

**image**

CHRISTIAN COMMENT



**news**

ON PRO-LIFE ISSUES

# THIS IS HELPING TEENAGERS?

**In an attempt, we are told, to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies, condom manufacturers are to be allowed to advertise condoms on television or radio at any time of day or night. The only exception will be alongside programmes targeted at children under 10.**

In a further attempt to reduce teenage pregnancies, abortion clinics are to be allowed to advertise on television and radio for the first time.

*We would point out that abortion clinics are only of interest to girls who are pregnant already. This is not an attempt to prevent teenage pregnancies: this is an attempt to prevent live births by teenage mothers.*

The above derestrictions are to be allowed by the Advertising Standards Authority as a result of a request from the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health. This group, which was set up by the Government in 2003 and whose members are appointed by Government ministers, is full of supporters of the abortion industry and does not contain a single representative from groups who support the traditional family.

Dr Peter Saunders, of the Christian Medical Fellowship, said the whole approach from Government creates an atmosphere where it is seen as acceptable for teenagers to indulge in recreational sex without regard to very serious consequences in physical and emotional health.

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A year ago, the Department of Children, Schools and Families cited South Tyneside as an example of what could be achieved by fully implementing the Government's teenage pregnancy strategy. The latest figures show a 37.5 per cent rise in teenage pregnancy rates in South Tyneside in 2007, giving South Tyneside its highest teenage conception rates since 2000. Presumably this is something the Department of Children will not be mentioning.

Advertising condoms and abortion clinics on TV will add to problems caused by the Government's failed teenage pregnancy strategy - because of the authorities' insistence on applying more of the same.

■ **Children's Minister Beverley Hughes** has said again that there is no evidence that education that promotes abstinence until marriage is effective. How much longer is she going to go on saying this before she has to admit that it is completely untrue?

2 In America, where there are abstinence programmes for schools, the number of students having sex has declined 12 per cent since 1991, and more in schools where abstinence is taught. The National Abstinence Education Association lists nine abstinence programmes that have had positive results.

Abstinence teaching brought a "remarkable sustained decline" in teenage pregnancy rates in South Carolina and a sharp drop in intercourse in young teens in New York and Seattle. In April 2008 the Heritage Foundation reported that 11 out of 15 abstinence programmes studied showed significant results.

The A. C. Green Youth Foundation says 20 studies show abstinence programmes are making a positive difference in the lives of youth. In the state of Georgia in 1995, the education authority ordered abstinence to be taught in public schools. There has been a drop in pregnancy rates there every year since that date. The pregnancy rate there for 15 to 17-year-olds has dropped 46 per cent in 11 years.

### Image says...

In 1999 the British Government pledged to cut teenage pregnancies by half by 2010. It has spent almost £300 million promoting sex education and handing out free contraceptives and morning-after pills. The result? Teenage pregnancies have increased.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics show that pregnancies in 2007 in girls under 18 were up. Pregnancies in under-16s were up six per cent. And the number of pregnant girls under 18 who chose abortion reached 50 per cent for the first time.

The Government's response? To announce the provision of a further £20 million to promote contraception. Every time more sex education, more free contraceptives and easier access to morning-after pills have failed to stem the tide, the Government has announced its remedy: more sex education, more free contraceptives and easier access to morning-after pills. You would have thought that by now it would have occurred to someone that something wasn't working. Alas, no. What we are dealing with here is not reason, but ideology.

The same week these figures were announced, the Government issued new guidance to parents. Parents should not teach their teenage children that it is wrong to have sex, the Government said, lest that discourage children from being "open." Instead parents should encourage children from the age of 13 - three years under the legal age of consent, that is - to obtain contraception. Why not, says a new leaflet, offer to go with your daughter to visit a local clinic or GP so that she can make a choice that is right for her?

How dare they? Parents - above all, fathers - have a responsibility to bring up their children to be moral, God-fearing citizens who respect marriage and shun illicit sex.

