

# Life Is Precious in All Stages

by Rolaant McKenzie



January 21, 2025

In the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode, *Half a Life* (Season 4, Episode 22, 5/6/1991), the USS *Enterprise* is sent to Kaelon II to assist Dr. Timicin with an experiment that showed great promise in leading to the salvation of his world from the impending demise of its sun. It was transforming from a yellow dwarf to a red giant, and it was expected to destroy Kaelon II within a few decades.

Generations of Kaelon scientists had researched various ways to rejuvenate the life of their sun without success. However, Timicin, who had devoted his life to resolving this danger to his world, had advanced in research knowledge well beyond his predecessors and was on the verge of a solution, generating high hopes among his people.

But a significant aspect of Kaelon culture stood in the way. More than 1,500 years earlier, the Kaelon people began a tradition, called *The Resolution*, where those reaching the age of 60 would participate in ritual suicide. This was established as a cornerstone of Kaelon society, allegedly to allow the aged to die with dignity, but it really turned out to be a means of keeping them from becoming an inconvenient and unwanted burden to the younger generation.

Timicin is about to turn 60, and he is ordered to return home to undergo his “resolution.” Though he sought more time to

complete his work, the Kaelon authorities were unswayed by the prospect that it would take several decades for succeeding scientists to sufficiently familiarize themselves with his work to save their sun (time they did not have), but for him it would take only a fraction of the time. They held so rigidly to this custom that they would no longer accept any more data updates from him, even if his solution worked.

In the end, the very physically and mentally fit Timicin, who could have easily continued his work for many years and saved his world, bowed to the intense pressure of his government and family and returned to the planet to die.

In allowing this death tradition to become such an overriding aspect of their culture, the Kaelons unnecessarily put their planet on the path of destruction from its sun by eliminating the scientist that could have provided a solution to save it.

Regrettably, a similar kind of death custom has become a growing part of many Western societies that once generally followed, however imperfectly, Christian foundational principles, which included respect for human life from conception to natural death as a gift from God.

Canada is one of several Western countries that have introduced assisted suicide into their culture as a way of allowing terminally ill elderly the supposed right to die with dignity. Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) has been legal in Canada since 2016, where initially it was eligible for those suffering from a grievous and irremediable condition whose death was reasonably foreseeable. But the law was amended in 2021 to include those whose death was not reasonably foreseeable. A further amendment was made in 2023 to include those suffering solely from mental illness, but implementation was delayed until 2027.

While assisted suicide is illegal in most of the United States, since the 1990s it has gradually been legalized in one

state, then ten, plus the District of Columbia. In the United Kingdom, the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in October 2024, which seeks to legalize assisted suicide, including for people as young as 18. Other countries, such as Germany and Italy, have been working on their own legislation to legalize assisted suicide.

This sliding down the slope of the culture of death did not occur in a vacuum. Decades earlier, the belief of man being a special creation of God, along with the acknowledgement of life being a gift from His hands, gave way to diminishing the value of life, especially of the most weak and vulnerable in society (Genesis 1:27; Job 31:15). Children in the womb were sacrificed when deemed to be an inconvenient burden, and this has been extended to the physically disabled, the mentally ill, and the elderly. Even those who support this today may face a society they helped to create that will eventually deem their lives as having insufficient value to preserve. Where there is no sanctity of life, no one is safe from being eliminated.

Sometimes God uses the unlikeliest people to express an important truth. During Jesus' time on earth, Caiaphas, the high priest, one of the unyielding opponents of Jesus who plotted with the religious leadership to kill Him, said, "It is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." Scripture notes that he did not speak of his own accord but unconsciously prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation and gather His children scattered abroad into His kingdom (Isaiah 49:5-6; John 1:1-14, 11:47-53).

Jonathan Rauch, a prominent professing atheist and author, argues that the United States needs to embrace Christian values to be a healthy society and that the church is failing in its role to represent Jesus. In a January 3, 2025, interview with *Matter of Opinion* (a *New York Times* podcast),

Rauch said:

“What really needs to happen to get our country on a better track is for Christianity not to become more secular or more liberal but to become more like itself, to become more truly Christian.”

Like the people of Kaelon II in the *Star Trek* episode, we are on the path to destruction from the culture of death that has taken hold of our society. The remedy is a return to the Christian principles that were once a foundation of Western civilization.

Through the proclamation of the gospel message, those who take hold and embrace it will come to value human life as God does and seek to protect it in all its stages. As more people believe in Jesus Christ, the giver of eternal life to all who trust in Him, the church will fulfill its role of being salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16), and society will turn around from its path to destruction.

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