

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

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Inside

Are you a David, ready to do battle with Goliath?

By
Bob Garvey

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call 655-0280, email, or contact our website (see back page)

David called on and depended on God to win his battle for him. He had to actually fight, but God guided the stone he threw that actually killed Goliath.

Currently the "Physician Assisted Suicide" bill, # H-168, sits in the House Human Services Committee waiting for an all out onslaught of "Goliath" (the other side) and those of us (David) who would hate to see a Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) law pass in Vermont. There are many, valid reasons outlined later in this article to use in opposing the bill. The "Goliaths" have amassed a large fund, much of which has been provided by out-of-state entities, who are anxious to see an expansion of the concept of Assisted Suicide. They are spending their money on professional lobbyists, whose primary goal is to convince Legislators that giving someone permission to help you to kill yourself is good public policy. It is decidedly not good public policy, but is the beginning of the slippery slope that will lead first to voluntary euthanasia, then to

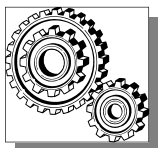
involuntary euthanasia (a Doctor or some other entity can make the choice, just as they did in Germany in killing the Jews and many Christian people). Joining the professional lobbyists will be many volunteer lobbyists who will be working to convince our (your) Legislators, either one at a time or in testimony before the Human Services or Judiciary Committees, that PAS is a good idea. As you read this right now the Human Services Committee has already met and is taking testimony.



PLEASE READ ON! The Death with Dignity proponents are "Goliath" and we (you) Christians are "David" in this scenario.

It is up to us to fight the battle, arm ourselves with the reasons why the bill is dangerous to the elderly, disabled and those suffering from depression, and ask God to guide us and win the "battle" over "Goliath's" challenge to our resolve and courage. How, you may ask, can we make a difference? There is a brochure, called "Vermont Voices" in which various doctors, nurses, pharmacists, developmental disability spokespersons, a professional care provider, and others with a personal view born out of their own personal experience with dying and living, share their experiences and knowledge. Using their experience and knowledge, YOU could testify that *their* views reflect your views as well, plus you could add any of your own personal experiences.

Robert Orr MD, President of Vermont Alliance for Healthcare, (VAEH) and an enthusiastic supporter of palliative care for terminally ill patients and of better pain management programs, tells us, "The Alliance is made up of Vermonters who are concerned about the



In the Works

Bible Curriculum in the Public Schools

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.



"This is all the Inheritance I give to my dear family. The religion of Christ will give them one which will make them rich indeed."

Patrick Henry

(Continued from page 1)

way we care for our neighbors who are chronically ill and those who are dying. We are physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other health care professionals; people with physical disabilities and those who advocate for them; and clergy and lay persons from the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish traditions. **We believe that the medical tradition that has been in place for over 2,500 years since the time of Hippocrates is still valid. Do no harm!!** This is why we have produced the brochure mentioned above, featuring comments from some health care professionals and others that we think will help you to understand the reasons why Physician Assisted Suicide is not needed or wanted in Vermont. Their reasoning is valid, sound and documentable.”

So, is the idea that suicide is wrong just a modern prohibition? Decidedly not. The notable pre-Augustinian moral and theological writings by recognized Church leaders condemning the practice of suicide include ones by Clement of Alexander (155- 220A.D.) and Tertullian (160- 220 A.D.). The great church leader Justyn Martyr (100-165 A.D.) wrote that suicide “...will be opposing the will of God.” Bishop John Chrysostom (349-407 A.D.) affirmed that “...if it is base to destroy others, much more is it to destroy one’s self.” (*Issues in Law and Medicine, Volume 13, Number 1, 1997*)

If you wonder what Scripture says about suicide, read Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27, Genesis 9:5, and Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. In his all-encompassing Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) the late John Paul II writes, “In Genesis 1:26-28 God proclaims He is the absolute Lord of the Life of man”.

Finally, hear what some of our Vermont health care professionals and health care providers have to say about Physician Assisted Suicide.



Marilyn Rinker, RN MSN, Chair of the Nursing Department, Norwich University, Legislative Advocacy Chair of the American Cancer Society. “Palliative care and hospice care have really improved since I entered the field of oncology nursing in 1970. There are many educational programs for nurses, physicians, and others who are caring for the terminally ill. Patients can be well cared for and families

supported through the dying process. **It is my belief that a Physician Assisted Suicide or Death with Dignity bill is unnecessary.** Patients and families need to be treated with humane care that allows them to spend their last days with families and friends.”

James K O’Brien, MD; past president of the Vermont Medical Society:

“The Vermont Medical Society believes that there should be no laws concerning physician-assisted suicide and the Society in no way endorses euthanasia,as a State we should concentrate on improved palliative and hospice services so all Vermonters come to understand that they need not fear this stage in their lives. We should never assume that the prescribing of a pill is the same as attending to the care of an afflicted person.”

Gary Greiner, Pharmacist, Essex Junction

“The pharmacy profession is founded on a tradition of patient trust. The mission of the pharmacist today is to provide pharmaceutical care, defined as the direct, responsible provision of medication – related care for the purpose of achieving definite outcomes that improve a patient’s quality of LIFE. PAS takes the medical and pharmacy professions back to the middle ages when physicians and apothecaries were sought out for their knowledge



of poisons as well as their skills in treating disease.”

