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ENDANGERED MAN
AND THE REPLY OF THE CHRISTIAN
FROM THE JURIDICAL VIEWPOINT*

A. Introduction

The central theme of this series of lectures implies that man – and then especially modern man, who provokes our concern – is an endangered being and that the Christian has a reply to this threat.

I have been accorded the signal honour of being asked to evaluate the problem from the point of view of the Law. I would like to extend my cordial appreciation to the PU for CHE for this invitation.

There can be no doubt as far as the first implication goes, which is that man is an endangered being.

The second implication, which claims that the Christian always has an answer, is more problematic, especially if one looks at the central theme from the point of view of Law.

Should one approach the question from a juridical viewpoint it would seem that there are three questions in particular deserving of attention, viz.

- (a) Can the Law constitute a threat to man?
- (b) Can the legal order become the subject matter of a threat leading to a threat to man as encompassed *within* the legal order?
- (c) Can the Law assume the function of protector of man against the treat?

Attention should thus be directed at the possibility of:

- (i) the law as the threatening force;
- (ii) the law as the threatened entity; and
- (iii) the law as a protector of man in the face of the threat.

In each instance an effort has to be made to determine the Christian point of view with regard to the matter under consideration.

* Translation from the original Afrikaans lecture.

B. The law as the threatening force

The question to be evaluated here is whether it is possible to abuse the law to such an extent that it constitutes a threat to mankind. Expressed differently: can the law be used as a means of committing an injustice?

There can be no doubt that state authorities sometimes commit injustices in the *name* of the law. Some biblical scribes apparently already struggled with this evil, as emerges from the following:

Proverbs 16:12: It is an abomination of kings to commit wickedness...

Deuteronomy 16:19: Thou shalt not wrest judgement...

Psalms 94:20: Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?

Proverbs 18:5: It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

Isaiah 5:22-23: Woe unto them... which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

In ordinary parlance one speaks in such cases of "tyranny", "force", or "suppression".

A state authority (including the judiciary which is part of the state authority) which is guilty of such action abuses its own function and thus its own nature. What then would constitute the function of the state authority from the scriptural point of view?

It rests on

(a) maintaining the state and society (cf. *Proverbs* 29:4: "The king by judgment establisheth the land...");

(b) protecting and cherishing the country (cf. *Psalms* 78:7: "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds... to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance");

(c) combating evil in society (cf. *Romans* 13:4: "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain...");

(d) reconciling the interests of subject and ruler in such a way that justice may prevail (cf. *Psalms* 82:3: "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy"; *Deut.* 16:20: "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow").

As stated already, a state authority which commits tyranny abuses its own function and intrinsic nature. From a legal philosophical point of view the question arises as to whether man is still dealing with true law when the legal norm itself becomes the instrument of injustice. This can be answered in more than one way depending on the school of thought to which one be-

longs (which schools cannot be considered within the scope of this paper). Whether man in such a situation is dealing with *defective law* or *sanctioned injustice* is not the point — man's existence is threatened by these measures of authority. The fact also remains that these prescriptions of authority function in the name of the law and even should this be not true law, it still brings the law into disrepute.

Examples from the Scriptures are the following:

- (i) Pharaoh's command to kill the Hebrew boys (Exodus 1:16);
- (ii) Darius' command that only the king may be petitioned in prayer for thirty days (Daniel 6:7-11);
- (iii) Herod's infanticide (Matthew 2:16).

Well-known examples from the twentieth century are

- (i) the Nazi prescriptions according to which many people were executed because of their belonging to a particular race; and
- (ii) the laws of President Amin of Uganda which robbed many Indians of their possessions and which led to their deportation.

The above are extreme examples and nobody except wilful enemies could suggest that such government prescriptions exist in South Africa, yet every Christian who wishes to adhere to the Scriptural prescription of seeking out justice should continually reflect critically on whether all government prescriptions answer to the demands of justice. Those laws specifically which condone extended detention without trial present problems to the Christian conscience.

C. The law as the threatened entity

The times in which we live have indicated that the legal order itself is threatened at times.

