

Do You Believe in God Appointed Destiny?

By Pastor David Diaz

My name is Pastor David Diaz, Pastor of New Beginning Community Ministries in Baldwin Park. The story I'm about to share is a testimonial of two lives headed for destruction but brought together by divine appointment and destinies changed forever. In March of this year, my wife and I were called to an emergency in Escondido, California because her cousin lay in critical condition. During our conversation, we asked them if they had any local support from a Christian pastor. They said that a local Pastor had been coming to minister to them and that he would be arriving in the morning. We stayed overnight and in the morning returned to be with the family again. The pastor they had told us about, Pastor Frank Salas, was there and we were introduced to him. He seemed very familiar and I wondered if we were previously acquainted. He asked me if we knew each other. I asked him if he was from Los Angeles and he said no, he was from the San Diego area, so we left it at that and continued to fellowship. That evening, after being at the hospital all day, we went together to have some coffee. Again I asked Pastor Frank what area he was from. He told me he was from the Otay neighborhood in San Diego and I said "I know that place."

I told him I had a bad experience there and began to tell him the story. I told him that my brother, a friend and I went to a Cinco de Mayo celebration in the Otay neighborhood in 1976. The streets of Otay had a bad reputation for gang violence. There was only one road in and one way out, but we went to the celebration anyway. We stayed there until it was late and began to notice different gang members gathering together. Before we had an opportunity to leave about 30 to 40 gang members surrounded us. They told us that we only had one choice and that unless we did as they said, we would not come out of that place alive. The main leader of the gang told us we each had to fight a gang member that they would assign to us and that if we lost none of us would come out of that place alive. The only way to leave that place was to win the fight.

They then selected a person for each of us who was bigger and stronger than we were. I was the first one to fight. He was a lot bigger than I. We were only permitted to have two knockdowns - whoever was knocked down twice lost for everyone. In the fight a blow to my head knocked me down. I knew my life was on the line. I had come to San Diego to kick heroin. I was into my third day and still ill from the withdrawals. Now I found myself in a fight for my life. Within I said "Lord if you get me out of this I will serve You," because God had been dealing with me for some time as different people witnessed to me. I knew I needed a change. At that moment I sprang up and ran back into the fight. A lucky punch knocked him down, hitting his head on a concrete wall and knocking him out. I don't know how, but I won the first fight. My brother was next. Raul was about 18 to 19 years old. He fought a guy fresh out of San Quentin, much older and a great fighter, but Raul had wrestling experience. This other guy was winning so my brother came in close to him, took him by the waist and flipped him on his head. The second fight was over. At that moment about 10 to 15 gang members attacked him. I knew I could not stop it or

even speak to them, so I ran to the leader and reminded him, "you gave me your word, you gave me your word, now stick to your word!" He looked at me angrily and said "stop, get back!" and everyone backed off. The third fight proceeded. My friend was the last. He was state champion wrestler in California and he also won the fight quickly. The leader looked at us and said "you better get out right now while you can."

Just as I am telling Pastor Frank this story, he looks at me and says, "I was the gang leader." I said "What!" He replied again, he was the gang leader. Then he shared "what you didn't know was that God was already dealing with me, otherwise I never would have listened to you. When you told me "stick to your word," I felt something compel me to hold them back because the gang already had their guns and knives ready to take all of you out." I said, "that was a miracle." He replied, "the miracle was that you me left [out of] there alive because no one had ever left there alive before." Pastor Frank said, "even my own gang asked me why I let you go." Both of us realized that the hand of God was upon us directing our destiny. He had already dealt with us about coming to the cross. God took two individuals on their way to destruction and turned their lives completely around. It all started in a place of conflict.

For both of us, Pastor Frank and myself, this was a strange, God-appointed reunion. I have to share with you now that God appointed us for a time such as this. We are now friends. Pastor Frank is a great man of God that the Lord has raised up. He is doing a great work in the foreign field and has a thriving church, Monte de los Olivos (Mt. of Olives Church), in Escondido in the San Diego area. My brother Raul is a Pastor in Riverside, CA at Path of Life Church. I am now a Pastor at New Beginning Community Ministries where God is doing great miracles in the lives of people. I can really see that the hand of God had been upon us back then because even then God called, God appointed and God directed His special plan as He does for every one of us, even the worst of us. God does great miracles. Now both of us are still fighting but on the same team and for the souls of men.



Stem Cells: Myth Vs Reality

By James Wilson

There is heavy duty mythology surrounding stem cell research in the United States. President Bush has so far been resolute in framing policy that accords with reality. Unfortunately, a large number of senators and journalists even the Record-Searchlight have been caught up in the mythology. They continue to pressure the president to loosen his standards for federally funded stem cell research. The stakes include a great deal of money and the conscience of our nation.

