

LifeNEWS

PROMOTING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE



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The Right to Life as a Divine Right

DR JOHN W. KLEINIG

Life is still relatively good for people who now live East of Eden. God does not abandon the descendants of Adam and Eve because they reject Him. They do not die right away as might be expected. He does not write them off, even though He does punish wickedness in order to protect the world and its inhabitants. He does not give up on them but is still unobtrusively involved with them. He

keeps them alive and protects their right to life even if they, like Cain, are murderers (Gen 4:13-15). He works with His left hand through what He has made to take good care of them. So, for example, He uses sexual intercourse to create

children and parents to provide for them. He works through His ordinances in the order of creation to create new life and nourish it. Through His law he curbs sin and maintains civic righteousness. He upholds all things by the power of His word (Heb 1:3). That includes the right to life!

In his discussion on the marriage of priests in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession Melancthon claims that our natural, human rights are established by God's ordinances in creation (Apol 23.7-12). His ordinances are the decrees which institute and maintain right order in the world. Thus natural rights are built into the natural order of the created world. Since that is so, human regulations, such as those that establish so-called same sex marriage, cannot abolish any natural right, such as the union of a man

and woman in marriage. Only God can override or change our natural rights. He concludes (Apol 23.12): "Natural right is really divine right, because it is an ordinance divinely stamped on nature."

By the decrees, recorded in Genesis 1 and elsewhere, God still orders the world for human life and continues to maintain human life. By His

powerful utterances in Gen 1:3, 6 and 9 He creates the cosmic and terrestrial order that is needed for life to flourish on earth. By His decree in Gen 1:11 the earth produces vegetation. By His word of blessing to Adam and Eve in 1:20a, which is repeated for Noah and

his sons in 9:1, 7 and for Jacob in 35:9-11, He enables them and their descendants to procreate. By His mandate for Adam and Eve in 1:20b He commissions them to rule over the earth as coworkers with Him. By His mandate in 1:29 he provides food for them from the plants and trees just as, later in 9:3-4, He gives them the meat of the animals to eat.

These creative decrees which were once spoken at the beginning are still in force; they remain said. They are performative utterances that do what they say. So if God should no longer say, "Let there be light," the whole cosmos would become dark and chaotic, formless and void, unfit for life and growth.

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Editorial

KIMBERLEY PFEIFFER

This issue of Life News has taken the form of a euthanasia edition. Spending these past weeks preparing this has brought me into deep (and sometimes disturbing) meditations on suffering and death - our real fear of suffering and pain as well as death itself. I fear that worrisome logic has already captured the minds of many Australians - that to be compassionate is to make death a convenient choice for people who are suffering under the weight of a future they did not choose or cannot control.

Working on this issue has rendered me more convinced than ever that it is not good for human kind to have the "freedom" to murder. Our laws should give us the freedom to live, not to die or be killed. In the next six months we will likely see Victoria, WA and NSW attempt to alter their state's criminal code to include exemptions for particular individuals to participate in the intentional killing of ageing, sick and vulnerable members of our community.

Dr Kleinig's article mentions how God ordered creation for our good and that these divine ordinances give us the right to life, they protect our most fundamental good, our very life, even from our desperate and despairing selves.

We cannot beat death by controlling when or how it greets us. Death is not for us to control. But rather life is to be loved, enjoyed, honoured and served till

the very end. We are lovers of life. Life that when it fuses with another brings forth more love, joy and hope. True, this is most sobering when we are frightened by the suffering we see and share in as a loved one approaches death, but it is in these times that the beauty of life-together can be most revered. We are simply called to remain faithful, to pray and to share in the life of those we love even as life slips away. The conveniences and efficiencies of our advanced society should give us time to be with those we love, to comfort them in their need and not be used to hasten their end.

Now is the time to share the reason for the hope that we have. We do not need this legislation in our country. If an end-of-life bill comes up in your state, please be ready. Pray that Christ will release our community from its fear too and share your hope with others.

We must remember that through Christ's death on the cross and His bodily resurrection, death will not win in the end. We are called as family, friends, neighbours, doctors, and law-makers to remain faithful and steadfast with each other as we pass through the shadows of the valley of death. We do not fear, for Christ is with us, His rod and His staff is our comfort.



