

DEADLY TREND

by Chuck Colson; Saturday, March 15, 2008

Sociologist Stefan Timmerman has observed that “Humans in every society studied to date are more likely to be murdered on the day they are born than on any other day of their lives.” Timmerman was quoted recently by bioethicist Wesley J. Smith in the online publication *To the Source*.

Smith rightly claims that while infanticide was commonly accepted in ancient times, only the Jews and the Christians actively opposed it. The strength of their opposition paid off “when infanticide was outlawed by Emperor Valentinian, a Christian, in the 4th century.”

So, as Western culture abandons its Christian roots, we ought not to be surprised that infanticide is making a comeback.

Take a look at what is already happening in the Netherlands. In 2004, doctors from Groningen University Medical Center admitted to killing, or “euthanizing,” to use the euphemism, dying or profoundly disabled babies. That practice came to be known as the Groningen Protocol.

Under those guidelines, not only are dying infants killed, but so are disabled infants who do not even require intensive care. The criteria for euthanizing a baby are subjective: Either the baby is judged to have no chance of survival; may survive after intensive treatment but with a grim future; or endures “suffering [that] is severe, sustained, and cannot be alleviated.” These criteria depend on the doctor’s whim.

So much for the Hippocratic Oath.

By judging which life is valuable or not, doctors are doing precisely what the Nazis did over 60 years ago. The Nazis even had a phrase for this, which translated means “life not worth living” — and not because of the individuals’ suffering, but because of their burden and cost to society.

“As the West loses some of its Biblical moral footing,” writes Smith, “there is a new effort to decriminalize infanticide.” In fact, he asserts, “the notion is ‘positively trendy’.” Most notably, of course, is Princeton Professor Peter Singer who has advocated for some time killing disabled infants. But he is not the only one. When the Groningen Protocol was revealed, others began — not condemning it — but, sadly enough, defending it.

Smith noted a New York Times feature and a New England Journal of Medicine report, both giving credence and sympathy to Dutch infanticide proponents. And now the Hastings Center Report, the most respected journal on bioethics, has published another pro-Groningen Protocol article in which the authors not only “support lethally injecting dying babies, but also those who are disabled.”

“The article assumes that guidelines will protect against abuse,” writes Smith, but, as he points out, “infanticide is by definition abuse.” And, as Smith reminds readers, Dutch euthanasia guidelines for adults and teens have been “violated for decades,” so why should we expect anything different with infanticide guidelines?

“[W]e are moving toward a medical system,” says Smith, “in which babies are put down like dogs and killing is redefined as a caring act.”

But this can happen only in a society that has forgotten that every human life is made in the image of God — and, therefore, worthy of protection.

Think worldviews do not matter? Think our Christian heritage is irrelevant? Too bad we cannot ask the infants of Groningen what they think.

