



Footprints

THE NEWSLETTER OF Right To Life New Zealand

Defending life from conception to natural death

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Abortion Supervisory Committee Directs Counsellors to be Neutral on Abortion

The Abortion Supervisory Committee has written to licensed abortion facilities advising them that:



"The Committee is of the view that all counselling services and literature should be neutral and that pamphlets that either promote or discourage termination are not appropriate. The Committee asked that each institution review the written material in their institutions accordingly."

Right to Life was advised by the Committee that this action was taken in response to a complaint laid with the Committee by Right to Life in June about a pamphlet that was being given to women at the Lyndhurst abortion clinic in Christchurch and the Level J abortion clinic in Wellington.

Right to Life commends the Committee for its principled action in seeking to ensure that pregnancy counsellors employed by licensed abortion facilities do not coerce vulnerable women into agreeing to have their unborn child killed and that pamphlets coercing them to seek an abortion are withdrawn. Right to Life does not support withholding pamphlets that uphold the right to be fully informed. Pamphlets that provide factual information on the development of the unborn child, information on the potential damage to a woman's spiritual, physical and psychological health that discourage the killing of the child and alternatives to abortion should not be classified as "inappropriate".

The Committee's action is believed to be unprecedented, It gives tacit acknowledgment that some counsellors are not neutral and that they actively encourage and coerce vulnerable women to kill their unborn. This is a tragedy, a great injustice and a national scandal. Right to Life asks, how many unborn babies have been killed because their mother has been coerced by a counsellor into killing their child?

This conclusion is supported by substantial anecdotal evidence from women in New Zealand who have had an abortion and claim that they were coerced by counsellors to have an abortion. Studies done in the United States by the Elliot Institute reveal that forty per cent of women having an abortion are coerced by others; the father of the child, family, friends and abortion counsellors. Eight out of ten women who had an abortion would not have done so if they had been offered help. These women are experiencing a lifetime of grief and sorrow at the loss of their child. Who will respond to their tears and grief? It represents a failure of District Health Boards to ensure that women are offered help and not coerced into having an abortion and made subject to social engineering.

Women were being given a pamphlet titled, "Women Know". Some of the statements in the pamphlet are:

- "We know when the choice of abortion can prevent the harsh consequences of bringing a child into the world when we are not ready or able to do our child justice."
- "We act out of compassion when we wait to have a child until the time when we can give it the kind of life every child deserves."

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*“Woe to you
 if you do not
 defend life”
 John Paul II*

Rising Danger of Euthanasia

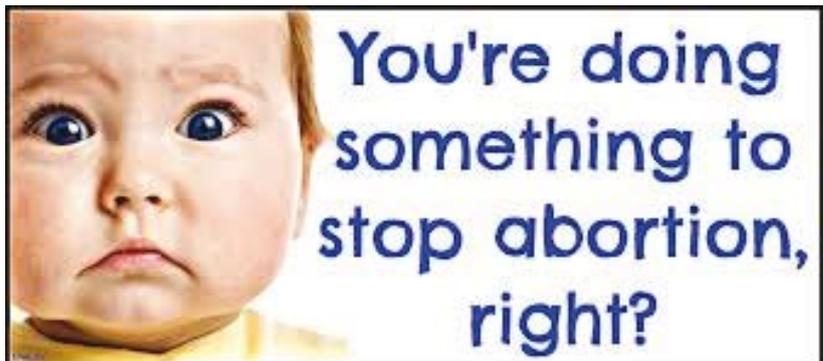
Maryan Street, Labour MP has drafted a Private Members bill which currently sits awaiting to be drawn in the ballot box at parliament. This bill constitutes a major threat to the right to life of many New Zealanders. The Volunteer Euthanasia Society of New Zealand has in the past had the support of a number of our Members of Parliament (Michael Laws and Peter Brown), who have attempted on two previous occasions, to pass legislation to introduce Euthanasia, into this country, fortunately without success. Euthanasia should be called by its real name 'State Sanctioned Killing'.

