capital crimes? What does the Bible have to say about showing partiality? (Find at least 2 verses)

5. What would you do if you had to sit on a jury in a capital murder case? Could you sentence someone to the death penalty?



# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *World Magazine*, Volume 13, Number 5, February 7, 1998, page 25.

## ***For Suicide Send a Card***

Whether because of an upsurge of despair or because they see physician-assisted suicide as a growing trend, Hallmark Cards has decided there is a market for suicide cards.

Starting in April, Hallmark will feature a sympathy card designed to console a person whose loved one killed himself. The card is the first in a possible line, which will be identified in the rack—along with the birthday, anniversary, and get-well categories—with a tab labeled “suicide.”

Hallmark test-marketed the card in six cities, where it met overwhelming success. Families of those who had taken their own lives reportedly appreciated them, while it helped solve the problem of friends not knowing what to say.

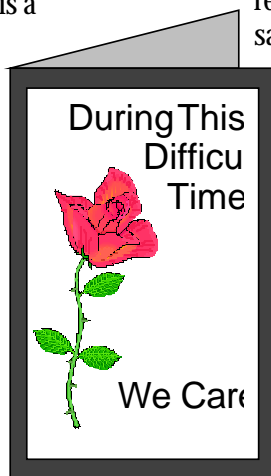
The line is to be part of the greeting-card giant’s “Lifesong Collection,” which is designed, according to

company spokesman Rachel Bolton, to celebrate all experiences, beautiful and painful. “There was a resounding response for this kind of card,” she said, “cards that deal with death and dying and spirituality.”

“When someone we love flees from life, it is so hard to understand,” reads the text. “But our compassionate Creator sees clearly into what is beyond our understanding and already has welcomed your loved one home.”

While Christians have traditionally agonized over the eternal destiny of a suicide, Hallmark, reflecting the therapeutic model of religion, describes suicide as a means of salvation. The attempt to link death, dying, and suicide with a sentimental

New Age “spirituality” threatens to make what is horrible seem nice, socially acceptable, and more common.



## ***Questions & Answers***

1. Find at least one example of someone committing suicide in the OT, and one example from the NT. Then describe the character of the person who committed suicide (i.e., was he “good” or “bad”?)
2. Find two Bible passages that instruct a Christian to comfort someone who has suffered loss.
3. Is suicide wrong? Provide at least 2 Bible passages to support your answer (look up 1 Cor. 3:16-17 and be ready to explain why this passage CANNOT be used to show why suicide is wrong).
4. Is it true, as Hallmark suggests, that the Creator will “welcome home” someone who has committed suicide? Be ready to explain your answer.
5. Look up each of the following passages and explain how each might relate to the question of whether suicide is acceptable in God’s sight:

Heb. 10:36-39

Job 2:9-10

Rev. 2:10

Jonah 4:8

1 Pet. 2:23

Phil 1:21-25

6. Did Samson commit suicide? (See Judges 16:29-30)

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *USA Today*, September 4, 1997, Online.  
Updated 12:24 PM ET

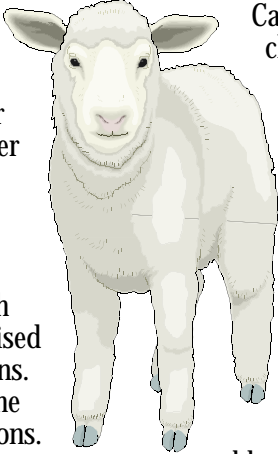
## Big questions for humanity

The cloning of a Scottish sheep raises profound moral and ethical issues for a higher species – cutting to the heart of what it means to be human and to the consequences of creating genetic copies.

“That’s the ultimate issue: How would these clones be treated? As a human being, or as a means to someone else’s end?” says lawyer and bioethicist George Annas, chairman of Boston University’s health law department.

Bioethicists say human cloning has long been viewed as the final barrier which reproductive technology would not cross. Although major hurdles exist, the sheep cloning has raised the prospect of a similar procedure for humans. That means society must now grapple with the religious, ethical and psychological implications.

“If this is being done to animals, this is going to be done to human beings sooner than we think,” says theologian and bioethicist Nigel Cameron, provost of



Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill.

“It would be perhaps the worst thing we have ever thought of in the maltreatment of our species,” Cameron says. “It would be a kind of new slave class. . . You would have human beings who were made by other human beings for their purposes.”

