

## Article

# Abortion and Christian Moral Decisions: An African Ecofeminist Perspective

The Expository Times  
2017, Vol. 129(2) 62–75

© The Author(s) 2016

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0014524616668948

journals.sagepub.com/home/ext



**Jonathan Kangwa<sup>1</sup>**

United Church of Zambia University, Zambia

## Abstract

Abortion is a controversial and complex matter that has been debated since the dawn of modernity. Current anti-abortion protests in some parts of the world are only the most recent examples of resistance against the legalisation of abortion. Anti-abortion protests continue to trigger debates on whether abortion is permissible from a Christian point of view. This article analyses the question of whether abortion is permissible from an African ecofeminist perspective. The article analyses ongoing protests against abortion, considers the question of moral rights and the Christian understanding of the sacredness of life, and discusses circumstances in life that may render abortion permissible. The article's contention is that life is a sacred gift from God but there are situations in life when abortion should be allowed as a painful last resort.

## Keywords

Abortion, Christianity, moral decisions, ecofeminist, Africa, moral rights

## Introduction

The debate over abortion is admittedly complex. It has medical, legal, theological, ethical, social and personal aspects. It is also a highly emotional subject, for it touches on the mysteries of human sexuality and reproduction, and often involves acutely painful dilemmas.<sup>2</sup>

Abortion is defined as the expulsion of the foetus from the womb during the first 28 weeks of pregnancy. It is the termination of pregnancy with the

intent of removing life or potential life from the product of conception.<sup>3</sup> There are two types of abortion. Therapeutic abortion occurs when the life of the mother of the unborn baby is at stake while non-therapeutic abortion refers to the case of a pregnant woman who does not want her pregnancy to continue for personal reasons.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Kangwa, United Church of Zambia University, Po Box 20429, Kitwe, ZAMBIA.

<sup>2</sup> J. Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1990), 308.

<sup>3</sup> K. Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion, Part 2*. United Church of Zambia Theological College training manual (Kitwe, Zambia, 2003), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 34.

## Corresponding author:

Jonathan Kangwa

Email: jonathankangwa@yahoo.co.uk

Generally, abortion is the interruption of pregnancy, the consequences of which affect women. Current research does not show serious effects of abortion on men.<sup>5</sup> Abortion is associated with ethical decision making. Both medical practitioners and religious leaders grapple with a number of relevant questions such as: 'Under what circumstances should a pregnancy be terminated?', 'Who has authority over the life of an unborn baby?', and 'Is the termination of an unborn life the equivalent of murder or manslaughter?'<sup>6</sup> The standpoint of Christian ethics is that these are moral problems which require moral answers. Moral answers serve as guidelines for Christians as they seek to make the right decisions concerning painful dilemmas such as abortion.<sup>7</sup>

Culture and religious beliefs have a strong impact on people's perceptions of abortion. Many of these perceptions rest on religious and cultural constructs. Religion and culture are a "complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a hu]man as a member of society".<sup>8</sup> Religion and culture enable people to share organised life in groups called society. As a result many emotions surrounding abortion are the result of people's religious and cultural worldviews.

There is an increase in the prevalence of abortion in Africa and other parts of the world. D'Souza posits that worldwide every year over 46 million pregnancies end in unsafe abortions and more than 13 per cent of these lead to the death of the pregnant woman.<sup>9</sup> In Africa over

six million women undergo unsafe abortions and over thirty thousand die from the procedure every year. Research shows that there is a high rate of death as a result of unsafe abortions in countries like Zambia, where Christians stigmatise women who choose to have an abortion.<sup>10</sup>

The high number of abortions in many countries worldwide has been a reason for pro-abortion activists to call for legalisation of the procedure and giving women access to abortion facilities in hospitals. South Africa is one of the countries that have legalised abortion so that women may benefit from safe abortion procedures.<sup>11</sup> Legalisation of abortion in South Africa has reduced the rate of deaths from unsafe abortions between 1998 and 2001 by 90 per cent.<sup>12</sup> Pro-choice activists in Africa have used South Africa as an example to plead for legalisation of abortion elsewhere in Africa in order to save the lives of women who, for lack of access to legalized abortion, turn to illegal, possibly unsafe, practitioners. However, actions in favour of legalisation have been met with resistance by anti-abortion activists and religious groups.

The question whether abortion is right or wrong raises a number of ethical dilemmas. The anti-abortion activists, looking upon procreation as a potential outcome of sexual activity, take the value and rights of an unborn human life into account as well as the welfare of the pregnant woman who needs to be protected from mental, physical, and social harm, while her sexual reproductive rights also have to be respected.<sup>13</sup> Other questions that are considered

<sup>5</sup> M. Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion, Part 1*. United Church of Zambia Theological College training manual (Kitwe, Zambia, 2003), 31.

<sup>6</sup> Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 31.

<sup>7</sup> Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 31.

<sup>8</sup> C. P. Kottak, *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity*, 9th edn (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2002), 268.

<sup>9</sup> A. K. D'Souza, 'Abortion and the Three Bodies: An Interpretive Understanding of Barriers to Abortion Access in South Africa', *The Collegiate Journal of Anthropology* 2 (2014): 1–15, on 1.

<sup>10</sup> 'Constitution has rightly provided ways in which a woman could terminate a pregnancy-Kamukoshi', *Lusaka Times*, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2016. <<https://www.lusakatimes.com/2016/03/26/constitution-has-rightly-provided-ways-in-which-a-woman-could-terminate-a-pregnancy-kamukoshi/>>. Accessed 26/03/16>.

<sup>11</sup> A. Okeowo, 'Africa's Abortion Wars', *New York Times*, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015. <[http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/15/africas-abortion-wars/?\\_r=0](http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/15/africas-abortion-wars/?_r=0)>. Accessed 17/03/16.

