

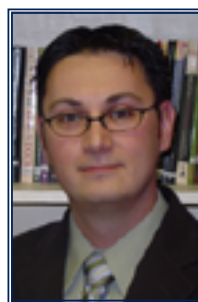
## DIRECTOR'S DESK

by Michael J. Sleasman, PhD  
Managing Director & Research Scholar

Greetings from the Center. Our apologies for this long-overdue Fall/Winter issue of *Dignitas*. The intervening months since our last issue have seen an immense sea of change in the domestic and international concerns facing us today. The financial and housing markets are beginning to show some signs of new life after an alarming near collapse that saw the disappearance of many retirement savings. The automotive industry saw massive declines in sales that brought about multi-billion dollar government loans and, in one case, bankruptcy proceedings. In the wake of such troubling times, the issues of bioethics could easily become yesterday's news, but, unfortunately, we do not see a reprieve from the complex bioethical issues of our day. News headlines from the past six months demonstrate the continued need for sober reflection on the classic issues of bioethics such as euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide and for the ability to adapt to ever evolving biotechnology conversations such as those raised by stem cell research and genetics. Headlines such as savior siblings and stem cells (in Spain), reported cases of physician-assisted suicide tourism (from the UK), the approval of Washington state's Death with Dignity law, and concerns over new guidelines for federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, came across our desk in the past few months just to name a few.

In this issue of *Dignitas*, we bring you two original research pieces and a number of various updates. The first research piece is an essay by CBHD research analyst Hans Madueme, MD entitled "Natural Law and a Reformed Bioethics: Another Look." In this piece, Dr. Madueme examines the importance and potential benefit of a robust analysis of natural law for Protestant bioethics in general and Reformed bioethics in particular. This piece takes as its basis some of the insights put forth in J. Daryl Charles's *Retrieving the Natural Law*, a 2008 addition to the Center's Critical Issues in Bioethics series with Eerdmans. The second piece is an annotated list of the top bioethics news stories of 2008 compiled by CBHD research assistant and intern, Kirsten Riggan. For many of us these new stories will be familiar territory, but we hope that you will find the compilation of some of the most significant stories to be a compelling statement of the impact of bioethics from a global standpoint. For others these news stories may be a wake-up call to the breadth of the bioethical issues of our day and the challenges and opportunities they present to our common humanity.

A new addition to *Dignitas* in this issue is the introduction of a set of columns: *On the Center's Bookshelf* and *Articles of Note*. Both of these new columns are in response to requests received from *Dignitas* readers and other CBHD constituents for recommendations on bioethics reading material from CBHD staff members. Some of the resources listed are recent additions to the field, while others are classics that a staff member is revisiting and wished to highlight. In both cases they are suggestions of material we have found to be either particularly provocative and/or informative. We hope that these lists will be an ongoing resource in expanding the material that our constituents and readership are critically accessing in the realm of all things bioethics. As always we invite you as our readers to send us your suggestions and feedback to [info@cbhd.org](mailto:info@cbhd.org).



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