

Parenthood President, Churchman Debate Reform of Abortion Laws

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"The present abortion statutes of this country make hypocrites of the medical profession," Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said last night.

Speaking at a Harvard Law School Forum on "Abortion: the Issues," Guttmacher said, "Seventy per cent of the illegal abortions in the country are performed by reputable physicians, each thinking himself a knight in white armor."

Guttmacher asked for liberalization of present abortion laws, but not for outright repeal. "To allow abortion on demand," he said, "would relegate man to the status of the bull."

State Senator Albert H. Blumenthal (D-NY) concurred. Attacking the "illogic" of anti-abortion laws, he said. "When a physician prescribes abortion, the law should be compassionate and understanding enough to permit that remedy."

Murder

But the Rev. Robert F. Drinan defended abortion laws. "An unborn child is still a child," he said. "In the foetus we see God's intention to create a human being. To destroy that human being is murder."

Noting that illegal abortion is the largest racket in the country behind gambling and narcotics Drinan defended the "deterrent value" of abortion laws.

"We need a stable moral law," he said, "and the law, as it exists now," protects life. There is a right to be born."

"Abortion is not murder," Guttmacher replied. "The difference between an embryo and a living human being is immense."