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The Culture of Death and Its Lessons

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This represents nothing less than a reversal of the logic of life. Now, we will not only end life just after its conception, we will end life when it seems best to ourselves. We will, in fact, determine our own deaths and assist in the death of others. The creature will seek to be the lord of its own destiny, and so we will seek not only to manipulate life's beginning, but also to terminate life at the end. We have decided, so it seems, that if we as finite humans cannot be freed from the threat of death itself, we will be at least the lords of our own death. We will choose death on our own terms. We will choose death for ourselves and, eventually, we will choose death for others as well.

The so-called “Dutch-cure” has been revealed in undeniable terms as the slippery slope from passive to active euthanasia. Regardless of the lies that have been told, there is no such thing as a “good death.” Euthanasia inevitably slides from passive to active when it is the technologies of active euthanasia that are celebrated as new opportunities. They are new opportunities, in fact, to control life and to control death.

Active euthanasia is not only a threat to the elderly, the infirmed, the disabled, and the chronically sick—but it will soon be reasserted as a duty to die. And this is already the discourse common in some American circles. Economic and emotional arguments are used to appeal to the duty to die of behalf of those who reach the end stage, an awkward stage, or a chronically disabled stage of life. According to this logic, the infirm must remove themselves from the living in order to avoid being a financial burden or a source of emotional stress to their families and society at large.

Not surprisingly, we see here the breakdown of the moral consciousness once again. These issues cannot even be discussed in the public square with any sense of truth and authority—of right and of wrong. Everything is reduced, not only to matters of technology, but also to the images of victimhood. The teenage parents in Delaware who killed their own newborn baby were described in one account as victims of “limited choices.”

Victims of limited choices? Adam and Eve must fit that category as well. We are all “victims” of limited choices. It is only in the utopian panacea of modern progressive liberalism and moral relativism that one would even conceive of a life unlimited in terms of choice.

The Culture of Death continues with the development of genetic engineering. The cloning of a sheep a few years back has set lose a virtual bonanza of cloning opportunities that are being played out before our very eyes. The ethical dimensions of cloning are raised in only the most superficial and dismissive sense. We will be lords, not only of the womb and not only of our own death, but we would be lords of our own genetic code, guided only by our own sense of destiny and our own sense of the good life.

The creature will try to play the Creator, thus distorting the dominion mandate of Genesis into a stewardship which is not our own. When we were told to exercise dominion over all creation, that mandate did not extend to tampering with the genetic code and the cloning of humans. This leads to such issues as the ownership of cloned organisms. We now have genetic patents on certain forms of life. Why not patent certain forms of human life in such a way that you could clone a certain species much the way General Motors releases a new line of cars? We can foresee the ominous specter of host bodies produced in order to produce and maintain human donor organs.

Human reproductive cloning is the ultimate narcissism. We love ourselves so much that we will give society and human history another one of us. [And then another, and yet another]. But, not only is it the ultimate narcissism, it is also an invitation to biological destruction and a time bomb of unprecedented proportions. Just imagine what will happen when God's design with regard to our genetic diversity is reduced by cloning. It is a threat to the survival of the human race.

We have also witnessed the completion of the Human Genome Project, which holds much potential for good as it has mapped the entire genetic code of the human being. But this knowledge also holds great peril. It represents an awesome moral challenge. What will we do with what we learn? What will we do with the knowledge of the genetic code not only of the species but of particular individuals? What will be the options politically and culturally sustained in the culture of death?

Baroness Mary Warnock, who infamously leads many of the bio-medical discussions in Great Britain, suggests that we should simply give in to those who suggest that we are playing God. We should simply admit this fact honestly, and get on with playing God. In this sense, it would mean working toward the genetic enhancement of the human race by favoring some genes over others. Of course, this has been said before—though it was not spoken not in crisp English so much as in militant German. This is a worldview Adolf Hitler would understand all too well.

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