

Bioethics

Cultural shift throughout Europe has led to Judeo-Christian values being jettisoned and an atheist worldview and secular humanist values increasingly imposed. The toxic cocktail of scientific materialism, consumerism, moral relativism and radical autonomy has opened the lid of a Pandora's box of new biotechnologies including artificial reproduction, pre-implantation diagnosis, embryonic stem cell research and animal-human hybrids. In addition economic recession and demographic shift provide a serious threat to vulnerable people (those who are disabled, elderly, sick or unborn) through legalised euthanasia and abortion whilst there are pressures on Christian healthcare professionals who are forced to conform as part of their 'public duty'. These threats will increase in the coming decade. This roundtable discussion will explore Christian responses on these complex issues. Peter Saunders will moderate and joining the discussion will be Michael Egnor and David Fieldsend.

Peter Saunders was born in New Zealand and originally trained as a general surgeon before serving with the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya and completing two years mission training at All Nations Christian College in the UK. Since 1992 he has served full-time with Christian Medical Fellowship, a UK-based organisation with 4,500 UK doctors and 1,000 medical students as members, first as Head of Student Ministries, and since 1999 as Chief Executive. His current work involves leadership training, teaching evangelism and ethics, medical mission, writing, editing, and media work. He has been a member of the ICMDA (International Christian Medical and Dental Association) Board since 2003 and is also Campaign Director of the Care Not Killing Alliance, a coalition of over 40 organisations in the UK promoting palliative care and opposing euthanasia. His wife Kirsty is a community pediatrician and they have three sons, Christopher, Benjamin and Jonathan. They are members of Spicer Street Church, St Albans. www.cmf.org.uk; www.carenokilling.org.uk; <http://pjsaunders.blogspot.com/>

Michael Egnor is a pediatric neurosurgeon and is professor and vice-chairman of neurosurgery at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He trained in medicine at Columbia University, and in neurosurgery at the University of Miami. He teaches on the faculty of the medical school at Stony Brook. He conducts research on blood and spinal fluid flow in the brain, and has published and lectured extensively on his basic science research in the United States and Europe. He has also written extensively on philosophy of the mind, and debated fellow neurological specialists on the metaphysical issues in the mind-brain relationship. He is actively involved in pro-life work as well, organizing and lecturing in the United States in support of the right to life from conception to natural death.

David Fieldsend is a co-leader of the European Politics and Society Network, and is the Manager of CARE for Europe, promoting Christian values in public policy discussion at the European Institutions concentrating on bioethics and family policy. He gained his first degree (town planning) from Newcastle University, holds a diploma in theological studies (Trinity, Bristol), and in 2009 was awarded a European Masters degree in bioethics. He spent many years as a planning specialist in local government in the UK (including a secondment advising the Sudanese Government). He stood as a British Parliamentary Candidate in 1983 for the constituency of Falmouth-Camborne. He is married to Anne; they have three adult children and three grandchildren. He is a licensed Reader in the Church of England and member of the diocesan synod for Europe.