From ABC-CLIO's Issues: Understanding Controversy and Society website

https://issues.abc-clio.com/

**Religious Values**

Religious beliefs can play an important role in determining the moral or ethical validity of abortion. Most religions take the issue very seriously and provide a firm stance on whether or not the procedure is allowed based on the teachings of that religion. Often factors that are taken into account are the point at which a fetus is considered "alive" and whether the procedure is acceptable if it is performed in order to save the mother's life. Religions such as Buddhism and Roman Catholicism provide examples of different stances on the issue of abortion.

Buddhism offers different views on the nature of abortion. Traditionally Buddhist beliefs hold that abortion is wrong because it involves killing a living thing. To Buddhists, the life of the fetus begins at conception, but they believe that death is only morally wrong if it is caused deliberately or by negligence. Abortion then results in bad karma both for the mother and for the aborted child. Yet if the abortion is done to save the life of the mother or if the birth will result in a severely handicapped child, many Buddhists believe that under these conditions an abortion would be justified. Still, Buddhism holds that abortion is a highly personal choice, that those involved must take full responsibility for it, and that the spiritual consequences vary depending on the motive and the level of mindfulness of the decision.

To most Roman Catholics, abortion is a grave moral wrong. Believing that a fetus is alive at the moment of conception, any type of abortion would constitute killing a living being. Since the second century, the Church has condemned abortion, and since the sixteenth century abortion could result in excommunication. Pope John Paul II reconfirmed this belief in a 1995 encyclical. Still, not all Catholics agree with this stance, citing the fact that Roman Catholic doctrine encourages adherents to follow their own moral conscience in several matters. To them, abortion, while not morally right, may be the best moral choice in a given situation.

ABC-CLIO

Copyright 2016 ABC-CLIO, LLC

This content may be used for non-commercial, classroom purposes only.

**MLA Citation:**

"Religious Values." Issues: Understanding Controversy and Society, ABC-CLIO, 2016, issues.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/958864. Accessed 2 Nov. 2016.

https://issues.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/958864

Entry ID: 958864