Some experts see circumstances under which human cloning could be justified: to replace a dead child, or to help save a brother or sister dying of an incurable disease through organ or marrow transplant. But most say it remains an unthinkable option for an individual who simply wants to see himself reflected in another being.

“It can’t be done today, but it will be able to be done in the future,” Annas says. “And there’s probably no way to prevent it from happening, somewhere in the world.”

By Deborah Sharp and Lori Sharn, *USA TODAY*

## Questions & Answers

1. Before reading what God might reveal in His word about “creating” humans through cloning procedures, what do you think about it? Would it be right or wrong? Make two lists below:

**Some Might Think Human Cloning Good Because**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Some Might Think Human Cloning Bad Because**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are there any biblical passages that would help us to know whether God would approve or disapprove of human cloning? If so, what are they? try to find at least 2 and list them below:

3. Do you believe it will be possible to clone a human, and if so, would the clone have a soul and be subject to the laws of God?

4. Consider the following passages. Do they provide any insight about the issue of human cloning?

- Gen 1:27; 2:7
- Job 33:4
- Psa 139:14
- Acts 17:25
- 1 Cor. 15:45

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *USA Today*, February 18, 1998, Online.  
Updated 10:27 PM ET

## *Discord not a top indicator for divorce*

Only about one-third of divorces occur in marriages with high levels of conflict, say two sociologists who have conducted a 15-year, intergenerational study. They speculate that the remaining two-thirds happen in marriages that could be preserved.

Their study will add fuel to the national debate on the effects of divorce on children. The researchers find that, while children often benefit from divorce when their parents are constantly quarrelsome, they do not from the majority of divorces where parents get along fairly well.

In these low-conflict marriages, "parents do not hate each other," says study co-author Paul R. Amato, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. "Many are bored, and their marriages could be salvaged."

The researchers found that after divorces in low-conflict marriages, the children grow into adults who tend to have increased psychological distress, reduced happiness, fewer ties with kin and friends, and reduced marital quality.



Only 23% of parents who divorced during the study said they disagreed with spouses often or very often; 30% reported more than two serious quarrels in a month; 28% said there was physical abuse, says researcher Alan Booth, Pennsylvania State University.

Amato stresses that "a substantial number of divorces are in the best interest of children." Many studies show they benefit if conflict is chronic. This newest research, reported in the book *A Generation at Risk: Growing Up in an Era of Family Upheaval*, shows "marital unhappiness and discord have a broad negative impact on virtually every dimension of offspring well-being."

Stephanie Coontz, a family historian at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., and author of *The Way We Really Are*, applauds the study's methodology. But she cautions that "to use this in a campaign to convince people to stay together would be to wield a very blunt instrument. We don't want to push people to stay in relationships that in the long run are problematic."

By Karen S. Peterson, USA TODAY

## *Questions & Answers*

1. What does God think of divorce? Find at least one passage that expresses God's reaction to divorce.
2. Does God allow or authorize divorce? If so, for what reason(s)? Find at least two passages to support your answer. Is boredom justification for divorce? How about physical abuse?
3. What percentage of marriages in the U.S. do you think end in divorce?  
 10%       25%       50%       75%
4. Do you agree with Paul Amato's statement that "a substantial number of divorces are in the best interest of children"? Why or why not?
5. What does the Bible say about the husband's responsibility to his wife, and the wife's responsibility to her husband? List the responsibilities of each below:

### *Husband's Responsibilities*

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

### *Wife's Responsibilities*

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

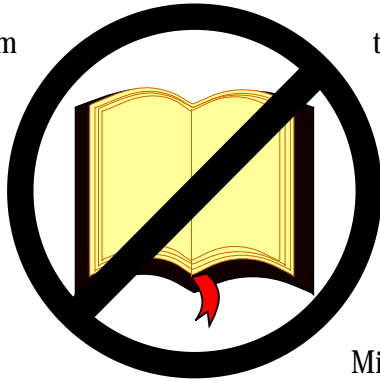
6. To what does Paul compare a husband and wife in Ephesians 5:23? What does this say about the devotion, care, and love that should exist between husbands and wives?

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *WORLD Magazine*, December 20, 1997,  
Volume 12, Number 31, page 9.

