



embryonic development whether the human life in development will end up as one life or two, making human identity unclear at this stage. The response to such an argument is that whether it is one or two human lives all human life is to be valued as it seeks the fulfillment of birth.

Thomson did say that there appears to be more evidence that adult stem cells may, in fact, provide more than differentiated stem cells and that adult stem cells may prove to do much of the ground work targeted by embryonic stem cell research except that it is more labor intensive and costly. In the end, however, the outcome may not be a lot different. Most interesting was Thomson's belief that the goal of stem cell research is only penultimately the cure of disease. Ultimately, the goal is that of disease prevention. He believes that much of what is being done with embryonic stem cells now is merely clarifying the mechanisms that lead to disease and it is hoped that disease processes will be so well understood that intervention to prevent their development may be the final outcome. This sounds good if it could be accomplished with sources other than human embryonic life.

All of us want to cure or prevent disease, but at what moral cost shall we pursue it? Where shall we draw the line in "using" human lives for our purposes, especially when those human lives are at our mercy and have given no permission for us to sacrifice their lives? This same argument could be made about the 40 plus million lives that have been terminated in abortion. The use of human embryos for research is another version of the abortion issue since it is expediency that drives each. Have we not learned from the damaging effect on human lives in addition to the fetus that further travel down this road is leading us into deeper disrespect for and cheapening of human life. At this point, only a spiritual perspective seems to offer us a better vision for the future and a path down which we might be able to pursue research morally. Pastors and theologians need to speak to these bioethical issues in a way understandable, if not acceptable, to the church and society.