Whither Loma Linda University?

Scenes from the Soviet Union

SPECTRUM

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ABORTION

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Litho USA

Abortion

Abortion divides not only the public but Adventists. The Adventist church confronts abortion not only as a matter of individual conscience but as a policy issue in Adventist hospitals. Recently, a prominent medical center in the Adventist Health Systems/U.S., the largest Protestant hospital system in the United States, faced demonstrators marching in protest against its permitting abortions. Conversely, another Adventist hospital was warned by financial donors that it must permit abortions. The General Conference became sufficiently concerned that it convened in April 1989 the first meeting of the Christian View of Human Life Committee, chaired by Albert Whiting, M.D., associate director of medical affairs of the Health and Temperance Department. Included in its mandate is a reexamination of the statements the denomination has already made on abortion and consideration of a new position on the subject.

In November 1988, the Ethics Center at Loma Linda University organized what was, in effect, the first Adventist town-meeting on the subject. In response to a widely published invitation from David Larson, director of the ethics center, 40 advocates of diverse viewpoints gave presentations over a three-day conference Larson organized on the Loma Linda campus. At the final session Warren Banfield, a General Conference field secretary and director of the Office of Human Relations, stood to say that on so emotional a topic "this is the first time in all my years of attending meetings where I think both sides were able to express their views in a spirit of love and acceptance."

We are pleased to publish what we think were the most forceful presentations at the conference on both pro-life and pro-choice sides, plus some excerpts that do not obviously advocate a particular position. We trust you will find the voices of these deeply concerned Adventists stimulating. Let the reader beware. Your attitudes on abortion may even be changed!

—*The Editors*

Lenin's Tomb, Bumper Stickers, and Egg Logic: Scenes From the Soviet Union

by Robert W. Nixon

Scene 1: Lenin's Tomb

The line forms outside the Kremlin Wall at the eternal flame honoring members of the Soviet military forces who died fighting Hitler's hordes in what Soviet citizens call the Great Patriotic War, in which 20 million men, women, and children died. The line, four deep, snakes around a corner of the Kremlin uphill toward the red granite Lenin Mausoleum several hundred meters away in Red Square.

"That's quite a crowd," I comment.

A cynical smile crosses the face of our tour guide. "There's not one citizen of Moscow in that line," she explains. "They're all from out of town. It's just something they feel they have to do. They can't go home and admit they didn't visit Lenin's tomb."

"How do they keep the body preserved so well?" I ask.

The Russian's eyes penetrate mine. She does not smile. "Almost everyone asks that question," she offers. "But there seems to be no real answer. Some even believe it's artificial."

Scene 2: Bumper Stickers

I've often thought bumper stickers say a lot of things about people, even in the Soviet Union, where they show up in the strangest places.

The two bumper stickers on the dashboard of a church van seem appropriately separated.

The first, with large red heart, proclaims, "I Love Jesus."

The second simply says, "Perestroika."

Robert W. Nixon, an associate in the office of General Counsel of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, spent two weeks during February 1989 in the Soviet Union.

Scene 3: Quivering Voice

The white-haired elder truly is troubled by something. I step closer. His voice quivers.

"Who would believe it?" he says in English. "Who would believe it?" He just stands there shaking his head.

I wait quietly.

"Who would believe it?" he says once again. "I've just come from the Council of Religious Affairs. They've asked me to participate in a radio program about religion in the Soviet Union. The program will be broadcast to the whole nation three times each Sunday. One week the speaker might be a Baptist. The next Orthodox. The next Lutheran. The next Adventist. I might be on four or six times a year to explain the Seventh-day Adventist church to the people. Who would believe it?"

Scene 4: War Story

The government official is impressive—and he gets right to the point.

"This is one of my best assistants. He will draft the feasibility study for the proposed publishing venture. He will draft articles of incorporation. He will draft a contract. And he will work with all other ministries and authorities on this project."

The assistant has a sense of command, of competence about him. When he later takes us to a workroom to discuss details of the publishing project, we learn he has traveled extensively in the West.

He leafs through the brochures describing the equipment we would like to import. "I'm impressed," he says. "Only the best."

We look over the rough plans for the facility. "Hmm," he says, with a smile. "Is this advisable under the circumstances?" His finger points to the word *Chapel.*

"Perhaps we should call it a 'community center.'"

Now we smile too.

The next morning he meets us in the lobby. "I'm at your command—the whole day," he says. "I know this project will be a success."

We look at one another. What does he mean? He tells us a story.

"My grandfather was a truck driver in the Great Patriotic War," he says. "One day, when he was returning from the front, he saw a small group of people who looked like they needed help. He stopped and discovered they were a Seventh-day Adventist family. He put them on the truck and drove them to safety.

"Through the years," he continues, "my grandfather kept in contact with that family. Some years ago, when he was in his eighties, when his health was failing, and he didn't want to be a burden to his children, he asked the Adventist family if they could help. They took him into their home and treated him with kindness and dignity—just like one of their own.

"So I know you Adventists," he says. "You're good and honest people. I know this project will be a success."

Scene 5: Right Neighborly

How can we be good neighbors? The eternal Adventist question gets considerable attention at the Adventist seminary in the Soviet Union. The seminary is nestled on the side of Zaoksky, a city located 100 km south of Moscow about half way to Tula, a regional capital. The seminary, built by church crafts people from the shell of a former school, sits in a neighborhood of small, traditional Russian country homes painted in bright blues and greens, à la *National Geographic* photographs.

The neighbors, of course, are typical Russians—warm-hearted, friendly, hospitable, with little knowledge of religion except for a sense of attachment to Russian Orthodoxy. Christmas and Easter are days of celebration for just about everyone.

But such people don't come easily to Adventist Houses of Prayer, as churches are called in the Soviet Union.

So how can we be neighborly?

Church members and their children plan—you guessed it—a Christmas party for all the neighborhood children and their parents. Features: A nativity play—complete with shepherds dressed in Middle East finery—and a Baby Jesus who after the program is rescued by a two-year-old who thinks Baby Jesus has been abandoned. And then, in the lobby, a beautiful Russian Christmas tree. And traditional Russian holiday songs that have been specially Christianized. And Grandpa Frost (our Saint Nick). And decorated tables—with real ice cream for all the children.

Then they develop another idea. In addition to regular church services and prayer meetings, why don't we plan a structured Sunday noon meeting? We'll sing the same opening song every week. We'll have a prayer at the same place in the program. The sermonette will focus on the church's fundamental beliefs, with a review each week, and with special explanations for those who have little knowledge of religion. We'll sing the same closing song. And we'll end with congregational recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Orthodox-like in a vague way, it may help local citizens understand their new Seventh-day Adventist neighbors.

The community begins to respond. Children and some parents come to the Christmas party. And on a recent Sunday more than 15 neighbors attend the noon service. Several have begun to attend Friday evening and Sabbath services as well.

