

Position Statement on

Reproductive Technologies

Current advances in research are opening doors to possibilities in reproductive technology that were undreamed of less than a generation ago. Numerous applications based on this new information are already available to us; many more are certain to follow in the near future. Gaining knowledge is important and valuable, but it does not follow that using the tools that this new knowledge provides is invariably the right thing to do. In evaluating the use of any of these new tools, it is critical that ethical considerations be part of the process, and that the sanctity of all human life be recognized in all situations. The Salvation Army believes that these ethical considerations should be based on principles established in Scripture.

While the Bible does not speak directly to issues raised by technologies emerging in the 21st century, it does establish principles that we believe to be relevant guidelines in the evaluation of all areas of life, including our response to new technologies. Based on this belief, The Salvation Army affirms the following principles and their implications:

Human reproduction is complex. Beyond the physical component are factors that are emotional, spiritual, economic, social and moral. The Salvation Army believes that as a consequence:

- the wellbeing of the prospective children should be at the forefront of decision-making.
- comprehensive counselling for couples considering use of reproductive technologies needs to be an essential part of the decision-making process. Counselling about emotional, spiritual, economic, social and moral matters needs to be just as thorough and reliable as the medical counselling.
- people should be enabled to consider adoption or living without children to be true and fulfilling options.

The transmission of life is sacred. The Salvation Army believes that as a consequence:

- reproduction must not become a commodity – one more thing to be bought and sold. Application of reproductive technology should take place within the field of health care, not in the marketplace.
- regulations are needed both to establish standards for the development of emerging technologies and to closely monitor their application. Reproduction and genetic manipulation are far too important to society to allow a free-for-all approach. A place for controlled, well-regulated groups that legitimately assist couples who are experiencing infertility is recognized, but reproduction for profit, whether in the form of the selling of eggs, sperm or embryos, or through such practices as commercial surrogacy, violates the sacred nature of the transmission of life.

- medical treatments for infertility that are ethically justifiable ought to be available fairly. Society should not allow them to become an instrument for widening the gap between the rich and the poor.
- from the earliest moments of their existence, human embryos have a moral worth and cannot be treated simply as tissues or reproductive materials to be used or disposed of as others see fit. The Salvation Army opposes the use of embryos purely for research purposes.

All life is granted and valued by God. The Salvation Army believes that as a consequence:

- society must vigorously protect against the danger that the medical treatment of infertility will succumb to the values of “technology”. While the language of quality control and selection for desired characteristics fits the world of manufacturing, it does not fit here. It is wrong to destroy human embryos because they are of “insufficient quality” or because they lack some desired quality. An example of this is gender preference.
- the use of this technology in ways that will reduce the range and variety of human existence needs to be met with rigorous opposition. God’s creation is amazingly diverse. This diversity has been a major strength of life on Earth. While the use of genetic engineering to address problems related to any number of congenital weaknesses or abnormalities may have the potential to reduce human suffering and improve the quality of life for many, society needs to proceed with great caution.
- in a world with large numbers of abandoned, malnourished, suffering and parentless children, adoption needs to be considered as a positive alternative to reproductive technologies for adults desiring to become parents. The Salvation Army believes that the nurturing of children through fostering is another option to be considered by more families.



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