

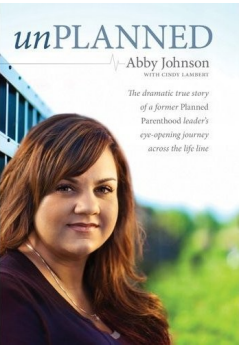
From Death to Life

Lorraine Pfeiffer

Unplanned
by Abby Johnson (Ignatius Press, 2010)

A friend recently gave me this book to read, and I found that I couldn't put it down. Abby Johnson tells her own story with personal insight and brutal honesty, and through it we are given an inside look at the world of Planned Parenthood—the largest provider of abortions in the United States—and the confused messages women are getting on the abortion issue. We also find out what brings about the complete change in Abby from being a director at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Texas, to joining the Coalition for Life. It is an emotional journey through pro-choice thinking, two abortions, her love/hate relationship with pro-life advocates and eventually to her own changed understanding of abortion.

Abby grew up in a conservative rural Christian home. In 2001 when she was a student at college, she attended a rally and then began doing volunteer work for Planned Parenthood. This soon progressed to a paid role over the next eight years, and in 2008 she was recognised as “employee of the year”. Abby explains how she really believed she was helping women and how she opposed late-term abortions. However she also fell for the propaganda that early abortions simply “solved a problem” for women. One day she was asked to do something that she had never done before; to assist with an ultra-sound-guided



abortion. As a result, she witnessed the reality of abortion and Abby does not attempt to hide the horror of this experience in her book. She explains that what she witnessed shook the foundation of her values and changed the course of her life. After the abortion, in October 2009, she walked across the street and joined the Coalition for Life. Abby has been active in the pro-life movement ever since, despite facing a lawsuit filed against her from Planned Parenthood and a subsequent courtroom battle inspiring much media attention.

I found this a powerful testimony and an inspiring book to read, bringing forgiveness and hope into this pressing moral struggle of our day. It is unique in that it brings understanding and insight into both sides of the abortion debate. Despite her complete transformation, Abby brings honesty to this debate as she explains her rationale and thinking during her eight years with Planned Parenthood, as well as her changed perspective.

I believe this is a must-read not only for those who care passionately about the life versus rights debate, but also for anyone who has not yet taken up the issue on a personal level. You will want to pass it on to others after reading it.

Lorraine Pfeiffer is a lay worker at St John's Lutheran Church, Portland. Abby Johnson recently completed a speaking tour of Australia.

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Life News

Volume 27, Number 2

Promoting the Sanctity of Life

August 2011

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Editor: Thomas Pietsch
 LN.editor@gmail.com

Lutherans Leading the Pro-Life Debate

Jason Pokela



Lutheran Doctors Rob Pollnitz and Tim Kleinig with the Hon. Dennis Hood (speaker at the 2010 LFL Conference) prepare to put forward the case against euthanasia.

On Monday the 1st of August, The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) hosted a debate for over 400 nurses to observe. It was on a topic that is currently in the minds of many in Australia including our politicians, doctors and nurses. The statement for debate was presented as follows: “The time to decriminalise voluntary euthanasia is long overdue and Parliament should act immediately.”

I was lucky enough to be able to attend this debate held at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. The stage was set, we were all anticipating an informative and passionate presentation from the debaters and we were not disappointed. The team for the affirmative included none other than the founder and Director of *Exit International* - Dr Philip Nitschke, member for the Greens the Hon. Mark Parnell MLC and Sandy Brandley from SA Nurses for Choice in Dying. The team arguing against the proposition included paediatrician Dr Rob Pollnitz, neurologist Dr Tim Kleinig, and from Family First the Hon. Dennis Hood MLC.

