



editorial:

The fear of death

*'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death'
(1 Corinthians 15:26)*

Friendly critics of *Triple Helix* are apt to chide us that we give too much space to the debate about euthanasia. 'Healthcare bristles with issues for discussion and debate', they say. 'Why give this one so much space?'

Our first response, always, is that euthanasia is a 'defining issue'. If the euthanasia debate were lost, the whole edifice of healthcare, as it has been practised in the West for centuries, would be totally undermined. To open the door to euthanasia would be to concede there is nothing in essence that distinguishes the human species from the animal kingdom.

But there is an even deeper reason. At the heart of the clamour for euthanasia is a very-human fear of death. Death has taken the place of sex as our chief taboo topic. We avoid talk about it. We have banished it from our homes.

But this is a fear that cries out to be informed by the radically different way of thinking. The New Testament tells us that a death has taken place that transforms everything we can know or even think about death. The claim is that in the death of Jesus Christ, something incredible happened: the immortal God tasted death and in doing so destroyed death.

So Christians do not accept that death is the end. Nor, even, can they regard it as 'the ultimate healing'. The Bible's claim is far more radical. With the death of Christ, death is itself abolished, and with it all the fears of the unknown it represents.

If we put our trust in Jesus, we can face impending death with a certain hope that in that moment, God will take care of us in just the same way as he took care of Jesus nearly two millennia ago.

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