<sup>12</sup> Okeowo, *Africa's Abortion Wars*.

<sup>13</sup> S. L. Cahill, 'Abortion', in J. F. Childress and J. Macquarrie (eds), *A new dictionary of Christian ethics* (London: SCM press, 1986), s.v., 1.

include the interest of family members such as the father of the unborn child, other children of the mother, the religious and civil communities to which they belong, the timing of the pregnancy and possible complications at the time of giving birth.<sup>14</sup> The moral dilemma—is abortion good or bad?—arises from a failure to accept that all the factors stated above have equal value. Differing priorities in evaluating the factors results in disagreements about whether abortion is morally right or not. The present article analyses the issue of abortion, using African ecofeminism as its theoretical guideline.

Feminism is a social movement which advocates the granting of the same social, political, economic and religious rights to women as those enjoyed by men.<sup>15</sup> Feminism uses women's experience of oppression as a starting point for any analysis. Even though women have, since the industrial revolution, participated in public life, they often do not enjoy the same social, political, economic and religious rights as men. In many contemporary societies, women have a lower social status and are discriminated against socially, economically, politically, and religiously.<sup>16</sup> To challenge patriarchy and the relationship between class, gender, and race in male-dominated societies, feminism advances four major ideological positions that emphasise political commitment. These are Marxist or socialist feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, and ecofeminism. The present article draws only on ecofeminism.

Feminist activists and scholars often promote women's right to abortion from a radical feminist standpoint. Radical feminism holds that the oppression and inferior position of women in society are due to a class system based on sex and patriarchy.<sup>17</sup> It argues that the origin of

the class system discriminating against women results from biologically determined reproductive roles of male and female and that it therefore predates all other forms of oppression of women.<sup>18</sup> This oppression is mainly maintained by male-instituted social structures such as the family under a patriarchal system, motherhood, love, sexual intimacy between men and women, and religion. These institutions, radical feminists insist, promote the psychological power of men at the expense of that of women. The behaviour and actions of women are measured by the degree to which they please men.<sup>19</sup> To counter such patriarchal structures, radical feminists advocate the development of better contraceptive technology to free women from having to give birth when they are not ready for it. They suggest that social structures, perceived as maintaining and promoting male dominance, need to be destroyed to free women from oppression. A new social order must ensure that the responsibility for reproduction is carried by the entire society, involving both men and women. Recognising women's oppression in society, radical feminists insist that abortion has to be legalised.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly radical feminism considers male supremacy as the defining characteristic of contemporary society.<sup>21</sup> The recent protests against abortion in Scotland, Zambia, and other countries appear to be largely motivated by patriarchal notions that are deeply entrenched in society.<sup>22</sup> These notions often neglect the views and experiences of women who bear the burden of pregnancy and abortion. Radical feminists plead that abortion must be available to

<sup>14</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 1.

<sup>15</sup> W. L. Kibera and A. Kimoti, *Fundamentals of Sociology of Education with Reference to Africa* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2007), 24.

<sup>16</sup> Kibera and Kimoti, *Fundamentals of Sociology of Education*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 4; L. L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (New York: Pearson, 2011), 16.

<sup>18</sup> Kibera & Kimoti, *Fundamentals of Sociology of Education*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> Kibera & Kimoti, *Fundamentals of Sociology of Education*, 48.

<sup>20</sup> Kibera & Kimoti, *Fundamentals of Sociology of Education*, 49.

<sup>21</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 4; Lindsey, *Gender Roles*, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Given that countries in the world have different laws regarding abortion, the article draws only on examples from Scotland in the global north and Zambia in the global south.

every woman who wishes to undergo the procedure.<sup>23</sup> As regards the rights of the foetus, they argue that women in childbearing need to be given social support including protection of their freedom of choice. They stipulate that women who have an abortion do so as a last resort. Radical feminists emphasise that abortion helps women to enjoy the same freedom as men.<sup>24</sup> They recognise and advocate women's rights to economic empowerment and to self-determination, including where childbearing is concerned. However, the exclusion of the rights of the unborn child from their agenda makes the radical-feminist approach less holistic and only partially emancipatory. For this reason, the present article proposes African ecofeminism as offering more holistic guidelines to address the question of abortion.

Ecofeminism is a new branch of feminism. It holds that the oppression and marginalization of women and the exploitation of nature are intertwined. Ecofeminism challenges world religions such as Christianity and Islam to accept their ethical responsibility to challenge patriarchal systems exploiting women as well as the earth.<sup>25</sup> Ecofeminism emphasises the interdependence of humanity, non-human forms of life and the earth. According to ecofeminists, earth can only be healed and ecological harmony restored through political action that focuses on the principle of equality of all species, be they humans, animals or plants, and including earth mysteries.<sup>26</sup>

The political theory of ecofeminism is in agreement with the African worldview that every part of God's created order is related to every other part, supporting each other in a complex web of life. An awareness of the existence and importance of non-human life forms and of earth mysteries is essential in the building

up of an ecologically balanced world order.<sup>27</sup> From an African perspective, ecofeminism recognises the interdependence of everything created, including unborn life. This understanding of God's creation may offer a positive contribution to the debates about abortion. It is therefore in order first to analyse the various views on abortion.

## Pro- and Anti-Abortion Arguments

The views on abortion can be divided into two categories. On the one hand there are the pro-abortionists. They strongly believe that pregnancy as a product of conception belongs entirely to them and that they have therefore the right to decide whether to keep the foetus or abort it. They consider a forced or an unwanted pregnancy as a violation of women's rights. A number of women's groups and movements have been formed to draw the attention of governments and the general public to the right of women to make independent choices where their bodies are concerned.<sup>28</sup> An outstanding concern in campaigns for women's rights is that for the right to self-determination, including on issues of reproductive health and, access to safe and dignified abortion services.<sup>29</sup> On the opposite side of the debate we find the anti-abortionists. They strongly believe that human life begins at conception and that any act leading to termination of a pregnancy constitutes murder. Protection of the rights of the baby before and after birth is of paramount importance.<sup>30</sup>

Scotland is one of the countries in the world that have witnessed anti-abortion activism. A group of anti-abortion activists called '40

<sup>23</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 4.

