Clintoncare? Not on your life

by Dexter Duggan

Although various medical treatments would be rationed if Clintoncare becomes law, one type of medicine seems sure to flow in copious doses: castor oil.

Our arms pinned to our sides by Nurse Billary, Dr. Political Correctness pinches our noses and spoons down what we don't want, but he's sure is good for us.

What else would we expect from an administration aggressively imposing its values across the board, from whipsawing loggers to stretching the credibility of condoms?

Under the headline "Pulling the Plug," writer Michael Kramer had noted in the October 4, 1993, *Time* that Hillary Clinton would be informing her husband, ". . .we're going to have a living will." Kramer explained: "The Clintons' true goal is the most ambitious of all, a change in the culture of dying. 'That's why Hillary's talking up living wills and advance directives,' says an administration official. 'She hopes to spur others to get comfortable with pulling the plug.'"

The following month, my state's largest newspaper, *The Arizona Republic*, tucked away a small Associated Press story quoting Bill Clinton that living wills are "one way to weed out" what the AP described as "some questionable health-care costs." Clinton recommended living wills.

If *that's* what living wills are good for, helping to cut health-plan spending, then Jack Kevorkian should be full of even better suggestions for the Clintons. A living will used to be an exercise of personal medical autonomy; now it's a way to fill your coffin while keeping U.S. Treasury coffers fuller.

As counterpoint, Julie Grimstad, executive director of the Center for the Rights of the Terminally Ill Inc., wrote in the March 20 *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national Catholic newspaper: "Cost constraints will lead to government-sanctioned and -encouraged, and possibly even-coerced, assisted suicide and euthanasia. Dead people don't use up 'scarce' health-care dollars. . . . Committees and bureaucrats will write health-care guidelines; and physicians, in order to get paid, will follow those guidelines, serving the interests of government, not the interests of their patients."

My active mother, Catherine G. Duggan, turned 88 in March. She was almost 40 when I was born, and nearly two years older when her daughter, Mary, my sister, arrived. One medical specialist recently evaluated Mom as "remarkably well-preserved." (Excuse the ageism!)

Mom is a religious person prepared to face death, but she's not likely to meet her Maker too soon. And she's hardly ready for some Clintoncare bureaucrat to deprive her of medical attention because of an arbitrary age criterion. Her own mother, who was born in pioneer Arkansas, lived to be 103. Mom, also an Arkansas native, has a recurring remark about our Little Rock president: "Why can't they get rid of him?" Should Bill do her the courtesy of exercising his living will, as Hillary wishes Mom would do?

Twenty-three years ago, long before Dr. Kevorkian hit the trail with his hearse-filling roadshow, and more than a year and a half before the U.S. Supreme Court suddenly discovered the previously unknown "fundamental constitutional right" to permissive abortion, Charles F. Magistro, a Unitarian minister, wrote prophetic words in the May 4, 1971, *National Review* magazine: "Government may very well determine, in the not-too-distant future, who will live and who will die. . . "

"What could bring about this state of affairs? Two things: the abolition of all laws pertaining to abortion and the establishment of a national health-care program. The convergence of these two thrusts will, in all probability, be the basis of the state's power over life and death."

Magistro continued: "To institutionalize medicine is to make the doctor an agent of the state; and to make the doctor an agent of the state is to make him an instrument of political power. This is already the case in the Soviet Union. . . . Will there be any meaningful way to prevent the state from using abortion and euthanasia as a means of population control?"

Returning to 1994, we see that among the enthusiasms of the Clinton administration are environmental extremism (an enthusiasm that often disdains what it regards as excessive human life), a rigid population-control mentality determined to dictate birth rates around the world, and a Planned Parenthood outlook trying to rule over our land. Plus the goal of spurring us into the pull-the-plug comfort zone. If the IRS gives you a pain now, wait till its kin can rule on whether to pay to heal your pains.

The majority of us, who aren't utopian ideologues, have trouble grasping the extent of the ideologues' contempt for the "excess" or "unwanted" life. During the Clintoncare debate, I have repeatedly thought back to a 1992 occurrence. Phoenix's *New Times*, a liberal-libertarian alternative weekly, had printed an article sympathetic to the Chinese who were suffering under Beijing's "one-child" program of forced abortion and sterilization. Liberal Editor Michael Lacey denounced Communist officials as "ruthless environmentalists" and "[r]adical eco-bureaucrats," "government brutes and medical stooges" practicing "draconian zealotry" and "planned parenthood gone insane."

Figuring this article would draw only mail agreeing with Lacey's position, I was surprised at the reaction of four writers of letters to the editor. Their sympathy was with Beijing's government zealots. If the time ever comes to hire ruthless Clintoncare bureaucrats, such potential employees are out there, writing letters to the editor today.

One letter-writer, lauding the forced-abortionists' enlightened endeavor, criticized the "qualms" of the "selfishly antagonistic." Another writer said the country's growth rate "made it very difficult for China to succeed in educating the population or providing adequate health care. Since the people are not wealthy enough to see the benefit of having fewer children, the government did what it's done in every other aspect of life — tried to control human behavior."

How dare the peasants make it harder for the totalitarian government to award them its health care! They wanted a baby, Doc Politics ordered castor oil. If Bill says swallow, we'd better go, "Gulp!" ■

The author's mother, Catherine Duggan, could face a bureaucratic decision to deprive her of medical care under Clintoncare.

