

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

EUTHANASIA

This issue has once again has been raised in parliament , both at Federal and State levels, by those who want to legislate to make euthanasia legal. It seems like every time it is raised we move a little closer to it becoming law!

I have spoken to people who say that if they were 'so bad' they would like to be put to sleep (ie killed!). It is interesting to note that those same people when they do have problems are not so keen to follow through with what they had said previously!

Points of interest

1. Nazi Germany was the first society in modern times to widely practise euthanasia in the 1930s; it became law in 1939. 275,000 were exterminated - mental health problems, epileptics, paralysed, MS, parkinsons etc
THEN - socially unproductive, racially unwanted (Jews etc) FINALLY all non Germans

2. Holland - many years
1995 - 1 in 5 occurred without the patients consent
Now the elderly, disabled and severely ill afraid to go to hospitals

3. Northern Territory
From September 1996 to March 1997 they allowed a patient to request his doctor to assist the patient to terminate his life if he was experiencing unacceptable pain or distress. A second doctor had to ratify the decision. The Federal government overturned that law in the Northern Territory

The Case for the Pro-Euthanasia position

The following is one person's position; "No decent human being would allow an animal to suffer without putting it out of its misery. It is only to human beings that human beings are so cruel as to allow them to live on, in pain, in helplessness, in living death, without moving a muscle to help them."

This type of a statement is typical fruit from evolutionary thinking! ie we are all animals!

Practical Problems

1. Diagnosis wrong or difficult to determine
2. The person may merely be depressed (cf Elijah)
3. The person may feel that they are being a burden
4. Pressure from relatives and carers
5. To save health costs pressures!
6. The effects on doctors, nurses etc. Doctors make an oath to preserve life!

What saith the Scriptures?

1. Thou shalt not kill - an absolute law - Ex 20:13
2. God has appointed a time for our lives - Job 7:1, 14:1,5,6; Heb 9:27
3. Our body is not our own - ICor 6:19,20

Practical Help

1. Palliative care - almost all severe pain can now be effectively relieved
- make comfortable, show love and compassion
2. The aim is not to eliminate the person in distress BUT the distress in the person

Conclusion

God alone has the right to determine when a persons life should be ended. Our responsibility is to do all we can to help the person until God ends their life.

Euthanasia (mercy killing) in any form is murder!