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Churches oppose Measure 16



NORTHWEST

PORTLAND (AP) — Leaders of several denominations denounced backers of the assisted-suicide measure Tuesday for singling out the Roman Catholic Church as the only religious opponent of the initiative.

"There are many denominations of the Christian faith that are opposed to Ballot Measure 16 and there are other faith groups that are just as opposed, mainly Jewish and Muslim," said the Rev. Rodney Page, executive director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

The measure would allow a terminally ill patient to take a lethal dose of a drug under certain conditions. If a doctor predicts the patient has less than six months to live, and a second doctor agrees, the patient may ask for a lethal prescription. The request must be made twice, then once again in writing, after the doctors have made sure every alternative has been rejected. It is up to the patient to take the final step.

The religious groups object to a television advertisement in which a former nurse who helped her terminally ill daughter kill herself asks if voters are going to allow one church make rules for everyone. The Catholic church isn't mentioned, but the allusion is obvious.

Backers of the measure, which would permit assisted suicide of terminally ill patients, say the Catholic church is a fair target because it has raised so much money throughout the country to fight the measure. Catholic churches across the country have collected money during services to fight the measure.

Catholic organizations and officials account for more than three-quarters of the \$1 million raised by opponents of the measure, according to the latest campaign contribution reports.

But that doesn't mean the Catholic church is right, said Barbara Coombs Lee, one of the mea-

sure's chief petitioners.

"My faith and the faith of many others leads us to believe that the relief of suffering is a greater good than preserving human life," she said.

Rabbi Daniel Isaak, head of the largest Jewish synagogue in Oregon, joined Page and several other religious leaders at a news conference denouncing the measure.

"I well appreciate the noble intentions of advocates of Measure 16," he said. "However, I can find within Jewish tradition no basis for advocating a public policy of endorsing active euthanasia."

In a statement on behalf of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Page cited the passage in Ecclesiastes that says, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven ... a time to be born, and a time to die." In other words, such matters should be in God's hands, Page said.

"Death is not a problem to be hastened, rather a sacred time of living the seasons and reasons of nature," he said.

But Coombs said the measure would simply give a choice to people who may not agree with the Catholic perspective.

"The problem is that the law enforces one particular religious perspective and it criminalizes the other," Coombs said. "Our point is the law should be evenhanded."

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon represents 17 denominations, including the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland.

The others are: African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, American Baptist Church, Antiochian Orthodox Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of the Brethren, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Greek Orthodox Church, Orthodox Church in America, Presbyterian Church USA, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, Society of Friends (Quakers), United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church.

Board questions doctor's practices

(AP) — A Eugene doctor is facing the loss of his license for what the state medical board says were unorthodox practices that were a potential danger to patients.

Action was taken against Dr. John L. Gambee after a series of reports about questionable medical techniques were received, state officials said.

Gambee, a licensed medical doctor in Oregon since 1975, has built a devoted following in Eugene as an advocate of "holistic" medicine. He published a newsletter with health advice for his patients and sold dietary supplements from his office.

"Dr. Gambee has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to move into uncharted waters in his practice without regard to the scientific merits of the proposed (treatment) modality," the board's decision stated.

Gambee declined to comment Monday on the board's decision. "I'm going to wait until I see the official statement from the board before I comment on it," he said.

The board said Gambee diagnosed and treated patients for hypothyroidism without performing blood tests to measure levels of thyroid hormone.

Failure to perform such tests while prescribing thyroid hormone can worsen thyroid conditions, posing serious health risks including heart rhythm disturbances, according to the board's report.

The board said Gambee treated a patient dying of cancer with ozone therapy.

Casino developers plan to protect rare plant

SALEM (AP) — Developers plan to take great care in making sure a rare plant doesn't get in the way of the \$20 million casino they're building.

Sidalcea nelsoniana, commonly known as Nelson's checker mallow, is listed by state and federal governments as a threatened species.

But there are plenty of the plants on land that the Grand Ronde tribes plan to use to build their casino.

Bruce Thomas, the general manager for the tribes' Spirit Mountain Development Corp., said the casino is to be completed in mid-1995.

An engineering report concluded that the casino site contained 455 checker mallow plants scattered over 21.5 acres, mostly clumped in three groups.

Although about 8.1 acres will be developed,

most of the plants in the way of the casino will be dug up and placed in pots for the winter.

Early next spring, they will be replanted in new plots along the South Yamhill River, the Rogue River, about three miles to the west, and along a nature walk area on the casino grounds.

Ten years ago, discovery of the checker mallow near Walker Creek halted McMinnville Water & Light's plans to build a \$7 million dam.

Jack Nicholls, director of resource development for the utility has made it his mission to find and protect enough of the plants to have checker mallow taken off the state and federal lists.

Brought in as a consultant for the Grand Ronde tribes last June, Nicholls visited the area with a tribal representative.

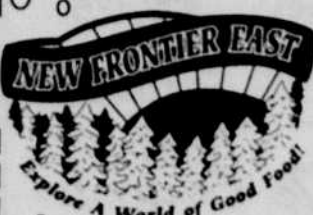
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