Scene 6: Truck Wanted

Six men sit around the table. At the end is a brother who has come to make a proposal.

"This brother has come from a distant republic," an elder explains. "His trip has been long—and expensive. He knows that you visitors from abroad are busy, very busy on church business. He asks only for five minutes of your time. He has a proposal to make. We have called his home conference, and he is a deacon, an honest and trustworthy man."

The brother-who-has-traveled-far sits straight, like a soldier. He's dressed in a dark suit, with white shirt and tie. But his tanned face—even in the middle of winter—shows he's a man who earns his living outside. His huge hands would not be comfortable typing on a computer. He would be a good model for a statue entitled "Leader of the Working Class."

"Tell us your proposal," the chief of visitors says.

"Thank you, brethren, for listening to my appeal. But some of us Adventists in our home republic—farmers all—have formed a Seventh-day Adventist cooperative. We grow the finest fruits and vegetables—cherries and apples and . . . ."

"An Adventist cooperative?" a Russian brother interrupts. "I haven't heard of that."

The man reaches into his pocket and takes out some folded papers. He opens them, and everyone leans forward.

"See. Here is our charter."

A Russian brother picks it up, skims through the pages. He smiles. "It's true," he says. "It says right here in the document that it is a cooperative and that they are Adventists. The papers seem to be in order."

The brother continues. "We grow the finest fruits and vegetables. Our problem is that we can sell our produce

for 40 kopeks where we live, but if we had a refrigerated truck we could transport them to a northern city, like Tula or Moscow. There we could sell them for a ruble and a quarter. We propose that you arrange a loan for us to buy the truck. We will repay the loan in six months to a year from the profits of the cooperative. In addition, we'll donate several tons of the best fruits and vegetables to the seminary."

"How much would such a truck cost?"

"We probably can get a good used one for 30,000 rubles."

Eyes around the table widen. 30,000 rubles. That's U.S. $48,000 at the official rate—the salary for eight pastors for a year in the Soviet Union.

"We'll have to give this a lot of serious thought," the chief visitor says. "You search for a truck and get a firm figure. And work with our local brethren to draft a proposed agreement. We'll see if we can find someone who might be interested in helping brethren in the Soviet Union develop a successful farm cooperative. It could become a model for other cooperatives."

The man smiles. Perhaps . . . just perhaps . . . it all might work out. Perhaps . . . just perhaps . . . God soon will answer the prayers of His followers who till the soil.

Scene 7: Other Adventists

Finally, I find myself alone with the person I want to talk to one-on-one about the True and Free Adventists. Two days before, another international traveler had happened to mention this person had worshipped with the True and Free. I began my series of planned questions.

"I heard someone say you used to worship with the True and Free Adventists."

"Yes—for nearly two years."

"How many of them are there?"

He wrinkled his brow, and turned to look at me. "It's hard to say," he said. "Maybe three or four thousand."

"Do they have churches?"

"No. They worship in homes. Most groups consist of husband and wife."

"I understand several are still in prison."

Adventists in the Soviet Union—More Facts

• **The Adventist seminary building,** an old, burned-out school building, cost about $2.43 million to restore, most donated by church members in the USSR. The work was done by members, in groups of 100 or more, volunteering two weeks labor. Most of the 500 Adventist pastors in the Soviet Union will get their first seminary training here.

Some of the seven faculty at the seminary received their theological training outside the Soviet Union. For example, Michael Kulakov, Jr., the son of the president of the SDA church in the USSR, received his B.A. in theology from Newbold College, and A. Romanov pursued theological studies at the Adventist school in Friedensau, in the German Democratic Republic. Other faculty have college degrees in nontheological fields from schools within the USSR.

The curriculum is taught in a fashion similar to adult degree programs in the United States: For two weeks students are in residence at the seminary, the rest of the term they carry on correspondence work at home. Classes began in the fall of 1987, with the first class of 15 graduating in the spring of 1990. A second class began in September 1988. The curriculum is being re-examined and it may be that some seminarians will become full-time residential students.

—Taken from Rose Otis' report in the *Adventist Review*, February 16, 1989, pp. 6, 7.

• **Publications and health foods** may be produced by Adventists in the USSR. Negotiations continue for Adventists to create a publishing company to be located near the Adventist seminary. Preliminary interest has also been shown in Adventists producing infant formulas from soy products.

• **A True and Free Adventist remains in exile,** according to Helsinki Watch, March 21, 1989. Timofei Ivanovich Krivoberets, born 1940, was arrested April 19, 1978. He was sentenced March 1979 to eight years reinforced-regimen and five years exile. He is scheduled to be released April 1991. Arts. 174-2 (bribery), 196 (forgery) are believed to be trumped-up as punishment for activities in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Co-defendants: G. Astashova, S. Bakholdin, A. Uysevich. Wife: Yelena Krivoberets, three children, mother: 487310 Kazakh SSR, Chikents Kaya obl. g. Sarayagach, ul. Chapayeva, 37. Exile address not known.

Telegrams (the fastest, most effective means of communication) may be addressed to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin, Moscow, USSR. Letters can be addressed to relatives.

—From Helsinki Watch, a human rights organization. (See *Spectrum*, Vol. 19, No. 2, November 1988.)

"No. . . . None."

"But Amnesty International, a respected Western human-rights organization, says two True and Free Adventists are still in jail. There's a lot of interest in this issue among some Adventists back home. Even a Sabbath school class wants the point covered when I make a report."

"No. I have contacts. None is in jail. There are two people we know of in jail for religious activities, and they're both Orthodox."

"So you say there are 3,000 or so? Others say they're only 800."

"Yes, 3,000. But the groups probably wouldn't claim 3,000. They're always disfellowshipping people."

"But you think at least 3,000 individuals would claim to be True and Free."

"Yes."

"You said groups. What does that mean?"

"Since Shelkov died, the True and Free have splintered into several groups."

"How many?"

"Three or four. There's 'S,' Shelkov's disciples. And 'Y,' sort of middle of the road. And 'K,' liberal. And 'C,' conservative." (I wish my ear was more tuned to Russian names!)

"When did you worship with the True and Free?"

"Several years ago I became interested in religious things. I found the True and Free and worshipped with them for nearly two years. Then I concluded I had more questions about God than when I was an nonbeliever. So I dropped out of religion totally for several years. Then I came across the Seventh-day Adventist church, studied, and joined."

"What raised your doubts among the True and Free?"

"They focus on works and deeds. If I had to choose a motto for them, it would be, 'Faithfulness, Not Faith.' They're suspicious of everyone. They're self-assured. They're self-righteous. They're always trying to get dirt on one another. Most believe ministers are apostles of God who can never do any wrong. One night I saw a member question a minister. The minister just pointed at him and said, 'You're disfellowshipped.' The man's wife started to say a word, and the minister said, 'You're disfellowshipped.' That was the end of the matter.