Some examples:

- (a) Some years ago a group of Palestinian terrorists launched a murderous attack on Israel athletes at the Munich Olympics. They were arrested but not punished. Why not?
- (b) The internal wing of Swapo conspires with the external wing to commit murder. Many murders are in fact committed. Why aren't the leaders prosecuted in the criminal courts on the basis of common purpose? Would the reason be that a conspiracy cannot be proved or that the authorities shy away from the international storm that this would create?
- (c) Russia invades Hungary. Cambodia succumbs to the Vietnamese onslaught. The Security Council of the U.N. which is supposed to monitor the rights of nations allows this openly.

In all these instances one common element is to be found: the principles of sound administration of justice are being eroded by the political onslaughts of the twentieth century. And ordinary man is threatened because of this — not merely threatened, often destroyed.

What would be the answer of the Christian to this threat? The powers involved here are so ferocious that the Christian's only recourse is to the humblest of prayers: "Deliver us from evil...".

D. The law as a protective force against this threat

It is the natural function of the law, as far as it may be able to do so, to protect man against these threats. This appears clearly from the following obvious examples:

- * man is threatened by his grasping nature: for that reason the law makes provision against crimes such as theft, robbery, blackmail, fraud and gambling;
- * man is threatened by his violent nature — therefore murder and assault are punishable offences;
- * man is threatened by his carnal urges — thus rape, incest and certain other forms of immorality are branded as criminal.

At first glance the fact that the law accords one protection in the above instances does not create problems for the Christian. The legal rules prohibiting the commission of the above crimes are in accord with the Scriptural demand that the government should bear the sword "to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4). But as soon as one reflects upon the fact that murder, rape and armed robbery can be visited by the death penalty the matter assumes a problematic nature. Would all Christians agree that there is a Christian foundation underlying the legal rules allowing the death penalty for armed robbery? What should a Christian legislature be in response to the rapist and the armed robber? Should he accede that the criminal's life may be taken in the case where the crime was committed in aggravating circumstances? May the legislature unlimitedly extend the number of cases entailing the death penalty, going to the extreme of, for example, employing the death penalty as a means to conserve petrol? Where should the line be drawn?

In the abovementioned examples the Christian should experience no difficulty in assessing the need for combating the relevant threat by the enactment and application of legal measures. The problem is rather whether the *way* in which the law seeks to guard against the threat is founded on Christian principles.

The case just mentioned, however, is not the only one in which the Christian may entertain a doubt as to how far he may legally go to avert the threat. I intend therefore to focus on two problem areas by way of example.

The first problem area to be focussed on deals with abortion¹⁾.

It is a well-known fact that there are a disquietingly high number of backstreet abortions in South Africa every year as a result of undesired pregnancies. A comprehensive sociological survey would be needed to establish the reasons underlying this situation. Although I do not pretend to be a sociologist, I would guess that the following factors play a rôle:

- * so-called liberal attitudes towards extra-marital sexual relations;
- * inability or unwillingness to assume the responsibility for parenthood;
- * the belief (a corollary of the existentialist world view) that man has the inalienable right to determine his own destiny, which contributes to the idea that the pregnant woman would have the inalienable right to decide for herself whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.

Whatever the underlying causes may be, however, one has to face the fact that the situation exists. Should one accept that the unborn foetus is "a human being in his pre-natal existence", then one is, undoubtedly, dealing in this case with a very serious threat against man – in his pre-natal existence. How should this threat be averted?

The ideal solution would be to avoid undesired pregnancies. This, however, is an ideal that cannot be realized, and therefore the legal order has to find an alternative solution. Generally speaking the threat is combatted legally by proclaiming abortion to be a crime. But, as will be seen, the legislature has allowed certain exceptions.

- In the light of this situation certain points affecting principle arise:
- (a) Should the principle allowing exceptions be subscribed to at all? In other words: is it possible to visualise circumstances in which the deliberate killing of an unborn foetus may be allowed on principle?
 - (b) Should the principle of allowing exceptions be granted the right of existence: what exceptions should be allowed?

1) For an extended debate on abortion, read *The Great Debate: Abortion in the South African Context*, edited by G.C. Oosthuizen, G. Abbott and M. Notelovitz, Howard Timmins, Cape Town. Cf. further: T.A. Barnard, L.M. du Plessis, G. Kempff and G. Oosthuizen, "Aborsie, 'n juridiese, etiese en regsetiese vraagstuk", *Koers*, 3(1978), pp. 330 ff; as well as F.J. van Zyl, "Regsvorming en regstoepassing as voortvloeiende uit die Christelike lewens- en wêreldbeskouing" *Woord en Wetenskap* (edited by D.F.M. Strauss, H.J. Stone, J.C. Lombard and J.M. Gerber), pp. 215 ff.