When it comes to morality, the British Government has lost its way. Its teenage pregnancy strategy is an abject failure. Yet it still insists on telling parents how to bring up their children. How very, very sad

## EMBRYO RESEARCH BATTLE IS 'OVER'

All the battle to use human embryos and human/animal hybrid embryos for stem cell research may have been, as suggested in the last issue of *image* news, all for nothing.

Taking stem cells from embryos destroys the embryos. Cloned hybrid embryos were suggested because it was not possible to obtain sufficient fully human embryos for research.

US President Obama ordered federal funding to be allowed for such research. British scientists are pleading for easier regulation of stem cell trials. But, as Robert Lanza, of Advanced Cell Technology, explained in the journal *Cloning and Stem Cells*, human/cow, human/mouse and human/rabbit hybrid embryos failed to grow beyond 16 cells.

At first, it was thought it would just be a matter of tweaking the culture conditions, he said, but "the problem was far more fundamental."

Meanwhile, scientists have found a way of producing stem cells - stem cells have the potential to become any type of tissue in the body - by perfectly ethical means.

Scientists found they could make stem cells from the patient's own skin cells - with the advantage that the stem cells would not be rejected by the patient's body - more than a year ago, but the cells could not be used because the procedure involved injecting viruses which could cause cancer.

Now scientists at Edinburgh and Toronto universities, instead of using viruses, have passed genes into the cells through pores. Once the genes have done their job, they are removed, leaving the cells healthy and intact.

Ethically produced stem cells, known as induced pluripotent stem cells, are showing promising results in trials. Research continues

into using stem cells to replace damaged tissue in all areas of the body.

Some doctors are saying publicly that the battle between research on stem cells from human embryos and research on ethically produced stem cells is over. It seems to be, says bioethics news agency BioEdge, "that the supernova of 'therapeutic' cloning is fading."

Now scientists with an eye on money to be made from research on embryonic stem cells who provided all the hype about possible cures for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases will have to explain to patients why cures from so-called therapeutic cloning are not forthcoming.

■ When scientists started screening human embryos for diseases, pro-lifers said it would lead to embryos being screened for hair and eye colour to produce designer babies. Not so, said the scientists. No legitimate organisation would do that, and if they did, they would be ostracised.

But one company, Fertility Institutes, run by Dr Jeffery Steinberg, has been advertising just such a service. "This is cosmetic medicine," he says. "Others are frightened by the criticism, but we have no problem with it."

After considerable publicity, adverts have been removed from the company's website, but Dr Steinberg says the cancellation is only temporary. He admits to his company's doing 10 sex selection procedures a week.

**Challenge Team UK**, who go into schools talking to children about saving sex for marriage, need two young male presenters for the beginning of September. Training and accommodation are provided. Details at [www.challengeteamuk.org](http://www.challengeteamuk.org)

# 'RIGHT TO DIE' DEBATE ROLLS ON

The Government introduced a bill – the Coroners and Justice Bill – in an attempt to outlaw internet websites that encourage suicide. The pro-euthanasia lobby has sought to hijack the bill by getting amendments added to the bill which would legalise assisting the suicide of someone who is seriously ill.

Patricia Hewitt, senior Labour MP and a former Health Secretary, added an amendment, backed by more than 100 MPs, which would have changed the law to protect from prosecution those who help terminally ill relatives to travel abroad to kill themselves in suicide clinics. She admitted it was a first step in a bigger campaign to permit assisted suicide in Britain for the first time.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has said he was not in favour of a change in the law, but signalled that he would allow MPs a free vote on an amendment like the former Health Secretary's.

Dr Peter Saunders, of Care Not Killing, said the result would be a law that discouraged suicide with one hand and encouraged it with the other. Taking away a deterrent to assisted suicide would open the floodgates.

In the event, the former Health Secretary's amendment was not discussed in the House of Commons because of a lack of time. The bill will now be debated in the Lords.

■ **Doctors who fail to act** on "living wills" which say patients want food and water to be withdrawn and their lives ended if they become unable to speak for themselves, may be struck off, according to new guidelines by the General Medical Council.

