Bioethics in the 21st Century
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• Personhood at the Beginning of Life
  – Abortion and Stem Cells

• Personhood at the End of Life
  – Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide

• Bioengineering
  – Genetic Engineering
  – Artificial Reproduction
Personhood at the Beginning of Life
Abortion
The Lord called me from the womb; from the body of my mother He named me.”

Isaiah 49:1
“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.”

Jeremiah 1:4-5
“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.”
Pro-Life Verses

“When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Psalm 139:13-16
“Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

Psalm 51:5
“If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life . . .”

Exodus 21:22-25
Arguments Against Abortion

- Biblical arguments
- Medical arguments
- Legal arguments
- Philosophical arguments
Medical Arguments

• Embryo is genetically distinct
• Heart formed (18-21 days)
• Brain wave activity (40-43 days)
Legal Arguments

Wednesday, November 9, 2011
“We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man’s knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to an answer.”

Roe v. Wade (1973)
Legal Arguments

• Burden of Proof
  Life Taker

• Benefit of the Doubt
  Life Saver
• Every woman has a right to control her own body.
  – Legal system does not recognize an absolute right over one’s body.

• Abortion should be every woman’s right.
  – Tempered by the right to life in the womb.
Pro-Abortion Rhetoric

• The fetus is mere tissue and not a person.
  – Old Testament verses illustrate there is a human being in the womb.

• Abortion is the best solution to a crisis pregnancy.
  – An unplanned pregnancy may seem like a crisis, but may be an unexpected blessing.
Church Involvement

- Individual Christians can become involved in the pro-life movement.
- Prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- Financial gifts to pro-life organizations.
- Churches should be centers of information.
Church Involvement

- Social and political involvement.
- Involvement with a pregnancy resource center.
- Pastors need to be informed about how to help women with crisis pregnancies.
Stem Cell Research
Stem Cell Research

• Background on stem cell research
• Benefits of stem cell research
  – Can produce the many different cells found within our bodies.
  – Can treat and cure human diseases.
Stem Cell Debate

• Adult stem cells
  – Raise few moral questions
  – Have been very effective
• Embryonic stem cells
  – Raise many moral questions
  – Have so far been ineffective
Stem Cell Research Options

1. Prohibit ES cell research.
2. Close off all federal funding.
3. Partial funding of existing lines.
4. Funding creation of ES cells.
5. Full federal funding of research.
Stem Cell Research

• Adult stem cell research is very successful in clinical applications.
• The biotech industry is still pushing for embryonic stem cell research.
• Politicians and the media need to tell the truth about stem cell research.
Euthanasia
History of Euthanasia

- Greeks (Pythagoreans vs. Stoics)
- Hippocratic Oath
- Euthanasia Society of England
- Hemlock Society – Derek Humphry
- Jack Kevorkian
Definitions of Personhood
Biological Criterion

“If a child were considered legally born when two days old, it could be examined to see whether it was an acceptable member of human society.”

Francis Crick
"A newborn baby is not truly human until he or she is molded by cultural influences later."

Ashley Montagu
Mental Criterion

“Humans without some minimum of intelligence or mental capacity are not persons, no matter how many of these organs are active”

Joseph Fletcher
The Moral Slide in the West

Sanctity of Life

vs

Quality of Life
Forms of Euthanasia

- Voluntary, passive euthanasia
- Voluntary, active euthanasia
- Involuntary, passive euthanasia
- Involuntary, active euthanasia
Voluntary, Passive

- Not truly euthanasia
- “Allow nature to take its course”
- Palliative care
- Living will
- Durable power of attorney
Voluntary, Active

- Something is done to hasten death.
- **Mercy dying** versus **mercy killing**.
- Secondary effect (pain medication).
- Do patients have a *duty to die*?
Involuntary, Passive

- Involves an act of omission.
- Famous cases: Karen Ann Quinlan, Nancy Cruzan, Terri Schiavo.
- Depends on what is withheld.
- The key issue often is motive.
“Nothing surprises me anymore. My great concern is that there will be 10,000 Grandma Does for every Baby Doe.”

Dr. C. Everett Koop
Euthanasia and Public Policy

• Definition of death
• Physician-assisted suicide
• The Dutch experience:
  – *Tens of thousands denied medical treatment without their consent.*
  – *Thousands killed without their consent.*
Biblical Perspective

• Biblical view of life-taking
• The so-called “right to die”
• Biblical view of death
Bioengineering
Genetic Engineering
Genetic Engineering

- Genetic counseling
- Gene splicing
- Cloning
Gene Splicing

1. Gene
2. Plasmid
3. Bacterium
4. DNA

Restriction enzyme
Benefits of Genetic Engineering

• Treat and cure genetic diseases.
• Agricultural benefits.
• Industrial processes.
• Basic scientific research.
Gene Splicing

• Social considerations
• Ethical considerations
• Theological considerations
  – Sanctity of human life
  – Natural limits to biological change
Quest for Genetic Perfection
Human Cloning

1. **Human egg donor**
2. **Donor egg**
3. **Remove nucleus**
4. **Fuse cell and enucleated egg with electricity**
5. **Egg fused with cell**
6. **Cell**
7. **Remove cell from person to be cloned**
8. **Embryo**
9. **Implant embryo into surrogate mother**
10. **Surrogate mother with cloned baby**
Why Clone Humans?

Same sex couples

Source of organs for transplants
Human Cloning
In order to avoid immune rejection, many want to clone the affected individual and use the stem cells from their clone.

This is an “end justifies the means” ethic.

Even the term “therapeutic” is deceptive since the subject is destroyed.
Biblical Principles

- We are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27-28).
- We are distinct from animals.
- Should not usurp the role of Creator.
Artificial Reproduction

• Artificial insemination
• Artificial sex selection
• In vitro fertilization
In Vitro Fertilization

1. Remove eggs and sperm
2. Combine in petri dish
3. Incubate
4. Implant in womb
Artificial Reproduction

- Social considerations
- Ethical considerations
- Theological considerations
  - Sanctity of human life
  - Moral integrity of the marriage
Resources

Various articles on bioethics and medical issues are on the Probe website:

www.probe.org