According to a May article published in Insight Magazine stem cells have already proven their worth in fighting cancer some thirty ways. They show great promise backed by experimental results against diabetes, lupus, multiple sclerosis and Lou Gehrig's Disease to name a few. Animal studies have shown these cells capable of repairing brain damage and even severed spinal cords. Stanford's Helen Blau says, "They travel through the bloodstream, respond to stress, and contribute to brain cells. They clearly repair damage in muscle and other tissues." In each of these examples it is adult stem cells performing the wonders. Embryonic stem cell research unrestricted beyond our shores has yet to produce any tangible result and even the theoretical promises of these cells are being met or exceeded through adult cell lines that do not require making

and destroying life. Adult stem cells come from locations as diverse as placentas, bone marrow, and blood itself. They have been proving their worth since the 1980's while embryonic cells those taken from human embryos have yet to make good on a single promise.

The ongoing pressure to release government funds for embryonic stem cell research is grounded in the simple fact that most private funding goes into the far more promising field of adult stem cell research. Researchers who want to be paid for research using human embryos have no other source of funding than your tax dollars and mine. But funding these experiments with public money has a major disadvantage beyond the fact that their promise is completely unsubstantiated. It requires the destruction many would say killing of human embryos.

The only guaranteed benefit of embryonic stem cell research is to make the creation and valuing of human embryos solely for their usefulness to others socially acceptable. President Bush and President Reagan before him finds all of this repugnant. The God revealed in the Bible the One who says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart," finds it unthinkable. Let us align ourselves with the Word of God on this one. It is as practical as it is right.

Will Abortion be America's Downfall?

2 Kings 24:3-4

Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of My sight, for the sin of Mannassah, according to all that he did: And also the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood: which the Lord would not pardon.

Abortion Statistics - World

- In 54 countries (61% of the world population) abortions are legal.
- In 97 countries (39% of the world population) abortions are illegal.
- There are approx. 46 million abortions conducted each year, 20 million of them obtained illegally.
- There are approximately 126,000 abortions conducted each day.

Abortion Statistics - U.S.

- Approximately 1,370,000 abortions occur annually in the U.S. according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute. Click here to see the approximate number of abortions in the U.S. per year from 1973-1996. In 2001, 1.31 million abortions took place.
- 88% of abortions occur during the first 6 to 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- 60% of abortions are performed on women who already have one or more children.
- 47% of abortions are performed on women who have already had one or more abortions.
- 43% of women will have had at least one abortion by the time they are 45 years old.
- 3,835 American children aborted every day of the year!!!

Abortion Statistics - Demographics

- **Age** - The majority of women getting an abortion are young. 52% are younger than 25 years old and 19% are teenagers. The abortion rate is highest for those women aged 18 to 19 (56 per 1,000 in 1992.)
- **Marriage** - 51% of women who are unmarried when they become pregnant will receive an abortion. Unmarried women are 6 times more likely than married women to have an abortion. 67% of abortions are from women who have never been married.
- **Race** - 63% of abortion patients are white, however, black women are more than 3 times as likely to have an abortion, and Hispanic women are 2.5 times as likely.
- **Religion** - 43% of women getting an abortion claimed they were Protestant, while 27% claimed they were Catholic.

Abortion Statistics - Using Contraception (U.S.)

- 54% of women having an abortion said they used some form of contraception during the month they became pregnant.
- 90% of women who are at risk for unplanned pregnancies are using contraception
- 8% of women having an abortion say they have never used contraception.
- It is possible that up to 43% of the decline in abortion from 1994-2000 can be attributed to using emergency contraception.

Abortion Statistics - Pro-Life vs. Pro-Choice

- According to a USA Today, CNN Gallup Poll in May, 1999 - 16% of Americans believe abortion should be legal for any reason at any time during pregnancy and 55% of American believe abortion should be legal only to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape or incest.
- According to a Gallup Poll in January, 2001 - People who considered themselves to be pro-life rose from 33% to 43% in the past 5 years, and people who considered themselves to be pro-choice declined from 56% to 48%.



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News Briefs

1. FDA APPROVES USE OF CHIP IN PATIENTS

The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday that Applied Digital Solutions of Delray Beach, Fla., could market the VeriChip, an implantable computer chip about the size of a grain of rice, for medical purposes. With the pinch of a syringe, the microchip is inserted under the skin in a procedure that takes less than 20 minutes and leaves no stitches. Silently and invisibly, the dormant chip stores a code that releases patient-specific information when a scanner passes over it.

The microchips have already been implanted in 1 million pets. But the chip's possible dual use for tracking people's movements - as well as speeding delivery of their medical information to emergency rooms



has raised alarm. "If privacy protections aren't built in at the outset, there could be harmful consequences for patients," said Emily Stewart, a policy analyst at the Health Privacy Project. To protect patient privacy, the devices should reveal only vital medical information, like blood type and allergic reactions, needed for health care workers to do their jobs, Stewart said.