<sup>24</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 4.

<sup>25</sup> Lindsey, *Gender Roles*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Lindsey, *Gender roles*, 17; R. R. Ruether, 'Ecology and theology: Ecojustice at the Centre of Church's Mission', *Interpretation* 65 (2011): 355–65.

<sup>27</sup> Ruether, 'Ecology and Theology', 360.

<sup>28</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 34; J. R. Cook et al., 'International Development in Abortion Law from 1988 to 1998', *American Journal of Public Health* 89.4 (1999), 579–86.

<sup>29</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian perspectives on Abortion*, 34.

<sup>30</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian perspectives on Abortion*, 34; Cook et al., *International Development in Abortion Law*.

Days for Life' staged protests outside Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow during the months of February and March 2016.<sup>31</sup> The new 'super' university hospital was targeted because of abortions being performed in Scottish NHS facilities. It is asserted that more than 30 babies a day are being aborted in Scotland.<sup>32</sup> 40 Days for Life was founded in the USA in 2004 by activists against abortion. The organisation has spread to about 25 countries. The Abortion Rights Committee in Scotland has observed that, while the campaign may be peaceful, the action is intimidating staff at the hospital as well as patients, including women who may want to undergo an abortion.<sup>33</sup>

Anti-abortion protests are fuelled by the fear that termination of pregnancy may be legalised "up until the point of birth" when responsibility for the matter is handed over to parliament, Holyrood.<sup>34</sup> It is reported that the anti-abortion activists in Scotland use harassment and intimidation. They are for example accused of distributing medically inaccurate literature claiming that abortion causes cancer. Anti-abortion activists sometimes "direct women away from regulated health clinics to 'crisis pregnancy centres' run by pro-life groups".<sup>35</sup>

Campaigns against abortion are often inspired by religious motives. The anti-abortionists in Scotland have the full support of Christian and Muslim communities. An umbrella organisation, named 'Don't Stop a Beating Heart', is

co-ordinated by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) Scotland, which has the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church, the Muslim Council of Scotland, and the Free Church of Scotland among others.<sup>36</sup> This is why the 2016 protests against abortion in Scotland were organised during the six weeks period of Lent, observed by Christians.

The situation is similar in other countries. Zambia, for example, enacted the Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1972, which amended the Penal Code concerning the law of abortion. The act permits abortion under specific circumstances.<sup>37</sup> The Zambian constitution provides guidelines for when a doctor may recommend abortion. As the Central Province Police Commissioner, Lombe Kamukoshi notes, termination of pregnancy is permissible when the mother's life is in danger.<sup>38</sup> However, abortion is strongly condemned by the Christian community, and those who undergo the procedure are victimised and stigmatised. This is obvious from a pastoral letter from the Catholic bishops which states:

The recent enactment of the Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1972 affords an occasion to the Catholic Bishops of Zambia to remind the Catholic community in Zambia of the unchanging doctrine of the Catholic Church on abortion. ... Abortion is the deliberate killing of a non-viable unborn child. Abortion is morally wrong. Regardless of the reasons that lead to abortion, or the circumstances attending it; whether it is performed in a hospital, in a clinic or secretly, abortion is evil and nothing can make it good.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>31</sup> G. Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland to target Glasgow's new super hospital', *The Herald Scotland*, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2016. <[http://m.heraldsotland.com/news/14209093.First\\_US\\_style\\_anti\\_abortion\\_protests\\_in\\_Scotland\\_to\\_target\\_Glasgow\\_s\\_new\\_super\\_hospital/?ref=ebln](http://m.heraldsotland.com/news/14209093.First_US_style_anti_abortion_protests_in_Scotland_to_target_Glasgow_s_new_super_hospital/?ref=ebln)>. Accessed 17/01/15.

<sup>32</sup> Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland'.

<sup>33</sup> Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland'.

<sup>34</sup> Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland'.

<sup>35</sup> Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland'.

<sup>36</sup> Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland'.

<sup>37</sup> J. Komakoma, *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia: Major Pastoral Letters and Atatements, 1953–2001* (Ndola: Mission Press, 2003), 81.

<sup>38</sup> 'Constitution has rightly provided ways in which a woman could terminate a pregnancy-Kamukoshi'.

<sup>39</sup> Cited in Komakoma, *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops*, 81.

The Catholic Church is joined by Protestant churches, which strongly condemn abortion. This negative view is reinforced by the official declaration that Zambia considers itself a Christian nation. Protests from religious circles against the legalisation of abortion has led to an increase in the number of unsafe abortions as women avoid going to hospitals for fear of being victimised by members of the public. The Roman Catholic Church pastoral letter confirms the church's viewpoint stating:

Thus it can be and should be clearly understood that the legalisation of abortion under certain circumstances by the civil authority does not in any way make the act of abortion any more acceptable to the Catholic Church. No matter what arguments, medical or social, are adduced, no matter what precautions or provisions are laid down to surround the act of abortion with safeguards, the Catholic Church cannot accept them as making the performance of abortion morally good.<sup>40</sup>

The reason for the outright condemnation of abortion by the Christian community in Zambia is that abortion is considered murder. Abortion is seen as undermining respect for the life of a human being, namely the unborn infant, in addition to violating various other values and considerations.<sup>41</sup> Each nation has laws that provide guidelines for abortion. Governments across the globe determine the circumstances in which abortion is legal or illegal or whether the procedure should be altogether forbidden. Generally the legality of an abortion can be settled in the courts of law. Statistics concerning the matter vary from country to country.<sup>42</sup> Many countries have made legal provisions to accommodate abortion. In the United Kingdom abortion is allowed in line with the 1967 Abortion Act. However, other countries submit women

who choose to have pregnancies terminated to punitive measures.<sup>43</sup> In Zambia the Christian community insists that the law is not above the Christian injunction which forbids killing a human being.<sup>44</sup> The present article argues that there is a need to revisit the Christian understanding of the moral right to abortion.

