

Sanctity of life



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In this coursework I will explain how this effects Christian attitudes and actions relating to abortion and euthanasia. The various Christian churches have different views on Abortion and Euthanasia. The Roman Catholic teachings on abortion is that the church says that abortion should not be allowed under any circumstances, because even while still very tiny and still hardly developed the baby growing in the womb is the beginning of a human life, And another human being should not end any life created by God at any stage of its development.

All life is precious as the psalmist says 'you created every part of me, you put me together in my Mothers womb... When I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there, you saw me before I was born. Mother Teresa also sums up the Catholic attitude we read in an interview with the Tablet' God had created us to love and be loved, she said, in his own image, as evidence of his love. ' For this reason I say abortion is the greatest evil. If anyone of you does not want his own child, do not kill it, give it to me' Also connected to issues involved in abortion and the sacredness of life is euthanasia.

Our beliefs in the value of life influenced by the church also affect the way we see euthanasia. Euthanasia is the act of bringing about the easy and gentle death of a person, usually someone who is terminally ill or in great pain. For this reason it is often called 'mercy killing' There are two types of euthanasia. Voluntary or active euthanasia is when the person concerned asked someone else to help them die. They may persuade another person to assist them to die or they may refuse the medical treatment necessary to keep them alive.

Passive euthanasia is when the person concerned is no longer in a condition where they can make a decision for themselves. The decision to bring about the death is taken by relatives or medical experts. Christianity teaches that all life comes from God. 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the Earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and every other living creature that moves on the ground. (Genesis 1: 26-28) It also teaches that life is sacred. 'Your body is a temple of the Holy spirit' (1 Corinthians 6: 19)

For this reason it would be wrong and against Christian teaching to commit suicide or to take life of another person. The 6th commandment is 'You shall not kill' (Exodus 20: 30) It is clear from the bible that human beings are not to choose whether they die. 'For every thing there is a reason, and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted' (Ecclesiastes: 1-4). The Roman Catholic Church is opposed to euthanasia because it is seen as murder.

In *Evangelium vitae*, the Pope said that to cause death in this way was a grave violation of the law of God'. The church's concern is to bring the light and the life of Christ to everyone who needs it. It clearly teaches that those whose lives are diminished or weakened in any way should be treated with special care. In particular, the sick, the handicapped, the elderly should be helped to live as normal life as possible. Whatever its motives, euthanasia does mean putting a premature end to the lives of such people. In any civilised society it is morally unacceptable to even contemplate the possibility.

The four reasons this is unacceptable are: Euthanasia is a murder.

Euthanasia is contrary to the dignity of human beings. Euthanasia destroys the respect that is due to God, the beginning and end of all life. There is a clear difference discounting treatment and actively killing someone. There are certain situations in which one simply cannot prevent the eventuality of death. These must be recognised and the decision to end treatment taken in consultation with the patient, if at all possible. If not then the closest relative should be involved.

However if large doses of painkillers are used to help ease a persons suffering, and as a result the person dies, this is understood as a double effect and is permitted. Roman Catholic Church does not believe that doctors should use any extraordinary treatment to keep people alive. The Church of England holds a similar view, saying in 1992 that although the deliberation taking of a human life is forbidden, there are very strong arguments that people should not be kept alive at all costs when they are suffering intolerable pain. Christian Church's encourage the support of hospices.

Hospices are places for terminally ill people to be cared for and allowed to die in comfort and dignity without employing euthanasia. The first hospices were founded by Christians who were at the forefront in looking for compassionate alternatives to euthanasia. The Roman Catholic Church opposes passive euthanasia that is when artificial means of sustaining life are either not offered or are withdrawn. The actual teaching, which informs both of these points of view, is the Roman Catholic Church's belief about the 'sanctity of life' - the belief that human life is sacred because God creates

Human life, and no human should decide another human should die. Therefore if there are ways a person can be kept alive then they should be, and this means passive euthanasia is to be opposed. If you think about this logically this is the only position the Catholic Church could hold, otherwise you would end up saying that anyone who was ill from anything from a headache to a heart attack should be denied treatment in case it was interfering with Gods plan. Roman Catholic Christians believe that medical knowledge and understanding are inspired by God and therefore they should be used to prolong life whenever possible.

In the end Christians believe only God can decide when a persons life will end. Euthanasia is taken from a Greek word meaning 'die well'. It raises many of the same moral problems as suicide. It is used today to describe the deliberate killing of a person for reasons of 'mercy'. e. g. suffering or a terminal illness. The law says anyone doctors included who helps a patient to die risks being charged with manslaughter or murder. There are many arguments for euthanasia. God has given people dominion over living.

God wants people to have quality life. If someone has no quality of life euthanasia might be acceptable. God is love. Stopping suffering is a loving thing to do. So euthanasia could bring more glory to God than keeping a suffering person alive. People have been given freewill people should be able to use this free will to end their own lives. There are many arguments against euthanasia. There may be a purpose to suffering. People may learn from it. Life is sacred euthanasia destroys life. So it must be wrong. The Holy Spirit lives in Christians.

Euthanasia destroys God's temple. It is more compassionate to care for the dying than to speed up death. There are arguments for euthanasia. A person may reach a point where his or her life is not worth living. These apply to people whose minds are so deteriorated that they are helpless and unable to live with any dignity at all. People who are brainstem dead and have no hope of recovering consciousness but whose bodies are still technically alive. Some people support voluntary euthanasia, e.g. Exit, and believe that the law should be changed.

They believe that a person who is incurably ill should be allowed by law to have a painless (if this is their expressed wish). They also believe that doctors should be able to help patients that can't be cured to die peacefully, provided the person has signed a statement making their wishes known 30 days before. ' We have 20,000 requests for living wills each year, showing that a large proportion of the British people would like to see voluntary euthanasia become legal. Everyone should be able to have the mercy of a painless death

Richard Hume of Exit, the voluntary euthanasia society. In a living will a person asks for euthanasia in the event that they become terminally ill and unable to communicate their own decisions to relatives or doctors. Jesus did not agree with voluntary euthanasia, as we read. Simon's Mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever and as soon as Jesus arrived he was told about her. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. (Matthew 2:30-31) Jesus did not believe in euthanasia as he healed her and did not kill her.