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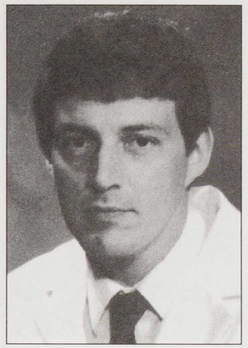
Careful to condemn

by Chris Kahlenborn, M.D.



Reverend Paul Hill's protection of the unborn, via the slaying of an abortionist and his escort drew almost unanimous condemnation from nearly every major pro-life group within the United States. I cannot fully condone the use of deadly force, for in order to do so—and not be a hypocrite—I would have to be willing to use such force; this is not something I wish to do. However, I think it is a mistake to quickly condemn the use of force unless one is *sure* that such a use is morally wrong. Before one claims that he or she is sure that the use of force is either right or wrong, I ask you, the reader, to patiently listen to my short argument, after which perhaps you may not be as willing to wholly condemn the use of force to protect the unborn. Consider the following case scenarios and follow them through to the end, please.

1) Imagine that you have just become the father, the mother, the aunt or the uncle of a beautiful baby boy or girl. Your baby is doing well, but because he or she was born prematurely at almost 24 weeks of age, he or she is in a neonatal intensive care unit; your baby is making progress but there is still a long road ahead. Now imagine that a crazed gunman has sent a note to the police stating that he is located in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and for an unknown reason, he intends to shoot and kill all of the tiny babies in the NICU with a machine gun that he currently has aimed at the babies. Now you overhear the chief of police speaking with the mayor and he notes that the gunman's letter states that he plans to begin shooting at 12 noon. It's currently 11:59 a.m. The chief mentions to the mayor that his sharp shooters will almost certainly be able to kill the gunman if they shoot within the next 4 seconds. My question to you is: Would you agree with the killing of the crazed gunman if this were the only way to save your baby at this particular point in time? (Please answer yes or no. If you answered yes, keep going; if you answered no, and are serious, send me your answer (I'll probably have a hard time believing you). If you answered neither yes or no, read no further, for you have to be able to make a yes/no decision in order to logically continue through this (that's my way of saying you're copping out).

#2) Let's change the scenario. Now imagine another set of circumstances. Suppose a mother just gave birth to a 23 and a-half week old child who is in the NICU. For some bizarre reason she does not want the child and decides to hire a trained assassin to kill her child. Now imagine that the assassin is about to fire at the child but again the SWAT team has its sharp shooters ready to kill the assassin at any moment. Now it's 11:59 a.m. again. You overhear the mayor and the chief of police having the identical conversation as above. Would you agree or disagree with the killing of the assassin if this were the only way to stop him in this situation? (Go on reading if you agree, send me your response if you disagree.) (At this point, I think even most pro abortion people would still be reading along.) (Also, on an additional note, would you agree that the mother should be prosecuted?)

#3) Imagine a slightly different scenario. You live in a country prior to 1973, a country in which abortion is illegal (sounds strange doesn't it?). You live in a little town named Kettering in which an infamous abortionist named Martin Haskell (Haskilled) performs his D & X abortion on babies up to 24 weeks old—a procedure in which he turns around the unborn child within the womb, delivers all of the body except the head, and then proceeds to puncture the (nearly completely delivered) child's skull with a metal stylet and literally remove the child's brain via a powerful suction machine, before delivering the rest of the unborn child. Now a mother comes to Mr. Haskilled (title of "doctor" not applicable) in the middle of the night and offers him $750 to kill her 24 week-old unborn child. The chief of police finds out about this illegal activity and arrives at the abortion building with a SWAT team. The abortionist states that he will not give up and is determined to perform the abortion. The SWAT team bursts into the "operating room" just as Mr. Haskilled is about to pierce the baby's skull with the stainless steel stylet. The leader of the SWAT team tells Mr. Haskilled to drop the weapon, but he refuses and states that he will not be stopped. Now, if you are the leader of the SWAT team and note that abortionist Haskilled picks up the stylet—at the same time stating that he will not be stopped—and starts moving it towards the back of the babies head, do you think that you would be justified in shooting the abortionist? (If yes, keep going, if no, and you agreed with #2, please note what you just did. In each case a mother paid a hired killer to destroy her child. In each case the baby would be capable of surviving. In each case, it was illegal to kill the child. In each case our Lord's creation is on the verge of being murdered.)

4) Let's extend the argument to today's environment. Assume that Mr. or Mrs. "A" states that he or she is willing to use deadly force on any abortionist who kills unborn children after the 22nd week of conception. Mr. "A" tells you that: "The only difference between the current situation and that in example #3 is that today our law condones the killing of 24 week-old unborn children. The question is not whether or not you would use force in certain situations, for if you answered yes to example 1, 2, or 3 you have already answered that. The question is, does God want us to employ the use of force to protect the unborn children?" This is a difficult question, especially if one believes that the ultimate Christian should be willing to die for his or her faith in Christ.

What then is my conclusion? In all honesty my answer is: "I do not know." Although this answer appears weak, it is precisely the reason why I wrote this paper. On such a question one cannot act on one's beliefs until one is certain that our Lord calls us to do so. If one is unsure about the use of force, then one ought not to endorse it, for if we endorse, we might find ourselves called to apply our endorsement. On a similar note, we ought to be just as careful not to condemn the use of force unless we are sure that God calls us to condemn. It's easy to preach pacivity when the army is overseas — it's more

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