The VES is more determined this time and in liberal Labour Maryan Street they have a more powerful advocate. A new breed of determined euthanasia advocacy seems to be arising. It comes this time with a new disguise. The Voluntary Euthanasia Society (VES), whose president is Elizabeth Sweeney, have set up a 'front brand' called 'End-of-Life Choice' for their campaign in support of Ms Street's Euthanasia Bill, itself euphemistically titled the *End-of-Life Choice bill*. This Private Members Bill currently sits in the ballot box, and may be drawn at any time.

The VES have kicked off what appears to be a national campaign to pedal euthanasia across the nation by holding a public meeting in Whangarei on Nov 1st. The keynote speaker was Yvonne Shaw, who hails from the US State of Oregon. Ms Shaw appears to have been specifically brought into the country as the VES's Media and Political Relations Manager, to advise and assist them in promoting their cause. Ms Shaw played a leading role in the passing of euthanasia laws in the state of Oregon. (Oregon is one of two US states that allows state sanctioned killing). Right to Life understand it is the VES's intention to hold many more meetings to pedal their cause around the nation and urges members and concerned parties to watch out for these meetings and if possible to attend in order to make their opinion known that Euthanasia is not needed and not wanted in this country. Watch out for more of these meetings being advertised around the country.

The Killing of Unborn Children a Justice Issue

Right to Life is concerned that the Committee in its 2012 report states that abortion is not a justice issue but a health issue. Parliament recognises that abortion is a justice issue. The laws providing protection for the unborn child are in the Crimes Act, under section viii, Crimes Against the Person. The killing of an unborn child is a serious crime. Section 182, Killing Unborn Child- Everyone is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years who causes the death of any child that has not become a human being in such a manner that he would have been guilty of murder if the child become a human being. The killing of an unborn child is excused under section 187A for serious and rare conditions. Right to Life is aware that 98 per cent of abortions are authorised for socio- economic reasons masquerading as psychiatric. The only connection with health is that the unborn are killed by doctors in hospitals. Right to Life has written to the Committee challenging it for denying that the killing of the unborn is a justice issue.



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- “We act out of love when we consider what we would be taking away from the child or children we already have if we brought another child into our family now.”
- “We take care of our spiritual wellbeing each in our own way, trusting our faith to provide: Infinite love, complete understanding, unlimited forgiveness and boundless compassion”

To use emotive words such as love, compassion to disguise a culture of death and to seduce women into believing that terminating the life of a defenceless and innocent unborn child is an act of love is appalling. It is scandalous that this perverse document should be given to women who were disturbed and traumatised with an unplanned pregnancy. Commendably, the Committee have had the pamphlet withdrawn.

It is always wrong to kill the innocent. Right to Life requests that District Health Boards accept responsibility for the care of vulnerable women and their precious unborn by ensuring that women considering an abortion are provided with counselling that defends life, provides support, factual information on the development of the child in the womb and alternatives to the killing of an innocent and defenceless child.

Supreme Court Costs

The Supreme Court in a judgment of the Court [Costs Recall] rejected our Society’s submission to the Court that costs imposed by the Court of Appeal should be set aside. The judgment presented on the 25 October was unanimously endorsed by the five Justices. Our Society submitted that its partial success on the central issue before the Court whether the Abortion Supervisory Committee had the power to scrutinise the decisions of certifying consultants and form its own view about the lawfulness of their decisions to the extent necessary to perform its functions, demonstrated that our Society was justified in bringing this matter to the Courts. The Supreme Court stated that it would be unjust for the Crown to pay costs for successfully defending its case that in law the unborn child did not have a right to life.



Our Society is now awaiting advice from the Crown Law Office as to what is the total of costs that they will be seeking from our Society for their appearance in the High Court and the Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court in their judgment of 9 August stated that no costs would be awarded for the Supreme Court hearing.

Abortion Supervisory Committee – Supreme Court Judgment

Right to Life has made a substantial submission to the Abortion Supervisory Committee following the release of the Court’s judgment in August. We have taken advice from our counsel and have outlined our Society’s expectations of the Committee in complying with the clear directions given to the Committee in holding certifying consultants accountable for the abortions that they authorise.