## Moral Aspects of the Right to Abortion

Pro-abortionists and anti-abortionists have different views on the moral aspects of the right to abortion. Pro-abortionists are of the opinion that women should be supported in decisions they make about their own bodies and their reproductive health. According to Simpungwe, Cook et al., Schroedel, and Cahill, recognition of the moral right to abortion offers five advantages:<sup>45</sup>

- Women are able to exercise their right to self-determination, including where it concerns their reproductive health. They are free to determine whether they want to continue a pregnancy and become mothers.
- If a pregnancy proves to be an obstacle to career advancement, its termination enables women to realise their dreams and talents as equal partners with men in society. Many women have not been able to fulfil their hopes in life owing to an unplanned pregnancy and motherhood whereas their male counterparts experience no such obstacles. Women have stayed at home to care for children or have taken up less demanding jobs while the fathers of such unplanned children managed to realise their dreams. Abortion

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Komakoma, *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops*, 82.

<sup>41</sup> Komakoma, *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops*, 83.

<sup>42</sup> Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 32.

<sup>43</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 34.

<sup>44</sup> Komakoma, *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops*, 82.

<sup>45</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 34–5; Cahill, 'Abortion', 2–5; Cook et al., 'International Development in Abortion Law'; J. R. Schroedel, *Is the Foetus a Person? A Comparison of Policies across the Fifty States* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000).

becomes necessary when women want to give their undivided attention to studying or pursuing a career.

- If abortion is legal, a woman will not feel she is forced to sacrifice herself for the sake of the foetus. Some women become miserable when they fall pregnant. They hate themselves for getting into such a situation. They feel no love for the foetus and the resulting conditions are psychologically and physically unfavourable for both mother and child.
- Complications from unsafe abortions, such as deaths and disabilities, are reduced when abortions are legal and carried out professionally. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that approximately 20 million unsafe abortions occur every year resulting in approximately 78,000 maternal deaths and hundreds of thousands of disabled women, especially in developing countries. If abortion is not legalised women cannot access abortion services from well-trained health professionals and turn to underground practitioners whose methods may be unhygienic and cause complications.
- In cases of pregnancy caused by rape or incest, women recover better from their psychological trauma if they have the legal option to terminate the pregnancy. Conceiving after a rape experience is one of the worst things that can happen to a woman because the baby might be a constant reminder of her terrible experience. Some women choose to keep the baby anyway, but many others see abortion as the correct and helpful answer to their predicament.

On the basis of the above-listed advantages of granting women the moral right to have an abortion the pro-abortionists have condemned the campaigns held against abortion in countries like Scotland.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Braiden, 'First US-style anti-abortion protests in Scotland'.

However, anti-abortionists reason that the right to abortion has disadvantages of which Simpungwe, Cook et al., Eapen, and Rooney mention the following:<sup>47</sup>

- There is a risk of abortion services being abused to terminate pregnancies without seriously considering the alternative of keeping the baby or of simply preventing pregnancy.
- As legalised abortion services are paid for and in high demand, access to such services may be limited to women who can afford it and denied to those with low incomes. In some countries abortions are legalised but expensive. Legalisation of abortion then risks service's becoming commercialised to the extent that only the rich benefit. Thus the purpose of legalisation, namely, the empowerment of all women to make their own choices regarding reproduction, would be defeated.
- Abortion may cause grief, feelings of guilt, and depression if after the procedure a woman is unable to conceive. Some women fail to fall pregnant after interrupting their first pregnancy. They hate and condemn themselves and end up seeking medical assistance to overcome their feelings of guilt at having killed an innocent life.
- People who abort are, if their choice becomes known, usually victimised or stereotyped by society. Most women of whose pregnancies others are aware tend to say that they had a miscarriage (when in reality they underwent an abortion) because they fear stigmatization.

<sup>47</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 35–6; Cook et al., 'International Development in Abortion Law'; S. Eapen, 'Abortion and Unplanned Pregnancy', *Journal of the American Medical Association* 283:12 (2000): 1565–7; B. Rooney, 'Maternal age and fetal loss: Having an induced abortion increases risk in future pregnancies', *British Medical Journal* 322.7283 (2001): 430.

Research shows that, both in countries with laws that permit abortion and in those that do not, women and teenagers get pregnancies terminated. To prevent the occurrence of abortions, countries need to provide intensive health education, including methods of avoiding pregnancy and planning the birth of children. Such education should preferably begin early on in adolescence.<sup>48</sup> If possible information on facilities offering family planning services should be made available in schools, churches, and other religious centres and in places where people spend their time with friends. Governments should adopt a policy of subsidising the cost of family planning services to make these affordable. Investing in family planning services is cheaper than treating the complications of unsafe abortions.<sup>49</sup> It is also necessary that Christians obtain a holistic and realistic understanding of abortion.

## Christian Perspectives on Life

Many Christian traditions question the moral aspects of a decision in favour of abortion. Cahill notes:

The Christian tradition brings to the question of abortion not only respect for the lives of all human individuals but also an extreme caution (if not absolute prohibition) regarding the killing of innocent persons. Abortion has never been seen as in itself a good, or even as morally neutral. However, Christians throughout their history have not been unanimous in determining exactly from what point in the process of conception, gestation, and birth the unborn offspring of human parents deserve the full respect and protection due to “innocent persons”, nor on the circumstances which could morally justify a resort to abortion either early or late in pregnancy.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 36.