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Contact: Dr Petrus Simons
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Contact: Mr Norm Auricht
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Through them God maintains the conditions for life on earth and keeps us alive. They create and uphold the right order for human life and for the reception of God's earthly blessings. So since they sustain God's good order in creation, the order for the transmission of His blessings, they, traditionally, are called divine ordinances. In the Apology to the Augsburg Confession XXIII.8 Melancthon rightly notes: "The Word of God formed human nature in such a way that it may be fruitful not only at the beginning of creation but as long as this physical [bodily] nature of ours exists. Likewise, the earth became fruitful by this Word [Gen 1:11]: 'Let the earth put forth vegetation; plants yielding seed.' Because of this ordinance, the earth commenced to produce plants not only in the beginning, but yearly the fields are clothed as long as this natural order exists."

The same pattern continues both before and after the fall. By His declaration in 2:18 the Lord God establishes and maintains the conjugal union of husband and wife in marriage. In response to Noah's burnt offering after the flood in 8:21-22 the Lord decrees that even though the human heart is still evil from youth to old age, he will maintain the good order for human life on earth with the agricultural cycle of seedtime and harvest, the meteorological cycle of hot and cold weather, the seasonal cycle of summer and winter, and the work cycle of day and night. By His decree in Gen 9:6 He protects human life from murder by animals and other people; by his covenant in Gen 9:8-16 with Noah and all his descendants including us, He declares that he will never again destroy animal and human life on earth with another flood. All these divine performative utterances remain in force after the fall until the end of the world. Through them He maintains bodily life on earth. They establish and maintain our right to life. Governments do not give us that right, nor can they abolish it. Instead those who are in government are required to respect it and uphold by their laws, policies, and actions. If they fail to protect the God-given right to life, they abandon their most fundamental responsibility and forfeit much of their legitimacy.

God also defends human life through His law, natural law that is summarized by the seven commandments in the second table of the Decalogue. He protects the good gifts that He provides for humankind and the right order by which He delivers them to all people on earth – parents and family, physical life and good health, sexual intercourse and marriage, money and property, justice and a good reputation, household as an economic unit with its personal members and its physical assets. So by His law He curbs social disorder and maintains the benevolent order that is necessary for a good human life on earth. In addition He establishes government to enforce His law for the common good of all mankind (Rom 13:1-7).

Even though the descendants of Adam turn away from God and spurn Him, He still offers a relatively good life to them in the order of creation. So if they are law-abiding, clean-living, moral people who respect God's order for the world and human society, they enjoy His earthly blessings. The promise attached to the fourth commandment

applies to them; it will be well with them and they will live long on the earth (Deut 5:16). They will have good lives with good families, good marriages, and good communities. They will be able to do good work in order to provide for their families, care for the people around them, and look after the natural world that sustains them. They will be able to enjoy food and drink and all the other good things that God so richly provides for their enjoyment in their bodily life (1 Tim 6:17), for He does not just provide them with their livelihood but also give them the ability to produce wealth (Deut 8:18) and the capacity to enjoy the fruit of their work (Eccl 5:19; 6:2). But all that depends on their respect for the life-giving,

life-sustaining order by which God delivers these temporal blessings to them through the natural order and other people in the social order. His ordinances give them their right to life.

*Dr John Kleinig is currently working on a book exploring the biblical vision of life in the **body** which will be a significant contribution to Lutheran thinking on life issues. Keep an eye out for this!*



Victoria, WA and NSW - A call to pray and act!

As noted in other parts of this edition, by the time you read this a new Victorian Euthanasia bill may be in play. There is also a real possibility that 'shadow' end-of-life bills will be presented in WA and NSW parliament at the same time. Please consider contacting your local MPs of both your lower and upper house. Those in politics tell us emails and hand written letters are good, and phone calls or face to face visits are even better. Generally it's wise to keep comments short and to the point, and to be firm but gracious.

Who is my MP?

To find out who your MPs are use the following websites and enter your address.

Victoria:

<https://electoratelookup.vec.vic.gov.au/>

WA:

<http://boundaries.wa.gov.au/electorates/find-your-electorate>

<http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/memblist.nsf/WebCurrMembElectorate>

NSW:

<http://streetlist.elections.nsw.gov.au>

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/Who-is-my-local-member.aspx>

Whether you are in these states or elsewhere, please pray.

PRAYER POINTS

- That MPs will vote to protect life and Euthansia bills in Victoria, WA and NSW will be defeated
- That the sanctity of human life is upheld in our land
- That Christians have courage to speak the truth in love
- For those who are suffering from terminal illness, for those who care for them
- For us as a caring community to seek ways to relieve the burdensome symptoms of illness, to help people stay in their homes in their final days and to comfort those who are isolated and alone in life



What has the LFL committee been up to lately?

