

Girl's life saved in an operation that Gov. Lamm said was 'too expensive'

by Nick Benton

Despite Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm's best efforts to tell her to "drop dead," a 13-year-old girl is fully recovering and preparing for a long, normal life following a liver transplant operation in Pittsburgh last month.

Governor Lamm, who shocked the world last spring with his statements that "the elderly have a duty to die," proved his Nazi-style comments were not reserved for the elderly alone when he threatened to withhold state funds from young Julie Chamberlain when the transplant operation was the only chance to save her life.

While Chamberlain lay in critical condition last month, Lamm held a press conference to announce that "the taxpayers of this state can't justify putting their money into an operation that the doctors tell us has a limited possibility of success."

This despite the fact that doctors for the 13-year-old insisted she had a 60-80% chance of survival with the transplant. Lacking private insurance, the girl's operation would have had to have come out of state and federal funds, at a cost of \$100,000.

As if to tell Lamm that life is worth more than \$100,000, the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh decided to waive the fee and performed the operation. The surgeon was Dr. Thomas Starzl, who pioneered liver transplant surgery while at the University of Colorado, before funding cuts under Governor Lamm forced him to leave the state.

The operation was a success: The girl has recovered fully.

Cover-Up

Reports of Lamm's press conference were quickly covered up. No mention of it has been made since, including on an hour-long interview of Lamm on the nationally broadcast Donahue show Nov. 11. Leakage of what Lamm said—given the girl's subsequent operation and recovery—threatened to discredit the governor's crusade to make euthanasia a nationally respectable policy.

At the October press conference, Lamm had attacked the Reagan administration for "sanctimoniously" offering to foot half the cost for the girl's operation, conditional upon the state pitching in its share. "The overall question is, in a world full of sympathetic stories, how many transplants can we afford, and who is going to pay for them?" he added. "You simply have to have some guidelines on how you choose who gets a limited resource."

While his remarks on the Chamberlain case have been hushed up, Lamm has not relented in his insistence that balanced budgets must come before human life. On the Donahue show, he pinned the blame on God and technology for the "necessity" of implementing the same policies of euthanasia that sent Nazis to the gallows following the Nuremberg trials.

He failed to mention that it is the major insurance companies, and their financial controllers—as well as his own opposition to nuclear power and general technological progress—which are responsible for both the budget deficits and the promotion of euthanasia.

Lamm has become a leading light in an effort by these financial interests to convince the population of the United States to prefer suicide, literally, to fighting high interest rates and related usurious practices.

Lamm is currently working with the regrettable Marshall McLuhan, famous for the slogan "The medium is the message," in hammering out techniques for this brainwashing method in a course the governor teaches as a sideline, titled "Tough Choices," at the University of Colorado.

The effectiveness of Lamm's method with the American population illustrates how Jim Jones was able to lead 900 people to commit suicide at Jonestown.

Lamm: Men are beasts

Lamm starts with the premise of the hedonistic principle of Jeremy Bentham—that all human behavior is reducible to

the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In this case, he identifies two different kinds of pain involved that the population will seek to avoid.

First is the pain associated with dying from a degenerative disease. The genuinely anguished emotions of people for the suffering of their dying loved ones, as well as the pain experienced by the dying persons themselves, make all those involved in such an experience eager to seek an alternative to the suffering.

Rather than being seen as unavoidable, and part—if an unfortunate and unpleasant part—of the bigger fight for cure motivated by an uncompromising commitment to life, the pain suffered in dying is exploited by Lamm to serve a different aim entirely—the justification for abandoning the nation's moral commitment to the sanctity of life in an effort to destroy the nation's commitment to improved health care.

What does relieving the pain of dying have to do with withholding funds for a life-saving operation for a 13-year-old girl? Obviously, nothing! The pain of the one is being exploited to justify the withholding of the other.

Second is the pain associated with having to combat evil. People tend to be like cattle walking to the slaughterhouse who prefer being gently nudged along to being rudely aroused by someone alarming them of an impending disaster, Lamm asserts. Further, in the desire to flee from the burden of responsibility for combatting evil, people will grasp at any opportunity to perceive that which is evil as good, and then will tend to vehemently insist on its goodness.

Lamm achieves this result by declaring that those who attack his pro-Nazi policies “misquote” or “misunderstand” him. He presents himself as the victim. “I’m just trying to be practical. I’m so misunderstood,” he laments, and the public breathes a big sigh of relief, and begins to embrace him and agree with him.

This occurred on the Donahue show. A studio audience not predisposed to support Lamm at the opening of the show became a near-riotous mob in his defense by its end. The incident occurred when one of Lamm's critics, Dr. Mark Siegler of the Center for Clinical Medical Ethics, made the only comprehensive, if meek, criticism of Lamm on the whole show. Siegler remarked that he felt Lamm's rabid assertions that there are too many “hospital beds, doctors, malpractice suits, laboratory tests and machines” was “irrational.”

“It is wrong to attack technology,” Dr. Siegler said. “It is irrational to link the duty to die with cost factors. The elderly are the victims of cost inflation, not the cause of it.”

At that moment, Lamm raised his voice in self-righteous, pained indignation, and the audience almost ate Dr. Siegler alive for daring to call Lamm's good intentions into question!

The fight for life

To defeat the evil that Lamm represents requires attacking the evil premise of his approach—the Benthamite plea-

sure-pain principle—with the real basis of human morality, the Genesis injunction to “be fruitful and multiply” and the related principles of natural law underlying the U.S. Constitution.

The issue of euthanasia can never be determined from the standpoint of the pain suffered by the individual facing death or the anguish of that individual's loved ones. The uncompromising fight for life is the only true motivation for relentless advance in the conquest of disease and suffering, and is the only valid, trustworthy morality a man can have. (Donahue's only worthwhile remark on his Nov. 11 broadcast came when he turned to a nurse on the panel with Lamm who had pulled the plug on a patient, and said to him, “I'll admit one thing for sure, I wouldn't want you as my nurse.” That is, an advocate of euthanasia can never be trusted with any man's life.)

Life is not “a terminal illness” nor is God the “author of death,” as Lamm cynically asserts, attempting to shift the blame from himself, his sponsors and his outlook, to God.

St. Augustine makes it clear in his *City of God* that death is unnatural, a condition of man by virtue of man's free will, and not a creation of God. He adds that there is an absolute distinction between life and death. Do not, Augustine says,

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confuse a “dying” man with a “dead” one. A dying man, he insists, is a living man, and he will remain a living man until the moment of his actual death. Life is a gift of God, and, as such, it is the absolute opposite of death, the unnatural consequence of man's condition. No man is moral who does not fight with all his strength to overcome one on behalf of the other, and if he succumbs in the fight, he nonetheless triumphs to that degree.

It is, in fact, the conquest over death—of man's condition as exemplified by it—which is the subject of Judeo-Christian tradition. Love, deploying reason, defeats death and its effects through striving for advances in science, technology, medicine, and institutions of political freedom.

It is these notions that Lamm hates and is seeking to destroy. Mankind must not seek refuge from the merchants of death, and thereby allow them reign over the entire world. Mankind's only destiny can be to rise up, fight, and defeat them.