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**Pro-life Movement**

The term pro-life has been applied to a number of movements focusing on concerns of bioethics. Pro-lifers have taken stances on cloning, stem cell research, euthanasia, the death penalty, and abortion. Typically these stances promote the right to life of those effected, but one who takes up the term "pro-life" does not necessarily agree with all other pro-lifers on all of the above issues. Often pro-life individuals have a religious basis for their beliefs, but this is not always true.

Some pro-lifers believe in a consistent life ethic in which all murder is wrong. This would include everything from abortion to capital punishment, or even an unjust war. Alternatively, some argue that the death penalty is an acceptable punishment for murderers. Others argue that euthanasia is acceptable for adults who have a choice in the matter but not in unborn children. In this way it would be acceptable for one who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness or had become severely incapacitated to choose to end their life through indirect euthanasia. However, many believe that those who no longer have the mental capacity to make a conscious choice regarding their own life should not be euthanized at the discretion of another. Using this same logic, an unborn child would not be able to be aborted because it does not have the mental capacity to make this decision. If this belief is coupled with a belief that life begins at fertilization, then any procedure that could destroy an embryo would also be considered murder. Thus stem cell research, in vitro fertilization, and contraception would also be grouped with abortion as murder because each could result in the loss of an embryo.

In terms of abortion, pro-lifers most often believe that life begins either at fertilization or at some point before birth. Because of this belief, participating in an abortion procedure is often seen as murder of the unborn child, or murder of a living being that does not have a representative voice in the decision on whether or not it is to live. This belief can stem from religious or secular motivations. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church has declared that anyone participating in abortion is automatically excommunicated unless they undergo a sacramental confession. Many believe that there are no extenuating circumstances for which abortion is justified. Other religions, however, such as Islam, believe that abortion is justified if it is done in order to save the life of the mother. Secular beliefs may provide an alternative reason. Many pro-lifers believe that upon fertilization the zygote already has a unique genome of human DNA and is thus a unique person with a subsequent right to life. In this sense, killing this unique zygote constitutes killing a living being and is thus murder.

On the issue of abortion, the pro-life movement is opposed by the pro-choice movement, which contends that it is a woman's right to choose whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term. Pro-choicers have different views than pro-lifers on what constitutes life in an unborn fetus and whether or not an unborn fetus thus has the same rights as a person already born.

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