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<div>Editorial</div>		
<div><div><div><p>To hear the readings from Genesis these past few weeks (if, indeed, your parish is following the semi-continuous cycle), is to be reminded that families have never experienced a golden age. Dysfunction is not a modern invention and only a fool would think thus, especially when faced with the family feuds of Abraham and his descendants. We don’t have a monopoly on broken families or, for that matter, on perfect families and no one ever will this side of glory. And yet it seems equally foolish to deny that the institutions of marriage and family are suffering greater challenges at this present time than they have for a long while. The English physician and writer Theodore Dalrymple recently noted that when doing hospital rounds his custom has been to ask children the name of their father. ‘Do you mean my father at the moment?’ has become a common response.</p><p>In this context, it was encouraging to read the recently released Hungarian constitution, due to take effect on 1 January, 2012. In a section titled ‘Fundamentals’, the constitution promises that ‘(1) Hungary shall protect the institution of marriage, understood to be the conjugal union of a man and a woman based on their voluntary decision; Hungary shall also protect the institution of the family, which it recognizes as the basis for survival of the nation. (2) Hungary shall promote the commitment to have and raise children.’ If that doesn’t provide you with a refreshing alternative to current Australian legislative proposals then listen to this bit, from a section on ‘Freedoms and Responsibilities’: ‘Human dignity shall be inviolable. Everyone shall have the right to life and human dignity; the life of the foetus shall be protected from the moment of conception.’ That this clear, wise and compassionate statement evokes feelings of amazement and wonder goes to show the confusion that most of us are in, Hungarians excepted.</p><p>The document also includes statements on Christianity and religion such as this: ‘We acknowledge the role Christianity has played in preserving our nation. We respect all our country’s religious traditions. We solemnly promise to preserve the intellectual and spiritual unity of our nation, torn apart by the storms of the past century.’</p><p>By means of contrast, the constitution of the European Union infamously decided against any mention of</p></div><div><p>Christianity in its preamble alluding to European identity. Astute commentators at the time noted that the constitution was signed in Rome, on the Capitolino square designed by Michelangelo, and the leaders were photographed beneath an imposing statue of the fifth-century Pope Innocent I, with an equally impressive bust of the emperor Constantine nearby. As one wag commented, ‘One expects that some of the politicians had a hard time remembering that Christianity played no part in the formation of Europe.’</p><p>This issue of <i>Life News</i> brings with it information (see next page) on our upcoming annual conference, held this year in Toowoomba. Comparisons are too difficult, but the line up of speakers this year is as impressive as ever. As the first conference in the sunshine State for a number of years, Queenslanders especially are encouraged to promote and attend this valuable event.</p><p>As well as a number of smaller articles, this issue presents a feature article from Jason Pokela reporting on a recent euthanasia debate in South Australia which happily involved two Lutherans, Drs Rob Pollnitz and Tim Kleinig. Their wisdom and astuteness notwithstanding, it will take more than two Lutherans to encourage our legislators to proclaim, with Hungary, that human dignity shall be inviolable. It will take Lutherans like you. South Australians should turn to page 6 for urgent action.</p><p>Finally, it’s that one time of the year when we ask you to consider beginning or renewing your membership, or just passing on a donation to Lutherans for Life. Please give this your careful consideration.</p></div><div><p><i>Thomas Pietsch</i></p></div><div><p>Lutherans for Life Branches:</p><p><u>Riverland Branch</u> (Serving the Riverland area of South Australia; established in September 1989) Contact Person : Mrs Lois Rathjen 08 8584 5706</p><p><u>New Zealand Branch</u> (Established in June 1991) Contact Person : Mr Petrus Simons 04 476 9398</p><p><u>Sunshine Coast Branch</u> (Serving the Sunshine Coast area of QLD; established in Aug 1992) Contact Person : Mr Norm Auricht 07 5443 6849</p><p><u>Darling Downs Branch</u> (Serving the Darling Downs area of Queensland; re-established in Oct 2005) Contact Person : Mrs Joy Wurst 07 4613 4189</p></div></div></div>		