James P. Rathmell, MD Pain Care Specialist:

“I spend all my time taking care of patients with pain, and researching new ways to treat pain more effectively. ...I take care of patients with a wide range of pain problems including: acute pain after surgery, trauma, chronic pain like that of lower back pain, and patients with cancer related pain often nearing the end of life. The real problem in our state is not the need for a new law legalizing physician assisted suicide. The real problem is that we need better education of all health care providers, of legislators, of patients, doctors and other health care providers caring for them, in the tools that are available and when and where to get help with treating patients at the end of life.”



“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”

Daniel Webster

Let me give you a condensation of views of the rest of the folks who feel strongly about this issue:

Robin Bobula, RN, (Nurse for 26 years, the last 6 years as a Hospice Nurse)

*"In that time I have worked with hundreds of dying people and their families. I strongly oppose PAS for a number of reasons. Medical advances in pain and symptom control have made it possible for the vast majority of terminally ill patients to be comfortable throughout the dying process. This requires a multidisciplinary approach, which hospices are well able to provide. Educating and empowering the patient and family is a primary function of the hospice team. A hospice nurse is available by phone for a visit 24 hours a day 7 days a week, most reassuring for a patient and family. ...**Our Society cannot afford to legitimize suicide, no matter what it is called or for what reasons it is done.**"*

Arthur Govette, Burlington (Ed. Note: Arthur's wife Betty died of cancer in September of 2003. His story is both heartwarming and gives pause for serious reflection.)

"My wife, Betty was featured in a series of articles in the Burlington Free Press about the dying process. After the articles appeared, several hundred letters soon arrived plus numerous phone calls. Many were total strangers thanking

me for sharing our story and speaking out against Physician-Assisted Suicide.

"My wife Betty looked death right in the eye and instead of cheating herself and her family by trying to end her life early, she seized the options and opportunities for meaningful choices during her final journey. It was time for final good-byes, healing, granting of wishes, a family coming together and many other blessings in the course of preparation for meeting her Maker. She lived her life to the fullest during her 5½ year battle with cancer and it was an incredible journey. Life became so precious!!.....Betty was enrolled in both palliative care and hospice care programs...she received superlative care, compassion and pain control throughout. ... The organization calling itself Death With Dignity, formerly "End of Life Choices", formerly the Hemlock Society, is financing and promoting the Death With Dignity (Ed. Note; a misnomer if ever there was one), or physician assisted suicide campaign. Derek Humphrey, the founder of the Hemlock Society, has stated publicly, that Physician Assisted Suicide is a step in the process to get the public (you) used to assisted suicide so that eventually euthanasia would be legalized. ...Instead of making our Doctors the gatekeepers in life and death, we should remember that only God is the author of life and death."

Follow-up:

Dr. Orr recently advised CAM that all of our Legislators have received a copy of the brochure. Therefore, you can also use the brochure as a wonderful opportunity and guide to discuss the subject with your



own Representative or Senator. If you are not aware of who your Representative or Senator is, call your local town or city clerk or call the Secretary of State's office at 802-828-2363, and ask for "elections". If you are a "senior" you can call toll free 1-800-642-5119. Even more effective is to get some of your friends, neighbors, or Church members together and take a trip to Montpelier, any

time between 8:30 am and 4:00 PM, to visit the "House Human Services Committee" to see what testimony the members are taking and if there are any Committee members, in your opinion, who do oppose the bill or might be swayed to oppose the bill. If so, send a note to VAEH, PO Box 2145, South Burlington, VT 05407 or visit their website, www.VAEH.org, and let them know what you heard.

You can help form Public opinion with a letter to the editor (both daily and weekly newspapers.) using the ideas fostered in the Brochure. The life of every person is sacred. The late Pope John Paul II said it well when addressing 500,000 people in Denver Colorado. He said, "America, defend Life...Do not be afraid to go out in the streets and into Public Places."

Bob Garvey is a Board Member of the Christian Action Ministry and attends St. Marks Catholic Church

NOTE: There are only a limited number of copies of "Vermont Voices" available. However, if you want a copy, please send CAM a note addressed to CAM Network, Inc., PO Box 1067, Williston, Vt. 05495, we'll see that you get one. Copies are free but further efforts to inform the public will be needed in the coming months and VAEH could use a donation of any amount to help spread the word. If you do send a donation, let them know you heard about it from us. Thanks!

You can reach VAEH at PO Box 2145, So. Burlington, VT. 05407-2145. Checks can be made out to either VAEH or Vermont Alliance for Ethical Health Care. The VAEH website is www.VAEH.org.



"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,"
Declaration of Independence, 1776

What can I do?



Faith without works is dead
James 2:17

e-mail : camnet@surfglobal.net

www.christianactionministry.com

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The Christian Action Ministry is seeking individuals interested in working on a project to teach about the Bible in public schools. The program we are interested in meets all legal requirements for use.

We need interested parents and students in a school district to become informed about this program and assist us with petitions to, and presentations for, their respective school boards.

If you want the Bible re-introduced into the schools (it once was the standard), and are willing to work, please get in touch with us. We will be holding some meetings in the upcoming months to begin this process.

✉ CAM Network, Inc.
PO Box 1067
Williston, VT 05495
☎ (802) 372-6442



Next Meetings
Feb 13, 7:00 pm
Maranatha
Williston, Vt.
March 13, 7:00 pm
St. Marks Catholic Church
Burlington, Vt.

Making A Difference in Vermont!



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