These students must have the knowledge of the ongoing use of experimental designs and statistical analyses used to formulate politically correct positions by the medical, scientific, and news media professions.

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Meilaender, Gilbert. *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. 120pp. Index.

Drawing upon five major themes (individuals in community, freedom and finitude, person and body, suffering, disease, and healing), Gilbert Meilaender has crafted a series of essays that propose a "Christian vision" of bioethics which is "deonto-logical" (p. 5). With eloquence and force he challenges predominant cultural assumptions that deny the legitimacy of any moral limits.

Meilaender contrasts the contradictory mindsets of procreation and reproduction. Life is a participation in the plan of the Creator, not simply a random reproduction of the species. Ideological presuppositions befoul virtually any form of assisted reproduction and weaken the genuine Christian vision of biological parenthood as a matter of rearing, nurturing, and civilizing children. The tendency to recast parenthood as possession of and over a child moves explicitly toward eugenics when a genetic or biological third party is introduced. Meilaender touches only briefly upon the issue of contraception in his discussion (p. 17) of the use of freedom to circumvent limits. Surrogacy reduces the child plainly to the status of means and object, inflicting a moral wrong even in the absence of any visible harm.

While opposition to abortion is for Meilaender a "relatively straightforward" part of the Christian vision, he nonetheless adopts the tentative position ("at least for the present," p. 31) that an individual human being does not come into existence until sometime after fertilization, basing this on empirical evidence that half of fertilized ova do not implant in the uterus and that twinning is possible for fourteen days after conception. His conclusion, notwithstanding its provisional setting, has definite and decidedly unfortunate consequences in classifying any intervention against a fertilized but not yet implanted ovum as merely contraceptive. A related difficulty is found in his justification for abortion in pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. He is on much firmer footing in decrying the shifting and elastic meaning of a "personhood" predicated on specified capacities. The weakest members of humanity should not be further impoverished by theft of their personhood. The diminution of personhood is accompanied by the inflation of privacy, with the predictable effect that children are less than welcome in the human community.

Two chapters are devoted to genetic screening. First, there is an acceptance of somatic cell therapy, dealing with the needs of particular patients, as opposed to an unacceptable germ cell therapy that would shape future life in a manner at odds with our creaturely vocation. At risk is the very definition of health and disease where an agenda of enhancement replaces a profession of healing. Meilaender sees any kind of prenatal diagnosis of the fetus as morally troubling; he praises the notion of control *before* conception rather than afterwards and cites approvingly the practice of some Orthodox Jews in New York to do carrier screening for Tay-Sachs and make decisions on dating and marriage accordingly.

His chapter on prenatal screening laments the almost guaranteed consideration of abortion as treatment. It is "poor preparation for becoming a mother or father." There is a profound eloquence in his admonition that the momentum of technology can slide toward self-deception. Still, the injunction (p. 56) to "simply say no to routinized prenatal screening" leaves open the possibility that the very theological themes enunciated at the beginning might furnish guidelines on cases where prenatal screening might be truly beneficial (e.g., treating the fetus as a patient) and *not* mere routine.

Chapter six sketches the ethical problems that arise from the claims of absolute independence from God or neighbor. Meilaender builds upon Paul Ramsey's counsel to care in such a way that the role of the Creator is not violated by excess (vitalism) or neglect (killing). An intent to "minimize suffering" as opposed to maximizing care will eventually call for the elimination of the sufferer.

The chapter on refusing treatment covers familiar ground on aim versus result although there is no reference to traditional analytical tools such as the principle of double effect that can aid in specifying the often murky notion of intent. There is a brief but excellent analysis of the difference between the inevitable burden of treatment and the "burden" of life itself, which must not be refused.

A somewhat surprising approval of the "language of indirection" (a phrase of William F. May) is found in a section on truth telling, where "being in truth" is seen as a requirement for telling the truth. An author ready to enunciate hard truths says nothing in this section about the need to prepare for eternal life and the fruits of Christ's Resurrection. It is not clear when "indirection" becomes theological stammering.

One severe result for Meilaender of the "idolatrous attachment to the language of autonomy" (p. 83) in his chapter on advance directives is the short-circuiting of conversation on ultimate questions of life and death. Certainly this problem occurs with a so-called "living will," but it is less clear how a health-care power of attorney necessarily precludes such a familial colloquy. Meilaender reluctantly opts for the power of attorney but does not elaborate.