* Should one accede to pleas from those wishing to combat backstreet abortions by increasing the number of legalized abortions? (It is well-known that the viewpoint is sometimes advocated that abortion-on-demand should be allowed.)

* Is the present legal situation with regard to abortion not already in conflict with Christian principles?

In order to see all this in true perspective we should look briefly at the present state of affairs regarding abortion legislation:

In accordance with the Abortion and Sterilization Act, 1975, a legal abortion may be performed in the following circumstances: where a continued pregnancy will endanger the life of the woman; where a continued pregnancy constitutes a serious threat to the woman's physical or mental health or where there is a serious risk that the child may suffer from a serious physical or mental defect of such a nature that he will be irreparably handicapped; where the pregnancy is the result of rape, incest or unlawful carnal intercourse with a female idiot or imbecile in contravention of section 15 of the Immorality Act, 1957. (In passing it might be mentioned that the statute embodies several provisions which have to be complied with before an abortion may be performed, but these are left out of consideration here as they are not crucial to the matter.)²⁾

Before this statute was promulgated abortion was permitted only in cases where a continued pregnancy endangered the woman's life³⁾. The statute under consideration has thus considerably *extended* the scope of legalized abortion.

The question now facing the Christian is whether or not this extension represents a step in the right direction. Has the legislature in conflict with Christian principles *intensified* the onslaught on man in his pre-natal existence *or* has it done that which can be justified on Christian principles? These questions cannot be dealt with adequately unless one ascertains what

2) For a discussion of the statute under consideration, cf. J.C. Stassen, "Die Wet op vrugafdrywing en sterilisasie, 2 van 1975", *Tydskrif vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Reg*, 1976, pp. 260 ff.

3) For a discussion of the law as it was before the promulgation of the statute in question, cf. S.A. Strauss, "Abortion and the Law in South Africa, *The Great Debate*, pp. 125 ff.

an unborn embryo essentially is. Should it be regarded as a potential *human being* who should then be treated as such in the juridical, ethical and religious spheres? Or should it be regarded as something essentially and radically *different* from man, with the result that it may be treated in a radically *different* way? Is the deliberate killing of an embryo (except in a case where a woman's life or condition of health is seriously endangered) murder or *principle*? Should Genesis 9:6 be applicable to an embryo? ("Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.")

Should the embryo therefore already be regarded as being in the image of God?

This question may be further elucidated as follows: no reasonable human being would even consider condoning the murder of a *child* concerned in rape or incest. The existing law, however, allows the abortion of an embryo thus begotten, with the proviso that the woman's life or physical or mental health be in danger. Similarly no Christian would advocate the killing of a child who is seriously and incurably physically or mentally retarded – yet the embryo may be aborted should there may be a serious danger of such defectiveness.

The underlying premise would seem to be that the embryo is something fundamentally *different* from a human being, so that the legislature is free to determine for itself the circumstances in which an embryo may be aborted.

The question remains, however, whether this viewpoint is defensible on principle.

For interest's sake one might mention here Prof. J.A. Heyns' viewpoint as expressed in his book *Die Nuwe Mens onderweg*⁴⁾. He says (in translated form) that "Whoever destroys developing life, according to Barth, kills a human being. As soon as conception has taken place, we are dealing with a human life – however incomplete and undeveloped it might be – a human being created by God in His own image. To my mind there can be only two exceptions: where life confronts life and either mother or baby (or both) would seem to be in mortal danger, a choice will have to be made. But it would not seem to be morally and religiously justifiable to prejudge the

4) Tafelberg Publishers, Cape Town, 1970, pp. 181-182.

issue and decide in *all* cases to save the life of either the mother or child. The choice has to be left open-ended as circumstances might determine which of the two should be saved. The second exception concerns rape. Here it does not concern an unexpected child, or an unwanted child, but one that has been forced on to one, the legacy of a feared and abhorred intruder. Such an event would be enough to scar the mother emotionally and physically for the rest of her life”⁵).