SOME RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE LFL COMMITTEE...

- ❖ PLUGGING AWAY AT BUILDING A NEW WEBSITE
- ❖ \$500 DONATION SUPPORTING CHERISH LIFE WHOSE CAMPAIGN RECENTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESSFUL PREVENTION OF QLD'S AMENDMENTS TO THE ABORTION LEGISLATION
- ❖ COMMITTEE MEMBERS ATTENDED PARLIAMENT IN SA TO SHOW SUPPORT AGAINST EUTHANSIA BILL
- ❖ COMMITTEE MEMBERS ATTENDED AN EVENING MEETING WITH RACHEL CARLING-JENKIN UPDATING ON VICTORIA'S UPCOMING EUTHANASIA BILL
- ❖ DONATED \$200 TOWARD BUS SHELTER POSTERS WITH PRO-LIFE MESSAGES IN SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF ADELAIDE.
- ❖ HOSTED A MEAL FOR THE 2016 FINAL YEAR PASTORAL MINISTRY STUDENTS TO GIFT THEM WITH SOME EXCELLENT INFORMATION AND A BOOK ON BIO-ETHICS.

Euthanasia Update - Mid Year 2017

KIMBERLEY PFEIFFER

It's already June of 2017 and euthanasia advocates are as sure as they have ever been that this is the year that euthanasia will become legalised in Australia. The campaign flags are waving and the personalities are at the ready, speaking on the radio, writing in the papers and stacking the panel on Q&A. The polls are showing that the public supports it, "Come on Australia, catch up to the rest of the world," they cry, "Its high time that the doctors and the law makers got on board".

So for those of you who don't follow these things, euthanasia season began in South Australia back in February last year when Labor MP Steph Key tabled the *Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 2016*. The usual process of submissions and conversations between MPs and their constituents followed, and parliamentary debate on the Bill was well underway when Liberal Duncan McFetridge cleverly introduced a reformed version of the Bill, *the Death with Dignity Bill 2016* on October 20. The new Bill promised to settle the many criticisms of the first, which implied that there was no need for further submissions. However those who could sense a swifty was being pulled took pains to respond again. That second Bill was tabled for less than a month before going to a vote. On November 16, celebrity campaigners flew in bright and early to hang out with the regular folk on the steps of SA's parliament house, unaware of the epic sitting before them. Debate pushed through the night and around 4am the following morning a vote finally took place. The Bill was defeated after the speaker voted against the Bill to split the 23-23 tie. Speaker Michael Atkinson stated that the process was "a textbook example of bad legislative practice." That was the fourteenth euthanasia bill defeated in SA.

The very day the second SA bill was tabled, three WA MPs (Labour, Liberal and Greens) announced the beginning of their campaign for end-of-life legislation. WA hasn't seen a euthanasia bill since 2010 and that one didn't make it to a second reading. It was announced by Labor MP Alannah MacTiernan late 2016 that we can expect to see a bill in the second half of 2017. It seems that WA is listening in on Victoria's huddle so we could expect the two states to run their campaigns concurrently.

Down to Tasmania and recently, on May 24th, the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2016* tabled by Labor MP and former Premier Lara Giddings and Greens Leader Cassy O'Connor was voted on and defeated - 16 votes to 8. The magnitude of this defeat may have come as a surprise to Giddings who also co-

sponsored a Bill in 2013 that was narrowly defeated by one vote. Tasmania has now seen three euthanasia bills in less than a decade.

Mid-May we heard reports that a NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill has been drafted by a cross-party working group but has yet to be officially tabled. It promises to be cautious, which means for over 25 year olds who are expected to die within 12 months and who are suffering extreme pain or disability. The legislation grants close relatives the ability to challenge the patient's eligibility in court. We can expect its introduction around August.

Moving south to Victoria we await the mother of all euthanasia bills. News comes in as we go to print that we may expect to see a bill introduced in the first parliamentary sitting of August and it could be moved to a quick vote within two weeks. A parliamentary committee spent ten months working on an *Inquiry into End of Life Choices* and presented some 49 recommendations to parliament in its June 2016 report. If you didn't pick it up from the title, this project was all about choice, and when choice is your central goal we all know that more is more. So it is no surprise that the Inquiry recommends that the assisted dying should be one of those choices. I admit I have not closely read the whole 350 page report but, I gained little confidence when I stopped upon the subheading "God" (page 309) to find that God is in favour of legalising assisted suicide. Lord have mercy! Punters believe that the Victorian parliament has the numbers to vote in favour of assisted suicide legalisation so it will be interesting to see how well the legislation is crafted and the time they allow for submissions and parliamentary debate.

