

# Midwifery case highlights tradeoffs of regulation

The province's attempt to regulate the practice of midwifery has given birth to twin consequences, say those involved with the profession.

On the positive side, the practice is more closely monitored and access to a midwife's services has increased.

But, when the B.C. College of Midwives took one of the province's best-known home-birth attendants to court to prevent her from delivering babies, it left women wondering if the bureaucracy that has built up around midwifery would end up causing them more harm than good.

On February 2, a B.C. Supreme Court judge granted the College's application for an injunction against Gloria Lemay. It prohibits her from calling herself a midwife and from carrying out any of the activities allowed under midwifery regulations, including "managing spontaneous normal vaginal deliveries."

In a press release, the college says it pursued the injunction because it believes Ms. Lemay is "a danger to the public."

It says it has received numerous complaints from the

public about Ms. Lemay's practice. The College alleges Ms. Lemay failed to monitor the well-being of mothers and babies in her care, and was not prepared to respond in emergency situations.

Ms. Lemay is known among the midwifery community as a "birth attendant with hefty experience, and a long history of attending births," said Mary Ann Allaart, coordinator of the the B.C. Women's Midwifery Practice in Vancouver.

In her opinion Ms. Lemay is "absolutely not" a danger to her clients. "Births are dangerous," she says, "life is dangerous."

Ms. Allaart is worried that the process of registering midwives is taking away women's freedom to choose how, where and with whose help they will give birth.

"You can't regulate how women give birth," she says. "You can't put women into a box. You can try, but they won't stay there."

Cheryl Francis, the Prince George coordinator for the Midwifery Task Force, delivered her most recent child in the care of a midwife.

She says since midwives have been forced to register, rural women have been "left out in the cold." She says women are coming from as far away as Kitimat to give birth in a host-home with Prince George's only midwife, because birth attendants who have chosen not to register have "gone right underground."

But Ms. Francis says, on balance, the move to register midwives so they can bill the B.C. health care system for their services has been a positive step.

"On the whole, for women who couldn't afford the couple of thousand dollars it costs to have a home birth, their level of access has increased. And they know that with a registered midwife there is at least some standard of safety. They know that she has jumped through the appropriate hoops."

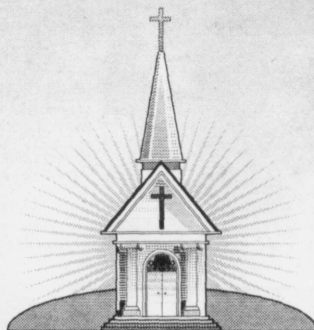
Jane Kilthel, registrar of the B.C. College of Midwives, says the college's first task is to protect the public from women who are not qualified to safely deliver babies. Then, she says, they will work towards encouraging registered midwives to move to communities that are underserved.

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## Program of Events

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participating  
churches  
will be  
announcing  
their  
upcoming  
events on a  
regular  
basis.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S SABBATH: WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK?

(Second in this series)

Why do Christians now observe the first day of the week for worship and not the seventh? We do so following the example of Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath. Every week of His life the Lord "went into the synagogue on the sabbath day" as "His custom was" (Lu.4:16). Two days before His death He pronounced judgment on the temple, saying "Your (not "my") house is left unto you desolate" (Mat.23:38). It is most significant that after His resurrection Jesus altered his life-long practice and never again participated in seventh-day Sabbath worship!

He met in a gathering with His disciples on the first and second occurrences of the now-inaugurated first-day Sabbath (Jn.20:19,26). After His ascension He met with His gathered disciples on the first day of the week, pouring out His Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:1). These meetings of Christ with the church establish the pattern in the present age. It is Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, who changed the day (Matt.12:8; Mk.2:28; Lu.6:5). This was recognized by the disciples, who continued this practice in the New Testament church (Ac.20:7; 1 Cor.16:1,2; Rev.1:10). Contrary to the oft-repeated charge of Seventh-day Adventism, the Christian church does not keep the first day of the week on the supposed basis that the church changed the day. Christ Himself changed the day of worship!

The early disciples met on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper and hear the preaching of God's Word (Act. 20:7). Paul commanded that the collection for the saints be taken on the first day of the week, when the church met for worship, so there would be no need for a special collection. If the church practice was to meet on the seventh day, there would have to be a "special collection" if they gathered on the first day. The apostolic command would become totally meaningless!

In the infinite wisdom of God the language of the fourth commandment fits both the seventh-day and first-day Sabbath. It does not read "the seventh day of the week is the sabbath of the LORD thy God..." but simply "the seventh day." The pattern in every age - from creation to the present - is six days of labour and one day of rest unto the Lord.

Peter tells us that Christ left "us an example, that (we) should follow in his steps" (1 Pet.2:21). This includes every aspect of our Christian experience, not just suffering for our faithful witness for Him. In observing the first day of the week as our day of rest and worship, the Christian church follows the example of Her Lord and King.

Next week: What is the purpose of the Lord's Day?

Join us for our Lord's Day Services

Sun. School 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Service 6:30 p.m.

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4020 Balsum Road, Prince George

Questions or comments? Call us at 962-8232