## *In the Nation: Choosing Sides*

The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled unanimously on Tuesday that a divorced father who became a Christian cannot share his newfound beliefs with his children if it alienates them from their Orthodox Jewish mother. A court-appointed guardian found that two of Jeffrey Kendall's three children were suffering "stress" because he was exposing them to Christian teaching while their mother, who gained custody after a 1994 divorce, wanted to raise them in the Jewish faith. The court agreed, ruling that Mr. Kendall



cannot take the children to church where they would be told that non-Christians are "destined to burn in hell," in the words of Judge Neil Lynch, who wrote the decision. Mr. Kendall's lawyer denounced the ruling, noting that the court had essentially chosen the mother's religion over the father's. "The court effectively has established a religion for these three children," said Michael Greco. "That's the court intruding where it shouldn't be intruding."

## *Questions & Answers*

1. Are we instructed in the Bible to obey the governing authorities?  Yes  No  
Find a verse to support your answer.
2. Has the Court overstepped its authority in making the ruling described above?  Yes  No  
Find 1-2 verses that tell us the *source* of a government's authority.
3. Should Mr. Kendall obey the Court order?  Yes  No Find passages to support your answer.
4. Is it true that learning of Christ might cause "stress" amongst the Kendall children?  Yes  No  
Should the children be taught of Christ regardless? Find passages that instruct parents to rear their children in the Lord. Who has the responsibility of spiritual teaching?
5. A similar "stressful" problem may arise if a non-Christian marries a Christian. Does the Bible have anything to say about marrying someone who is not a Christian? Find verses to support your answer.
6. Is it true that non-Christians are "destined to burn in hell"? Find verses to support your answer.

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: CNN Interactive, U.S. News Story Page,  
October 2, 1996 Web posted at: 6:15 a.m. EDT

## *Proposed adoption change angers gay parents*

SAN FRANCISCO (CNN) – Lesbian and gay activists are up in arms about a proposal by California Gov. Pete Wilson to restrict adoption by couples to those who are legally married.

Politically active gay-rights supporters like Kate Kendell say the proposed change to California's adoption regulations are nothing short of an attack on the concept of homosexual marriage.

"These regulations will not effect in any way the ability of single people, regardless of their sexual orientation, to adopt," said Kendell. "It will only affect the ability of committed lesbian and gay couples to adopt."

Wilson's initiative appears to be an indirect attempt to join the ranks of Florida and New Hampshire, which specifically outlaw homosexual adoptions.

"The governor believes it's in the best interests of the child to have a mother and a father in the household," a spokesman told CNN.

An estimated 17,000 children wait in California foster homes for adoption. Agencies working to place

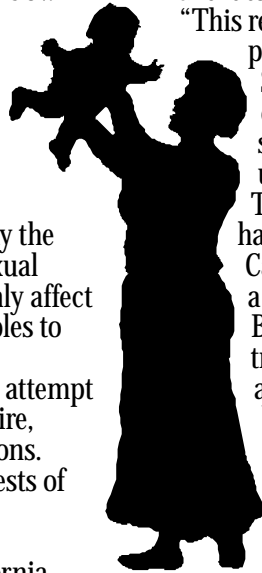
the youngsters say the proposed rule change could make it tougher to find adoptive parents.

"This regulation would really drastically reduce the pool," said Harriet Finck of the agency Adopt a Special Kid. "Over the last two years, of the children that AASK has placed in homes, I'd say 50 percent were single parents or couples unmarried."

Thana Christian is one person who might not have qualified as an adoptive parent under California's proposed change. She is single and a lesbian.

But after spending \$35,000 over four years trying to become a mother – first through artificial insemination, then adoption – she brought home a 10-month-old girl, Patty, in July.

"It's wonderful. She needed me as much as I needed her," Christian said. "And the birth parents needed me as much as I needed them. It's wonderful, even better than I imagined."



– From Correspondent Don Knapp

## *Questions & Answers*

1. What does the Bible have to say about homosexuality? Is it approved or disapproved by God? Find at least 3 verses to support your answer.

2. How should a Christian treat a homosexual? In other words, what should be our response if we were to learn that a friend was a homosexual? Consider James 2 in this light.

3. Should a homosexual be allowed to adopt children? Why or why not?

4. Are homosexual marriages approved or disapproved by God? Indicate verses to support your answer.

5. There are 17,000 children awaiting adoption, should this cause the state to reconsider the proposal, or should the standards for adoption be tightened to exclude homosexuals? Why?