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<div><div><div><p>France updates its bioethics law</p><p>After months of debate the Senate of France has passed a law which has some progressive and some conservative aspects. Anonymous sperm donation will be allowed. Using sperm or eggs from a dead partner is banned. Surrogate motherhood is banned. Research on human embryos leftover from IVF will be allowed for projects approved by the Agence de Biomedecine. Live organ donors must have a strong emotional attachment to the recipient for at least two years. IVF is permitted for any couple with genuine medical infertility. This does not include social infertility, and hence does not include homosexual couples. The law is due to be revised each seven years. (Genethique)</p><p>Medical abortion using the drug RU-486 (mifepristone) is back in the news after another death, with a 16-year-old girl in Portugal dying of septic shock after taking the drug. Infection of retained products with Clostridium sordelli causing a toxic shock syndrome has been reported as causing death in at least 32 women by the European drug maker Exelgy. The Italian Ministry of Health now insists that the entire procedure must be performed in a hospital setting. In contrast, some doctors in Australia claim that medical abortion is safe and convenient for women in rural and remote areas to undergo at home.(Bioedge)</p><p>France considers law to penalise sex worker clients</p><p>Sweden, Norway and Iceland all have prostitution laws in which the customer is the guilty party and is liable to a fine or time in prison. A parliamentary committee in France is considering a similar law, with the French MPs noting that 80 per cent of France’s estimated 20,000 prostitutes are victims of slavery and trafficking. Social Affairs Minister Roselyn Bachelot comments – ‘There is no such thing as freely chosen and consenting prostitution. The sale of sexual acts means women’s bodies are made available for men, independently of the wishes of those women.’</p><p>America also has a major problem with child sex trafficking, with the FBI estimating that more than 100,000 Asian-American girls are sold for prostitution each year. The abusers may be pimps/criminals/male relatives, with some drug dealers switching to prostitution as having more profit and less risks. The Polaris Project estimate that a stable of four girls earns over \$600,000 a year in tax-free income for the pimp. Oakland police officer Jason Skrdlant notes—‘The person dealing drugs has a finite amount of product to sell. But a girl is reusable.’ Mariette Ulrich comments—‘At base there is only one cause for child prostitution, which is men indulging a grossly disordered appetite. If only men—all men—would act like Real Men. Real men protect and defend the innocent and the vulnerable. Real men don’t hurt children.’ (Mercatornet)</p></div><div><p>New York State passes law allowing same-sex marriage</p><p>NY has become the sixth US state to legalise same-sex marriage, with gay rights advocates gathering enough funding to persuade a majority of politicians. Michael Cook, pictured, writes that the weakness of the defenders of traditional marriage may be related to the declining number of Mum-and-Dad couples with children in NY, 20 per cent of all households, down from 45 per cent in 1950. With so many children witnessing divorce and growing up in broken homes, marriage is not seen as a jewel to be prized. Cook believes we need to demonstrate more convincingly that same-sex marriage undermines traditional marriage. ‘Many supporters find it hard to articulate why the publicly recognised union of a man and a woman with their children is the only model which works... for the next generation of children.’ (Bioedge)</p><p>US doctor helps 300 Americans to commit suicide</p><p>Newsweek has called 83-year-old Lawrence Egbert ‘the new “Doctor Death”’. As medical director of the Final Exit Network (FEN) he approves about 95 per cent of requests from people who want help to die. These people need not have a terminal illness. FEN provides “exit guides” who give advice and loan the equipment for inhaling helium until death from asphyxiation. Egbert personally claims to have been present at nearly 100 deaths. He is being prosecuted, and his legal defence team argues that counselling for suicide is protected as free speech under the First Amendment. (Baltimore Sun) In Australia the various Federal and State bills to allow euthanasia (lethal doses on request) appear not to be advancing at the time of going to press.</p><p>Oregon USA bans sale of suicide kits</p><p>Governor John Kitzhaber has put the state of Oregon in the position of allowing assisted suicide but stopping the sale of suicide kits. Oregon became the first US state to allow physician-assisted suicide in 1997, with 65 deaths from lethal drugs being reported in 2010 under this law. The ban on suicide kits follows the death of a 29-year-old Oregon resident being treated for depression, who ordered a suicide kit online from California. The helium hood kit costs sixty dollars and was available without restriction from GLADD, or Good Life And Dignified Death, who claim to promote freedom of choice and deny responsibility for how the kits are used. (Washington Post)</p><p><i>Dr Rob Pollnitz</i></p></div></div></div>		