Because the VeriChip is invisible, it's also unclear how health care workers would know which unconscious patients to scan. Company officials say if the chip use becomes routine, scanning triceps for hidden chips would become second nature at hospitals. So far, just 1,000 people across the globe have had the devices implanted, very few of them in the United States.

Meanwhile, the chip has been used for pure whimsy: Club hoppers in Barcelona, Spain, now use the microchip to enter a VIP area and, through links to a different database, speed payment much like a smartcard. (AP)

2. SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW RIGHT TO DISPLAY TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Supreme Court delivered big news when it agreed to review cases centered on the Ten Commandments. Federal Courts have ordered the Ten Commandments removed from public property when they stand alone and the Supreme Court has in the past agreed with those decisions. However, those who hate the sight of the Commandments want to go even further. Lawsuits have been filed around the nation demanding that the Ten Commandments be removed from public property even when displayed with other "historical" documents including the Magna Carta, The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In the mind of men such as former ACLU attorney Barry Lynn who heads Americans United For Separation of Church and State, any public display of anything of a religious nature must be stopped. He praised the Supreme Court for taking the case and demanded that they bury the Ten Commandments from public view once and for all. The Court is split and we must pray for a right headed decision. (Religious Freedom Coalition)

3. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM STATUTE GOES TO SUPREME COURT

The U.S. Supreme Court has decided to hear a case brought under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) by prison inmates who say they were denied the right to practice their religion. But the case, described by one attorney as a frontal attack on religion, goes beyond the debate over how far the state must go to accommodate faith practices behind bars. If the inmates lose, it could lead to RLUIPA being struck down as unconstitutional. If that happens, Christian ministries will no longer have the protection of law to enter into prisons, according to Pat Nolan, president of Prison Fellowship's Justice Fellowship. "This is a very important law," Nolan said. "Without it, it allows government officials to just arbitrarily cancel religious

activities, deny access to religious services and programs."

Jordan Lorence, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), said damage from a bad ruling in this case could extend to First Amendment rights outside prison. "The Establishment Clause theory is so broad that, eventually, it would undermine the entire statute, as well as every other religious exemption," Lorence said. Those exemptions include land use provisions for churches, the right of parents to provide ethical medical treatment for their kids and the right of doctors and pharmacists to exempt themselves from abortion services. "If these prisoners lose," Lorence said, "we all lose." (Citizen Link)

4. PRESIDENT BUSH ADVANCES PRO-LIFE AGENDA AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

a. PRESIDENT BUSH WITHHOLDS U.N. FUNDING THAT SUPPORTS FORCED ABORTIONS

President George W. Bush has withheld \$25 million in funding from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) because of that agency's support of forced abortions and forced sterilizations in China and other nations. The President transferred the funds to a State Department program to fight human trafficking and prostitution. Previously the President had transferred \$9 million that was to go the UNFPA to the US Agency for International Development for a reproductive health program. So far this year President George W. Bush has move 11 percent of the \$300 million Congress allotted to the UNFPA to other US agencies who do not promote abortion. (Religious Freedom Coalition)

b. PRESIDENT BUSH FUNDS ABSTINENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

On October 5th President George W. Bush announced \$100 million in new grants for abstinence-focused programs as part of the \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Of the eleven organizations receiving grants nine are faith-based. The grants will help these faith-based organizations teach children in AIDS plagued nations such as Ethiopia, Haiti, Tanzania and Zambia to avoid behavior putting them at risk for HIV. Previously the President has said, "I think our country needs a practical, effective and moral message. In addition to other kinds of prevention, we need to tell our children that abstinence is the only certain way to avoid



contracting HIV. It works every time." (RFC)

5. PRESIDENT BUSH KEEPS HIS PROMISE -SIGNS TAX RELIEF BILL

Last Monday, President George W. Bush, continued to keep his 2000 campaign promise to cut taxes for American families and to allow the American people to keep more of their own money by signing into law H.R. 1308, the "Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004." The law extends key parts of his 2001 tax relief plan set to expire next year. A family of four with an income of \$40,000 will save more than \$900 on their taxes next year because of the President's actions. Overall, 94 million will have a lower tax bill next year, including 70 million women and 38 million families with children. The legislation which President Bush signed into law extends the full marriage penalty relief to couples who have been unfairly taxed just because they are married; ensures that the full \$1,000 per child tax credit is available through 2010; provides \$200 million of assistance in the form of higher child credit refunds and earned income tax credits for military men and women living in combat zones; and lessens the tax burden of lower-income Americans by ensuring the full benefits of the 10% tax bracket. When finally made permanent, all of President Bush's tax cuts will come close to a total of \$2 trillion. American families and America's small businesses are clearly the winners. Christian Coalition commends both the majorities in the House and the Senate and President Bush for passing this critical pro-family piece of legislation this week. (Christian Coalition of America)

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