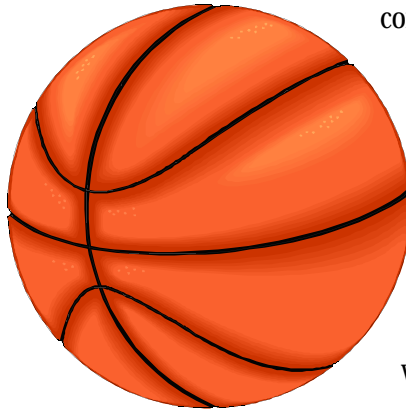
6. Do you think Patty (the little girl adopted by the lesbian woman) will be brought "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" (Eph. 6:4)? For whom is Patty's adoption "wonderful"? Her or her mother?

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *World Magazine*, "Risks and asterisks," by Joel Belz, March 21, 1998, Vol. 13, No. 11, page 5.

## *Compassion or Cheating – Which Is It?*

In February, Nykesha Sales had been closing in on the all-time scoring record in women's basketball at the University of Connecticut. Then, when she was just a single point away from that record, personal disaster struck. Miss Sales ruptured her Achilles' tendon. She was a senior, and the season was about to end while she was sidelined with her leg in a cast.



however, had a better idea. For the season's final game, he arranged with both the opposing coach and the conference officials to start with a unique pair of plays. First, the ball would be inbounded to Miss Sales, standing in her leg cast just beneath the basket; she would be permitted an uncontested layup. Then, the other team would be allowed an uncontested layup. Finally, with the score tied at 2-2, the regular game would proceed, and Miss Sales would be in the record book.

Geno Auriemma, Nykesha's sympathetic coach,

## *Questions & Answers*

1. What does the Bible have to say about showing compassion to others? Find at least 2 verses.
2. What does the Bible have to say about honesty or fair play? Again, provide at least 2 verses.
3. What possible lessons did this incident teach Miss Sales? Her team? The opposing team? The previous record holder? The fans? List all the possible lessons (good or bad) that this act may have taught.
4. Do you approve or disapprove of what the coach did? Support your answer with scripture.
5. Are there things that may appear "good," but are actually bad"? Try to think of a couple of examples.
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_

## DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *Screen It*, Entertainment Reviews for Parents Available on the Internet: <http://www.screenit.com>

### ***Marilyn Manson's New Album Antichrist Superstar Reviewed***

From the first song, "Irresponsible Hate Anthem" to the last, "Man That You Fear," the album, *Antichrist Superstar*, never lets up on the hard-driven guitar and rip roaring vocals that encase the anger and hate found in between each and every song. The demonic delivery of lead vocalist, Marilyn Manson, captures the essence of a new generation with no direction. The themes of isolation, death, hate, and violence add to the scare appeal. Teenagers could find this fascinating about a new group that shocks its audience with taboo subjects that their parents might not discuss with them. The heavy influence of loud guitar feedback and the high-pitched screaming nearly puts the listener into a repetitive "head banging" trance. It's shock-rock at its best. With nothing to offer but eerie imagery and a bad case of terminal feedback.

*Antichrist Superstar* contains profanity and deals with topics that could offend listeners who are sensitive



to issues such as violence, religion, and death. It promotes a feeling of hatred and anger toward anything dealing with the status quo, and contains morbid content and disturbing lyrics meant to shock the listener. This band has reached a cult following that has influenced the way people look and behave. It harkens back to the days where Alice Cooper, Kiss, and Ozzy Osbourne influenced the way their fans dressed and acted. Children could be attracted to the escapism that this album offers. Curiously enough, there are actually 99 tracks on this release, even though the credits list 16. Tracks 17 through 98 are 3 seconds long with no audio. However, track 99 has over a minute and a half of monstrous gibberish. It sounds like the audio was recorded backwards, encoding some cryptic message. However, when listened to backwards there was no distinguishable spoken audio or message.

## Questions & Answers

1. Are people influenced by the music they listen to or sing? Are godly people influenced by the singing of hymns and spiritual songs? Provide some NT Bible passages to support your answer.
2. Where is the biblical account of prisoners hearing the singing of praises to God? Do you think the prisoners were influenced by the singing? Who else was influenced by the singing?
3. Given the nature of the album review above, would you purchase or allow your children to purchase or listen to this album or this artist? Why or why not?
4. In the above review we are told that Marilyn Manson shocks the audience with "taboo" subjects. What does this word mean? What does Ephesians 5:11-12 have to say about taboo subjects?

## DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *USA Today*, November 20, 1997, Online.

### *Doctors astonished at septuplets' health*

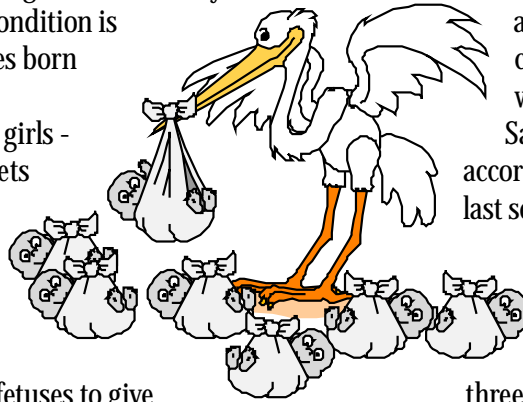
DES MOINES, Iowa

The seven little McCaugheys were reported doing well Thursday morning -astonishing doctors who say the day-old septuplets' size and condition is "virtually unheard-of." The babies born Wednesday to Bobbi and Kenny McCaughey - four boys and three girls - are only the second set of septuplets ever born alive and if they live, would be the first ever to survive.

The babies' deeply religious family - who had rejected suggestions to abort some of the fetuses to give the others a better chance (fetal reduction) - rejoiced.

Once news began trickling out, the 29-year-old seamstress and her 27-year-old husband, a billing

clerk at an auto dealer, found themselves the center of worldwide attention.



The birth of septuplets is rare and serious complications are common. The only other known set were born alive in September in Saudi Arabia. Six of them died, according to hospital officials there. The last set of septuplets in the United States was born in May 1985 in Orange, Calif., to Samuel and Patricia Frustaci. Born in her 28th week of pregnancy, one was stillborn, three died within 19 days of birth and

the remaining three had medical and developmental problems.

By The Associated Press

## Questions & Answers

1. When it became known that the McCaugheys were going to have multiple children, many people suggested they should submit to "fetal reduction." What is "fetal reduction"?
2. What passages in the Bible would you turn to defend or refute the practice of "fetal reduction"?
3. When does a child become a child? What does the term "abortion" mean?
4. Did the McCaugheys make the right decision in refusing to abort any of the babies?
5. Is abortion ever right? If so when? If not, why not? Provide biblical passages to support your answer.



# DIFFICULT ISSUE

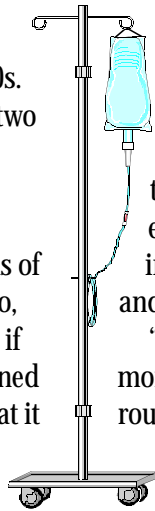
Source: *USA Today*, September 9, 1997, Online.

## *Near death: Essence of the argument*

PINELLAS PARK, Fla.

Entangled in a web of medical tubes, the lives of Rosemary Zeidler and Lynn Bessinger are slowly coming to a close. Both women reside at Woodside hospice center. Both are in their early 70s. And both have incurable breast cancer. Yet these two women are far apart on the question of whether terminally ill patients should have the right to a doctor's help in ending their lives.

Zeidler, who says she can still hear the screams of her mother-in-law, who died of cancer 17 years ago, wants the option of asking a doctor to help her die if her pain becomes intolerable. Bessinger is frightened by the prospect of widespread legalization and what it could mean to society. "It's not up to us to make up our minds when we're going to die," she says. "It's up to God."



Their views in many ways capture the essence of two cases being argued before the Supreme Court Wednesday over the constitutionality of doctor-assisted suicide. The court's decision, expected before the end of the term this summer, could be the most divisive since the landmark *Roe vs. Wade* abortion ruling of 1973. If the court finds that patients have a right to a doctor's help in ending their lives, the ruling would mark sweeping change in the nation's laws, medical practice and ethics.

"It would be saying that suicide now becomes morally and socially acceptable as a relatively routine way of dealing with the problems of pain and suffering," says Daniel Callahan, co-founder of the Hastings Center in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. The center studies ethical problems in medicine, biology and the environment.

## *Questions & Answers*

1. With whom do you agree – Zeidler or Bessinger? Why?
2. What does the term "euthanasia" mean?
3. What Bible passages would you use to refute or defend the practice of euthanasia? List them below:
4. What is the name of the medical doctor known to many as "Doctor Death"?
5. Should all possible means be used to keep a person alive (feeding tubes, specialized equipment, etc.) or should a person be allowed to die with dignity?

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: 09/09/97- Updated 05:33 PM ET USA TODAY Online.

## ***Lawsuit Resolved, Abortion Pill on Track***

A legal dispute that threatened to delay U.S. introduction of the abortion pill RU-486 has been resolved, the drug's backers announced Wednesday.

