

BAPTIST MINISTRY SEMINAR – SESSION 3

Death with Dignity: The Big Lie—Part I (I Cor. 6:19, 20)

“The whole reason that Nazi Germany came to be is that some took it upon themselves to choose who would live and who would die.”

--Dr. William J. Brennan, professor at St. Louis Univ.

- I. Euthanasia in the 20th Century
 - A. Euthanasia Defined: The act or practice of causing death painlessly.
 1. The dictionary definition further qualifies euthanasia with the words “...so as to end _____.”
 2. Reality has proven that the practice of euthanasia always reaches beyond the motive of ending “suffering.”
 - B. Hitler’s Advocacy of Euthanasia
 1. Contrary to a popular myth, Adolph Hitler did not claim any allegiance to _____.
 - a. Hitler stated, “The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity’s illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew.”
 - b. William Shirer, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, said, “...the Nazi regime intended eventually to destroy Christianity in Germany, if it could, and substitute the old paganism of the early Germanic gods and the new paganism of Nazi extremists.”
 - c. In German churches, the Bible was replaced with Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and the cross with the swastika.
 2. Prior to Hitler’s Holocaust, Germany had instituted a _____ euthanasia program.
 - a. Prior to Hitler, Germany had been adversely influenced by a philosopher named Hegel. A primary premise of his philosophy may be summarized in the phrase, “what is useful is _____.” Thus, utilitarianism—not God’s law—became the standard of the day.
 - b. Dr. C Everett Koop, surgeon general under President Reagan, wrote,

Medical science in Germany collaborated with this Hegelian trend, particularly in the following enterprises: the mass extermination of the chronically sick in the interest of saving “useless” expenses to the community as a whole; the mass extermination of those considered socially disturbing or racially and ideologically unwanted; the individual, the inconspicuous extermination of those considered disloyal to the ruling group; and the ruthless use of human experimental material in medical military research. Remember, physicians took part in this planning.

c. Malcolm Muggeridge, a British philosopher, wrote,

Initially, the holocaust was aimed, not against Jews or Slavs, but against handicapped Aryan Germans, and was justified, not by racial theories, but by Hegelian utilitarianism, whereby what is useful is per se good, without any consideration being given to Judeo-Christian values, or, indeed to any concept whatsoever of good and evil. Subsequently, of course, the numbers of the killed rose to astronomical figures, and the medical basis for their slaughter grew even flimsier; but it should never be forgotten that it was the euthanasia program first organized under the Weimar Republic by the medical profession, which led to and merged into the genocide program of 1941-45.

d. In summary, Dr. Koop states, "...when the first 273,000 German aged, infirm, and retarded were killed in gas chambers, there was no outcry from that medical profession either, and it was not far from there to Auschwitz."

3. Dr. Leo Alexander, who assisted the American counsel at the Nuremberg tribunal, states from evidence provided at the proceedings,

Whatever proportion these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in the emphasis in the basic attitudes of the physicians. It started with the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived. This attitude in its early stages concerned itself merely with the severely and chronically sick. Gradually the sphere of those to be included in this category was enlarged to encompass the socially unproductive, the ideologically unwanted, and racially unwanted, and finally, all non-Germans. But it is important to realize that the infinitely small, wedged-in lever from which the entire trend of mind received its impetus was the attitude towards the non-rehabilitable sick.

C. Semantics: Groundwork for the Holocaust

1. A book entitled *Permitting the Destruction of Unworthy Life* (1920) by Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche aided in the cheapening of human life in Germany. These men employed a litany of terms designed dehumanize the victims of euthanasia:

"incurable idiots," "monstrous births," "mentally dead," "empty human shells," "defective people," "valueless lives," and "lives not worth living"

2. In 1923 Hitler declared, "Jews are undoubtedly a race, but not _____." By 1936 the German Supreme Court refused to "recognize Jews...as 'persons' in the legal sense."

3. In contemporary America both the abortion industry and euthanasia advocates are developing a death-speak designed to be palatable to the public.

1. Abortionists call unborn babies "tissue," or "POC"—product of conception.
2. Euthanasia advocates speak of "quality of life," and "death with dignity."

