



Human Life

- 1** Government's responsibility for the political community begins with the protection of a) the lives of its citizens and b) the life-generating, life-sustaining institutions of marriage and family.
- 2** The generation of new human life belongs, by the Creator's design, to married couples, who bear primary responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children.
- 3** When pregnancy and childbirth occur outside of marriage or at a time of marital or family crisis, difficulties arise that typically call for the assumption of extraordinary responsibilities by extended family members, supportive friends and neighbors, churches, social service organizations, and/or public authorities. All such assistance should aim to support and nurture life, marriage, and the family, rather than to encourage abortion.
- 4** Abortion entails the taking of human life and is a violation of the life-generating process. Therefore, abortion should not be allowed under public law as an ordinary or standard means of family planning, or for the social and psychological convenience of those responsible for a pregnancy.
- 5** As a life-ending act, abortion should never be legalized as a freedom right of those responsible for a pregnancy. Government bears responsibility for decisions that involve the taking of life. Consequently, abortion should require public-legal authorization, and then only under circumstances of unusual danger to the pregnant woman.
- 6** With respect to the reasons why pregnancy sometimes arrives as an unwanted burden to a woman, government should do everything in the sphere of its responsibility to:
 - Support adequate health care for pregnant women and for infants
 - Encourage pregnancy counseling
 - Promote adoption
 - Strengthen foster care

Implications

1. Public-legal recognition of abortion as a “privacy right” is a violation of the norm of justice that holds government responsible, as a public matter, for the protection of life and for the authorization of decisions that take life. To the extent that this so-called privacy right is now established in law by the constitutional interpretation of the U.S. Supreme Court, it should be reversed.
2. Opposing abortion and trying to outlaw it are not sufficient ways to achieve the goal of protecting the unborn and supporting life. Protecting life and the life-generating process from before pregnancy (healthy marriage) through birth and human maturation must be the underlying aim of public policies.
3. “Crisis pregnancies” should, in almost all instances, not be the cause for considering public-legal efforts to violate or interrupt the life-generating process. Rather, such critical circumstances should be the reason to undertake public efforts to protect and strengthen marriage, discourage extramarital pregnancy, protect the unborn, and undergird families in the care of children.

For Further Reading

For more information, search on this topic at www.cpjustice.org.

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- Address the nature of political community, the task of government, and the responsibility of citizens.
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