EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

November 17, 1999

According to Mr. Bardsley, fetal-tissue recovery accounts for about 10 percent of AGF’s business. The rest involves the recovery and transfer to researchers of non-transplantable organs and tissue from adult donors. But the fact that AGF covers tissue from all 50 states, Mr. Bardsley could not cite for WORLD an instance in which AGF pays a “site fee” to hospital morgues or funeral homes for the privilege of camping on-site to retrieve adult tissue.

Mr. Bardsley, a trained surgical technician, seems like a friendly guy. On the phone he sounds intelligent, and sincerely about his contention that AGF isn’t involved in the fetal-tissue business for the money.

“We have a lot of pride in what we do,” he says. “We think we make a difference with research and researchers’ accessibility to human tissue. Every time you go to a drug store, the drugs on the shelf are there as a result of human tissue donation. You can’t perfect drugs to be used in human beings using animals only.

AGF operates as a nonprofit and employs fewer than 15 people. Mr. Bardsley’s brother Jim and Jim’s wife Brenda founded the organization. The couple had previously owned a tissue-recovery organization called the International Institute for the Advancement of Medicine (IIAM), which had also specialized in fetal-tissue redistribution, counting, for example, for Mr. Sick among its clients. But when IIAM’s board of directors decided to withdraw from involvement with fetal tissue, the couple founded AGF—specifically to continue providing fetal tissue or researchers.

Significantly, AGF opened in 1994, the year after President Clinton shuttered the fetal-tissue research ban. Since then, the company’s revenues have rocketed from $800,000 to $2 million in 1996. Did the Bardsleys see a market niche that was too good to pass up? Brenda Bardsley, who is now AGF president, says no. AGF’s economic windfall, she says, is related to the company’s expansion into adult donations, not the transfer of fetal tissue. She says she and her husband felt compelled to continue providing the medical community with fetal tissue “because of the research that was going on.”

“Abortion is legal, but tragic. We see what we’re doing as trying to make the best of a bad situation,” Bardsley told WORLD. “We don’t encourage abortion, but we see that good can come from fetal-tissue research. There is so much wonderful research going on—research that can help save the lives of wanted children.”

Mrs. Bardsley says she teaches her own children that abortion is wrong. As a Deep South transplant with a brisk, East coast accent, Mrs. Bardsley and her family attend a Southern Baptist church near their home on the Satilla River in White Oak, GA. Mrs. Bardsley homeschools her three children using, she says, a Christian curriculum: “I’ve been painted as this monster, but here I am trying to give my kids a Christian education,” she says, referring to other media coverage of AGF’s fetal-parts enterprise.

Mrs. Bardsley says she’s prayed over whether to be acceptable to God and has “gotten the feeling” that it is. She also, she says, reads the Bible “all the time.” And though she can’t cite a chapter and verse to back up the claim, she says, “I know that God commands us to love one another. For Mrs. Bardsley, aiding medical research by supplying fetal tissue has been a religious calling.

If they were in it for the money rather than for the good of mankind, says Mrs. Bardsley, AGF could charge much higher fees. If it did, because research demand is so high.

The issue of demand is one of several points on which the testimonies of Mrs. Bardsley and her brother-in-law Brent don’t coincide. He says demand is “not all that high.” She says demand for fetal tissue is “so high, we could never meet it.” He says AGF has only a small percentage of aborting women consent to donate their babies’ bodies. She says 75 percent of them consent. He says AGF charges only for whole bodies, and doesn’t care how the body parts are processed. Opening Lines could justify charging by the body part. She says AGF charges for individual organs and tissue based on the company’s recovery costs.

Founded by pathologist Miles Jones, Opening Lines was, until recently, based in West Frankfort, Ill. According to its brochure, Opening Lines’ parent company, Consultative and Diagnostic Pathology, Inc., processes an average of 1,500 fetal-tissue cases per day. While AGF requires that researchers submit a proof of their Institutional Review Board (IRB), a research oversight commission, approves their work, Opening Lines does not burden its customers with such technicalities. In fact, says the Opening Lines brochure, researchers need not tell the company why they need baby parts at all—simply state their wishes and let Opening Lines provide “the freshest tissue prepared to your specifications and delivered in the quantities you need it.”