<sup>49</sup> Simpungwe, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 36; Cook et al., *International Development in Abortion Law*.

<sup>50</sup> Cahill, ‘Abortion’, 1–2.

Biblically and theologically, views of abortion are not fully articulated. The word ‘abortion’ is not found in the bible. However, there are biblical texts about God’s creation of human life that no one has the right to terminate (Gn. 1–2, 26–27; Ps. 8:4–5, 139:13–16; Acts 17:25–28; Dt. 27:25; Pr. 6:16–19; Exodus 20:13, 21:12). The texts indicate that God knows the destiny of a human being before its birth. It is emphasised God alone has power over life and can decide to end it (Job 1:21, Ps. 104:29). The bible presents a sacred understanding of life: it comes from God and therefore is sacred. The implication of this sacramental view of life is that it should not be terminated at all. It must be allowed to flourish.<sup>51</sup> Proverbs 24:11–12 notes:

If you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who go staggering to the slaughter; if you say, ‘Look, we did not know this’—does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it? And will he not repay all according to their deeds?<sup>52</sup>

Many prophets and leaders in ancient Israel are presented in the biblical text as being aware that God knew them before they were born (Jr. 1:4–5, Is. 49:1–5, Ps. 22:9–10, 51:5, Jdg. 13:2–5) and that every aspect of their lives was predestined (Jr. 1:4–5, Gn. 25:22–26; Lk. 2:41–42). In spite of this sacramental perception of life there are many instances in the bible of God allowing the termination of life, sometimes in bizarre circumstances (Job 1:6–22; 2 Sam. 11:1–23). Bwalya rightly observes:

However, even when precautions are made, human existence is full of imperfections and difficult circumstances which make people to decide to abort. The decision to abort is personal. In some cases, it is corporate, involving other people. The stark reality is that, in deciding

<sup>51</sup> Bwalya, *Christian perspectives on abortion*, 32.

<sup>52</sup> All bible quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.



to abort, one decides on behalf of the unborn baby.<sup>53</sup>

The bible attaches much importance to the value of the lives of both the mother and her unborn child. Exodus 21:22–23 states that, if the quarrelling of men causes a woman to miscarry, the guilty one shall be punished by paying a fine to the woman's husband. On the other hand, if a woman is killed, the offender must be killed as well. In both passages the value of the woman's life is emphasised. No human is allowed to take the life of a woman but God alone.<sup>54</sup>

The bible also stipulates God's intimate love for the unborn life. The life of the unborn child is sacred. Both the Old and New Testaments confirm God's involvement in the formation of the unborn child and God's hope that human beings will produce descendants and thus future generations (Gn. 4:1, Jr. 1:5, Mt. 1:18). Early Christian theologians, such as Clement of Alexandria, associated abortion with sexual immorality and prohibited drugs that can kill the unborn life.<sup>55</sup> Tertullian, Jerome, and Augustine all condemned abortion despite agreeing that the unborn life has no soul (and therefore lacks human identity) until some time after its conception. Augustine in particular believed that the foetus was animated or ensouled only at 46 days of age. Nevertheless he regarded abortion as a serious sin. He also condemned any form of contraception in marriage.<sup>56</sup> Thomas Aquinas held a different view on abortion. In his *Summa Theologiae* III he states that the foetus is not ensouled at conception. Drawing on Aristotle, he posits that the foetus is ensouled at 40 days in the case of a male and 90 days in that of a female. He argues that "one who causes an abortion by striking a pregnant woman commits the sin of homicide only if the foetus is formed. Placing the lives of mother and foetus

on a par, he rejects killing the mother in order to baptise the foetus, even though its eternal life may be at stake".<sup>57</sup>

Generally the Roman Catholic Church is against abortion except when it concerns indirect abortion. Indirect abortion includes for example the removal of the uterus when it is affected by cancer and of the fallopian tube when there is question of an ectopic pregnancy.<sup>58</sup> The church holds that the foetus has a right to the same care and protection given to human beings. On the other hand Protestant churches such as the Church of Scotland and the United Church of Zambia see "procreation as an important natural and divinely mandated purpose of sexual activity".<sup>59</sup> They stress that the life of the foetus has value in the same way as that of a human being.

Clearly, Christians view abortion differently. The Christian belief in creation and redemption supports the preservation of human life. The unborn child is created in the image of God and is sacred. On the other hand it is clear that, due to the fallen nature of the world, human beings face complex issues requiring them to make ethical decisions. The life and work of Jesus Christ provide human beings with sufficient grace, forgiveness, and power to deal with heartbreaking circumstances and to make choices as difficult as the decision to undergo an abortion.<sup>60</sup> The different viewpoints on abortion show how complex a matter it is. It is not simply a question of adhering to biblical or theological arguments. It encompasses moral and gendered-ethical considerations. Given that the mother makes decisions affecting her unborn child raises questions about the rights of that child and if in certain circumstances cutting off its chances to live is permissible.

<sup>53</sup> Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 32.

<sup>54</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 2.

<sup>55</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 2.

<sup>56</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 2.

<sup>57</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 2.

<sup>58</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 3.

<sup>59</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 3.

<sup>60</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 4.