"Each of the groups," he continues, "teaches that the other is 'adulterous.' For some it's a sin for a man or woman to wear a short-sleeved shirt. For others it's a sin to have a gold filling in a tooth. Some prohibit you from speaking to someone who has been disfellowshipped, even if the person is your son or daughter. One small group makes members sit during the sermon with their hands on their upper legs and their eyes closed.

"Many of them say you must prove your worthiness of Christ by being arrested. The more you suffer, the closer you are to God. And they want the records to be straight. One man was disfellowshipped because when he worked extra on Friday in a work camp to avoid Sabbath work, he didn't protest when the guard listed his extra work in the Saturday column."

"And none are in jail now?"

"No. And they will dwindle unless the government jails some of them again."

Scene 8: Egg Logic

A home. A private home. What a privileged family. We have been invited home for Sabbath dinner. The small brick bungalow, vintage late 19th-century, I'd guess, sits behind a fence with iron gate and an ancient walnut tree with buds that show promise of an early spring.

Inside the front door the coat room is filled with wool and padded coats and a stack of fur hats. Everyone seems to have several fur hats, but no one seems to know whether the hats are rabbit or beaver or mink or sable. They seem puzzled by such questions.

And inside the next door a dining nook, with two small crystal-clear aquariums. The 14-year-old son explains about his *neonskys* and *schwartzmollen*—pardon my obviously faulty transliteration of his Russian. To the left is the sitting room, with phonograph playing a classical piece—and books stacked in a bookcase—obviously the pastor's study when visitors aren't present.

And in the kitchen, just past the family bathroom, I compliment the cook on her white-enameled gas stove, with simmering pot of cabbage soup. And small sink. And small work board. And the furnace for the house. And a small hot-water heater.

And the dining room with large table for our banquet—Ukrainians make sure everyone goes home stuffed—and piano—and two daybeds with bookshelves above each for the school books of the two boys. On one shelf is a brick. They see my eyeing the brick.

"My son is proud of that brick," the pastor says. "See," he adds, pointing to the side. "It's signed by the workmen who helped build the seminary. My son worked there two weeks as a volunteer. This is his souvenir. It's his most valued possession." His son, with ear-to-ear smile, obviously agrees.

The blessing over, a typical first course—a plate of salted salmon from eastern Siberia—passes around the table. And small, dried, brown-black fish which somehow manages to avoid my plate. Fresh fruits and vegetables don't abound in winter in many parts of the Soviet Union. But here there are pickled garlic cloves, each as big as the end of your thumb.

"Eat lots of that," one elder urges. "You eat Ukrainian garlic and you won't go home sick." Since I had forgotten to bring my medicine kit on the trip, I eat five

cloves—just to be safe, of course.

And then the pastor's wife brings the *pièce de résistance*: Frenchlike bread, cut thin, buttered (no margarine because of lard), sprinkled with sliced green onion and red caviar.

All talk stops. My traveling companion whispers under his breath: "What's that?"

I try to play dumb. "What do you think it is?"

"Caviar."

"Why don't you try it?"

"I could never swallow it."

The silence builds. I reach toward the plate.

We are all passengers aboard one ship, the Earth, and we must not allow it to be wrecked. There will be no second Noah's Ark.

— Mikhail Gorbachev

I take the special treat. As I move it toward my mouth, all eyes watch. I bite. I chew. I swallow.

"Good," I manage to say.

Everyone smiles.

"What a treat," I continue. "Caviar. It's the first I've ever had. Only the rich can afford this in my country."

And then the Russian words fly back and forth. More smiles. And a laugh or two.

"What're they talking about?" I ask the interpreter. He doesn't really want to say, but my eyes lock on his.

"Well," he eventually says, half in a whisper, "it's hard to explain. But they're trying to figure out the logic. It's clear our friend prefers a vegetarian diet. But he's not logical on the *eggs*. He doesn't like chicken, but he *will* eat a chicken egg. It's logical he won't eat fish, but, surprising, he also *won't* eat a fish egg. They're having a hard time figuring that out; it doesn't make sense."

I decide to explain the logic of it all with a chuckle and a change of subject.

"Would you please pass the plate of pickled garlic?"

Scene 9: Gorbachev's Sermonettes

Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and chairman of the USSR Council of Defense and member of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, delivers his best sermonettes. I quote: From his book, *Perestroika*, p. 12: "For all the contradictions of the present-day world, for all the diversity of social and political systems in it, and for all the different choices made by the nations in different times, this world is nevertheless one whole. We are all passengers aboard one ship, the Earth, and we must not allow it to be wrecked. There will be no second Noah's Ark."

Perestroika, p. 30: "Today our main job is to lift the individual spiritually, respecting his inner world and giving him moral strength. We are seeking to make the whole intellectual potential of society and all the potentialities of culture work to mold a socially active person, spiritually rich, just and conscientious. An individual must know and feel that his contribution is needed, that his dignity is not being infringed upon, that he is being treated with trust and respect. When an individual sees all this, he is capable of accomplishing much."

In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, the West German news magazine:

"But changes are demanded by the strategic, political and economic realities of our times. The strength of the new political thinking, in my view, is precisely in its reliance on these realities. It stipulates: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. When everybody understands this, the world will change dramatically for the better."

Special Cluster: Abortion

The Hardest of the "Hard Cases": Rape and Saving the Life of the Mother

by Teresa Beem

The conference on abortion was the fifth on contemporary moral issues sponsored and organized by the Loma Linda University Ethics Center. At the very first session, David Larson, director of the ethics center and associate professor of Christian ethics in the school of religion, made it clear that the ethics center did not anticipate that the conference would adopt its own position statement on abortion. The center, Larson says, is not a lobby. Rather, it attempts to be "an intellectual Switzerland—a place to which people with all points of view can come to learn from each other."

However, by the end of the conference members noted that some convergence had taken place in what Larson calls the "middle ground" on the subject. Larson and his colleagues at the center, Charles Teel, James Walters, and Gerald Winslow, were not surprised. The candid but courteous exchange of views throughout the conference suggests that on some controversial moral issues, such as abortion, the church might avoid dictating a stand to its members, and instead encourage an unofficial but real consensus to emerge gradually. Larson believes that such a consensus is both less divisive than official statements and much longer lasting.

The ethics center that Larson now heads was founded only five years ago. In addition to organizing conferences on issues such as heart transplantation and nuclear arms, the center produces collections of essays. The four full-time Ph.D.'s in ethics at the center also offer a master's degree in religious ethics and an eight-week clinical intensive course in biomedical ethics. Their newsletter is distributed to 12,000 readers.

