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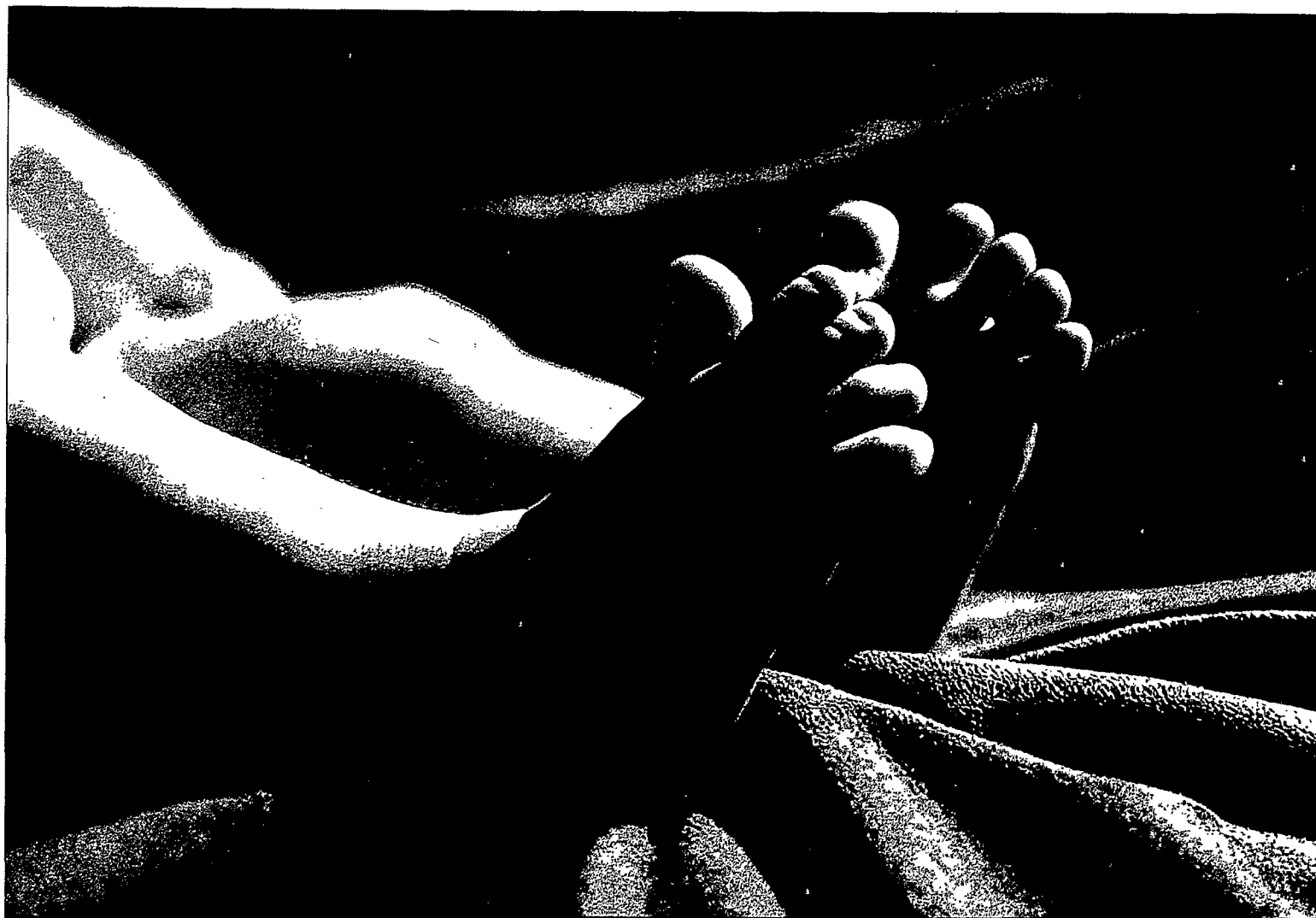


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Science benefits the unborn

Advances allow fetuses to be viewed as people

WASHINGTON — “They fixed my booboo.”

With those words in a U.S. Senate hearing room, Samuel Armas, nearly 4, put into simplest terms the medical advances that are helping to convince even the most hardhearted about the humanity of unborn children and the need to protect them in the womb.

In-utero surgery — like that Samuel underwent on Aug. 19, 1999, at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn. — and three-dimensional ultrasound technology both offer new ways of

looking at unborn children as patients and as unique people in their own right.

Samuel's surgery came just 21 weeks after his conception. When he was diagnosed with spina bifida early in the pregnancy, his parents chose a relatively new procedure aimed at reducing the condition's effects.

Although dozens of such operations had been performed, what made Samuel's operation unique was the presence of freelance photographer Michael Clancy, who had been hired by *USA Today* to photograph surgical procedures being performed on fetuses.

Clancy captured the graphic image of Samuel reaching a hand out of his mother's womb and grasping the finger of Dr.

Joseph P. Bruner, who was performing the surgery. A nurse in the operating room told Clancy that the unborn babies undergoing surgery “do that all the time.”

The now-famous “Fetal Hand Grasp” photograph is featured on Web sites and on billboards, posters and on Clancy's own Web page, www.michaelclancy.com. (The graphic color image is reproduced on page 7 of this issue in subdued form.)

Samuel, born Dec. 2, 1999, in Atlanta, is famous now, too. He responded with the “boo-bòo” remark when Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., showed him Clancy's picture during a Sept. 25 hearing before a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transporta-

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