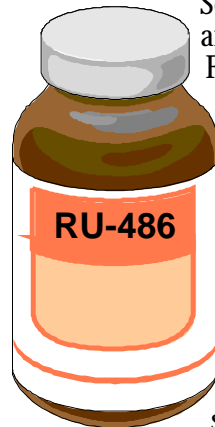
If the Food and Drug Administration approves the drug, as is widely expected, it should be available before the end of 1997, the backers say.

"We're going to move ahead," says Margaret Catley-Carlson, president of the Population Council, New York.

The council, a nonprofit research group that holds U.S. rights to the drug, has settled a lawsuit with Joseph D. Pike, a San Diego lawyer it had chosen to handle fund-raising, manufacturing and distribution.

The council demanded Pike sell controlling interest in the for-profit project - which he has now done - after learning he was disbarred and pled guilty to forgery in a North Carolina real estate case.

The cloud over Pike would undermine the venture, the council argued in its suit.



Now, a new company, Advances for Choice, has been formed to market the drug. The council shepherded the drug through the FDA process and, in September, learned the agency had found it safe and effective for ending early pregnancies. But the FDA asked for more information on labeling and manufacturing before approval. That information should be ready by June, says Jack Van Hulst, chief executive of the new company.

Abortion opponents are unsympathetic about the venture's woes. "The whole problem reflected the fact that there is big money here," says Wanda Franz of the National Right to Life Committee. "This is not about choice or women's health or compassion or any of that. Under that nice sales pitch, there's a seamy side."

Abortion rights supporters say the drug will be preferred over surgery by many women and will make the procedure more accessible and private.

By Kim Painter, USA TODAY

## ***Questions & Answers***

1. Should the introduction of RU-486 be delayed? Why or why not?
2. Should a woman have the right to "choose" to end a pregnancy?
3. What Bible passages would you use to show that abortion is wrong? (Consider Exo 21:22-23; Psa. 139:14; Luke 1:44)
4. Is a woman who has an abortion displaying the "natural affection" mentioned in Romans 1:31 and 2 Timothy 3:3?
5. Does God give people a choice to do good or evil? When it comes to having or not having children, when should a woman exercise her freedom to choose?

# DIFFICULT ISSUE

Source: *USA TODAY* Online.

## *Anti-cyberporn law challenged*

PHILADELPHIA - The government's ban on sending "indecent" and sexually explicit material to minors over computer networks was challenged in court the moment President Clinton signed it into law Thursday.

The law defines indecency as "any comment, request, suggestion, proposal, image or other communication that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards..."

Supporters say the law will protect children from pornography. Those who oppose the law say that the ban limits constitutionally protected freedom of speech.

U.S. Attorney Anthony J. Coppelino said restrictions are necessary because computers have become increasingly pervasive and bring pornography right into people's homes.

"It's not an exaggeration to say that many of these indecent images are available on a computer by ... a click of a mouse," said Coppelino.

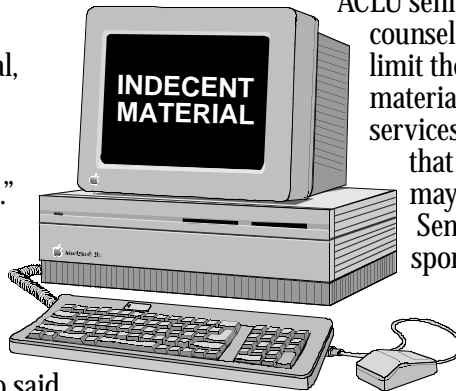
Christopher Hansen, the national ACLU senior staff

counsel noted that parents already can limit their children's access to adult material by using safeguards on computer services or by buying inexpensive software that limits the Internet sites children may reach.

Senator Jim Exon, D-Neb., who sponsored the wide-ranging Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996, expressed confidence in the anti-porn provisions.

"The ACLU continues to raise red herrings that have nothing to do with our proposal," he said.

The ACLU-led coalition argued that on-line speech is protected under the First Amendment.



## *Questions & Answers*

1. Is it sinful to view pornographic materials? Why or why not? What Bible passages would help to answer this question?
2. What is lust? Is lust bad? See James 1:15.
3. If one looks "upon a woman to lust after her," (Matt. 5:28) has he committed adultery for which divorce would be an option?
4. Should the government step in and eliminate pornography from the internet? Why or why not?
5. What strategies would you suggest for preventing nudity, pornography, etc. from jeopardizing your soul?