

Minister's Message – October 2010

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is back in the news. It is back on the political agenda thanks to a particular doctor and a few politicians. In a society no longer anchored in the truth of God's word, many people are ready to go along with the euphemism 'death with dignity'. 'Eu' is a Greek prefix meaning 'good' 'well' or 'easy'. Euthanasia means an 'easy death' or 'good death' – if ever death could be looked upon as 'good'.

There was no death in the beginning. *In the beginning God created human beings. He formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being* (Genesis 2:7). Many think that man somehow evolved out of a primordial slime via fish, frogs and monkeys. But where did life come from in the first place? Evolution has no answer. The Bible does. God our creator is the source of life. Death came into the world when man sinned. It is the direct result of sin according to the Bible; and that is not just Genesis. The apostle Paul believed this when he wrote *through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and this death spread to all people because all sinned* (Romans 5:12). How then can we speak about a 'good death'? Death is God's judgment on sin.

At a friend's funeral Jesus said *I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet he shall live* (John 11:25). Jesus is God's answer to death because in Jesus we have forgiveness of sin. To know the only true God and his only begotten son Jesus Christ is to defeat death and have eternal life.

This truth may be beyond the understanding of humanists – people who think that this world, and our life in this world – is all there is, but it remains the truth. It is somewhat ironic that people who say 'let us eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die' turn around and say, 'we want to die quickly and without pain'. I suppose if they are not enjoying life it is not worth living. Life has no meaning when they are not enjoying it.

One problem with death and with euthanasia is that no one has ever come back from the dead to say 'yes, it was good that my doctor gave me a fatal dose to put me out of my misery'. Drs Brown and Nietschke are there with the needle ready to put someone out of their misery, but where are they sending them? To the great blue yonder, to be nothing in the vast expanse of the universe?

There is one man who has come back from the dead and that is Jesus of Nazareth. He does not advocate euthanasia. Why not if death is so much better than living in pain? Jesus knows what comes after death, and it is not nothingness or annihilation. He told a story about a man who died and went to Hades or Hell where he was in torment in the flames (Luke 16:23). He was in pain with weeping and gnashing of teeth. Pain on earth was nothing compared to the pain this man had after his death.

We must keep this matter of euthanasia in perspective. But what about someone with a terminal illness and suffering lots of pain? Many have seen loved ones in such situations. We thank God for the medicines he has given us to relieve pain. We thank him for loved ones who comfort us in such pain. But life is God's gift and he is the one with the right to take it away. It is not a human right; it is a divine prerogative.

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