Opening Lines’ brochure cloaks the profit motive in a veil of altruism. The cover tells abortionists that since fetal-tissue donation benefits medical science, “You can turn your patient’s decision into something wonderful.” But in case such altruism isn’t a sufficient motivator, Dr. Jones also makes his program financially appealing to abortionists. Like AGF, he offers to lease space from clinics so his staff can dissect children’s bodies on-site, but also goes a step further: He offers to train abortion clinic staff to harvest tissue themselves. He even sweetens the deal for abortionists with a financial incentive: “Based on your volume, we will reimburse part or all of your employee’s salary, thereby reducing your overhead.”

Again the money trail: more dead babies harvested, less overhead. Less overhead, more profit.

But Dr. Jones’ own profits may be taking a beating at present. When Life Dynamics released the results of its investigation to West Frankfort’s newspaper The Daily American, managing editor Shannon Woodworth ran a front-page story on a 100-point headline: “Pro-Lifers: Baby body parts sold out of West Frankfort.” The little town of 9,000 was scandalized, City officials threatened legal action against Dr. Jones and his chief of staff Gayla Rose, a lab technician and longtime West Frankfort resident. The story splashed down in local TV news coverage, and Illinois right-to-life activist vowed to picket Opening Lines. Within a week, Gayla Rose had shut down the company’s West St. Louis Street location, diametrically opposing the disapproving GODLINES. Area reporters now believe Dr. Jones may be operating somewhere in Missouri. WORLD attempted to track him down, but without success.

The demands of researchers for fetal tissue will continue to drive suppliers to supply it. And all parties will continue to wrap their motives in a veil of altruism; God is good. But some bioethicists believe that even the greater good has a spending cap.

Christopher Hook, a fellow with the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity in Bannockburn, Ill., calls the exploitation of pre-born children “too high a price regardless of the supposed benefit. We can never feel comfortable with identifying a group of pre-born children who can be exploited for the good of the whole.” Dr. Hook says. “Once we have crossed that line, we have become a society, and certainly the covenant of medicine.”

TRIBUTE TO ETHEL GILROY

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS
OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ethel Gilroy. Ethel was awarded the prestigious award Southeastern Colorado Chapter of the American Red Cross’ Outstanding Supporter for 1999. Repeatedly, Ethel has gone far beyond the call of duty.

Ethel is the native of Springfield, Ill., where she married her husband John Gilroy in 1929. In 1981, after her husband passed away Ethel moved to Pueblo, Colorado. It was there that she began a dedication to the bettering of the Red Cross that is the stuff of legend. For most of her life she has been a supporter of the American Red Cross and has been affiliated with the Southeastern Colorado Chapter since 1989. Over the course of the years she has helped countless people stay warm and fed.

Ethel also supports the Salvation Army, Library for the Blind, El Pueblo Boys and Girls Ranch, PBS and Habitat for the Humanity. She is to be admired and commended for her contribution and service to the Pueblo community. So, it is with this Mr. Speaker, that I say thank you to this dedicated woman.

RECOGNIZING FLOOD RELIEF WORKERS

HON. SAM JOHNSON
OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the following young people who gave of themselves to help the people of New Braunfels, Comal, and Seguin, Texas, and Strong City, Kansas, in the wake of severe flooding in the fall of 1998. These men traveled many miles, at their own expense, to assist the citizens of these cities by removing countless loads of mud and debris from their houses and yards and by providing much-needed encouragement to those affected by the devastating flooding.

Anthony Anderson II, TX; David Bair, OH; Matthew Barber, British Columbia; Ryan Bedford, CA; Jacob Bradly, AZ; Jacory Brady, CO; Daniel DePoppe, CA; Warren Burres, IN; James Connelly, CA; Andrew Conway, WA; Seth Cooke, TX; Steven Dankers, WI; Joshua Dean, WI; Ryan DePoppe, WI; John Dixon, GA; David Edmonson, GA; Stephen Gaither, TX; Travis Gibson, FL; Zechariah