Including only the most trenchant presentations from the ethics center's latest conference still permitted us to include both men and women, as well as both pro-life and pro-choice advocates. We do not pretend that we have been able to publish an exact number of pages for each category, but we do believe that the most pointed essays have been included. To varying degrees all the essays presented here are, with the permission of the authors, shorter than the original presentations. Some, as noted at the beginning of the pieces, are excerpts that provide relevant information, not the author's own position on abortion. Those wanting the longer versions of these essays and the other presentations can write to the Ethics Center, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California 92354. A printed volume of essays from the abortion conference is now being edited.

— The Editors

I don't believe in bombing abortion mills, or terrorizing the people who run them or go to them. But I do believe we Adventists and American citizens should reinstate the unborn child's right to live. Yes, I am a pro-lifer and I believe that upon conception a unique individual, a gift of God, has entered the human family. I believe God created that life, and no one but God has the right to take that life. When we destroy one of our fellow humans we destroy a part of his creation.

Every 20 seconds in the United States a child's life is destroyed by an abortionist.[1] Almost 20 million since the Supreme Court decision in

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1973. *Roe vs. Wade* and its twin case, *Doe vs. Balton*, legalized abortion for any reason at any time during a woman's nine months of pregnancy.[2] Of these, 97 to 99 percent are done for social or emotional reasons.[3] Most Americans agree that these abortions are useless genocide and should be halted.[4]

What about the other three percent? Why are they performed? Are they "necessary" abortions? Specifically, I question the morality of approving abortions performed in those hardest of hard cases, abortion for reasons of rape or the endangerment of the life of the mother.[5]

Who Is the Neediest Rape Victim?

One cold January evening, 16-year-old Kay ran through an underpass on her way home. She was grabbed in the darkness and raped. She told no one. Soon she began experiencing horrible nightmares and paranoia. For four months she calmed herself by rationalizing that her missed periods and queasiness were due to the trauma of the rape. Soon it became physically evident, and her fears were confirmed: Kay was pregnant.[6] This is an exceptional story. Becoming pregnant after a rape is extremely rare. The FBI estimates that a half a million rapes occur annually in the United States. Less than one percent end up in a pregnancy.[7] Yet there are instances, like Kay's, that a woman does become pregnant. Should they be able to obtain an abortion, legal or morally, because the child was conceived after rape?

Kay did not have an abortion. Instead, she gave her child up for adoption.

> I can live with the fact that I have been raped, but I could not live in peace if I had killed my child. I do not agree with those who advocate abortion for rape or incest. One violent, cruel act doesn't justify another. Our laws do not condemn the rapist to death, so it is insane that we would issue a death sentence for an innocent baby. Robin [the child conceived by rape] is no different and no less valuable than any other human being. In fact, I have often imagined Robin and my other daughter (born through marriage) standing together before a gathering of all the pro-abortion people. I would ask the crowd to decide which one should live: Does one deserve to die because of the way she was conceived, because of the sin of her father?[8]

Kay chose life for her child. This is not unusual. Of women who become pregnant by rape, about half of them carry their child full term. Only one of 25,000 abortions are performed annually on women pregnant from rape.[9] Less than 100 abortions occur each year in the United States because of rape or incest.[10]

In 1973, the United States Supreme Court heard the story of a Dallas woman who said she'd been gang-raped and became pregnant. The high court ruled on this case, opening up the possibility for a woman to kill her child for any reason.[11] Fortunately, the ruling was too late for the baby of the Dallas woman. The mother had already given birth and given her up for adoption into a loving family.

Since the 1973 ruling of the Supreme Court, there *have* been women, although few, who obtained abortions for reasons of rape. Jackie was one of them. She was sexually assaulted at knifepoint in Hollywood. She also became pregnant. She was told by her family and friends that abortion was the only answer. "They offered no solutions." Jackie recalls:

> I believed them when they said my nightmare would be over and I could get on with my life after the abortion as if nothing had ever happened. I felt an emptiness that nothing could fill, and quickly discovered that the aftermath of abortion continued a long time after the memory of the rape had dimmed. For the next three years I experienced horrible depression and nightmares. I would dream of giving birth, but they would take my baby away from me. I would hear crying and I would search, but I could not find her anywhere. I would just hear her cries echoing in the distance.[12]

When a woman has an abortion, she most likely will experience postabortion syndrome or psychological trauma. If we combine this with the rape experience, it may be doubly devastating.

One experienced counselor declares that, "abortion does not un-rape a woman."[13] The director of Suiciders Anonymous of Cincinnati reported, "Interestingly, the pregnant rape victim's chief complaint is not that she is unwillingly pregnant, as bad as the experience is.... We

found this experience [the rape] is forgotten by remembering the abortion, because it is what *they* did."[14]

Should a woman have a legal right to abortion—especially a rape victim? So far, I have used women who, because of personal experience, say No. Can we use their testimony to decide for other women? You might be able to find many more testimonies of women who chose abortion because of rape and felt they did the right thing.

As Adventists, we must look at the question in a much broader sense. We obey laws, yes, but we answer to a much higher power when we make our choices. We make decisions not only from personal and other people's experiences, or what we feel at the time, but by what God's Word says. We should base our actions by the laws in the Bible. There we find God's commandment not to kill (Deuteronomy 5:17, Exodus 20:13). We learn that we are not put on this earth to find our own happiness, nor to manipulate people to solve our own problems. We are here to follow Jesus' example and show love and compassion to our fellow humans. We are all given trials, just as Job in the Bible endured trials. We are held up by Satan to the entire universe and our works and reactions to those trials either glorify God or mock him. We show our commitment to God by humble, unselfish submission to his commands. Then he turns our sorrow into joy; he takes what seems like tragedy and turns it into triumph.

What God requires of us is one thing. What our government requires is another. With our ever present paranoia of church and state separation, we must find different grounds than loyalty to God if we want to make rape/abortion illegal.

Making abortion illegal, except in cases of rape or incest, invalidates the whole argument of illegal abortion. Let me explain. The reason we should not kill preborn people is because they *are* people and have the right to live protected under the 14th amendment of the Constitution. Biologists, geneticists, fetologists, to name a few of the professional fields, all have proved that a human life begins at conception.[15] We have allowed the killing of that unborn child because society feels sorry for the young woman. We give her the fairly new concept of "right-to-control-her-own-body" because we can see she is emotionally unready to be a mother, or so she convinces us. If we allow the rape victim access to abortion for emotional reasons, we must allow all women the same. Either *all* unborn children have the same rights or they do not. You cannot pick and choose those who are really human by the way in which they are conceived.

Another problem with allowing rape victims abortions is that there are several types of rape.

Statutory rape involves a girl, 15 years old or younger, who willingly has intercourse with a man of legal age.

Either *all* unborn children have the same rights or they do not. You cannot pick and choose those who are really human by the way in which they are conceived.

Date rape is when a woman on a date is forced into sex.

Marital rape occurs when a man forces his wife into sex.

Assault rape is the most commonly thought of when we speak of rape. This is when an unknown, possibly armed, man surprises a woman and sexually assaults her. It is often accompanied by beatings and threats on the woman's life.

