

MERCY KILLING Does God Approve?



THE subject under discussion is that of Euthanasia, which is defined by WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY as:

"Gk, easy death . . . the act or practice of killing individuals that are hopelessly sick or injured for reasons of mercy."

When we are reminded of **Dr. Kevorkian**, "Dr. Death," who runs around pumping carbon monoxide into the lungs of human beings made in the image of God, he is simply being consistent with the philosophy of *humanism*. Humanism is the Godless belief system which holds that morals and values are subjective, i.e., left to each individual. It holds as a major premise that there is no absolute standard in existence by which men are to make moral decisions. However, the Christian recognizes that the Bible is the standard of judgment on morals, values and ethics (cf. II Timothy 3:16-17).

With over 15 lives now snuffed out (the number will probably be higher by the time you read this) he appears to feel like a savior. Pro-death people from both camps of active euthanasia and abortion appear to think of themselves as the enlightened breed while forced to contend with right-to-lifers

and traditionalists. Of course it only follows that if one thinks that he has the right to murder life in its beginning, he also believes that he has the right to murder life in its ending. However, only *God* has the right to *give* life and only God has the right to *take* life, i.e., only God may exercise the authority to put to death. With reference to civil law he authorizes capital punishment of certain evil-doers and "natural" death of the law abiding citizen. (cf. **Romans 13:1-7**). If we may murder those in society that we "reason" need it for their own good, what class of people will be next in the coming generations? If one is clinically depressed and hands you a gun requesting you shoot him to put him out of misery, should you do it? No, when a person is suicidal we know that he is not thinking straight and we seek to help him by protecting him from himself. Mental Health Centers in Tennessee counties must (and do) abide by Tennessee state law to contact the authorities when either a homicidal or suicidal person calls their on-call workers and refuses to retract his statement. Our mental health centers, along with our police, serve as a commendable example of our regard to protect the clinically depressed person from himself.

Actually, the so-called mercy killer who wants to murder by poison is homicidal. Consider the Bible example of the Amalekite who was put to death for helping King Saul kill himself (cf. I Samuel 31:1-6; II Samuel 1:1-10). When Saul fell on his sword it only wounded him, so he requested a stranger to stand on him so that he would die. II Samuel 1:14 described his act as "putting forth the hand to destroy." As one writer correctly stated: "David equates the Amalekite's act with an act of assassination" (John P. Simpson).* **Let's keep homicidals away from suicidals.**

Where Does Compromise On "Assisted Suicide" Lead?

Next, comes the report dated, May 6, 1994, revealing that the *Right To Privacy* has been applied not only to allow a woman to destroy her baby but also to allow a person to destroy his own life. The report stated that "only a day after the latest trial of Dr. Jack Kevorkian . . . Judge Barbara Rothstein of the United States District Court in Seattle" (she is a *federal* judge) sought "to strike down a 140-year-old Washington State law prohibiting a doctor from assisting a patient to commit suicide. Judge Rothstein appeals directly to *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 abortion decision. Her reasoning is that just as the Court has established that abortion is an exercise of a right of privacy, so is ending one's life." She stated, "The suffering of a terminally ill person cannot be deemed any less intimate or personal, or any less deserving of protection from unwarranted governmental interference than that of a pregnant woman."

But she also said, "Obviously, the state has a strong, legitimate interest in deterring suicide by young people and others with a significant natural life span ahead of them."¹ But not only is the decision to assist another to commit murder in error, but who is to decide what "a significant natural life span" means? If the *Right To Privacy* means that one class of individuals (those terminally ill) may commit self-murder, then what's to keep another class (the strong, young person who is seriously depressed) from making the argument they *also* have the right?

Distinction To Be Made

We are to have the utmost compassion for anyone who has a terminal illness. The Bible teaches to "weep with them that weep" and to "bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Rom. 12:15; Gal. 6:2). But this gives no man the right to violate God's will in the matter.

There is a distinction which must be understood: