
LIFE IS PRECIOUS

Christians believe that there is something special about human beings. Being human is not the same as being anything else in the cosmos - different in nature from being a rock, a tree, a spider or a chimpanzee. Humans are 'in the image of God'. That means we share something of the nature of God - we know the difference between good and evil, we have the ability to be creative, we have a capacity to love and seek justice, and we have a nature which is in some way eternal (some people call this a soul).

Everything Christians believe about the sanctity of life follows on from this. And the

most wonderful of those facts is a belief that God knows every human individually - from the baby that lives only a few tragic minutes to the great-grandfather who celebrates his hundredth birthday. Christians also believe that God has a total and unconditional love for every human. (This is exhilarating but also challenging, because it means he must have loved Hitler as much as he loved Saint Francis of Assisi). It means that God loves you, wherever in the world you are reading this right now.

Several things follow logically from this:

Human life is very precious. In Christian ethics all humans should treat all humans with total respect. Admittedly we are not

very good at this, but that is what God has asked of us.

Humans need to respect themselves. That means Christians try to do something worthwhile with their lives. For almost all Christians it means they try not to throw their one beautiful life away by viciously abusing drugs, alcohol, tobacco and so on.

Humans need to respect others. Out of this has come the laws that have made the UK civilised - about murder, the death penalty, abortion, euthanasia, contraception, embryo experimentation and so on. All these are controversial and Christians don't agree. However, they try to have their debates about it in the context

of seeking God's best for humankind.

Human life has absolute dignity. Perhaps the most important belief of all is that God himself has inhabited a human body and so he has conferred utter dignity on human flesh. Christians believe that in Jesus God himself was walking and talking on this planet.



There was no more dozing off after the vicar started serving the extra-strength coffee *before* the service