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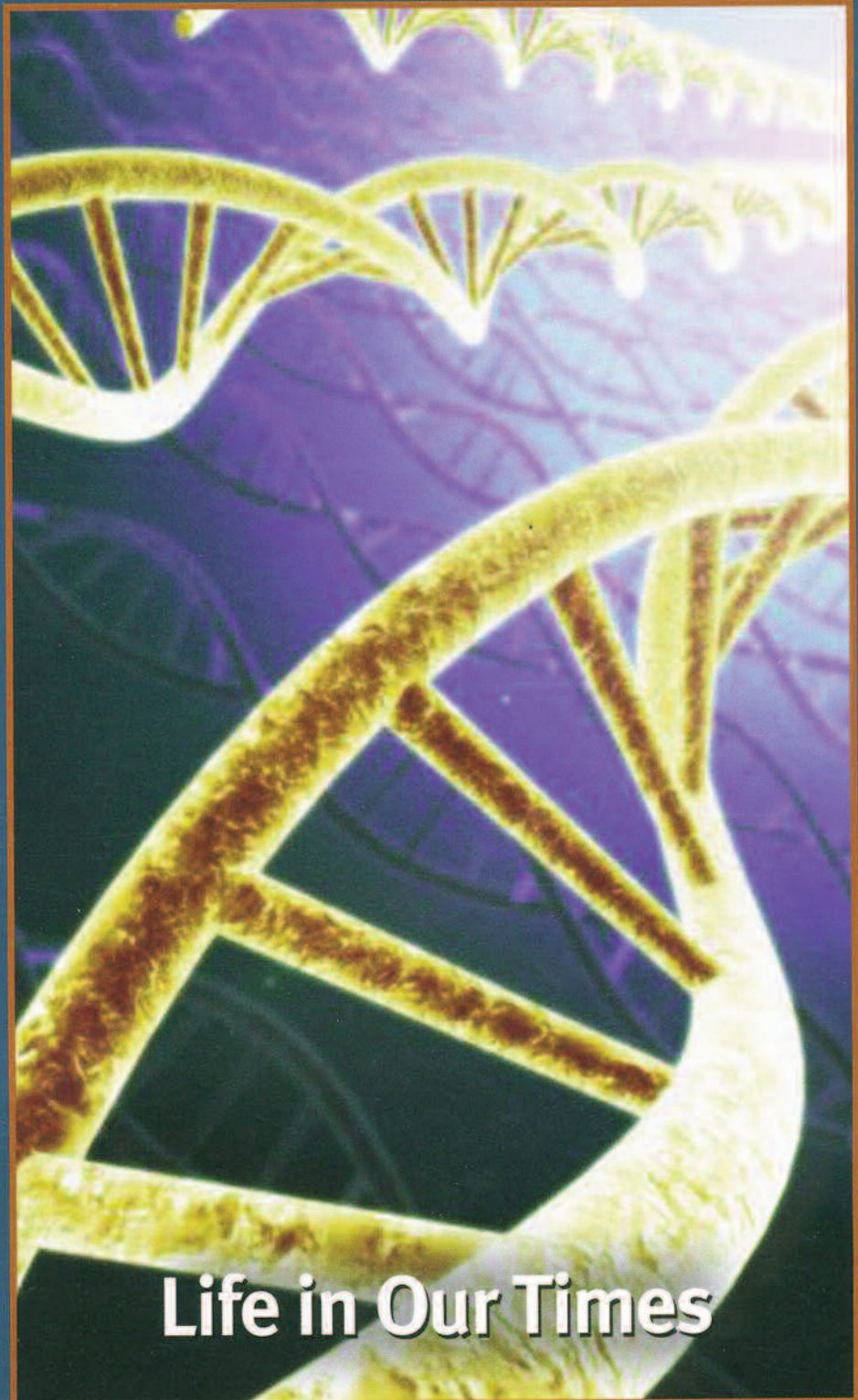
ROGER LIMOGES

ALSO: Debora Spar on Making Babies: Ivy League Supermodel-Style and Ted G. Jelen on Kathleen Kennedy Townsend's *Failing America's Faithful*

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Life in Our Times

Bookshelf

Blasphemy: How the Religious Right is Hijacking the Declaration of Independence

Alan Dershowitz (Wiley, 2007, 208pp)

Dershowitz, a lawyer and Harvard law professor, systematically and unapologetically argues that the religious right is perpetuating a false and dangerous notion that the U.S. was founded on and should be run according to Christian precepts. He claims much of the right's rationale rests on the inclusion of words such as "Creator" and "Divine Providence" in the Declaration of Independence but argues that the document does not have the legal authority of other founding texts.