Two chapters register "circumspection and caution" on "gifts of the body," dealing with organ donation and human experimentation. The main issue is "the integrity of bodily life." Various objections to the Harvard criteria of defined brain death are forcefully exposed. In regard to human experimentation Meilaender seeks to strengthen the important distinction between therapy versus experiment, again notes a human tendency toward idolatry, and calls for a "chastened understanding" (p. 109) of medical research.

Finally, the point is made that human beings have a personal responsibility *to* those who are ill, and not merely a responsibility for discovery of a cure for impersonal illness.

Anyone attached to Christian principles of bioethics can applaud this elegantly phrased restatement of essential truths. At the same time there are some limitations that cannot be ignored. First, it is not so much a "primer" as a manifesto: Meilaender directs his heavy artillery at the easy assumptions of a secularized culture that has absolutized autonomy and lapsed into high-tech idolatry. He acknowledges that it is not a survey or history (p. xi) of bioethical views but proposes that his goal is to state "what we Christians ought to say." This decision to forgo a comparative survey or history means that the primary effect is more apologetic than analytical.

Second, when Meilaender describes his approach as "deontological," he does not define this critical term nor distinguish his approach from a goal-oriented or teleological approach. This methodological defect generates two serious practical effects. First, it deprives him of a powerful tool in locating the boundaries of human autonomy. For example, why and to what extent should medical research be "chastened"? Should it not rather be robustly oriented toward the praiseworthy goals of a Christian anthropology, namely, human flourishing compatible with our *imago-Dei* vocation? Second, the exclusion of a teleological method obscures the clarity of his invaluable critique of idolatry. In opposing assisted reproduction as instrumentalizing the body, one cannot validate this judgment as theological and not merely aesthetic without pointing to the *telos* of human existence in communion with the Creator.

Third, the view that a human being does not begin at conception opens the door disturbingly to abortifacient procedures that exemplify the worst of the anti-life mindset he elsewhere skewers. Exceptions to the prohibition on abortion for pregnancies resulting from rape and incest likewise raise troubling questions about the consistency of his standard of integrity in bodily and generational choices.

Fourth, allied with the exclusion of any teleological approach is the loss of practical ethical guidelines gleaned from a natural-law analysis. For example, must *all* prenatal screening be avoided or might that which aims solely to treat rather than kill be morally desirable?

Finally, the effort to delineate a "Christian vision" of bioethics that we "ought to" adopt must rest on a bedrock of normative authority. That there are several Christian "visions" of contraception shows the need for an ecclesiology that includes a magisterium. Meilaender's last quotation is from G.K. Chesterton. It is suitably about hope and provides on its own terms a measure of hope that devout, textured Christian views are moving toward the inseparability of life and love in all ethical choices.

Despite these criticisms the work is an edifying, informative, and most welcome challenge to the superficial secularism that holds salvation to be scientific rather than divine.

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Pellegrino, Edmund D., and Alan I. Faden, eds. *Jewish and Catholic Bioethics: An Ecumenical Dialogue.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999. Index. 154 pp.

This contribution to the Moral Traditions and Moral Arguments Series edited by James Keenan, S.J., is a helpful collection of essays addressing key issues in bioethics. Among the topics treated are early human development, end-of-life ethics, sanctity of life and quality of life as correlative and often competing ethical principles, the meaning of suffering, the ethics of the medical profession, the interface between religion and science, and ethics of the health care profession. The contributors to this interfaith discussion include Orthodox and Reformed perspectives from the Jewish tradition as articulated by physicians Shimon Glick, Fred Rosner, and Avraham Steinberg; by bioethicists Baruch Brody and Ronald M. Green; and by biologist Rabbi Moshe Tendler. The Catholic contributors include physicians Alan Faden and Edmund Pellegrino, and bioethicists Tom L. Beauchamp, Joseph Daniel Cassidy, O.P., James Keenan, S.J., and David Thomasma. Each essay is distinctive and can be read independently of the others, but there are some interesting questions and issues that merit further discussion.

Tom Beauchamp's historical retrieval of the Jewish philosopher Spinoza explores Spinoza's conviction that theology and philosophy are discrete cognitive disciplines, with philosophy clearly privileged as rationally superior to theological discourse, which is historically embedded in communities of faith. Beauchamp further observes that this disjunction between reason and faith is quite common in contemporary bioethics, and leads him to the further interesting observation that Stanley Hauerwas's project of championing tradition-based, communitarian ethical discourse partakes of this same disjunction between reason and faith. This observation suggests the need for more conversation about the relationship between reason and faith in bioethical discussions.