## When is Abortion Permissible?

Human experience is the starting point and the ending point of the hermeneutical circle. Codified tradition both reaches back to roots in experience and is constantly renewed or discarded through the test of experience. 'Experience' includes experience of the divine, experience of oneself, and experience of the community and world, in an interacting dialectic.<sup>61</sup>

As already noted, there is no consensus as to if and when abortion is permissible. It is argued by pro-choice activists that abortion is a private matter and that the pregnant woman has the right to a choice. This position values the woman's right of self-determination. Anti-abortion activists, however, argue that women are not given enough information about the development of the foetus, the abortion procedure and alternative help that may be available. Therefore, their choice cannot be based on sufficient knowledge. Furthermore the anti-abortionists consider the life of an unborn baby as equivalent to that of its mother. Making life and destiny of an unborn baby subordinate to that of its mother is seen as wrong.<sup>62</sup> Clearly, the unborn baby has human rights such as the right to life, to food and to bodily growth. Unfortunately the rights of unborn babies are not captured by government's constitutions and the result is the social exclusion of unborn babies.<sup>63</sup> The human rights of the foetus are based on the perception that unborn babies are a sacred gift from God and sustained by him. Human beings cannot consciously decide that they may terminate the life of an unborn baby.

The unborn baby—though powerless, naïve, and speechless—has human rights because it is a sacred creation of God, made to serve a special purpose (Gn. 25:22–24). The life of unborn babies ought to be respected, lest we terminate a child of destiny who was meant to bring progress and liberation to a nation. Vicky Allan outlines the views of anti-abortion organisations in Scotland. The 'Don't Stop a Beating Heart' campaign has been organised by a coalition of religious groups in Scotland to put pressure on the government not to legalise abortion up to the time of birth.<sup>64</sup> The group also advocates against the use of the morning-after pill or terminating a three-day pregnancy. Allan notes:

The religious organisations behind the movement are united in their opposition to abortion, whether for a woman who has been raped, the victim of incest, a foetus diagnosed with severe disability, or anything other than the most severe threat to the mother's life. Even then, many of them question that as a 'justification'.<sup>65</sup>

The Christian Action Research and Education in Scotland finds it difficult to determine whether the majority of contraception methods stops the woman from ovulating or stops the fertilised egg from implanting itself in the womb. Therefore the action group promotes abstinence instead of the use of contraceptives.<sup>66</sup>

Pro-abortionists, on the other hand, insist that abortion is permissible when the life of the mother or that of an unborn baby itself is in danger. According to Allan, official records show that about 8.2 million women have undergone an abortion in the UK alone in the past fifty

<sup>61</sup> R. R. Ruether in S. Rakoczy, *In Her name: Women Doing Theology* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2004), 15; cf. R. R. Ruether, 'Ecofeminism: Symbolic and Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and Domination of Nature', in C. J. Adams (ed.), *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 13–23.

<sup>62</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 4.

<sup>63</sup> Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 32.

<sup>64</sup> V. Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay—even in cases of rape', *The Herald Scotland*, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 <[http://m.heraldsotland.com/news/14210094\\_Under\\_no\\_circumstances\\_is\\_abortion\\_okay\\_even\\_in\\_cases\\_of\\_rape\\_I\\_m\\_also\\_against\\_most\\_contraception\\_I\\_d\\_go\\_for\\_abstinence\\_Inside\\_the\\_minds\\_of\\_the\\_men\\_and\\_women\\_behind\\_Scotland\\_s\\_new\\_anti-abortion\\_movement/?ref=mr&lp=2](http://m.heraldsotland.com/news/14210094_Under_no_circumstances_is_abortion_okay_even_in_cases_of_rape_I_m_also_against_most_contraception_I_d_go_for_abstinence_Inside_the_minds_of_the_men_and_women_behind_Scotland_s_new_anti-abortion_movement/?ref=mr&lp=2)>. Accessed 22/01/16.

<sup>65</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>66</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

years.<sup>67</sup> But, Roseann Reddy, co-founder of the 'Sisters of the Gospel of Life', a pregnancy crisis service set up by the late Cardinal Winning, states that there is no reason that could possibly justify abortion.<sup>68</sup> It is argued that there exists no evidence that abortion has ever saved any woman's life in the UK.

Pro-abortionists, however, find abortion permissible when the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. Rape is a critical issue when it comes to abortion in the UK. However, anti-abortion activists stick to the view that, although rape is a horrible experience, abortion is no solution as it involves taking human life. Regardless of how the child is conceived, abortion is wrong. The Muslim Council of Scotland categorically states that terminating such pregnancies is not acceptable as it does not negate the rape or the incest.<sup>69</sup> Instead of undoing the trauma, abortion adds another trauma to the suffering of women. As the perpetrator of incest or rape is not killed, it is not fair to kill the resulting innocent human life in the woman's womb. It is also argued that of the circa 8.2 million abortions performed in the UK in the last fifty years, very few were the result of incest or rape.<sup>70</sup>

Among the conditions that, in the eyes of pro-abortionists, justify abortion, is when it is discovered that the baby is or will be disabled or when the pregnant woman is disabled. While the UK has greatly improved disability rights, the life of disabled unborn babies is discriminated against. In more than ninety per cent of the cases of unborn babies diagnosed with Down's syndrome, pregnancies are terminated.<sup>71</sup> Anti-abortion activists condemn the termination of pregnancy based on disability. Abortion on the basis of disability is illegal and considered equivalent to capital punishment which has been abolished in many countries. Anti-abortionists make the point that tests

showing that an unborn baby is disabled may be faulty. In that case, abortion could mean getting rid of a possibly healthy human being.<sup>72</sup> Life is equal and sacred whether a person is disabled or not. After all, there are people who are able-bodied but who turn out to be mentally ill.

