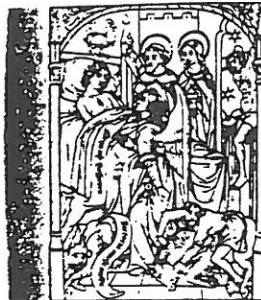




"To those who were robbed of life, the unborn, the weak, the sick, the old, during the dark ages of madness, selfishness, lust and greed for which the last decades of the twentieth century are remembered"
 Francis A. Schaeffer



"I commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life 'everlasting."
 William Shakespeare's will



"See in what peace a Christian can die"
 Joseph Addison's last words



"Neither the sun nor death can be looked at steadily."
 La Rochefoucauld



"Thou, Lord, bruise me. But I am abundantly satisfied since it is from Thy hand."

John Calvin's last words

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO EUTHANASIA

I. Definition of Term

1. *Moral*: Webster's Dictionary defines "Of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior, conforming to a standard of right behavior; sanctioned by or operative of one's conscience or ethical judgment; capable of right or wrong action."
2. Euthanasia: An easy or painless death. Mercy killing; the deliberate ending of life of a person suffering from an incurable and painful disease
 - a. Active Euthanasia: Using active means to hasten death, the giving of material to do so. (Murder)
 - b. Passive Euthanasia: No "heroic measures" to be used to extend life. The withholding of extraordinary measures (intubation, cardiac defibrillation, cardiac massage, etc - i.e. "No code"
 - c. Voluntary Euthanasia: Assisted or permitted suicide
 - d. Involuntary Euthanasia: Someone else decides and kills the patient

"Living will" - legal directive about what medical measures should or should not be taken given the parameters of a prognosis. Most often used to used to withhold extraordinary measures in event of a catastrophic accident / illness / medical decline.

II. Historical Perspectives:

- A. The Ancient World
 - Martyrdom was considered heroic
 - Philosophers were often pro-euthanasia
 - Augustine was against euthanasia
- B. The Middle Ages
 - Luther believe in mercy killing for severely handicapped, mentally retarded
- C. The Modern Era
 - Pain killers allow for painless death - and hence a major argument for "mercy killing" was removed

III. Secular Perspectives:

- A. Arguments for the practice of Active Euthanasia
 1. The dignity of life is greater than the value of life. If a man has the right to live with dignity, then there must also be the right to die with dignity.
 2. The physician's responsibility to relieve suffering is greater than his responsibility to preserve life.
 3. The principle of autonomy, or right to be at liberty with one's life. (Fletcher)
 4. The principle of justice and fair treatment. The rights of physicians, patients, and family members must all be considered.
 5. The principle of utility. Life is only of value when it is able to meet the needs of society. To continue to support the hopelessly ill and deformed and the mental degenerates burdens society beyond what should be allowed.
- B. Arguments against the practice of Active Euthanasia:
 1. The Hippocratic Oath states that physicians are to abstain from anything that would lead to a harmful effect for his patient.

2. The possibility of wrong diagnosis
3. Future cures for the now terminal illnesses.
4. Pain-killing drugs are available so very few would die in pain or agony
5. Possibility for abuse. - Nazi Germany is a case history of “wedge theory” on this topic
6. Patients suffering from pain or from the effects of drugs would be in no position to decide to terminate their own life.

IV. Christian Perspective

A. Case studies:

1. King Saul of Israel: The Amalikeite who “mercy killed” Saul was executed for murder by David
2. The life of Job: Job suffered for reasons unknown to him, endured it and glorified God

B. Arguments against Active Euthanasia

1. Man is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27)
2. Man must not destroy life (Gen. 9:6)
3. Man’s responsibility is to love his fellow man (John 13:34-35)
4. The benefits of suffering (2 Cor. 12:9-10 - God’s grace is sufficient; James 1:2-4 - maturity)
5. The possibility of healing (Luke 7:2-10)
6. Euthanasia deprives a man of the opportunity for repentance - Augustine

V. Legal Perspectives

1. The Euthanasia Society of America - established 1938
2. The Euthanasia Education Fund
 - a. The living will - voluntary passive euthanasia
3. The Euthanasia Society in England, 1936

(2024 update: Many countries now allow euthanasia with various restrictions - and they demonstrate there is definitely slipper slope as the restrictions become less and less with many moving from passive euthanasia, to voluntary euthanasia, to active euthanasia, to involuntary euthanasia. The same pattern is happening in those States in the United States that have legalized it.)

VI. What are our responsibilities in relation to Euthanasia?

1. Realize man is made in the image of God and life is precious.
2. Active euthanasia should never be practiced.
3. Realize suffering is allowed by God for good - in the end (Rom. 8:28).
4. Teach these principles
5. Write our legislatures, for perhaps our life may one day be considered not worth living.
6. Pray!

VII. Conclusions

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