

Column on time

Finished with life

Recently the citizens' initiative 'Uit vrije wil' (Of free will) collected over 40.000 signatures for the motion on assistance with suicide. This motion will therefore have to be attended to in Parliament. The proposal means that elderly people who consider themselves to be 'finished with life' should receive medical assistance with euthanasia. They are entitled to this, according to the proposal.

To me such a proposal, in which the motive is 'being tired of life' (and not unbearable and incurable suffering) is at daggers drawn with biblical and Christian inspired moral.

Is this a rigid point of view where the feelings of hopelessness of people are not taken into account? I don't think so. Because life is a gift. And freedom is part of that gift. Dazzling!

But real freedom does not mean to be able to command one's own existence. There is a limit. Freedom is limited freedom. That is more merciful and human than unlimited freedom. Freedom benefits from limitations. The fact that there are possible exceptions to the observance of these limits, does not change anything to the meaning of this limit.

Tired of life

Many people are tired of life. There can be many causes. It can become very serious. We know examples of this even from biblical times. 'Take away my life,' says Elijah. In our times this occurs more often than before. We can often hardly understand what others experience. Loneliness, the feeling to be useless, depressions, dependency, illness, loss of loved-ones, it can change life into a burden. A burden which tests the capacities in such a manner that the burden is rather thrown off. Let us not judge anyone who experiences this. Let us judge nobody who gives in to this, even if we can not assist in this. However, this does not imply a legally established right on euthanasia.

Appeal to others

Being tired of life makes an appeal to others. It appeals to the Christian congregation to be alive to each other. It asks for proper pastoral care and attention. Also for the people around the person in question. However it also asks for a society which does not picture age as a problem. It asks for dignified care. Maybe that means a degree less purchasing power. But what is real humanity?

Consoled

Indeed there is another side to the matter. We prefer to live longer. With all the possibilities we have that is an understandable wish. But this wish can also lead to fixation. It should be also possible to be enough. From a Christian outlook on life it can also be enough. Life is a gift from the Creator's hand. There is a time for consoled depart from life.

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