Choices

Kate Buckley (iUniversity, 2007, 169pp)

Choices is a novel that centers on the intersection of Catholicism, reproductive health care and coming of age. Through the story of a teen-age rape survivor in a Catholic school, the author captures how many young women navigate difficult and morally complex situations while learning to take responsibility for their choices.

Choice: True Stories of Birth, Contraception, Infertility, Adoption, Single Parenthood, and Abortion

Karen E. Bender and Nina De Gramont (MacAdam Cage, 2007, 350pp)

Twenty-two essays by both established and up-and-coming writers cover the breadth of reproductive choice through their own personal experiences. Collectively, these stories highlight just how numerous, complex and subjective are the issues surrounding women's childbearing and -rearing decisions and make the case for the many shades of gray that are required to envision and legislate on reproductive rights.

Church, State and Public Justice: Five Views

Clarke E. Cochran, Derek H. Davis, Ronald J. Sider, Corwin Smidt, P.C. Kemeny (IVP Academic, 2007, 254pp)

Five contributors with differing academic and theological backgrounds address the mission of the church, the purpose of government and how the two should relate to one another—especially with respect to the justice system. Each writes from a distinct Christian perspective—from Catholic to Evangelical Anabaptist—and offers his own position, allowing readers to get a clear sense of where the writers' views overlap and diverge.

International Social Health Care Policy, Programs and Studies

Gary Rosenberg, Ph.D., and Andrew Weissman, Ph.D., eds. (Haworth Press, Inc., 2006, 226pp)

This collection of papers by practitioners and academics connects social work, global health challenges and international health-care policy and speaks to the need for international cooperation. Using a number of case studies, the editors involve us in an exchange of ideas and strategies for addressing a range of public-health concerns around the world.

Intimate Spirituality: The Catholic Way of Love and Sex

Gordon J. Hilsman, D. Min.

Hilsman recognizes that both spirituality and sexuality are important aspects of the human experience and need not be treated as incompatible, but are, rather, complementary. He articulates how lay Catholics can integrate their faith into intimate relationships, presenting a healthy and positive view of sexuality.

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mined not to draw any broader conclusions from them, or to view them through any moral or ethical lens. Instead, agonizing decisions and life-threatening situations are treated parenthetically, as with the three boys conceived by donor eggs: "After the birth of the triplets," Mundy reports matter-of-factly, "which was horrific and nearly fatal—Laura hemorrhaged badly after the triple C-section, losing half the blood in her body—Laura e-mailed Kendra photos of the newborns. Kendra put the pictures up in her townhouse. She e-mailed them to friends." Now, presumably it's nice to learn that the egg donor delighted in her far-off progeny and that she and the birth mother have become friends. But somehow the material between the dashes seems far more deserving of our attention. The birth mother had three embryos transferred to her womb. She hemorrhaged during delivery and nearly died. These details are bundled away, allowing us to revel instead in the intricacies of a new-age baptism.

AN EVEN MORE FRIGHTENING subplot runs through the story of Doug and Eric, the gay couple who hired Ann Nelson to bear their daughters. While the two men are dashing across the country to attend their daughters' birth, Ann starts hemorrhaging. Doctors race to stop the bleeding and ultimately perform an emergency hysterectomy to save her life. The tragedy of this trauma is that it was probably both predictable and preventable. Ann, we hear parenthetically, was overweight. She had delivered her own children by Caesarean section and was at increased risk for uterine rupture. Yet the doctors and prospective fathers agreed to transfer four embryos to her, creating an accident waiting to happen.

It is in not dwelling on these accidents-in-waiting that Mundy's book falls short. She seems so enchanted by her subjects and so sympathetic to their plights that she refuses to touch more than briefly on the questions raised by her stories. Should any woman—and particularly a paid surrogate—have four embryos transferred to