

## A Final Dignity?

Anyone who has had a pet has, undoubtedly, had to make a very hard decision at some point or another regarding the end of life. Usually this happens when our pet has a disease, or has gotten very old, and the question has to be asked, what quality of life is there? Are we causing more suffering by keeping our pet alive? When I was younger, my family had a dog named Natasha. She was a beautiful dog, a German Shepherd/Border Collie mix, and aside from being a very pretty dog, she was one of the friendliest animals I have ever known. When she was middle aged she was diagnosed with hip dysplasia, a very nasty condition that caused her to lose the ability to walk. The worst part was, aside from her back legs losing the ability to function, she was perfectly fine. Yet, it was clear that she was losing her quality of life, as she was constantly embarrassed when she would have an accident, and by our frustrations. It truly was sad, but we made the decision to say goodbye to our beloved pet far sooner than we were expecting to.

When it comes to pets, unfortunately such decisions are a part of the process. They aren't decisions that anyone wants to make, but they are, at times, necessary, simply due to compassion and mercy. Now, it makes sense when it comes to animals, to want to alleviate their suffering, if possible, but what about when it comes to humans? Do the same standards apply? It may seem like a strange question to ask, and yet, in the west, Europe, Canada, and the United States, this is a debate that has been ongoing for a few decades. In fact the Swiss company, Dignitas, has been performing "physician-assisted suicide" since 1998 for those with terminal illness, or severe physical or mental illness. In Canada, something rather grim has taken place just in the past few years. In 2016 Canada began the Medical Assistance in Dying Program, also known as MAiD, for those whose death was reasonably foreseeable due to terminal illness or severe physical injury. However, in 2022, the law was expanded by Bill C-7 "Broadening the law to permit

MAID for persons whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable would promote the liberty and security of the person interests of individuals who seek MAID as a response to a grievous and irremediable illness.”<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the requirement which demands that one’s death be reasonably foreseeable has been repealed, meaning that it is no longer a requirement for death to be imminent to receive medically assisted suicide.

In 2016, MAiD was responsible for 1,018 deaths. In 2022 MAiD was responsible for 13,241 deaths, 3.5% of which were situations where natural death was not reasonably foreseeable<sup>2</sup>. I don’t think it’s out of line to say that this is horrifying. How many other restrictions are going to be removed? How long will it be before it turns into something far more sinister for the sake of climate control, maintaining a reasonable population, or ensuring of high living standards? How long before this becomes the standard practice in the United States? There are already ten jurisdictions in the United States where assisted suicide is legal, those being Washington D.C., California, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, New Mexico, Maine, New Jersey, Hawaii, and Washington. The argument is made that it is a matter of dignity, to die when you’re ready, as opposed to suffering through terminal illness and subjecting your family to the pain of watching you die. However, this argument is a weak excuse. The truth is, this is evil. It is absolutely a violation of the fifth commandment, “you shall not murder”, and it is an abomination in the sight of God.

I think, at the heart of this problem, is the fact that our culture no longer values life in the same way that it used to. Abortion is birth control, young people getting married are less and less likely to have children, and more and more likely to raise pets instead. We constantly see how we

---

<sup>1</sup>Bill C-7: An Act to amend the Criminal Code - <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/pl/charter-charte/c7.html>

<sup>2</sup> Fourth annual report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada 2022 - [https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2022.html#chart\\_3.1](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2022.html#chart_3.1)

hate our own species because we burn fossil fuels and eat hamburgers. It truly is an identity crisis, and at its heart, it hates what the scriptures say about life. God formed us from the dust of the ground. (Gen. 2:7) That gives us value. God commanded humanity to be fruitful and multiply, implying that we are not to die out as a species, but rather we are to continue, we are to endure, and God, through His grace, would continuously care for His creation. This is all contrary to the narratives that we hear regarding humanity, that we are a virus, a disease that plagues the earth and sucks all the life from it. With such a mindset, is it any wonder that assisted suicide is seen by many as practical and perhaps even good?

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are the craftsmanship of God's own hands (Psalm 139:13-14). God has given us dominion over the earth and all that is in it, and He has made man in His own image. (Gen. 1:26-28) That means that we are special, we are above the animals, we are above any other creation on the earth. To see humanity treat the gift that is life with such irreverence, with such a casual lack of importance is beyond disturbing. We, as Christians, have a duty to remind those around us of just how precious our lives are, especially since they were bought with the holy, innocent blood of Christ. The reality is, our bodies are not our own. Paul writes, **"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."** (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

We need to trust that God works in His own time for our good. (Job 1:21, Eccles. 3:1, Eccles. 7:17, Rom. 8:28) Not only that, but we need to be aware of our surroundings. We need to be aware when bills are introduced in our local legislatures or propositions are added to our ballots that seek to legalize assisted suicide in our state. I believe this is a fight that is coming. As more and more hysteria is fostered about subjects like climate change, overpopulation, or food

shortages, I think assisted suicide will be seen by many as a dark solution to such things. We also, as Christians, need to continuously remind people that life is precious, that each and every one of us has been bought with a price, that Christ has paid for our sins in full, and that gives our lives value far above anything we can comprehend.