- Affirms the duty of the Abortion Supervisory to enquire from certifying consultants how they were approaching their decision making in general.
- The Court noted that the Committee had the power to revoke the appointment of certifying consultants where enquiries the Committee makes lead it to believe that consultants are holding views incompatible with the tenor of the Act. The Committee may refer to the Health and Disability Commissioner or the medical disciplinary authorities, in the case of a consultant authorising abortions inconsistent with the abortion law

Right to Life is totally committed to doing everything in its power to ensure that the Committee complies with its statutory duties and exercises its powers to ensure that consultants are not using mental health grounds to provide abortion on demand. The Committee is accountable to Parliament. Ultimately it may be necessary for Parliament to ensure that the abortion laws are upheld as passed by Parliament in 1977 when it was their clear intention that abortions may be authorised only after full regard for the right to life of unborn children.

**Do you know that Right to Life has run a website for over ten years?
Visit us at www.righttolife.org.nz to keep up to date with all the latest Pro-life news from
Right to Life and around New Zealand and the world**

Certifying Consultants

The Committee advises in its annual report to Parliament for 2012 that the number of certifying consultants appointed by the Committee to authorise abortions as at 30 June 2012 has fallen to 170. In 2011 the number of consultants was 175 and in 2009 the number was 196, a loss of 76 consultants since 2009. Right to Life is pleased that an increasing number of doctors do not wish to be involved in authorising the killing of defenceless and innocent unborn children. Right to Life commends those doctors who are faithful to the highest traditions of their profession and respect the inalienable right to life of unborn children from the moment of conception.

Alleged Harassment of Certifying Consultants

The Committee in its 2012 report expressed concern of hearing from certifying consultant's reports that they, their families, patients and wider public have been the subject of harassment. Right to Life is opposed to harassment of consultants, their families, patients and the public. Right to Life supports the right of any person to assemble in a public space to pray, to display placards challenging the evil of abortion and to offer counselling to women seeking an abortion. Right to Life is unaware of any members of the pro-life movement acting in the manner alleged by the Committee and has written to the Committee seeking further information.



Winners and Place-Getters, 5th VFL National Pro-Life Songwriting Contest

Marking the 5th consecutive National Pro-Life Songwriting Contest as being the last in the series initiated by the Voice For Life Bay of Plenty Branch in 2008, the combined committee (of B.O.P. and Auckland members since 2011) is pleased to announce the prize winners at the Manukau City venue last Saturday, 24th November:

“Open” Category:

- Winners: Aaron Fisk and Maria Schrivvers, Nelson, singing their original Song, “Circles”
- 2nd Place: Mike Fidow and St. Anne’s Youth Group, Woolston, Christchurch, “Stay”.
- 3rd Place: Richard Dawson with Central Hawkes Bay College Singers, “Powerless Ones”

“College/Tertiary Under 21:

- Winner: Kayla Hatton, Gisborne; original song, “Innocence”.
- 2nd Place: Maisy Start-Walter, Gisborne; “Shy”.
- 3rd Place: Alana and Rachel Jeffcote, Rotorua, “Beautiful Unborn”.

In addition to their cash prize, the winners also received Full three-day passes to the 2013 “Parachute Festival”. Our thanks to all who supported the series as supporters, contestants and sponsors. total of just on 200 entries competed during the 5 Contests. The panels of Judges, seven in all, came from Tauranga and Auckland. Don Brebner, Contest Organiser.

Human life begins at conception and every human being has been endowed with an inalienable right to life.

Pro-Abortion President Barack Obama Defeats Mitt Romney

The re-election of Barack Obama to the Presidency of the United States is bad news for the United States and indeed for the international community. The results will make it increasingly difficult for Americans to end legalized abortion any time soon, or to end taxpayer funding to the Planned Parenthood abortion business, or approve new pro-life legislation in Congress. The pro-life movement will need to rely on state legislatures to continue approving new limits on abortion that have helped some states cut abortions as much as 50 percent. The victory of Obama will have serious consequences for the rest of the world as President Obama intensifies his promotion of an anti-life agenda with the aid of the United Nations. to promote abortion and contraception worldwide especially in the third world and to have the killing of the unborn child accepted as a human right. President Obama will now be able to promote the redefinition of marriage by encouraging legislation that will allow for same sex marriage. Romney was unable to capture the battleground states necessary to defeat the pro-abortion president. Although he captured Republican states like North Carolina and Indiana, he was unable to win key states like Ohio. Other states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and others that Romney hoped to be able to pick up from the Obama column did not come through for him.



