



Statement on Euthanasia

The Associated Gospel Churches affirms the sanctity of human life and believes that God is the giver and sustainer of all life. We also believe the Bible clearly teaches that God knows the extent of every life.

"Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass." Job 14:5

"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.

And I have the keys of ... Death." Revelation 1:18

With the advances in medical technology today, it is possible to sustain the lives of those who have been severely injured in accidents, or those who are suffering from life-threatening diseases. These people are frequently left in a persistent comatose state with little hope of recovery. Many believe that individuals in such conditions, and others who have been diagnosed as terminally ill, should not have to endure great physical or psychological suffering. The argument is for legalized euthanasia, which means, literally, "good or easy death."

Euthanasia is a deliberate taking of life, with or without the victim's consent, in order to put an end to what is believed to be unnecessary and extreme suffering. It is a complex and very confusing issue and can be perpetrated either passively or actively.

Passive euthanasia is the withholding of life-saving measures for the dying person. The Christian Medical Society states that dying begins when a person's condition rapidly and irreversibly deteriorates. Those for whom death is imminent, who are beyond reasonable hope for recovery, not to have death postponed. A patient's decision to refuse or to stop certain treatments should be respected.

However, to deliberately deny treatment for the purpose of assuring that a seemingly hopeless case does not survive, is a form of killing and violates God's command: "Thou shalt not kill."

Active euthanasia is an act which results in the death of an afflicted person, with or without his or her consent. Such action is in direct violation of God's command (Exodus 20:13).

Note the following quotations.

"A deep respect for the sanctity of life should cause us to consider how we can help others live with dignity and affirm the importance of their lives, rather than assist in hastening their deaths." Brian Stiller

"The killing of another person, even with that person's consent, is a very public matter. To accept killing as a private matter of individual choice is to diminish respect for human life, dull our consciences and dehumanize society." Marcel Gervais, President, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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