South Australia lower house passes second reading of latest euthanasia bill—Urgent response needed from SA

In March 2011 Labor MP Steph Key tabled her Criminal Law Consolidation (Medical Defences – End of Life Arrangements) Amendment Bill, which provides a legal window in our homicide law that allows a doctor to provide a lethal dose to a person aged 18 years or more where the person claims to have a medical condition that makes life intolerable for them. The bill places total faith in that one doctor – there is no consent form, no family involvement, no second opinion, no board of oversight, no mental health specialist, no cooling-off period, no residency requirement. After the event the only witness other than the doctor is dead. The bill grants the doctor immunity from prosecution by the simple assertion that he or she thought the lethal dose “reasonable” and the bill actually directs the court to see it that way. The defence need only be proven on “the balance of probabilities” to succeed. This is a protect-the-doctor bill that provides no protection at all for the patient. Zero. To see a copy of this Bill go to www.legislation.sa.gov.au

Christian observers were surprised when on 28 July

the bill passed the 2nd reading on the voices, meaning that no MP called for a division and there was no formal vote. Those lobbying in favour of the bill are telling MPs that the bill simply provides protection for doctors who withdraw burdensome treatment or increase pain medication to relieve suffering. Doctors already have such protection under our 1995 medical treatment law, but some MPs appear not to understand the distinction. The bill now goes into the committee stage where amendments can be discussed before a final vote in the lower house, which may happen as early as 15 September 2011. The bill would then need to pass the upper house to become law. If that happens Dr Philip Nitschke can set up his proposed death clinic and make Adelaide the euthanasia capital of the southern hemisphere.

Concerned readers are urged to write to their MP and other Members of Parliament to express their opposition to this dangerous bill, ideally before 15 September 2011.

For details of MPs, go to www.parliament.sa.gov.au

Snippets from around the world

British concern over creation of human-animal hybrid embryos

Peer David Alton in the House of Lords has expressed his concern over the creation of 155 hybrid embryos containing both human and animal genetic material since this practice was legalised in the UK three years ago. He comments: 'The scientists have failed to justify this dabbling in the grotesque. Of the eighty treatments and cures that have come about from stem cells, all have come from adult stem cells – not embryonic ones.' Prof Tom Baldwin of York urges that such research involving primates should be banned – 'if you start putting large numbers of human brain cells into primates, you might transform them into something with capacities we regard as distinctively human.'

Lord Alton also uncovered an interesting statistic from the British IVF authority. In the twenty years since the Embryology Act was passed in 1991, IVF clinics in the UK have created over 3.1 million human embryos to achieve over 94,000 births – meaning that 33 embryos are created to achieve one newborn baby. (BioNews)

German doctors maintain ban on euthanasia

After a prolonged debate the German medical association has voted to continue a ban on doctors providing lethal doses for patients who wish to commit suicide. The reported vote was by a convincing margin, 166 to 56, with 7 abstentions. The president of the federal medical council, Dr Joerg-Dietrich Hoppe, commented : 'Physicians must care for the dying, respecting their dignity and respecting their choices. But we are forbidden to kill patients at their request. We must not assist a suicide.' The professional code is considered binding and violations can potentially lead to loss of registration. (BioEdge)

Woman to donate womb to her daughter

Sara Ottoson (25) of Stockholm, Sweden, could be the first woman to bear a child in the same womb in which she herself was carried to term. Sara was born without a uterus, and will undergo a novel treatment to have her mother's uterus transplanted into her. Eva Ottoson (56) is willing to donate her uterus in the hope that her daughter can give birth. The article does not discuss the potential dangers to the foetus of mother having to take anti-rejection drugs throughout a pregnancy. (BBC News)



LOVE ABOUNDING
2011 LUTHERANS FOR LIFE CONFERENCE

Saturday 1 October : 9am - 3:30pm

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church : 23 Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba, QLD

\$20 adults & \$10 students/concession (includes lunch)

Dr David van Gend : Euthanasia & palliative care

Madeleine Weidemann : Helping women choose motherhood

Aidan McLindon MP : Keeping mother & nature together

Dr Luke McLindon : Procreation... what's new?