President Obama

The differences between the two candidates on abortion were stark.

Because a federal Human Life Amendment to the Constitution is an extraordinarily difficult long-term prospect, overturning Roe v. Wade is the only real method of achieving legal protection for unborn children any time soon. **When it comes to Roe v. Wade, Obama has repeatedly voiced his support for the infamous abortion decision while Romney had repeatedly said he wants it overturned.**

To overturn Roe v. Wade, we need more Supreme Court justices in the mold of Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, both of whom have publicly made clear their desire to overturn the decision. President Obama named pro-abortion radicals Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor to the high court in his effort to keep abortions legal another 40 years.

Evangelicals turned out in record numbers and voted as heavily for Mitt Romney yesterday as they did for George W. Bush in 2004," Reed observed. "That is an astonishing outcome that few would have predicted even a few months ago. But Romney underperformed with younger voters and minorities and that in the end made the difference for Obama."

Catholic voters who regularly attend Mass broke 67% for Romney to 32% for Obama. This represented a swing of 35% in the direction of the GOP since 2008. Romney also won white Catholics by a margin of 59% to 40%, a margin of 19 points among a group that historically has voted for the winner. Nevertheless, Obama narrowly won the Catholic vote driven largely by over-performing among Hispanic Catholics.

The Obamacare health care law President Obama signed contains absolutely no limits on abortion funding. Every pro-life group has confirmed that, once it is fully implemented, Obamacare will fund abortions and fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business. Romney had said he would push for repealing Obamacare and do so beginning on the first day in office by removing any funding or implementation he can via executive order that can be done other than its full repeal. In 2008, the Catholic Vote, which has been about even split over the past 50 years, voted for Obama over Sen. John McCain 54 to 45 percent. In the 2012 presidential election, it went for Obama over Gov. Mitt Romney 50 to 48 percent. The narrowing of that margin was probably due to the HHS mandate, because the pro-life issues certainly haven't brought Catholics together over the past 40 years

"There is a big difference between the choice to have a child and the choice to kill a child. Because abortion kills a child who already exists, it is in no way a "right."

– Father Frank Pavone

Submission – [Definition of

Right to Life made a submission to the Government Administration Parliamentary Select Committee opposing the [Definition of Marriage] Amendment Bill. It was decided by the executive that this Bill was an attack not just on the family but on the creation of new life, it was therefore seen as an important life issue. At the outset we stated that this debate is not about denying members of the homosexual community recognition of their human rights. Members of the homosexual community are capable of forming loving relationships and of being good parents. It is noted that there are many members of the homosexual community who do not support this Bill.



Same sex marriage is not an issue of equality and it is not about the value or validity of homosexuality. The issue is about the link between the state and marriage and society. It is about what is the purpose of marriage. The family is the foundation of a healthy and prosperous community. History records that the health of a nation is dependent on strong families where children are loved and nurtured by their biological parents.

Our Society' opposition to this Bill is for the following reasons:

Redefining Marriage Marriage as exclusively between one man and one woman has been recognised by all cultures since the beginning of time. The institution of marriage as being exclusively between one woman and one man was established by our Creator for the happiness of man and for the procreation of the human race. It is recognised that the State has a right and duty to regulate the institution of marriage, it does however not have the authority to redefine marriage to include marriage between two men or two women. To seek to do so is in violation of the Creators plan for procreation of the human race.

The Common Good The State has a duty to the Creator and to the common good to protect the institution of marriage for the preservation and promotion of society. It is only within the family of one man and one woman that the State can provide for the creation of new life to ensure the continuation of society. We should learn from the lessons of history. Same sex marriage was legalised in the Roman Empire and contributed to the ultimate collapse of the Empire as it suffered from a birth rate that brought about its ultimate destruction.

The passing of the proposed legislation will undermine marriage and procreation, it will treat same sex marriage as being equal to traditional marriage. It would send a strong and dangerous message to the community that the procreation of children is not the prime purpose of marriage.