In a case of rape, where there is a real danger of “permanent physical or emotional scarring” one might agree that abortion might be allowed on the basis of a crisis situation. But this is not necessarily the case. Would it, on principle, also be permissible to destroy the foetus in cases where the woman might not be physically or emotionally seriously affected by the continuing pregnancy? Should we accept that “as soon as conception has taken place... we are dealing with a human being... created by and in the image of God”, then it seems unclear to me that it would be permissible to kill purely because it was “forced” on a woman.

Apart from these reservations regarding Prof. Heyns’ views it is to be pointed out that the statute under consideration sanctions abortions not covered by him, such as in the case where it can reasonably be expected that the child will be seriously retarded⁶), or where the pregnancy was the result of incest. The question now arises as to whether there are un-Christian elements in a statute passed by Christian Members of Parliament.

Suppose for the moment that an unborn embryo/foetus is something radically different from a human being while it is still not viable – in other words, that at this stage it is merely an appendage of the mother’s body. Yet the statute in question makes no distinction between a viable and a non-viable foetus – an unborn foetus of eight months conceived after rape or incest may legally be aborted should the mother decide not to continue the

5) Cf. with this the viewpoint of Prof. G.C. Oosthuizen, “Termination of Pregnancy – a D.R.C. Viewpoint” in *The Great Debate*, pp. 60 ff., especially p. 64, as well as the viewpoints of Barnard et al., quoted article, pp. 336 ff.

6) Cf. Also G.A. Lindenboom, *Opstellen over Medische Ethiek*, Kampen, p. 64, who regards abortion as unacceptable to the Christian medic in cases where one might expect the unborn child to have serious physical or mental defects. He puts it on a par with the killing of crippled or disabled people. Barnard et al (quoted article, p. 344) also reject abortion in the case of a “possibly defective or mentally deficient” foetus.

pregnancy. The provision as to incest also creates a problem. Incest may be committed by two people not related by blood and who have a relationship, such as between man and the grown daughter of his divorced wife. To permit abortion in such a case is highly problematic.

Against this background the problem may be recapitulated as follows:

- (a) A threat to man in the pre-natal state does exist.
- (b) The legal order combats this threat by rendering abortion a criminal act apart from certain exceptional cases.
- (c) There are thus exceptional cases where abortion is sanctioned by law.
- (d) The question arises on the one hand as to whether these can be justified on Christian principles.
- (e) On the other hand the question arises as to whether these exceptions can be extended with due reference to the said principles.

In conclusion the question can be posed as to whether the Christian has a clear solution to the problem of undesired pregnancy which results in a threat to "man in his pre-natal existence".

Subsequently, attention will be directed briefly on the one hand at the threat inherent in human suffering and on the other hand at the threat posed by a highly developed medical science and technology. The combined effect of these two threats is the problem of *euthanasia*.

(i) The threat of suffering

That man is exposed to terrible suffering is no secret. Should this suffering be accompanied by an incurable disease and the position is one of irrevocable deterioration, the question arises as to whether euthanasia would not be justified. We all know that this cause has support from time to time. In this vein a certain Edgar Hill wrote in the *Eastern Province Herald* on February 24, 1979, under the heading "Ticklish Subject for a Saturday Morning":

"What I do suggest, is that any man, provided he is *compos mentis*, should have the right in certain extreme circumstances, to request that his life be terminated, and if he be *non compos mentis*, that two doctors, of whom one should be preferably his own personal physician, be given the

7) Cf. F.J. van Zyl, quoted article, pp. 218 ff.

right to accord him the mercy of a 'good death' ”.

In this respect one can also refer to the viewpoint expressed by Prof. Chris Barnard recently in the USA *Evening Post* of July 17, 1978:

“He believes the law will someday change and doctors will be permitted to stop treatment when the treatment serves only one purpose – and that is to prolong the suffering of the patient’.”

In America the situation already exists where a judge may permit euthanasia. According to the *Evening Post* of July 17, 1978 a judge in Florida decided “that an elderly, terminally-ill patient had the right to die by asking for his life-support machine to be switched off”. In another recent news report from Los Angeles we read:

“While his parents sat by his side, a three-year-old boy died today, just 17 minutes after a doctor switched off his life-saving respirator. A judge, at the wish of the parents of the boy, identified only as Benjamin C. had a short time earlier signed a court order authorising doctors to pull out the plug of the machine. Benjamin had been in a coma since he was injured in a car accident three months ago. Doctors said he had irreversible brain-damage”.