Noelene Baldry : The world of adoption & foster care

Rev Mark Henderson : A pastoral reflection on life & love

Saturday: 1 October: 7:30pm for 7:30pm start

Conference dinner with Dr David van Gend : A shot in the arm for the pro-life troops

Qi Lin Chinese Restaurant : 187 Hume Street, Toowoomba, QLD

\$27 per person, plus drinks : RSVP essential

RSVP for each event: lutheransforlife@gmail.com or (03) 5241 4110 by Friday 16 September
To make a donation or to learn more about Lutherans For Life, visit
www.lca.org.au/action/lifeissues/lfi/

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE
Promoting the Sanctity of Human Life



Annual appeal for donations

As a reader of *Life News* I trust you are excited and encouraged by the continued vision and work of Lutherans For Life. Living by those words of our Lord in Matthew 13:52, we seek to bring out of our treasure what is new—the latest developments, arguments, books and personalities—and what is old—the church’s age-old commitment to protecting life and taking up the cause of the weak, voiceless,

and vulnerable. We know you care about this mission as much as we do, and so invite you to contribute generously to our work. Turn to the last page and you will find a form that can be used for a donation or for a membership application/renewal. LFL is run by volunteers and supported only through your kind donations and prayers. We thank you in advance.

Lutherans Leading the Pro-Life Debate

continued from page 1

Dr Philip Nitschke was the first to speak in the affirmative and, true to the controversial style for which he is known, he opened with a startling story and statement. After recounting the last moments of 66 year old Bob Dent’s life, Philip Nitschke declared ‘I killed Bob Dent.’ It was the first of four deaths he was a part of in the brief window of legalized euthanasia in the Northern Territory in 1996. Dr Nitschke explained how the law was overturned by Canberra mainly because of influences by ‘religious conservatives.’ This he believes threw Australia back into the ‘dark ages’ and is also where he believes we now find ourselves. He went on to argue passionately that legislating for euthanasia would be the caring and responsible thing to do in Australia and that it would provide a means for the doctors and nurses to perform legally what is already going on. He certainly is a good public speaker and can draw a crowd along with him, especially one that already thinks he is right. His focus was for people to have choice in how and when they die. Ironically, euthanasia laws will do just the opposite – they will give the choice to others.

I find it interesting that for people like Dr Nitschke, if someone wants to end their life the apparent solution is to help them do it. Dr Pollnitz in his response addressed this issue with some very important and insightful information. He clearly defined euthanasia as the intentional taking of someone’s life by means of administering a drug or by refusing ordinary care, like in the case of refusing milk feeds to an infant that you want to die. He rightly explained that the difference between suicide and euthanasia is that for euthanasia you always have other parties involved. Therefore euthanasia is more about how we all as a community respond to someone who thinks it is necessary to take their own life.

Dr Pollnitz believes a law giving access to death for people who think life is ‘intolerable’ (whatever that means) is incredibly dangerous as it would not do anything to boost the already shameful youth suicide figures in Australia. Telling people who are suicidal and already feel ‘worthless’ that they are ‘right’ is not Dr Pollnitz’s idea of compassion.

The ‘slippery slope’ (a term used to describe the potential misuse of euthanasia) argument was a point that Dr Nitschke laughed at and mocked, predicting

his opponents would comment on the Netherlands as an example, and so he claimed that they are doing alright and that it must be working well otherwise everyone would be leaving the country in droves. Dr Pollnitz countered this with the statistic that in the Netherlands 900 people are euthanatized each year without a request of any type. That is to say that 900 people were killed because it was determined that it was better for them (and society) if they were dead, without their consent. This goes against the original intention of the law as a last resort for a few special cases of terminally ill people. Instead, the Netherlands is now facilitating the general removal of the undesirable, including infants and children with parental consent, and those suffering from depression or who are tired of life.



