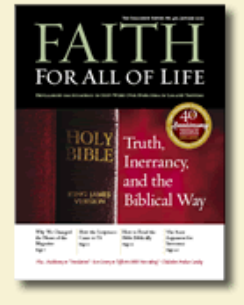




FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

## The Seduction of Medical Science, Then and Now



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John E. Stoos  
May 2003

*"It is the duty of the doctor, through advice and effort, conscientiously and to his best ability, to assist as helper the person entrusted to his care in the maintenance, improvement and re-establishment of his vitality, physical efficiency and health. The accomplishment of this duty is a public task."*  
*Suggested Oath for Physicians*

Suppose you are a physician or someone studying to practice the art of medicine. Would you sign such an oath? Even if you have some concerns about how it is worded or structured, would you be willing to go along with the powers that be who want it signed or would you need to take a stand? If you were willing to take a stand against this oath, what price would you be willing to pay for taking a stand in opposition? Would your fellow doctors or students be willing to join with you in such a crusade?

How you answer these questions determines which side you are on in one of the greatest battles of the last century. If you think this oath is not all that bad or all that serious, you are with those who assisted with the deaths of millions of European Jews, Christians, and other undesirables in the Nazi death camps. If you think that this oath is fundamentally wrong and would choose to take a stand against it, you have joined the one hundred Dutch physicians who were sent as prisoners to those same camps for refusing to sign.

### The Beginning of the End for Millions

This oath was presented to Dutch physicians in 1941 by their Nazi conquerors as a mild way to bring them into the fold of the new order. The story of how these brave Dutch physicians stood against this opening wedge of Hegelian utilitarianism was told by Dr. Leo Alexander in the July 1949 edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Alexander was a psychiatrist at the University of Boston who was sent to the Nuremberg Trials for the sole purpose of finding out why so many scientists and physicians in the once civilized German society had participated in the gruesome human experimentations and deaths under the Nazi regime.

Dr. Alexander discusses how the attitude changes came long before the Nazis took control of Germany and how the medical community was fully involved in what we now call "The Holocaust."

The first direct order for euthanasia was issued by Hitler on September 1, 1939, and an organization was set up to execute the program. Dr. Karl Brandt headed the medical section, and Phillip Bouhler the administrative section. All state institutions were required to report on patients who had been ill five years or more and who were unable to work, by filling out questionnaires giving name, race, marital status, nationality, next of kin, whether regularly visited and by whom, who bore financial responsibility and so forth. The decision regarding which patients should be killed was made entirely on the basis of this brief information by expert consultants, most of whom were professors of psychiatry in the key universities. These consultants never saw the patients themselves.

These questionnaires were collected by a "Realm's Work Committee of Institutions for Cure and Care." A parallel organization devoted exclusively to the killing of children was known by the similarly euphemistic name of "Realm's Committee for Scientific Approach to Severe Illness Due to Heredity and Constitution." The "Charitable Transport Company for the Sick" transported patients to the killing centers, and the "Charitable Foundation for Institutional Care" was in charge of collecting the cost of the killings from the relatives, without, however, informing them what the

charges were for; in the death certificates the cause of death was falsified.

According to the records, 275,000 people were put to death in these killing centers. Ghastly as this seems, it should be realized that this program was merely the entering wedge for exterminations of far greater scope in the political program for genocide of conquered nations and the racially unwanted. The methods used and personnel trained in the killing centers for the chronically sick became the nucleus of the much larger centers on the East, where the plan was to kill all Jews and Poles and to cut down the Russian population by 30,000,000.

### **The Beginning of Corrosion**

Dr. Alexander points out, "It started with the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived." He goes on to warn, "It is, therefore, this subtle shift in emphasis of the physicians' attitude that one must thoroughly investigate." With that in mind, let me return to the question about whether you would sign the oath presented to the Dutch physicians. These doctors understood what it meant and, to a man, refused to sign. Dr. Alexander explains that "the Dutch physicians decided that it is the first, although slight, step away from principle that is the most important one." I would encourage you to read the entire story in his essay, but know that even when the Nazis sent 100 of the doctors to the concentration camps they still refused to sign. Dr. Alexander concludes:

They had the foresight to resist before the first step was taken, and they acted unanimously and won out in the end. It is obvious that if the medical profession of a small nation under the conqueror's heel could resist so effectively, the German medical profession could likewise have resisted had they not taken the fatal first step. It is the first seemingly innocent step away from principle that frequently decides a career of crime. Corrosion begins in microscopic proportions.

As we think about medical ethics today, there is enormous sadness on two fronts. The country that we look back to for our example in those brave Dutch physicians is today leading the world down the path of euthanasia. Here in the United States the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 has led to the killing of over 40 million "unwanted" unborn children and an epidemic of child abuse and neglect. The appointment of Dr. C. Everett Koop by President Reagan as the Surgeon General in 1981 seriously slowed the advancement of infanticide in our country, but we obviously have a long way to go on the road back to properly upholding the sanctity of human life.

A Texas medical professor recently caused quite a storm of protest with his policy of not giving recommendations to his students who could not affirm the "fact" of evolution as the answer to the origin of life. The howls of protest went up in many Christian circles decrying this blatant discrimination against those who hold to Biblical truth. Perhaps the better question might be to ask why there are no Christians in the medical field who are refusing to recommend students who hold to the "Hegalian utilitarianism" that Dr. Alexander warned us about back in 1949.

### **Notes**

1. [www.petersnet.net/browse/492.htm](http://www.petersnet.net/browse/492.htm) .

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*John E. Stoos is a political consultant living in Sacramento, California with his wife Linda. They have six children and sixteen grandchildren.*

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