Rights of Children Every child has the right to the love and nurturing of its mother and father. Death and divorce may prevent it but there is substantial evidence from studies conducted that children do better when they are brought up by their biological parents within marriage. Marriage is the best way to ensure that children are brought up by their biological parents. The unique contribution of the biological mother and father to the raising and wellbeing of children cannot be replaced by two men or two women in a same sex relationship.

Two men in a same sex relationship may be good fathers but they cannot provide the requirements for the love of the biological mother. Likewise two women in a same sex relationship may be good mothers but they cannot provide the unique contribution that is desired from the love and nurturing of the biological father. Today, we are faced with many children being raised due to divorce and separation in fatherless and motherless families; it would however be unwise for the State to create through this proposed legislation fatherless and motherless families.

Same Sex Marriage a Human Right There is no United Nations treaty or convention that recognises same sex marriage as a human right. The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in March this year rejected a French lesbian couple the right to adopt. The Court said in its judgment that there was no human right to same sex marriage or to adopt a child. The judgment means that no member states are required to legislate to allow same sex marriage or to allow for homosexual couples to adopt.

The Rights of those Who are Married For many people in New Zealand who are married, their marriage is more than just a legal agreement or social contract. It is important to recognise the rights of those who are married.

For many the proposal that marriage should be redefined to include same sex marriage is repugnant and deeply offensive.

By passing the proposed legislation the rights of those who are married would be violated. The State has a serious responsibility to protect the rights of those who are married. A petition supporting marriage has been presented to Parliament. The petition organised within two weeks and signed by 50,000 concerned New Zealanders stated; "I

Marriage] Amendment Bill

support the definition of marriage in New Zealand being maintained." Parliament should respond to this petition by supporting marriage as being exclusively between one man and one woman.

As at 31 December 2011, 2152 civil unions were registered to New Zealand residents. These comprised 1685 same-sex unions, of which 989 had been between females and 696 had been between males, and 467 opposite-sex unions. In addition, 387 civil unions were registered to overseas residents. 83 civil unions had been dissolved.

The number of people in a same sex civil union in 2011 was 1,685. Many of these couples do not want to be married, in addition there are many in the homosexual community who do not support marriage being redefined to include same sex couples because they believe in "sexual freedom". **Why should Parliament trample on the rights of the hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders who are married and who are strongly opposed to the proposed legislation in order to please a small minority in our community?**

Civil unions of New Zealand residents in New Zealand, 2005-11

Year	Same-sex civil unions		Opposite-sex civil unions	Total civil unions
	Female Couples	Male Couples		
2005	105	98	46	249
2006	182	115	77	374
2007	150	103	63	316
2008	145	111	71	327
2009	147	97	68	312
2010	127	73	73	273
2011	133	99	69	301

Seeking Equality and an end to discrimination

The proponents of the proposed legislation claim that legislation for same sex marriage will end discrimination and provide equality for members of the homosexual community. It is important that all members of our community be treated fairly and without discrimination. Parliament in 2004 passed the Civil Union Act that protects the rights of homosexuals to enter into a legally recognised relationship. The homosexual community in lobbying for this legislation claimed that they were not seeking a change to the Marriage Act to include same sex marriage. Two prominent Labour Members of Parliament, Hon Cris Carter and Tim Barnett, who are members of the homosexual community who supported the passing of the Civil Union Act, stated that they did not seek to redefine marriage. The Marriage Act rightly discriminates, a man who is married cannot marry another woman. There is no absolute right to marry, a man cannot marry his daughter nor can he marry his first cousin. The law currently discriminates against Moslems who may, according to their religion have four wives.