What should the response of the Christian legislature be to this threat of pain and suffering?

It is well-known that a certain Dr Hartman was found guilty of murder in the Supreme Court in 1975. Motivated by pity he had terminated the life of his father who was critically ill⁸⁾. He was sentenced to one year's imprisonment suspended for one year on condition that he did not in that year commit an offence involving the intentional infliction of bodily injury. He was detained merely until the court adjourned.

This court case highlighted problems surrounding euthanasia. The judge referred to this issue by saying that “at this stage the patient presented a problem to his medical attendant which brings about a conflict in ethical principles, namely to save life and to relieve pain and suffering. The magnitude of this conflict varies naturally with the circumstances of the case”.

From the court's finding it appears that the infliction of euthanasia is, according to our law, technically and on principle *murder* but that the punishment is often relatively light as a result of the extenuating circumstances motivating the deed.

8) Cf. *State versus Hartman*, 1975(3), SA 532.

Judged from the viewpoint of Christian ethics it would seem to me that the legal position should be supported. It is hard to accept that Christian ethics would sanction the killing of an incurably ill person out of pity⁹).

(ii) *The threat presented by highly-developed medical science and technology*

Should one approach the matter from this angle, the problems proliferate. Medical science and technology are able nowadays to keep a person alive artificially for a long time. In some cases the patient's death is postponed in a way that cannot be sanctioned by Christian morality, as one can describe this process as nothing other than cruelty at times. Is this not an infringement of man's inalienable right to die in peace?

In this respect Dr D.H. Brandt writes the following (in translated form) in his article "Brandpunte betreffende sekere medies-etiese probleme"¹⁰): "Added to this one may not intensify or prolong the suffering of your neighbour. Because one does not wish to have this done to oneself, one should not inflict this on another, as one should love one's neighbour as oneself. Can the doctor not aggravate the suffering and grief of his neighbour by over-enthusiastically applying medicines, and also bring grief to the relatives? Undoubtedly he can do this"¹¹).

9) C.F. Heyns, quoted work, pp. 180-181.

10) Institute for the Advancement of Calvinism, Volume 85 (October 1974), pp. 6-7.

11) Cf. also J.H. van den Berg, *Medische macht en medische ethiek*, published by G.F. Callenbach, N.V. Nijkerk, 1969. Prof. Van den Berg points out that "the doctor shall combat death, under all circumstances". According to him (p. 20), "the constitution of medical ethics was sacrosanct, because the doctor had no power" (p. 20). (By "power" he means medical-technical knowledge and skill with which to obtain medical results undreamed of earlier.) "Nu heeft de arts macht. Moet hij nog? Mag hij nog?" ("Now he has power. Should he still? May he still?"). By means of several illustrative examples he points out that this "constitution" has led to very undesirable practices in our day and age and that under certain conditions the doctor should allow a patient to die. Heyns (quoted work, p. 187, n. 62) disputes Van den Berg's view that the foundation of medical ethics (conservation and prolongation of life) should have significance in these days only where prolongation *makes sense*. To my mind the question to be answered is not whether or not the prolongation of the patient's life makes sense. How can one individual decide on the significance or otherwise of another's life? The question should rather centre on whether prolongation may be undertaken in a way which will expose the patient cruelly to pain and suffering.

We have to accept that Christian morality prohibits the cruel prolongation of suffering. The question now arises as to whether the principles of *unauthorised* euthanasia and of *authorised* non-prolongation of suffering can always be distinguished. The answer would seem to be negative. Suppose that – as in the case of Benjamin above – a person has been injured in a car accident, incurring such serious brain injury that he cannot, medically speaking, recover, that he suffers grievously and that he can be kept alive only through intravenous feeding and oxygen. Suppose further that a nurse in command of the ward interrupts the oxygen supply so that the patient dies. Has the patient been *murdered* or is one dealing in such a case with a principle of authorized non-prolongation of suffering? Superficially one could say that he has been murdered because (so one could reason) the nurse has terminated the patient's life through a *positive action*. Suppose however that the nurse merely refrained from providing for a new oxygen supply after the previous one had been exhausted. In the latter case, one might argue, the nurse has done nothing positive to terminate the patient's life but merely failed to prolong agony. And yet it is clear that in both instances the nurse has acted on essentially the same principle: she exercised her control over the patient in such a way as to cause his death deliberately.

