

Information concerning the CSEB (Centre for Studies in Ethics and Bioethics)

For more than ten years the I.F.E.D. (Evangelical Institute for Formation and Documentation) study centre in Padova has been actively involved in ethical research, particularly in the area of Bioethics. The first step, back in 1992 was an edition of the magazine Studi di Teologia entitled "Ethics and Medicine". This was followed by another monograph in 1996 entitled "The Bible and Sickness", with the national annual seminar being dedicated that year to Bioethics.

This year IFED is launching CSEB (Centre for Studies in Ethics and Bioethics) with the intention of creating an Evangelical point of reference, principally for Italy, but which will relate extensively to the Evangelical Churches world-wide. The challenges of contemporary society are such that at the present time the Evangelical Voice can all too easily be dismissed as a minority opinion which appears to be totally irrelevant. IFED's desire is that through CSEB, under the leadership of its new director, Dr. Leonardo De Chirico, the Church of Christ will be able to vitally interact from its own specific view point and show itself to be salt and light in the health-care sector of society.

The twin objectives of the Institute are to develop and communicate an evangelical world-vision in the area of Ethics and Bioethics, and to assist in the formation of Christians who will be able to significantly interact on these issues within society. All too often the Evangelical church has been almost totally absorbed by the more vocal Roman Catholic expressions of morality or just simply standing on the side-lines watching the game being played out on the field. The heart-beat of CSEB is to develop an alternative biblical option which is not just a fruit of natural theology and which can be put into practice by professional people who are involved at all levels of society. There is the anticipation of the formation of working groups studying particular issues and the development of courses which can prepare nurses, doctors, professors, teachers, pastors, etc. to be Christians who are actively involved in this very practical area.

The principal activities which are being launched this year are:

1. A course in Ethics and Bioethics which will be tailored to meet the needs of health-care workers, professional medical personnel, teachers, pastors, etc.
2. A two-day Congress in May 2004 which will conclude the academic year.
3. A special supplement to the magazine, Studi di Teologia, which in the future will be published every autumn and will have articles, book-reviews, critical studies, and bibliographical references covering the entire field of study developing within CSEB.

The intention is to establish a specialised study centre which will

progressively develop an Evangelical Vantage-point to which Christians and laity can look for a qualified biblical opinion on these contemporary issues. This will mean ongoing research and continued interaction with a controversial world, but if we do not seize the opportunity today to be at the forefront of our society, tomorrow we will be left behind reaping the fruits of a secular society which found God to be distant and obsolete. The Sovereign Lord is never that and IFED's desire through CSEB is to confess His glory even in these very down to earth matters.