In other parts, there is scant evidence that Queensland is looking at the euthanasia question this year. In 2013 a Queensland parliamentary inquiry looked into palliative and community care but, unlike Victoria, the examination of euthanasia was not part of the agenda.

Our final stop is in Canberra, where there has been media speculation that someone may have a go at turning over the *Federal Euthanasia Laws Bill 1996*. This was the bill that overturned NT's *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 1995*, under which four people had their lives ended with the assistance of the (now) deregistered doctor Phillip Nitschke before the law was nullified. I don't put much stock in media speculation these days. Politicians revel in announcing their own plans so we'll wait to hear notes on that one from the horse's mouth. KP

New NT abortion law

The Northern Territory has passed a new abortion law “to take abortion out of hospitals ... and to give women more control.” The new law allows the use of the drug RU486 at up to 9 weeks gestation. There are concerns that RU486 is not safe to use in rural/remote areas, as around 10 per cent of women will have major bleeding or an incomplete abortion needing a curette. If the pregnancy is over 9 weeks problems are more likely. Infection of retained products needs high dose antibiotics IV and delay can lead to toxic shock which can be fatal – worldwide there have been over 30 deaths reported with RU486. One particular bacterium *Clostridium sordelli* is liable to infect retained products and to cause toxic shock. The *Clostridia* group includes tetanus and gas gangrene. Aboriginal elder Rosalie Monks says – “This is not part of our culture. We don’t even have a word for abortion.”

There were similar concerns with the “Women on Waves” vessel visiting Guatemala in February to offer RU486 abortions. After the ship leaves, where do the women with problems go for after-care? (theaustralian.com.au)

Abortion bill in NSW defeated

Mahreen Faruqi MLC introduced an Abortion Law Reform Bill in NSW to allow abortion right up to the time of birth on demand. It required that doctors who have a conscientious objection would be obliged to provide an effective referral to women requesting abortion, making the doctors feel morally complicit in the process. The bill also proposed an exclusion zone of 150 meters radius around abortion premises where it will be a summary offence “to communicate disapproval of abortion by any means”, which may include silent prayer. (parliament.nsw.gov.au)

On the 10th of May this bill was defeated in the NSW Legislative Council by nearly 2 to 1 (25 against and 14 in favour). Abortion therefore remains in the NSW Crimes Act, late term abortions will not be an *a priori* right and doctors will not be prosecuted for not referring to abortion providers.

Gender selection IVF ban continues in Australia

The National Health and Medical Research Council released its revised guidelines on 20 April 2017, and has continued its national ban on sex selection through IVF “unless for medical purposes”. While the UK has decided to give egg or sperm donors a AU\$1278 “gift of gratitude”, in Australia the ban on commercial surrogacy also continues. Many observers believe the IVF clinics and customers are quietly breaching both bans in the knowledge there is no will to prosecute. (theaustralian.com.au)

NSW and TAS drop controversial Safe Schools program

The so-called Safe Schools program mentioned in the last issue of Life News is now being promoted only in VIC and by the new Labor government in WA. The notion that all forms of sexual activity are normal and that gender is whatever you feel like has led to a continuing epidemic of “transgender” children, including four-year-olds in kindergarten. Prof John Whitehall in Sydney describes this “massive intrusion into the minds and bodies of children (as a) collective madness .. Most transgender children will “grow out of it through puberty if parents do little more than gently watch and wait.” It seems a form of madness to think we can transform a male into a female by feeding him hormones and surgically altering his plumbing, when every single one of the 37 trillion cells in his body is permanently coded male with the Y chromosome. (theaustralian.com.au)

Iceland claims to have overcome Down syndrome

“Iceland prides itself on being the first country to eradicate Down syndrome (Trisomy 21) with an abortion rate of 100 per cent since 2008.” For Denmark the figure is 98 per cent and for Britain over 90 per cent. The exact figure for Australia is not known, yet it appears that over 90 per cent of parents who know of the diagnosis during pregnancy decide in favour of abortion. There appears to be an increasing tendency for doctors to emphasise the negative aspects of having a child with Down syndrome. (pjmedia.com/parenting)