Although all are degrading and with the exception of statutory are forced, all could be used to gain legal abortions. Marital and date rape would be almost impossible to prove. If the law only considered assault rape, women would begin staging rapes to get abortions and possibly innocent men would be put in jail. The only way rape can be proved is if the woman immediately reports it to the police and gets medical attention. If she does this, she can receive hormonal therapy to prevent pregnancy, therefore, that renders the rape/pregnancy reason invalid.

An anonymous caller to a radio talk show told her story:

> I am the product of rape. An intruder forced his way into my parent's house, tied up my father, and, with him watching, raped my mother. I was conceived that night. Everyone advised an abortion.... My father, however,

said, "Even though not mine, that is a child and I will not allow it to be killed." I do not know how many times that, as I lay secure in the loving arms of my husband, I have thanked God for my wonderful Christian father.[16]

Kathy, at 16, was raped when the man she had accepted a date from drove her to the lake, instead of taking her home as she had requested. She screamed and screamed. Somehow she knew she would become pregnant. She did. Kathy's story occurred many years ago, before the legalization of abortion, so she tried to kill her child herself. She drank ant poison, jumped off tall haystacks, and punched her stomach. Kathy recalls:

"I hated the baby, I hated the guy and most of all, I hated myself." After the baby was born, Kathy said, everything changed. She decided to keep her baby and named him Patrick. Two-and-a-half years later she married, but the rape experience continued to haunt her. "I hated men. I got even deeper into drugs and drinking, and what was left of my life quickly crumbled. Finally after my third or fourth overdose, God got through to me. I knew I needed to give my life to the Lord, and I cried out to God."[17]

Kathy writes about her new life in Christ and her son:

Patrick is now 22, and I thank God abortion was illegal when he was conceived. If it had been available, I do not know for certain what I would have chosen, but I am glad I did not have the option. I pray for the day

A Modest Proposal

by Madelyn Jones-Haldeman

R. N. Wennberg insists that a woman has the right to determine what happens in and to her body, but "it does not follow that she also has the right to the death of the fetus" (*Life in the Balance*, p. 168). He suggests that modern science develop artificial wombs in which fetuses can be placed. However, until modern medical science can come up with such technology, Wennberg declares that the right of the fetus to live supercedes the right of the woman to control her body. Please note that Wennberg is a male, and that his solution, of course, has to do with the female. Permit me to direct your minds to some solutions which have to do with gentlemen. These suggestions are not only Christian solutions, they can be promoted by Christians helping society to confront and solve a moral dilemma.

Solution One: Every couple applying for a marriage license must sign a contract as part of their marriage agreement that they will have only so many children. Upon reaching that goal, the husband is to be sterilized.

Solution Two: With sperm banks and insemination present-day realities, all men who are getting married, or who decide to cohabit without a marriage license, should be required by law to deposit enough sperm in sperm banks to create at least 50 children. Having deposited his sperm, the male is sterilized. Insemination of the woman with the sperm of her husband or partner will guarantee that begetting of new life is no accident, but truly planned.

Solution Three: Young boys who reach the age of puberty should be treated as men who are intending to marry. Each should deposit sperm in sperm banks and then be sterilized. Boys and men who are guilty of incest should be emasculated.

If these simple remedies appear barbaric, remember no one thinks so when a woman is so desperate that she has a tubal ligation. Furthermore, if these solutions were adopted, there would be no need to legislate on abortion, even for those women who were raped or who were victims of incest.

These solutions put the responsibility of sexual activity squarely on men's shoulders. It proposes to make men stewards of the life within them. When male theologians seek to solve the problem concerning abortion by always prescribing and proscribing what women should do, they need to know that they are indeed themselves acting irresponsibly. Why not, after the manner of the paradigm in Ephesians 5, let men (husbands) give their life for the wife? Why are we so afraid to suggest: "Christian gentlemen, it is your turn to take some of this awesome responsibility of begetting life"?

Therefore, Christian theologians, pastors, teachers, and men should do everything in their power to introduce into the legislative halls the concept that the male, particularly now that science has made new options easily and safely available, is far more responsible than the female for maintaining the integrity of creating new life. Christians should urge the three solutions suggested so we can solve our ethical dilemmas at the beginning and not the end. I call on all Christian men, including Adventist males, to be brave and lead a great movement urging society to adopt these solutions.

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when it will again be outlawed. I guess both Patrick and I are classic examples of God's mercy and grace and what He can do in the case of rape.... Every life is of immeasurable value and importance, no matter what the circumstance of their conception. God gives each person something unique to contribute, and when even one life is lost, we all lose something. If Patrick wasn't here, there are many people whose lives would have suffered, including mine. [I find this last statement of Kathy's very interesting.] It was Patrick who challenged and helped me to truly forgive his father.[18]

What about the women who choose abortion? Surely we cannot say they made a mistake, can we? I would never presume to judge anyone's decision in a case such as this, but I will say that she will never know what that child could have meant to her, or an adoptive family or society.

Even if conceived outside the sacred marital bed, there is no such thing as "wrongful life." For if a child conceived of rape is "wrongful life," is God no longer Master of the universe, the Giver of life? If he remains so, then surely none of his creation is expendable.

Often forgotten in the discussion is the fact that the child is still a part of the mother. The baby may be half the rapist's, but it is still the mother's flesh and blood. Can we justify killing all of the child to rid it of its "ugly" half? Maybe we should take the Bible literally when it says he will not give us more than we can bear.

I do not mean to sound legalistic or less than compassionate toward a woman who has gone through something as horrible as rape. I, being a woman, have lived in dread of being raped. I, along with probably every woman in America, check the backseat of my car before I get in. I also feel somewhat panicky when I must enter a dark, empty house alone at night. Yet I question the kind of compassion used by society when it automatically encourages an abortion if a woman becomes pregnant following a rape. No matter how well meaning our judgment seems, abortion probably isn't the best answer for the woman, and it never is for the child.

Kathy's son, Patrick, a happily married, handsome young man tells us,

"As a child of rape, I have a unique outlook on abortion. If abortions had been legal when I was conceived, I would not be alive. I would have never had the chance to love and give of myself to others. I have had wonderful opportunities to share my testimony, too. Whenever someone says, 'What about rape?' I have the perfect answer!"[19]

Should the Mother Automatically Save Her Own Life?

In 1985, Dr. Joseph MacDougall told the story of one of his patients, a 23-year-old mother with a one-year-old child. She was hospitalized, suffering from tuberculosis and was near death. This story begins in December of 1947, when medical science had no drugs to cure cases like hers. The doctor chose to name the woman Eleanor, to protect her real identity, and he said she was a devout and courageous woman.

One day Eleanor asked, if she were still alive, couldn't she please go home for Christmas? The doctor promised her that she could only because he knew she would not make it till then. It seemed so little to do to make her happy. Yet, Christmas

Often forgotten in the discussion is the fact that the child is still a part of the mother. The baby may be half the rapist's, but it is still the mother's flesh and blood. Can we justify killing all of the child to rid it of its "ugly" half?