Anti-abortionists argue that in countries where abortion is legal, the law has been abused. For example, while the 1967 abortion law in the UK was intended to give access to good medical facilities for those who wished to have an abortion for valid reasons, certified by doctors, in practice about ninety-eight per cent of performed abortions are technically illegal under the terms of the act, and many women suffer from post-abortion trauma. Thus anti-abortion activists want to see the law rolled back.<sup>73</sup>

From the aforementioned, one might conclude that there is no such a thing as a permissible abortion. All life—undeveloped, developing, and developed—is sacred. Abortion should be treated as a complex situational reality without easy answers. When it occurs, those who perform it should do so, not as 'terminators' but, after having done everything humanly possible to avoid an abortion, in painful submission to the need of the hour. This need should be determined by a very careful consideration of the circumstances of the unborn baby and its mother.<sup>74</sup>

## **Towards an African Ecofeminist Understanding of Abortion**

It is generally agreed that African cultures emphasise the centrality of procreation in marriage for the sake of continuing life and the family lineage.<sup>75</sup> Among the Bemba people

<sup>67</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>68</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>69</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>70</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>71</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>72</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>73</sup> Allan, 'Under no circumstances is abortion okay'.

<sup>74</sup> Bwalya, *Christian Perspectives on Abortion*, 33.

<sup>75</sup> L. Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997); R. M. Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo* (Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House, 1980); J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1969); Y. A. Chondoka, *Traditional Marriages in Zambia* (Ndola: Mission Press, 1988), 161.

of Zambia heterosexual<sup>76</sup> marriage is seen as meant for sexual pleasure and procreation.<sup>77</sup> The birth of a child and pregnancy itself are considered to be a blessing of fecundity from the ancestors and the creator God.<sup>78</sup> Inability to have a child in marriage indicates a lack of blessings from the ancestors.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the birth of a child is a celebrated event.

The Bemba encourage child spacing for the sake of the health of the baby but, because children are highly valued, no herbs are used as a form of contraception. It is said that *ubukulu bwankoko masako* ("the respect of the chicken lies in its feathers"). This means that continuity of life and the respect for a person are associated with his/her procreative performance.<sup>80</sup> If a man or woman dies before having a child he or she is buried with a small piece of charcoal (*umufito*) inserted in the anus. Barren women are buried with a cob of maize. These rituals aim to ensure that their spirit's bareness or infertility does not come back to possess another living person. No child is named after a person who dies without bearing a child. If a woman takes long to get pregnant, elders in the village find herbs for her and her husband to increase their fertility and ensure that procreation occurs.<sup>81</sup> Procreation gives assurance to the parents of a child that there will be life after death.<sup>82</sup> In other words, they will become ancestors or 'living dead' after their passing.<sup>83</sup> Failure to bear a child is regarded as a curse. It means that one's

life will not continue after death and no-one will bear one's name.<sup>84</sup>

Kambole notes that the Bemba people of Zambia look after their pregnant wives well to secure the safety of the unborn child.<sup>85</sup> The pregnant woman is expected to eat good food and have enough time to rest, and receives support from the entire community. Measures are taken to ascertain that the unborn baby will not die through witchcraft performed by people with evil intentions. The pregnant woman is not allowed to greet any person or visit social events until the child has been safely delivered.<sup>86</sup> The unborn baby is not considered a full human being but rather as a human being without a body, but with a spirit, who has been inserted into the womb of its mother by the ancestors and the creator God (Lesa). In other words, the unborn child is a human being with a soul but lacking a physical body. Naming rituals are performed to initiate a newly born child into the human community after which it is called *umuntu*, a human being with a physical body.

The death of an unborn baby is the death of a human being. For this reason when a pregnant woman dies along with the baby she carries, the child has to be removed and buried on its own. Burying the foetus—a human being—in another human being's womb is not acceptable.<sup>87</sup> If a man is found to be responsible for his pregnant wife's death through having committed adultery<sup>88</sup> or by mistreating her, for punishment he has to remove the foetus from his deceased wife's womb by himself in her grave before burial can take place.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>76</sup> There were also cases when homosexuality was practiced between men and young boys.

<sup>77</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 102–3.

<sup>78</sup> Magesa, *African Religion*, 146–8; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 117.

<sup>79</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 113.

<sup>80</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 104; Chondoka, *Traditional Marriages*, 161.

<sup>81</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 103.

<sup>82</sup> Magesa, *African Religion*, 82.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. A. K. Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage: A Christian Theological Appraisal* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011), 77.

<sup>84</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 110.

<sup>85</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 105.

<sup>86</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 104.

<sup>87</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 106.

<sup>88</sup> It is believed among the Bemba people that adultery by the husband can cause the death of the wife during labour (*inchila*). If the woman dies immediately after giving birth, it is believed that she has committed adultery (*incentu*).

<sup>89</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 105–6; cf. Magesa, *African Religion*, 84; J. Kangwa, 'Reclaiming the Values of Indigenous Female Initiation Rites as a Strategy for HIV Prevention: A Gendered Analysis of Chisungu Initiation Rites Among the Bemba People of Zambia' (M.Th. thesis: University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2011).

Abortion is forbidden. It is equated to witchcraft and to killing an innocent person. Those who practice it do so in secret and, if found out, are shunned by the community. A woman who practices abortion is considered wicked (*shonongo*).<sup>90</sup> Abortion defiles the community and is a grave offense of the ancestors. The duty to protect unborn children and babies is emphasised by both female tutors of initiation (*bana chimbusa*) and male tutors (*bashichimbusa*). Tutors would sing:

Nemwine nshilya fyamako ("I do not eat food from my in-laws.").

Nabampe nsenya wandi nabamope ("Give me my caterpillar.").

Nemwine nshilya fyamako ("I do not eat food from my in-laws.").

Nabampe nsenya wandi nabamope ("Give me my caterpillar").

This song tells a couple not to worry about what in-laws and others in their community say or eat. Their own important responsibility is to take care of children until they are grown up. The caterpillar symbolises a baby, born or unborn, who is a gift from God.