On Euthanasia: Penn State University Ethicist cautions Australia to focus on the data

A timely article by Bioethicist Ezekiel Emanuel was published in the May edition of the Medical Journal of Australia which cautions Australia about thinking that legalising euthanasia and physician assisted suicide (PAS) will help solve the problem of poor-end-of life care. He states "we still need to deal with the problem that confronts most dying patients: how to get optimal symptom relief, and how to avoid hospital and stay at home in the final weeks. Legalising euthanasia and PAS is really a sideshow in end-of-life care - championed by a few for the few, extensively covered by the media, but not targeted to improve care for most dying patients who still suffer." (MJA 206 (8) 1 May 2017)

Disability advocate Liz Carr in Melbourne

British actress, comedian and disability activist Liz Carr has visited Melbourne with her stage show "Assisted Suicide: the Musical". She was a party to defeating the Rob Marris Assisted Dying Bill in the UK House of Commons in 2015 by 330 to 118 votes. A transcript of her address to the Victorian Parliamentarians is available at this address

www.mercatornet.com/mobile/view/what-do-disabled-people-think-about-assisted-suicide

For a taste of the musical:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in5WJlg1m4M>

VIC government awaits advisory panel report on euthanasia

The Andrews government is waiting on the report of an advisory panel on the design of assisted dying law they plan to introduce in the second half of 2017. "It is expected that only people with decision-making capacity, suffering from a serious and incurable condition and at the end of their life will be able to seek an assisted death. They will also be required to be over 18, a Victorian resident, and an Australian citizen." (theage.com.au)

Canadian doctors have second thoughts on assisted suicide

Last year the Supreme Court of Canada imposed a national euthanasia right on the country.

Advocates used words such as compassion, and death with dignity, and many Canadian doctors agreed to provide lethal doses for those with major illnesses. Now in Ontario alone 24 doctors have removed their names from the willing list and another 30 have put their names on hold. "We're seeing doctors who go through one experience and it's just overwhelming, it's too difficult, and those are the ones who say, take my name off the list."

These doctors started out supporting the concept of euthanasia, and then they were hit by reality. The human conscience, perhaps with a degree of religious faith, can prove powerful. (endeavorforum.org.au)

A Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Victoria

On 18 April 2017 the catholic church leaders of Victoria released a letter to inform their people on euthanasia. It states,

"Euthanasia and assisted suicide are the opposite of care and represent the abandonment of the sick and the suffering, of older and dying persons. Instead, we encourage all people of goodwill, to respond to this new challenge with truth and compassion."

It is well worth reading:

www.cam.org.au/Portals/9/Euthanasia%20Pastoral%20Letter.pdf

Euthanasia rates rise by ten per cent in the Netherlands

The regional review committee reported that in 2016, 6091 patients received lethal doses, up from 5516 in 2015. Since 2006 there has been a 317 per cent increase in euthanasia deaths. That does not include unreported assisted deaths, estimated at 23 per cent. The 2016 figures included patients with dementia and with mental illnesses. Issues such as the capacity to give valid informed consent appear to cause little concern. (lifeneews.com)



IM MEMORIUM – DAVID ERNST JAESCHKE

A fruit grower at Bookpurnong, South Australia, David began in his role as president of the Riverland Branch of Lutherans for Life in February 1994. He continued in that position for 22 years. On nine occasions from 2008-2015, David promoted the pro-life cause at either the Riverland Field Days, or the Loxton or Renmark Show. He didn't tire of transporting, setting up and manning Dr Toni Turnbull's Great Expectations display.

In February 2016, David suffered a stroke caused by a melanoma. Branch members gathered at his home in June to pay tribute for his work on behalf of the unborn. A few weeks before his 75th birthday, on 4 March this year, David was taken to be with the Lord. At his funeral, his pastor, Darrin Kohrt, commented:

Anyone who knew David at all knew he was serious about his faith. There was nothing artificial or pretentious about his Christian life. He was sincere and gentle. He was a man of few words but he was never absent from the hearing of God's word or receiving the sacrament. David was an avid proponent and generous supporter of disseminating the Scriptures. He believed everyone should have access to the Bible. He cherished the sanctity of life. The unborn are especially vulnerable and David had a heart for their well-being. He wanted all people to participate in the life of Christ for eternity.

Vale David—until we join around the throne of Jesus, the Author of life (Acts 3:15), together with angels, archangels and all the company of heaven.

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