It thus appears that the dividing line between morally *forbidden* euthanasia and morally *permissible* non-prolongation of suffering *should not be sought in the difference between so-called positive and negative euthanasia*. It is conceivable that even in the case of sanctioned non-prolongation of suffering a positive action has to be taken, viz. the cessation of administration of life-support¹²). There can be no question that the Christian doctor

12) According to Brandt, quoted article, p. 7, "Still more difficult is the decision as to whether supporting means or aids which have already been supplied and which may in all probability have contributed materially to the prolongation of life, should be discontinued. Such discontinuation may constitute positive action. This has to be distinguished, however, from positive action accompanied by the administering of a specific substance(s) to induce death quickly. The mere cessation of life-supporting substances would not deprive the patient of an opportunity to live were his earthly span not completed. This observation refers only to those patients who cannot return to normal by the administering of these substances... The cessation of therapy which will unnecessarily prolong the agony of the patient seems to be justified". It would seem as if Dr Brandt is looking for the dividing line between forbidden euthanasia and permissible non-prolongation of agony in the answer to the question as to whether or not

who is involved in such a situation is in a serious dilemma. On the one hand he has to obey the commandment prohibiting killing while on the other hand he has to obey the commandment to love his neighbour and not to inflict needless cruelty.

Is it fair to leave it to the doctor to decide every time which of these principles he is dealing with and to expose himself at the same time to the risk of criminal prosecution as a result of our uncertain laws in this respect? Should Christians who are in a position to exert an influence on legislation not also work towards establishing clear guidelines between permissible and forbidden actions? If so: what should the reply of the Christian legislature be to the threat of pain and suffering on the one hand and the threat posed by a highly-developed medical science and technology on the other hand?

I leave this question to you.

It would appear from the foregoing examples that there are threats for which the Christian jurist and Christian government have not yet developed final counters. Has the time not arrived to start a serious quest for answers? Or will the Christian procrastinate until answers are supplied from humanist sources?

In conclusion I would like to refer very briefly to some threats posed by the humanist world view as regards the administration of law:

(a) There can be no doubt about the fact that the existentialist world view according to which man has an absolute right of choice has an enormous influence on literature. The existentialist writer claims for himself the right to write about *everything* even should this shock my and your religious sensibilities or offend against our sense of propriety. The legislature has sought to avert this threat by promulgating the Publications Act, 1974.

(b) The Marxist world view threatens or endangers our governmental institutions. The legislature has countered these threats by promulgating the

man's earthly span has elapsed. Should the answer be affirmative, the administering of supportive substances may be terminated — not otherwise. The problem with this argument is that it is not always clear when one's *earthly span* has ended. Does it not perhaps *include* the time during which one may live *only* with medical aid? Cf. further: C. van der Meer, *Geneeskundige Confrontatie met de Dood*, Stafleu's Wetenschappelijke Uitgewersmaatschappij, N.V. Leiden, pp. 23-24: "I am of the opinion that it is not the duty of the physician to support unendurable agony. When he is convinced personally of the inevitability of the patient's death and the intensity of his agony, then it is his duty, preferably in consultation with an uninvolved physician, to cease all therapy not aimed at relieving agony".

Internal Security Act 1950 and the Terrorism Act 1967.

(c) The existentialist world view has promoted the abuse of drugs by which the *physical and mental health* of thousands is threatened. The legislature tried to counter this threat by promulgating the Abuse of Dependence-Producing Substances and Rehabilitation Centres Act 1971.

(d) The existentialist world view has become a threat to *married life*. At the moment a bill is being considered in Parliament which will put divorce laws on a completely different footing. This bill encompasses the principle that a court may dissolve a marriage should it seem that there is no reasonable chance of reconciliation.

While these laws should be regarded as an effort to combat evil, the Christian should ensure the safety of both himself and his descendants against these threats according to the principle expressed in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up".

The concern here is with the Christian principle of education which was acknowledged by the legislature in the Act on National Educational Policy in 1967, and the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (Private) Act 1950.

May this University continue in its great task of *reinforcing* Christian principles in young people privileged to study here.

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