Where a patient's wishes are explicit or interpreted by close family or their legal representatives, the guidelines say, "*acting against the patient's wishes should be deemed to be causing harm. Serious or persistent failure to follow this guidance will put your registration at risk.*"

Jane O'Brien, assistant director of standards and ethics at the GMC, said "*Clinicians will still have the final say on 'best interests,' but we are asking them to give greater weight to patients' wishes in a more formal sense than we have before.*"

"*Those who have strong feelings about how they want themselves or their loved ones to be treated should expect those feelings to be considered.*" Patients had the right to refuse treatment "*and a valid advance refusal must be respected, even if it will result in their death.*"

■ **Doctors and nurses** should give routine offers of help with making living wills to patients with terminal illnesses, according to new guidelines. Professional bodies including the British Geriatrics Society and the Royal College of Physicians have produced the guidance for healthcare professionals.

"*We have grave concerns about people saying in advance that they would like food and drink to be removed,*" said a spokesman for the Christian Medical Fellowship. "*This could be used by people to take advantage of relatives for financial and personal reasons.*"

"*Living wills take away the freedom of the doctor to do what is in the best interests of the patient.*"

■ **Retired British GPs** belonging to a group called Fate (Friends at the End) have been

helping patients starve and dehydrate themselves to death.

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal in this country. Doctors from this group have been advising patients who are terminally ill or suffer from a degenerative disease and are unwilling to travel to Switzerland, where assisted suicide is legal, that the one thing they can do is refuse food and drink.

They have sent out copies of a book concerning death by refusing food and drink to about 30 British patients in four months. Eustratia Tuson (85), took five agonising days to die. Lily (75), from Scotland, took 25 days to die.

If a patient insists on refusing food and drink, doctors have a duty to ease suffering. The General Medical Council says, however, that doctors discussing dehydration and starvation with patients could be at risk of being struck off.

■ **Ludwig Minelli, founder of the Swiss assisted suicide clinic Dignitas**, wants to arrange an assisted suicide for a healthy woman who wants to die at the same time as her husband, who is terminally ill.

Assisted suicide should not be restricted to people who are terminally ill, he told BBC Radio 4. Suicide was "*a marvellous opportunity*" and "*a very good possibility to escape a situation which you can't alter.*" Assisted suicide would save money for the NHS.

A spokesman for Care Not Killing said these comments showed why legalisation of assisted dying would open "*a Pandora's box of nightmare scenarios.*"

The BBC was criticised for allowing the interview without including views from critics of assisted suicide.

"*The BBC is under an obligation to balance its coverage,*" said Simon Calvert of the Christian Institute, "*and it is breathtaking that on this issue of life and death importance it has not bothered to find anyone to put the case against killing.*"

■ **Two cancer patients who wanted chemotherapy** to extend their lives were told by the authorities in the US state of Oregon that chemotherapy was too expensive for the extra time it would give them, but the authorities would gladly pay for their assisted suicide when they were ready.

Wesley Smith, associate director of the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, reporting on this in the Daily Telegraph, said people continued to say Oregon proved assisted suicide could be legalised without abuses – "*but the more one learns about the actual experience, the shakier such assurances become.*"

Doctors Kathleen Foley and Herbert Hendin, he said, wrote a scathing expose of assisted suicide in Oregon, pointing out that physicians are able to assist in suicide "without inquiring into the source of the medical, psychological, social and existential concerns that usually underlie requests. . . even though this type of inquiring produces the kind of discussion that often leads to relief for patients and makes assisted suicide seem unnecessary."

■ **Debbie Purdy, from Bradford**, who wanted a guarantee that her husband would not be prosecuted for assisting suicide if he accompanied her to an overseas suicide clinic, but received no such satisfaction from the High Court and the Appeal Court, has been given leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

■ **A 15-year-old girl, Alesha Thomas**, died five days after an abortion because of a blunder at Marie Stopes abortion clinic in Leeds, the inquest heard.

Abortionist Dr Peter Paku said he issued a prescription for an antibiotic after a successful procedure, but the patient had already been discharged. Patients leaving without medication was a regular problem.

