

Life in the news

Woman unwittingly agrees to be starved to death

A woman is being starved to death with the permission of Louisiana courts because she signed a living will. Doris Smith, 89, suffered a stroke that left her incapacitated. Her daughter insists that she did not know that the words "life-sustaining procedures" in the living will she signed included food and fluids. Her daughter says that her mother never intended to approve her own starvation.

(*LifeSiteNews.com*, August 23, 2004)

China seeks girl babies

A long period of forced abortions in China has resulted in a serious gender imbalance. Families limited to one child have favored boys over girls. The result is that today, according to the Chinese government, about 117 boys are born for every 100 girls. In most countries, the numbers are approximately equal.

China has decided to offer free schooling and better housing for families with girls. Those families also will be given preferential treatment in welfare allowances and employment. Chinese family planning officials call their program Care for Girls.

Stephen Mosher, who first reported the scandal of China's coercive one child-policy, after traveling as a student in China, says, "Since the beginning of the one-child policy in 1981, well over a hundred million baby girls in China have died by abortion, infanticide, abandonment, and neglect."

The gender imbalance has created a "bachelor society" where men are having problems finding wives. (From "China Offers Families Money to Have Girl Babies Instead of Abortions," by Steven Ertelt, *LifeNews.com*, August 12, 2004.)

A better solution than abortion for mental impairment

U.S. and Swiss researchers have located a gene which is responsible

for mental impairment. While their work is in the earliest stages, they are exploring the possibility of developing a drug that could be used to reactivate the part of the brain affected by Down's Syndrome.

(*BBC News*, August 20, 2004)

Second federal judge strikes down partial-birth abortion ban

After President Bush signed legislation in November 2003 banning partial-birth abortion (following the third Congressional vote to approve the ban), abortion rights groups immediately pursued suits against the ban in federal courts of three states. In August, New York Federal District Judge Richard Casey ruled against the ban stating that the law does not allow for a health exception. Lawyer Jay Sekulow commented that "this ruling represents only the beginning of a lengthy legal process that will end at the Supreme Court."

The current position of the PC(USA) on late term abortion makes it likely that the Washington Office and the Stated Clerk's Office will be active in lobbying for partial-birth abortion when it reaches the Supreme Court.

Unintended consequences of living wills

Oregon is the only U.S. state that has made assisted-suicide legal. Columnist Maggie Gallagher writes of the possible unintended consequences of what is touted as an individual freedom to control one's own destiny.

Where assisted suicide is legal, says Gallagher, it is regarded as both normal and moral. When options for care for the elderly are being considered, it becomes a proper consideration. In fact, failing to bring it into the discussion may be regarded as prejudicial.

However, considering assisted suicide as a legitimate option sends a message to elderly patients and loved ones that they are worthless. Oregon physician Kenneth Stephens reported his own wife's reaction when her doctor

offered her an overdose of drugs as an option for dealing with her cancer. "He wants me to kill myself," she told her husband. She was devastated by the suggestion.

Gallagher writes, "What Oregon's suicide laws actually do is convey social approval to individuals contemplating self-destruction, and to their friends and relatives." They give the decision "to self-destruct a quasi-medical veneer."

(From "Euthanasia Tells Elderly, Disabled: 'Your Life is Worthless,'" by Maggie Gallagher, June 5, 2004)

"A lready we hear openly advocated the murder of the unborn, the sick, the suffering, and the old, as well as self-murder. Free love has not only its advocates, but its avowed votaries, and a hatred of marriage and the family is one of the sentiments common to those political enthusiasts who claim for themselves, par excellence, the title of 'advanced.'

"When such views come to be mastered and accepted by many of those who adopt the religious system here sketched, they will doubtless powerfully reinforce, but also strongly affect the religious system itself—possibly even its ritualistic expression. Thus the revived paganism of the future may be as calculated to startle the rationalist of today fully as much as the revived paganism of today would have startled a reformer of the time of Luther."

- Written in 1876: *Contemporary Evolution: An Essay on Some Recent Social Changes*, by St. George Mivart, English biologist.