Consequences of Passing Proposed Legislation

Should Parliament redefine marriage to include same sex marriage it could result in the following harmful consequences:

- If marriage is redefined it would mean that everyone would be required to accept it and not speak or act against it.
- If the state passes a law that changes the nature of marriage, and consequently family, then every citizen's liberty is endangered. If the state enters into intimate human life that was once outside the power of the state to control and usurps the role of the Creator as the author of marriage then the state must eventually erode religious freedom and then freedom of speech,
- It could lead to the further redefinition of marriage to allow for a man to have more than one wife. It could be redefined to allow for threesomes and foursomes.
- **It would then allow for same sex couples to adopt children. This would be to the grave detriment of children. Children have a human right to live with their biological parents.**
- Children would be required to be taught that same sex marriage was equal to heterosexual marriage and it was their choice to marry someone of the opposite sex or of the same sex.
- **Churches would be prohibited from opposing same sex marriage in their teaching**
- Church Ministers, marriage celebrants in exercising their function, will be in breach of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 199, if they refuse to perform their public function as marriage celebrants by reason of the same sex of a couple seeking to be married.

Conclusion

It would be unwise for Parliament to redefine marriage for it would undermine the family as the source and nurturer of new life, our future citizens. We have an obligation to our children to protect marriage and the family. Our forebears, who came to this land nearly 200 years ago, recognised the importance and the contribution that marriage and family were to make for the founding of this nation. Right to Life requests that Parliament, in the interest of the common good and the future health and prosperity of this nation, supports the institution of marriage as being exclusively between one man and one woman and withholds support for the Definition of Marriage [Amendment] Bill. Right to Life wishes to speak to this submission at the Select Committee hearing.

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We note that there is a requirement that health practitioners have a duty under the Primary Maternity Services Notice 2007, section DA 19 1 [b] to offer antenatal screening to all pregnant women in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy. It is of vital importance that health practitioners are permitted by government to practice medicine in accordance with a well informed conscience. The High Court in 2011 in *Halligan and others v the Medical Council* in a Judicial Review of the proposed Guidelines of the Medical Council upheld the right of medical practitioners to seek the protection of section 174 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act when it was a violation of a doctors conscience to refer a woman seeking an abortion to a certifying consultant. Our Society contends that health practitioners who object to antenatal screening on the grounds of conscience do not have a duty to offer screening to any pregnant woman. Legal protection for their conscience is found in the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, section 174 which reads;

174 Duty of health practitioners in respect of reproductive health services

(1) This section applies whenever—

- (a) a person requests a health practitioner to provide a service (including, without limitation, advice) with respect to contraception, sterilisation, or other reproductive health services; and
- (b) the health practitioner objects on the ground of conscience to providing the service.

(2) When this section applies, the health practitioner must inform the person who requests the service that he or she can obtain the service from another health practitioner or from a family planning clinic.

We submit that:

- That antenatal Screening should not be offered by health practitioners, but be provided to women only when the women requests it.
- That the Ministry of Health should advise all health practitioners including radiologists of their statutory right under s 174 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 to refuse to offer screening or to assist in its provision
- That the Primary Services Notice 200, s DA 19 1 [a] should be amended with urgency to incorporate the conscience provision.

The Guidelines on page 34 state that if appropriate, the following choice could be discussed: The second choice is to continue with the pregnancy or seek a termination. This option raises several very important questions. The inference is that a positive diagnosis of Down syndrome or Spina Bifida constitutes grounds for an abortion. The Crimes Act 1961 section 187A [1] [aa] states "That there is a substantial risk that the child, if born, would be so physically or mentally abnormal as to be seriously handicapped. **Down syndrome is classified by the international medical community as being a mild to moderate disability, it may be expected that the child when born would not be seriously handicapped. In view of this classification it is contended that it would be unlawful to kill an unborn child with Down syndrome on the grounds that it would be seriously handicapped.** Unborn children diagnosed with Spina Bifida may have a disability that may be corrected with surgery that would result in a child that is not seriously handicapped.

It is noted that the killing of an unborn child is a serious crime under the Crimes Act, section 183, Procuring an abortion by any means, and that everyone is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years who, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman or girl, whether she is pregnant or not... Section 187A Meaning of "Unlawfully" provides for abortions on exceptional and serious rare grounds including fetal abnormality when the doctor performing the abortion has honest belief in the grounds on which the abortion is authorised.. The Contraception Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977, provides for abortions to be authorised after full consideration of a request from a woman for an abortion by two certifying consultants appointed by the Abortion Supervisory Committee. Abortion on demand or offer is unlawful in New Zealand and it is improper for any health practitioner to offer an abortion to a woman.