Eve she still hung on to life, so true to his promise the doctor allowed her to go home. When she returned her condition was worse and soon she was down to 80 pounds. New complications developed; she became nauseous and vomited continually. As ridiculous as it seemed, the doctor gave her a pregnancy test, and to everyone's astonishment it was positive. The doctor said, "On the very outer frontier of life itself, she now bore a second life within her. When I told her she smiled and blushed."

Legally, medically, they strongly advised an abortion, yet Eleanor and her husband said No. The doctors didn't push because they knew her body would reject the baby anyway. They began

to feed her intravenously and although they kept insisting she was dying, Eleanor refused to die, and kept her child. "Then an incredible thing began to happen," said her doctor. "In late June of 1948, we noted some improvement... She began to eat and to gain weight. An X-ray showed that the growth of the TB cavity had stopped. The diaphragm was pushing up against the diseased lung to make room for the child she bore. Nature was doing exactly what we had failed to do: it was pressing the sides of that deadly hole together." Eleanor gave birth to a normal, healthy baby. In a few months Eleanor was so much better they allowed her to go home. The baby whom everyone said would hasten her death actually saved her life.[20]

I have focused on the hard cases, those in which you might disagree with my conclusions. I only hope that your mind and heart have been opened to new ideas for even the apparently open-and-shut cases.

We can never predict when God will intervene with a miracle. When doctors have done everything possible and when a woman's life is endangered by a pregnancy, the doctor must advise what he thinks is best. Then it must rest with the mother; only she can decide to have an abortion.

She can also go to the Bible for some principles to guide her. There we find the story of a little lost lamb (Luke 15:3-6). The shepherd had a flock of sheep that he tended, which he was responsible for. But when the smallest, frailest, most vulnerable was in trouble, the shepherd left his others to rescue him. He was even willing to put his life in danger to save the lost one (John 10:11). A mother is like a shepherd. She knows when one of her children is in need of her. She sometimes puts her other children on temporary "hold" to tend to the one who is most in need. We might be able to apply this parable to the woman who is facing a therapeutic abortion.

I have based my entire paper on the valid assumption that the unborn *is* a child—snuggled warmly inside the protective womb where no one can see it develop. Although an unborn child may not be so easily recognized as a baby, an unborn child *is* a living human being. Even though a mother has not held the baby in her arms or wiped its runny nose, or heard its first cry, to kill the unborn would be to kill one of her children.

Under rare, sad circumstances I can understand a woman choosing abortion. I have two small children myself and I cannot imagine not being there for them, giving up being their mother to give life to another child; leaving them to the responsibility of their father. Yet, I would find it close to impossible, in order to save my own life, to kill any of my children, including an unborn child.

The Bible says, there is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friends (1 John 3:16-18 [NASB], John 15:13). Of course, the Bible does not coerce or demand this of anyone. And I am in no way suggesting that we should convince a woman to carry her child to term if it means her life, or pass legislation making therapeutic abortion illegal. Therapeutic abortion should remain legal; and when I say *therapeutic*, I mean in the strictest sense: Abortion to save the life of the mother.[21] Such exceptions should include the mother who has cancer and for whom pregnancy would interfere with life-saving treatment, as well as the mother who has Eisenmenger or Marfan's disease. But let us remember the woman with tuberculosis. If we automatically choose abortion when faced with a life or death decision, we rule out God's possible intervention with a miracle.

Of all abortion topics, disapproving an abortion even when the life of the mother is in danger, is the very hardest. We cannot legislate a woman to die because she is pregnant, but abortion is not the automatic answer for the Christian. If I am ever faced with this decision, I hope that I have the faith and relationship with Christ that I will be open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Pro-lifers are often described as being uncompassionate, unrealistic fetus lovers, who are against the woman in a personal crisis. Instead of lots of cold statistics, I have let the people who have endured and overcome rare tragic circum-

stances speak to you about their views on abortion and why they feel it is wrong. In addition I have shared the opinions of a few experts, as well as my own. I have focused on the hard cases, those cases in which you might disagree with my conclusions. I only hope that your mind and heart have been opened to new ideas for even the apparently open-and-shut cases. I hope that you and I together can join in the effort to uplift the human of God's creation. I pray that our society may see the wonders of God's hand even in the tiniest of human beings. For, since the beginning of man's existence, when God breathed into Adam's nostrils and ignited the spark of mankind, the gift of human life, the image of God has been passed down; first, through Adam's bone to Eve, and then to the first child at conception. Thus the chain of life has continued till now and will continue into the future. We are all a part of that chain and have a kinship with our fellow humans. Ultimately we must protect and preserve the life and dignity of each human because we are Christians. And because we are Christians we must preserve life with love and compassion.

> Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?" (Proverbs 24:11, 12, NKJV).

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Adventists, Abortion, and the Bible

by John C. Brunt

Despite the fact that the Bible gives no explicit advice to those contemplating abortion, the Bible has played, over the past two decades, a prominent role in Adventist discussions of the subject. In important respects these authors agree. All believe the Bible teaches that God values life highly and that we should respond to this gracious God by valuing it as well. All agree that this important biblical principle has serious implications for the question of abortion. No one sanctions the kind of wholesale abortion of convenience that has become commonplace in our society. Differences center on whether there are kinds of principled considerations that would make abortion the lesser of evils in certain situations.

In journals such as *Ministry* and *Spectrum,* Adventist authors have used Scripture in four distinct ways to come to these agreements and also some clear disagreements about abortion. It is important to see how these Adventists have actually used Scripture. It is also useful to reflect on what basic principles ought to guide our application of Scripture to concrete moral problems such as abortion.

The Bible as a Source of Specific Rules

Few Adventists have attempted to make Scripture yield specific rules governing abortion, but some of the strongest opponents of abortion have come very close in their use of the sixth commandment in Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill."

Ardyce Sweem, for example, uses Exodus 20:13 and Genesis 9:6 to show that the Bible forbids violence and killing and then concludes: "The techniques of abortion are violent acts of killing."[1] Muller reaches the same conclusion through a series of rhetorical questions. After quoting the commandment he asks:

> Is this commandment not straightforward, clear in itself? . . . Some might argue that the commandment in its original setting speaks about murdering, not about accidental killing, but is not murdering exactly what we find in cases of abortion?. . . Is this not one of the most brutal forms of murder?[2]

Fredericks is slightly less emphatic when he sets forth his first in a series of four Old Testament principles as the principle that God is against abortion. Again he uses the sixth commandment and argues that even though this commandment may allow for some forms of capital punishment or self-defense, it never allows for the taking of innocent life by violent means.[3]

In all three Adventist authors the sixth commandment becomes a specific rule against abortion because abortion is defined as murder. If the Bible says "Thou shalt not murder," and abortion is murder, the Bible does give an explicit rule against abortion. But is this simple equation of abortion with murder justified?

