

Euthanasia and Its Acceptance

Active euthanasia is the inducing of death, typically with medical assistance. Terminally ill individuals might seek death to release them from their condition. Through euthanasia, society has sought to increase human dignity in the end stages of an individual's life. Through euthanasia, society has also sought to improve the lives and social standing of those deemed desirable. Throughout history, genocidal movements have arisen to purge nations of undesired elements. These issues are worrisome to God's children.

According to research,¹ two thirds of respondents supported legislation to allow active euthanasia, and two out of three would personally consider euthanasia a solution if terminal illness prevented them from living with human dignity. The results were similar in cases involving a loved one who requests assistance in dying due to suffering and untreatable pain. What makes these research results even more worrisome is this: 77 percent of 15 to 22-year-olds support legislation allowing euthanasia. Euthanasia is murder. It is taking another person's life—whether or not it is according to the wishes of the individual or a loved one. The Union of Doctors (a Finnish medical association) frowns on active euthanasia, creating a measure of security in society regarding this issue for the near future.

Reading these results, older people may fear for their own destinies, especially as they lose their faculties and begin to place additional strain on public resources. They might wonder, "Is a generation rising that will clear room for youth, for hard values, among whom common humanity is unknown and where man is elevated as a lord and god over all?" The signs of this hardness become more evident from year to year. Two sobering examples particularly reveal this trend: increased abortion, and genetic testing for employment or life insurance. In such a society there is no place for the handicapped, the less gifted, the disadvantaged, or the sick.

Throughout history, repressive regimes have used euthanasia as a tool for removing undesired elements from society and ethnic cleansing. Genocide often begins over seemingly inconsequential issues. Deep down, the proponents of such ideas may have originally had good intentions, for instance, removing pain. But this thinking quickly runs amok as erroneous suppositions, suspicions and accusations fanned by skillful agitators give rise to popular movements that induce acts of mindless fanaticism. This applies to many extremist movements, be they of racial, national, religious or other ideological incitement. Even in recent history we see examples of where these types of purges lead.

Have the great tragedies of history, with their racial doctrines, been hidden from our young, and apparently from many adults? It is hard to comprehend why young people would so readily approve of such dangerous legislation, where life and death decisions would often be put in the hands of another person. Or are the murders of children and adults, handicapped and sick, the useless and weak, with all their horrors, explained away through psychological methods because similar ideas and actions are socially acceptable? It is proper that matters between nations and targets of persecution should be settled and forgiven. But the dangerous ideologies leading to these horrors must never be forgotten. In all instances, the spread of these dangerous doctrines must be prevented.

What is life with human dignity like? Is it really knowledge, authority, power, or the exhausting struggle to reach the pinnacle of honor? Or could life's dignity also exist where two people meet each other, even if they are severely ill? One speaks and the other listens. Isn't that moment worth experiencing, and isn't this also life with human dignity? People are not meant to destroy one another; rather, we offer each other mutual support. The handicapped, the sick, the elderly and all others have duties and a reason for existing in this often overly efficient world.

Day4L4R04_ *Euthanasia and Its Acceptance, Crossing the Current*

Are polls like this, where mercy killing powerfully comes to the fore, helpful in a time of recession, unemployment, and other stresses? On one hand, these issues reflect the prevailing economic situation in society. However, we hope these polls do not create the wrong impression for those who feel themselves worthless due to illness, unemployment, or old age. Shouldn't we today affirm a belief in life and hope for a better tomorrow with all our strength, and place questions concerning life and death in the hands of God, where they truly belong?

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¹ conducted by Gallup Finland