South Australian nurses listen to the euthanasia debate

The really scary thing is the amount of misinformation out there about the legal process and also the misunderstanding of euthanasia itself. After the debate I asked Mark Parnell (the member who introduced one of the euthanasia bills to SA Parliament) if it was possible to legislate euthanasia in a way to ensure that no ‘innocents’ would ever suffer or that no misuse would occur. After trying to speak around it, carefully explaining the difficulties, he admitted that it could not be done. Now this is the man that is putting the legislation forward to be made law. Even he knows that it will be open to abuse and that people who should not die, will die as a result of this legislation. How can he still pursue this in good conscience? The other surprising thing I discovered from discussions with an audience member—who was a nurse—was the level of misunderstanding about what euthanasia is. Despite Dr Pollnitz’s clear definition this nurse was still very passionate about telling me she was ‘all for euthanasia’ and her husband has even signed Do Not Resuscitate forms as well as making their children

promise that they will not place him on life support equipment. When she had told me this I responded, ‘but that is not euthanasia now is it? That is just letting natural consequences take place.’ She looked confused and answered ‘well it really is just the same thing, don’t you think?’ I would love to think that she was an isolated case but unfortunately these are the types of reasons many people give in support of euthanasia legislation. Here we have, from inside the medical industry, a scary level of misinformation. What hope does the general public have! No one I know who is against euthanasia would be in favour of keeping people alive at all costs. No one who is informed on the matter thinks that turning off life support is euthanasia. The same goes for refusing certain medication that may or may not prolong life. Letting natural consequences take their course and administering pain relief for pain management even if that drug were to hasten death is not euthanasia.

The winners of the debate, according to the applause of the audience, were the team for the affirmative.

I have a deep concern for the future. If euthanasia is legalised we will increasingly see the sick, the elderly and the downtrodden feel that it would be better for everyone if they were just out of the way so that everyone else can get on with their lives. The ability of one group to ‘play god’ and decide on another’s life worth and value, a point to which Dr Kleinig alluded, is bound to go wrong because people will get it wrong. Any law in Australia that encourages us to find a way to remove a ‘problem’ instead of working to lovingly care for and help a person, their family and their friends through that moment is negligence. For anyone to feel that death is the only escape from their condition is a terrible place to be, for them and us. Legalising euthanasia will undoubtedly be nothing more than approving government sanctioned murder. Lord help us!

Jason Pokela is a second year pastoral ministry student at Australian Lutheran College and a member of the Lutherans for Life national council. He and his wife Bernadette are expecting their fourth child.

‘Hope is the oxygen of the human spirit’

Mark Tuffin

On Tuesday, July 5, 2011, at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Professor Margaret Somerville, internationally acclaimed ethicist, was invited to present her case against euthanasia. An Australian academic currently living in Canada, Professor Sommerville, whose credentials also include degrees in law and medicine, spoke eloquently and persuasively to a packed auditorium representing a range of professions and interests, including representatives from groups that would like to see euthanasia legalised. In her talk, Professor Sommerville asked and answered five fundamental questions:

1. Why *now* do we think legalising euthanasia is a good idea?
2. Are we sufficiently aware that euthanasia might be legalised through confusion?
3. Once legalised, will euthanasia become the norm?
4. What would be the impact on medicine and on physicians and nurses of legalising euthanasia?
5. What do dying people need?

Professor Sommerville began by acknowledging that the strongest case for legalising euthanasia is at the

individual level, because of the concern of many about dying alone, unloved, in pain, or as ‘burdens’ on family and society. She went on to point out that the strongest case for *not* legalising it is at the institutional level, because of ‘the unstoppable expansion of justifications for doing it’. Alluding to the examples of the Netherlands and Belgium, both of which have had legalised euthanasia for many years, she showed how initial legal and medical safeguards against abuse invariably and inevitably are ‘justified’ away.

She concluded her talk by addressing the human need for hope and dignity. “People who are dying need hope,” she said. “Hope is the oxygen of the human spirit. Hope keeps the human spirit alive.”

Professor Somerville has written a number of books including *The Ethical Canary - Science Society and the Human Spirit*; *Ethical Imagination - Journeys of the Human Spirit*; *Death Talk - The Case Against Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide*.

Mark Tuffin is a pastor at Luther College, Croydon, Victoria and a member of the newly established church-state committee in the LCA—Vic/Tas District.