Right to Life submits that the Guidelines be amended to recommend, that the health practitioner after receiving a positive result from diagnostic testing:

- Refrain from suggesting or encouraging the termination of the life of the child.
- Places emphasis on recognising the humanity of the child and its right to life.
- Recognise that killing an unborn child diagnosed with Down syndrome or Spina Bifida on the grounds of fetal abnormality would be unlawful.

Right to Life contends that the Guidelines should support the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states in its preamble, "that discrimination against any person on the basis of disability is a violation of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person." New Zealand is a signatory to this important Convention. The government has a Disability Strategy which states:

"The New Zealand Disability Strategy's vision is of a society that highly values the lives and continually enhances the full participation of disabled people. It provides a framework to guide government agencies making policy and services impacting on disabled people. In taking the lead, the Government will do everything possible to influence the attitudes and behaviour of society as a whole by all New Zealanders considering issues facing people with disabilities and their aspirations, New Zealand can become a fully inclusive society."

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It is contended that the Ministry of Health has a serious duty to support the government's Disability Strategy by ensuring that the promotion of screening is based on the objective of supporting the government's Disability Strategy.

It is a travesty that the New Zealand government should be supporting the screening of unborn children for targeting simply because they have Down Syndrome, and at the same time promoting anti-discriminatory messages concerning the disabled after those persons are born.

Right to Life submits that the Guidelines be amended to ensure that health practitioners are aware of the Disability Strategy and that they do everything possible to influence the attitudes and behaviour of women who have an unborn child diagnosed with a disability to welcome the birth of the child into their family and into a fully inclusive society.

In conclusion it is the earnest aspiration of Right to Life that the Ministry of Health take this opportunity in the preparation of new Guidelines to promote the wellbeing of women in New Zealand and the human rights of unborn children, especially those diagnosed with disabilities. We trust that this submission will assist in achieving these objectives. Our Society would be grateful if you would kindly acknowledge receipt of this submission and provide our Society in due course with a copy of the new Guidelines.

SALVATION ARMY REJECTS EUTHANASIA BILL



The Salvation Army notes the intention of Labour Maryan Street (MP) to introduce a Private Members "End of life choice" Bill to legalise voluntary euthanasia and/or physician-assisted suicide.

The Salvation Army believes euthanasia and assisted suicide are morally wrong regardless of illness, age or disability, and **does not accept the view that euthanasia is "death with dignity"**. It says there are two important misconceptions around euthanasia: that death is usually preceded by serious pain, and that modern medicine seeks to prolong the dying process for as long as possible.

"Society's task is not to eliminate those who suffer, but to find better ways of dealing with their suffering," says Major Stevenson, chair of The Salvation Army's Moral and Social Issues Council.

The Salvation Army believes it is important to communicate by word and deed to the sick, the elderly and the dying that they are worthy of respect, they are loved, and that they will not be abandoned. Full palliative care should be available to anyone with a terminal illness.

"A mature society can learn more about itself and the importance of family and friendship by journeying with those who are dying - no matter how difficult this journey may become," Major Stevenson says. "The dying days of an ill person can be extremely hard on family members and friends, but healing, forgiveness and the celebration of life and love also occur in such times." Debate around voluntary euthanasia needed to consider not only the straightforward but also the worst-case scenarios, he said.

"Removing legal liability from health professionals and family, as Ms Street is signalling she would do, could place these individuals under undue pressure to meet

the expectations raised by such a change. **By offering some the choice to end their life, even with the best of intentions, we may also be removing a choice from others who may consequently feel pressured to choose an 'early exit'.**"

Such a choice could be influenced by the convenience of bringing together family members with busy schedules and limited financial means for a final farewell, or by the desire to more quickly wind up an estate. It could also be influenced by views around the expense of continuing medical or palliative treatment.

As a Christian organisation, The Salvation Army believes in the sanctity of human life. It considers each person to be of immense value, and each life a gift from God to be cherished and cared for throughout all life stages.

Legalising voluntary euthanasia, even in limited form, would see New Zealand take steps towards non-voluntary euthanasia for those of limited mental capacity, says Major Stevenson.