Africans believe that abortion defiles the community. According to the Bemba worldview, abortion may potentially affect the ecological order to the extent of ancestors punishing the entire community by withdrawing rains or sending pestilence. In addition, the blood of the innocent victim of an abortion will harm people who eat food prepared in the home where the operation was performed. They might for example get a particular sickness that affects the neck. Elders need to perform rituals to cleanse the community and appease the ancestors so that peace and harmony in the community will be restored.<sup>91</sup> Miscarriage in general, also if not

induced (*ukupulumuna ifumo*), has the same effect on the community. Mageša notes:

For Africans, conception and birth in the human species correspond very closely to the same activities in the plant and animal species. They correspond also to human contact with the soil and its fertility, that is, cultivation, planting and harvesting. Similarly, they are related to the cosmological realities of seasons, in Africa the rainy and dry seasons. If we keep in mind the relationship of human life to nature, to creation, we can more fully appreciate why in African Religion the beginnings of human life make demands on creation, and how, conversely, "natural" events have immediate religious implications for human life.<sup>92</sup>

Some women know herbs that induce miscarriage, but their application is condemned as being based on bad motives. The loss of an unborn child means to the Bemba people the death of human spirit and the loss of blood. The death of a newborn baby owing to negligence attracts serious punishment for its parents.<sup>93</sup> It is believed that a child—born or unborn—is "the outcome of human act, God's creation and ancestral blessing".<sup>94</sup>

In some African communities the birth of twins, of an albino, of disabled children, and of children who cut their first teeth from the upper jaw is considered a curse. Sometimes these children are killed through the performance of rituals to ensure that their spirits do not return. Among the Bemba of Zambia, however, twins, albinos, and disabled children are not killed but through rituals incorporated into the community. On the other hand, in ancient Bemba society children who cut teeth from the upper jaw were considered a curse (*ichinkula*) and as likely to bring calamity to the community. Such children were killed by being thrown into the river to make certain that their spirits would not return.<sup>95</sup> Killing a child in that manner was socially acceptable

<sup>90</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 106; cf. Mageša, *African Religion*, 85.

<sup>91</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*; Chondoka, *Traditional Marriages*.

<sup>92</sup> Mageša, *African Religion*, 81–2.

<sup>93</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 107.

<sup>94</sup> Mageša, *African Religion*, 83; cf. Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 75.

<sup>95</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*; Mageša, *African Religion*, 84.

and therefore would not result in a calamity hitting the community or in punishment from the ancestors. There were, however, parents who chose not to adhere to these traditions.

Clearly, African cultures value the life of an unborn child and abortion is not permissible in African communities. However, there are circumstances in which the termination of life may be accepted. This is the case when the taking of a life will benefit the entire community, whereas sustaining it might pose threats to the wellbeing of the group as a whole. This implies that the wellbeing of the community is of paramount importance. Individuals need to consider the welfare of their community before attending to their personal needs. Every action in the context of the community has to support the wellbeing of human as well as non-human forms of life in God's created order, and Africans are aware of the need for human life and activity to be in close harmony with nature.<sup>96</sup>

The Bemba of Zambia perceive procreation and conception as having ecological significance. They believe that "conception indicates and assures that the universe is in good order and that the ancestors are happy".<sup>97</sup> Pregnancy is celebrated by the extended family and the entire clan. Rituals that are associated with ecological concerns are performed after the birth of the child. The placenta (*ichisa*) and the navel cord (*umutoto*) are buried under the *mufungo* or the *musafwa*, fruit bearing trees which are important in the context of fertility beliefs. Through such rituals a fruitful life, good health and fecundity are bestowed upon the newly born child and its parents.<sup>98</sup> During the pregnancy the future parents, their ancestors, and members of the clan are constantly in contact with each other. Sometimes ancestors would speak to the couple or to members of their family about the gender of the baby to be born or about the name it should be given. The beliefs and rituals emphasise that God, ancestors, human beings, and non-human forms of life are seen by the Bemba as existing in a web

of interconnectedness. To terminate the life of an unborn baby would be to rupture the web of life.

## Conclusion

Christians hold divergent views on abortion. As Cahill notes, the Roman Catholic Church supports the right to live of an unborn baby and it rejects abortion even in the early stages of pregnancy.<sup>99</sup> But the Church acknowledges that there are circumstances in which a pregnancy can confront women and their families with serious difficulties. The mainline Protestant churches generally take the unique circumstances surrounding each decision to terminate a pregnancy into account as well as the persons involved.<sup>100</sup> Anti-abortion activists reject abortion absolutely and in all circumstances. They are also against any form of contraception but encourage abstinence and stipulate the responsibility of women not to fall pregnant. These views are supported by religious groups such as the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches, and Muslims. Their argument is that the termination of life is the prerogative of the divine authority.<sup>101</sup> As we have seen, from an African ecofeminist perspective, the value of the life of a pregnant woman and her unborn child lies in the fact that they are part of a complex web of life encompassing all of God's created order.

While it is true that life is a sacred gift from God, who not only gives but also sustains life, there are difficult situations that may support, or at least allow, a woman's choice for abortion. This is the case, for example, when the pregnancy endangers the life and well-being of a woman or when it threatens to prevent her from ever realising her potential, condemning her to an existence in the margins of male-dominated society. The starting point for coming to a moral decision regarding abortion is found in the experience and the conviction of a pregnant woman while considering the sacredness of the life of the unborn baby. An abortion should always be treated as the last painful resort in situational reality—*ultima ratio*.

<sup>96</sup> Magesa, *African Religion*, 82.

<sup>97</sup> Magesa, *African Religion*, 82.

<sup>98</sup> Kambole, *Ukufunda umwana kufikapo*, 107.

<sup>99</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 5.

<sup>100</sup> Cahill, 'Abortion', 5.

<sup>101</sup> Bwalya, *Christian perspectives on abortion*, 33; Komakoma, *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops*, 81–83.