Coroner Roger Whittaker strongly criticised the clinic for procedural failings and warned it could face legal action.

# ARE CHILDREN'S JABS SAFE?

More than 1,300 young teenage girls have suffered adverse reactions to injections against the sexually transmitted HPV virus which causes 70 per cent of cervical cancer.

Most were comparatively minor complaints such as rashes, allergic reactions, nausea, muscle weakness, fever and dizziness, but there were almost 20 cases of blurred vision and several cases of paralysis. Four girls had convulsions, one had a seizure and one had an epileptic fit.

Campaigners called for injections to be suspended, but Government health officials said the Cervarix vaccine was safe. Some 1,340 complaints were to be expected in view of the fact that 700,000 girls were given the injections last year, and there was no evidence that the serious complaints were caused by the vaccine. Government ministers say the injections could save 700 lives a year.

■ **Kidneys and livers** from aborted babies could be given to desperately ill people to ease the organ donor shortage. The suggestion comes from Professor Sir Richard Gardner, an Oxford University stem cell expert and advisor to the Royal Society.

Stem cells offered hope and research was going on into the use of pig organs, but the use of aborted fetuses would at least be a temporary solution, he said. He was surprised it had not been considered.

Pro-lifers saw the prospect of abortions being timed to suit transplant patients. Josephine Quintavalle, of Comment on Reproductive Ethics, said the proposal was “*absolutely horrifying.*” “*At what stage,*” she said, “*do you say to the woman who is to have an abortion ‘Can we have some organs for transplant?’*”

Professor Stuart Campbell said if babies were going to be aborted, it was a shame to waste their organs.

“*A well kept secret is that many stem cell scientists use aborted fetuses in their research. Scientists and policy makers tend to stay away from drawing the public’s attention to this because abortion and aborted fetuses are political minefields,*” said Professor Naomi Pfeffer, of London Metropolitan University.

■ **Scientists are to use discarded IVF embryos** and aborted fetuses to produce synthetic blood. There is a shortage of donated blood, which can carry infection.

The NHS and the Wellcome Trust are to fund research to find stem cells from embryos and fetuses which can be turned into o-group blood, the group which can be transfused into anyone without being rejected.

Research is to be led by Professor Marc Turner, of Edinburgh University, and Professor David Anstee, of the National Blood Service.

■ **The Obama administration** in the US is giving UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, \$50 million in US funding. The money was withdrawn by the Bush administration after evidence that the group was working with population control officials guilty of forced abortion and forced sterilisation in China.

The Population Research Institute says a claim by UNFPA that it is working with Chinese officials to remove coercion is untrue. An investigation in three “model counties” showed China’s one-child policy had not been scaled back and in some ways coercive measures by the Government were worse than ever.

The Times reports outrage in China as public opinion wakes up to the persistence of forced abortion, compulsory sterilisation and infanticide. Coercion was banned by law in 2002, but still continues. China’s population continues to grow by up to 10 million a year.

■ **New Government guidelines** for abortion in Northern Ireland say doctors who cannot cooperate with abortion will be required to refer women to a doctor who will. Pro-lifers say abortion in Northern Ireland is legal to save the life of the mother, but a criminal offence solely to take the life of the child, and no one can be forced to cooperate in carrying out a criminal offence.

■ **An analysis published in the Journal of Reproductive Medicine** of 21 international studies between 1995 and 2007 showed that abortion increased the risk of premature birth in subsequent pregnancies by 64 per cent.

■ **A study in the US journal Fertility and Sterility** by researchers at Yale University School of Medicine says of every 100 eggs fertilised for IVF, only five will become live births. In other words, 95 per cent of IVF embryos will be discarded or will die.

■ **A terrible thing about abortion**, apart from the fact that it takes human life, is that according to the Bible the shedding of innocent blood pollutes the land and brings judgment on a nation.

The Hatikvah Film Trust has produced an excellent documentary on DVD about abortion from a biblical perspective, called The Land Cries Out. We can thoroughly recommend it.