It is not within the scope of this study to answer the question of whether abortion is murder. But it is important to notice that none of the authors who find a specific rule against abortion in the sixth commandment make a *biblical* case for why abor-

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tion should be considered murder. In fact, the biblical data are simply not sufficient to establish this case.

The Bible as Arbiter of Facts

Adventist authors have also looked to Scripture in order to settle certain factual matters. They have done this either by bringing specific questions, such as when life begins, to the text or by looking at texts that appear to have some relevance for abortion and asking about their significance.

Some of the strongest Adventist opponents of abortion have used Scripture to show that human life begins at conception, although no biblical writer specifically addresses that question. Muller takes the close relationship between conception and birth in Genesis 4:1 (Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bore a son) and Luke 1:31 (She conceived a son) as evidence that "the beginning of personhood starts with conception."[4]

Fredericks uses Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:13-16 as support for what he calls the "principle" of the value of life. But his conclusion is not so much a principle as a statement that life begins before birth. He says:

> He [God] views the unborn not as potential life but as persons, individuals with identity and worth for whom He already has a destiny.[5]

Sweem also uses Scripture to argue that life begins before birth. She points out that passages such as Genesis 16:11, 19:36, and Matthew 24:19 refer to pregnant women as being "with child" and that texts such as Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:13-17, 35, and Galatians 1:15 show God's involvement with persons before birth. She concludes: "God looks at fetuses as having personhood prior to their birth."[6]

On the other hand, Maxwell and Woodward use Genesis 2:7 to posit that it is the breath of life that leads to a living being. After pointing out that the fetus is not viable until 20 weeks gestation, without giving specific endorsement they conclude: "According to the Genesis approach, the infant would become a human being when it has taken its first breath and is able to live apart from the mother."[7]

Paulson objects to arguments such as those of Muller, Sweem, and Fredericks. "Adventist doctrine and practice should be based on a plain 'Thus saith the Lord.' And nowhere does inspiration declare that personhood begins at conception."[8]

The Bible does not solve the problem of when life begins. The texts cited by the authors above may have some general significance for the question of abortion, but all of them have a purpose in their original historical and literary context very different than determining the moment when human life or personhood really begins.

Another factual question faced by authors on abortion has been the interpretation of Exodus 21:22-25 and its significance for the abortion question. The passage reads:

> "When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (RSV).

The major difficulties with this verse are the meanings of the words translated *miscarriage* and *harm*. Is the contrast being made in the passage between a premature birth where the fetus lives and one where it dies, or is it between a miscarriage that does no injury to the mother and one that injures her? If the latter is in view, the passage places less value on the fetus than the life of the mother. If the former, the fetus is valued as a life.

Muller takes "harm" to refer to the accidentally aborted fetus and concludes that if the child survives there is only a fine, but if the child dies the one causing the miscarriage must die.[9]

Other authors, such as James Londis and Gerald Winslow, recognize that interpretation is problematic and use the text with more caution.[10] Wittschiebe, for example, recognizes the different possibilities and opts for a still different view from Rabbinic interpretation. It holds that according to Leviticus 24:18 "life for life" can refer to mere monetary compensation, thus in no case is the "harm," whatever it is, punished by death.[11]

Discussion of this text reveals how little attention is given to the process of exegesis by most of those who use the text. In actual fact the text is probably not very helpful to the ongoing debate on abortion since its interpretation is so problematic. A review of any good commentary will show the complexities of the text and the numerous attempts at its interpretation.[12]

Both of these attempts to find factual data in the Bible speaking to abortion actually are examples of how Scripture fails to give any specific and clear commands about abortion. These passages certainly do not provide direct factual data about when life begins.

The Bible as a Source of Principles

By far the majority of appeals to Scripture in Adventist discussions of abortion are at the level of principle rather than that of specific rule or fact. We can only briefly survey the major principles and concerns to which Adventist authors appeal.

Value of life is by far the most popular and frequently utilized principle, especially as it is seen in God's personal valuing of human life. It is often pointed out that this value that God places on life includes fetal life. The most frequently used text to support this principle is Psalm 139:13-16, which reads:

> For you created my inmost being;
> you knit me together in my mother's womb.
> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
> your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
> My frame was not hidden from you
> when I was made in the secret place.
> When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
> your eyes saw my unformed body.
> All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (NIV).[13]

Frequent use is also made of passages that speak of God's purpose for specific individuals while they were still in the womb. These include Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5), John the Baptist (Luke 1), and Paul (Galatians 1:15).[14] Numerous other Biblical appeals to God's value for life include Genesis 2:7,[15] the "lost" parables of Luke 15,[16] John 3:16,[17] Jesus' warning against despising "little ones" in Matthew 18:10,[18] and the Bible's pervasive regard for life in general.[19]

Justice, or God's impartiality and even special concern for the vulnerable, is a second biblical principle or theme that receives frequent attention. In at least three different articles Winslow calls this the principle of justice and uses Deuteronomy 10:17, 18 and Matthew 5:43-48 for support.[20] Fredericks appeals to Psalm 82:3,4 to show God's special regard for the vulnerable and goes on to argue, on the basis of texts such as Romans 5:6, Ephesians 2:3-6, and 1 Timothy 2:15, that God's unconditional acceptance of human beings apart from their achievements precludes any kind of quality-of-life ethic.[21]

The "*person-image* concept" is a principle Waddell says he finds in the Creation story in Genesis 1. This is part of his attempt to give biblical support for the specific reasons for "therapeutic" abortion given in the 1971 General Conference guidelines. Since God intended for humans to be born in his image within the context of family, this "concept" supports the legitimacy of abortion in cases of deformed fetuses that cannot be "normal," and in cases of rape and incest.[22]

Freedom is a principle used in different ways by different authors. Winslow calls this the principle of "choice"[23] or "respect for personal autonomy."[24] For Winslow this principle means that even though he personally opposes abortion when carried out merely for convenience, and would see only a limited number of "exceptional" cases as legitimate, he nevertheless opposes efforts to remove the choice from the pregnant woman.[25] Others specifically argue that reverence for life has primacy over freedom of choice. The Youngbergs use Deuteronomy 30:19 to support this,[26] and both they and Fredericks appeal to 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 to show that since the body belongs to God a woman does not have the right to choose what she will do with her own body.[27]

Forgiveness is another principle that is used by a couple of authors. Winslow appeals to Colossians 1:13, 14,[28] and Duge to the *pericopae adulterae* of John 8 (some manuscripts).[29] Winslow

stresses the need for forgiveness to be mediated to all concerned in the tragedy of abortion, and Duge stresses that the result of the antiabortion argument is often a punishment of the victim, which is not in keeping with the spirit of Christ.

