

Psychologist views sides of euthanasia, abortion issues

The controversy over such issues as euthanasia and abortion, which involve choices between sustaining and ending life, stems from ethical and religious differences in defining human life, a Lincoln psychologist said Thursday.

In an address at Union College, Paul Cameron said the United States is witnessing "a movement that argues for quality of life and not the sheer existence of human life."

Cameron said there have been problems in treating the sick and injured throughout the ages. Even though modern science now has the ability to save those who, under similar circumstances in earlier times, would have died, society has certain "choice points" concerning their treatment.

The initial dispute is over defining the term "Human life," he said.

"It just means a lot of different things," Cameron said there is no doubt that a fetus is alive. From a human sense, it has humanness.

Fetus is personless

But on the other hand, he said, it is clear the fetus is without personhood.

He defined personhood as "someone who has enough social currency to be fully responsible for what they are and do."

Humanhood, he said, starts at conception and ends at death, whereas personhood starts at birth but doesn't mature until one is a legal adult. Personhood will most likely deteriorate as one grows older and will be lost if an individual becomes senile.

"Protecting humanhood would be far more expensive and time consuming than protecting personhood," Cameron said.

The issue should be viewed as man's relationship to God versus man's relation-

ship to man, he said.

The two factions in the argument debate over what background will be used to formulate the ethics for regulating social order, he said.

One side is composed of the Judeo-Christian block, while the other emulates from the 1973 release of the Humanist II Manifesto.

Cameron said the Judeo-Christians subscribe to basic Biblical beliefs in defining and regulating social life and order, and the humanists believe there is no God and favor preserving the right to die with dignity, abortion, divorce, euthanasia and suicide.

Rights not basic

The humanists' position that these rights are basic is incorrect, he said.

Human rights are not built into the human, but have to be decided upon. He gave some examples of how the decision could be made.

The United States could be divided in half, one side given to the Christians and the other to the humanists. In 20 years, a random sample could be taken to see which side is doing better.

Another way, he said, would be to take a random sample of the quality of life each side depicts and let the results decide. The side with superior results would be endorsed as the standard to be used in mandating ethics, he said.

He said the data accumulated from both sides of the argument indicates that the Judeo-Christian ethic results in a far superior lifestyle regarding quality and quantity of life.

Cameron cited several cases to support the Judeo-Christian ethic. In one, a Utah man, who was considered clinically dead after receiving no oxygen for 45 minutes, was revived after hours of attempts.

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Wheel tax...

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share as long as everybody else pays theirs. Thomas said there will be no distinction between part- and full-time employment.

The person will pay the wheel tax at the County-City building, 10th and J streets, and be given a sticker to place in the left rear window of their vehicle, Thomas said.

"I know that this is not a popular ordinance, but I want to emphasize a couple of things," Thomas said. "The university cannot be a bastion unto itself."

Thomas said Lincoln students have the advantage of using the city's streets and should be willing to help pay for them.

"Another thing is that this tax will only be assessed to students who are employed," Thomas said. The wheel tax proposal will be the subject of a hearing at the County-City building on Nov. 9.

Thomas said enforcement of the wheel tax would be through selective spot checks by the Lincoln police. The fine, according to the proposed statute, would be between \$25 and \$100.

"We anticipate having a very major public informational effort in January and February. After that, selective enforcement begins," Thomas said.

GLC Chairperson Nette Nelson said the wheel tax would not make the situation more fair.

"I'm very concerned about the premise that the voters of the city feel the situation is inequitable," she said. Nelson said the ordinance was filled with inherent inequities.

"I'm a little taken aback by what is being proposed. I don't think it relates very well to the interim kinds of employment that students generally have. A student who works two weeks in the year may have to pay the same thing as a Lincoln resident who works the entire year. It's a disincentive to students to get employment."

The GLC is making the wheel tax a major concern, Nelson said. She noted that representatives from Nebraska Wesleyan University and Union College were at the meeting.

"What we're doing right now is a communication effort," Nelson said. "We're trying to alert as many students as possible to the proposal."

Nelson said the wheel tax will be a subject of discussion at the next GLC informational breakfast, with City Council member Eric Youngberg, at 7:30 a.m. Nov. 3 in the Nebraska Union. Nelson said all interested persons are welcome to attend, and asked that they make reservations with the GLC by Nov. 2.

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