Copies of the DVD can be obtained free of charge (at the discretion of Hatikvah Film Trust) from Hatikvah Film Trust, PO Box 157, Llandudno, Wales LL30 9DE. The e-mail address is [orders@hatikvah.co.uk](mailto:orders@hatikvah.co.uk). Donations to help cover costs are welcome. Suggested amounts are £5 for a single copy and £3 each for multiple copies.

■ **Women can now buy up to three morning-after pills** by credit card or debit card on the website of a well known chemist without seeing a doctor or pharmacist. Women have to confirm that they are 18 or over and that the pills are intended for them, but there are no checks. Geraldine Smith MP pointed out that the morning-after pill in fact causes an abortion in the earliest stages of pregnancy. Critics said bulk buying of the morning-after pill would promote promiscuity and fuel the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases.

■ **If you see young people** standing silently outside Parliament or outside public buildings in the provinces with red tape over their mouths bearing the word “LIFE,” they are praying for the abolition of abortion and for revival in Britain. You can see details at [www.bound4life.co.uk](http://www.bound4life.co.uk).

■ **From July, girls at secondary schools** from 11 years old and upwards will be able to text a request for a morning-after pill to a school nurse. There has been a significant rise in the number of teenage pregnancies in Oxfordshire – so schoolgirls there are to have a telephone number to contact so they can get advice, or a morning-after pill, even when the school is closed.

■ **Image** will be organising a **National Day of Prayer** about abortion on Tuesday, October 27, the anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act. People throughout Britain will be asked to get together to pray in churches, ladies’ groups, home groups, youth groups and pregnancy centres.

We are looking for area co-ordinators who can organise a prayer meeting or co-ordinate people who pray in their town or their area. Advice, literature, and details of prayer needs will be provided.

### Can you help?

If you feel you may be able to help, contact Stuart Cunliffe on 0161-799 5180 or at [stuart.image@poptel.org.uk](mailto:stuart.image@poptel.org.uk)

## THIS IS HOW YOU CAN HELP

It's good to read about life issues and be aware of what's happening in the world around. But if you read about them all and say "My, isn't it awful?" may we point out something? You have achieved nothing.

To be what God wants us to be, we need to be involved in two things: prayer, and action.

*Image* publishes an *image* prayer letter. This goes out by post and by e-mail. Get a copy and put it to good use.

*Image* also publishes a prayer bulletin, called Networking News and Prayer. This goes out by e-mail. It lists the things we pray for, and the answers to prayer we have (and we do have answers to prayer!). For a copy of either, contact the *image* office.

Why not write to your MP and express your concerns?

Why not pass on your *image* news? If you can use more copies, let us know.

*Image* runs regular counsellor training courses (for men as well as women). Why not train, and help out in your local pregnancy centre?

Why not adopt a pregnancy centre in prayer? Contact your local pregnancy centre and ask them about their needs.

You can help by raising funds. *Image* is now registered with [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk). If you go via that website address and mark *image* as your charity when you buy goods online from amazon or several hundred other major retailers, *image* will receive a donation of up to 15 per cent of the purchase price without cost to yourself.

*Image* is also now registered with a new search engine at [www.easysearch.org.uk](http://www.easysearch.org.uk). Each time you use it *image* gets a donation. Have a look at the website addresses for details. **Every little helps.**

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### FINALLY! DON'T MISS THIS. . .

*Image* is to hold a one-day prayer conference at Holy Trinity Church, Corporation Street, Stalybridge, from 10.30am to 4.30pm on Saturday, June 13.

There will be teaching on prayer, praise, worship and intercession with Ian Cole, of the World Prayer Centre.

**THE CONFERENCE IS FREE. THERE IS NO NEED TO BOOK BEFOREHAND. JUST COME.**

*Image* will have expenses, however, in putting on the conference. There will be a freewill offering on the day. Lunch will be provided at a small cost. This promises to be a wonderful day. **Don't miss it.**

Enclosed is a small poster. Can you display it for us?



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