Experience in other jurisdictions highlights the extreme difficulty of drafting law to adequately control the circumstances under which the killing of other human beings is legalised.

The Salvation Army looks forward to examining the proposed legislation carefully and encourages all New Zealanders to do the same.



Embryonic Stem Cell Research

The Minister of Health has recently advised Right to Life that he has decided to decline a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology [ACART] made in 2008 to allow IVF clinics to have "spare" human embryos used for stem cell research. This advice was in response to a further submission from Right to Life made in July opposing the use of these human embryos for research. Right to Life had made four previous submissions to the Minister as well as one submission made to every Member of Parliament.

Right to Life New Zealand in the defence of life was totally opposed to the recommendation as being immoral and a violation of human rights. It was also an appalling exploitation of women who would be asked to give up their children for research and destruction.

It is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception. At the moment of conception the human embryo is endowed by its Creator with human rights, the foundation of these rights is the right to life. These rights are inalienable and cannot be taken away. From conception the human embryo should be accorded the respect that is due to the human person. Human embryos are members of the human family and should be respected and protected. Each one of us began our wondrous life's journey as a human embryo.

Embryonic stem cell research entails the destruction of the human embryo. This is immoral and a violation of the human rights of the human embryo. The human embryo is a unique and unrepeatable miracle of God's loving creation. **The destruction of the human embryo is a violation of the fifth commandment of God, Thou shalt not kill.**

We all have a duty to defend the right to life of every human being. Embryonic stem cell research is part of a culture of death which has given us the killing of innocent and defenceless unborn children by abortion. We should oppose this culture of death and promote a culture of life by respecting and protecting the right to life of every human person from conception to natural death.

ACART contended that the use of so called 'spare embryo's from IVF clinics for embryonic research was justified on the grounds that those embryo's were not required for implantation and would be destroyed.



The end does not justify the means. **The destruction of human persons can never be justified to promote medical research.** ACART also contended that the research would be ethical as the consent of the parents would be required. Right to Life contended that human embryos, human persons are not a commodity owned by the parents. Parents do not have a moral right to give consent to donate their children to medical science for research. To do so would be a grave dereliction of their duty to protect their offspring.

We have had more than ten years of research on embryonic stem cell lines that have produced no medical cures. Right to life applauds ethical research with umbilical cord stem cells and adult stem cells that have produced more than seventy treatments for medical conditions, many more are anticipated. It is suggested that the government encourage ethical medical research in New Zealand using adult stem cells that have very promising results for the cure of serious medical conditions such as paraplegia.

Right to Life is opposed to IVF, the creation of human embryos in a petri dish. Our Society is very pleased with the decision of the Minister in defending life. It is understood that there are an estimated 7000 embryos in storage in IVF clinics in New Zealand. The human embryos are now expected to be destroyed. This too is a violation of the rights of the embryo, who should never have been created in the first instance.

Do you know that Right to Life has run a website for over ten years?

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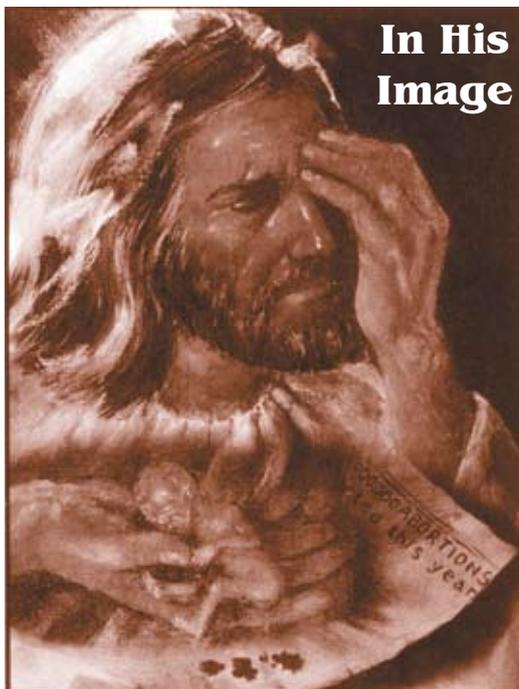
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