The *love of money and danger of wealth* concludes our by-no-means-exhaustive list of principles. Fredericks shows the danger of the love of money and greed from texts such as 1 Timothy 6:5-11, Colossians 3:5, and Ephesians 5:5, and then goes on to add that James (4:2; 5:5, 6) even shows a link between greed and violence against the innocent. For Fredericks this rules out economic factors as a reason for abortion.[30]

With the exception of the "person-image concept," which seems quite problematic, the principles and themes in this list all appear to be valid biblical emphases that do indeed have at least some relevance for the question of abortion. This method of using principles from Scripture appears to be the most fruitful of the various uses we have surveyed so far. Yet, here as well, there are problems with the manner in which the Bible is utilized.

Most of the authors line up biblical principles to buttress a certain position without any recognition that a given principle might be applied in a different way. For example, almost everyone would agree that the principle of God's concern for the vulnerable and oppressed has significance for the question of abortion. But when a fifteen-year-old girl is raped and becomes pregnant, who is the "vulnerable one" who should be in focus? A given principle might be very clear in the abstraction, but it might also become quite problematic when we realize that there are legitimate claims and interests that can be brought on behalf of different subjects, i.e., the fetus and the pregnant woman.

Most Adventist authors also do not acknowledge that different principles can sometimes legitimately come into conflict. For example, personal autonomy and freedom can conflict with our desire to preserve life. In other words, the line from biblical principle or theme to specific decision on a topic such as abortion is not as straight and uncluttered with complexity as many of our authors assume.

The one person who gives explicit recognition to this potential conflict between principles is Gerald Winslow. He sees such conflicts as an opportunity for moral maturity. He says:

> [T]ough dilemmas, such as abortion, may also lead us toward moral maturity. The fact that an issue is called a moral dilemma generally reveals that two or more of our firmly held values are in conflict. If we do not rush to resolve the conflict in facile, one-dimensional ways, if we pause long enough to explore in some depth our colliding values, we may become clearer about why the problem troubles us so. And, as a result, we may be able to state with greater clarity and force those principles which we must balance if we are to remain true to our Christian convictions and honest about the complexity of the moral dilemma confronting us.[31]

The Bible as a Source of Analogies

The final use of the Bible to be explored overlaps with the previous one, but there is a distinction between them. Here, the focus is not on broad biblical themes and principles but on individual stories and incidents that are used to speak to some aspect of the abortion issue. In each case the author sees some analogous features between the biblical incident and the current problem of abortion. We will here look at only two examples.

Muller points to God's anger at the nations around Israel for their disregard for unborn life as an analogy pointing to God's disapproval of abortion. He mentions incidents such as those recorded in Isaiah 13:18, Hosea 13:16, and 2 Kings 8:12; 15:16-18 where enemies slash open the wombs of pregnant women, killing both mother and unborn child, and then concludes: "These acts are presented in Scripture as acts of sinful cruelty because they reveal a total disrespect for unborn life."[32] The reader is left to wonder if perhaps a small part of God's anger might have been caused by what was done to the women.

Winslow offers the most self-conscious use of biblical analogy. He explicitly states that even though the Bible offers no specific instruction on how prenatal life should be treated, the Bible

nevertheless enlivens our moral imagination. As an example he presents the analogy of the birth story of John the Baptist recorded in Luke 1. He points out that John's conception was a miraculous fulfillment of a divine mandate, that his mission was designated prior to his conception, that his prenatal movements were given symbolic significance, and that his name was chosen prior to his birth. Thus we see that the fetus is one whom God calls by name. This analogy helps us see the value of fetal life.[33]

Such analogies can not be expected to give unambiguous answers to modern dilemmas. How does one decide what really counts as a valid analogy when there are always elements that are not analogous? For example, Muller's analogy may say something about the value of the unborn, but the differences between the violent murder of a pregnant woman and abortion are quite marked; Manson's murder of Sharon Tate is something different than an abortion.

How does one decide what really counts as a valid analogy when there are always elements that are not analogous? Biblical analogies seldom produce unambiguous conclusions to specific dilemmas, but they do support broader biblical themes and principles.

In Winslow's analogy also there are factors that could lead one to argue in a very different way. For example, Winslow shows that John's mission is designated prior to his conception. Why could not this analogy be used to speak for the value of potential life before conception and thus lead one to oppose birth control?

These objections certainly do not rule out the use of analogies to "enliven our moral imagination." In fact, these stories do much to shape our characters at a level deeper than that of specific decision-making. Biblical analogies seldom produce unambiguous conclusions to specific dilemmas, but they do support broader biblical themes and principles.

Proposed Approaches to Scripture

The preceding description and evaluation of how Adventist authors use the Bible to address abortion leads to several concluding suggestions as to how Scripture should be used in discussions of not only abortion but other contemporary moral issues.

Respect the Bible's Own Agenda. This means that every passage must be considered in the light of its own literary and historical context, if we are to discover the author's own agenda and concerns. Our use of Scripture must be consistent with that original intent. Unfortunately, the articles surveyed often reach conclusions that appear to be some distance from the author's intent.

Respect for the Bible's agenda would result in the following specific guidelines for our agenda as we move from Scripture to the issue of abortion.

First, there must be less lining up of texts to support a position and more interpretive analysis of texts to determine whether they actually speak to the question of abortion. That means interpreters must be sensitive to the kind of literature they are interpreting and must show how stories they utilize are analogous to the abortion issue.

At the same time the skills needed are more than those of technical exegesis. One must be sensitive to the basic directions that Scripture and biblical materials of moral significance are moving. Those issues must then be translated into our own circumstances so that we may discover where these issues intersect with our life and culture. This may necessitate saying something that is different from what the biblical writers said. As Ogletree has reminded us:

> [T]o say the same thing as the texts, we must say something different, for that 'same' thing can live again only if it is expressed in a way that is suited to the different reality within which we live.[34]

Second, respect for the Bible's agenda includes respect for its silence. The Bible simply does not give a clear, direct, unambiguous answer to the problem of abortion, and we must let that

silence stand. This, of course, does not mean that the Bible is irrelevant for the question. But the Bible should not be pressed to speak directly to issues on which it is silent merely because we believe it should address such an important issue.

Third, respect for the Bible's agenda means honestly balancing biblical evidence with other relevant data. Obviously our experience and empirical data will condition our views. The Bible is not our only source of evidence, even if it is the central controlling norm.

For example, if one believes, as does Sweem, that abortion always causes severe emotional damage to the woman,[35] his or her application of the principles of both compassion and justice might be quite different than for one who believes, as does Ziprick, that "few psychiatric disturbances occur in the aborted patient, since her feeling is mainly that of outstanding relief."[36] The answer to such a question is and should be important to our discussion, but empirical data, not the Bible, must solve it. We must clearly acknowledge what the Bible can and cannot do and carefully balance biblical and nonbiblical data.

All of this means listening to the Bible on its own terms before rushing to use it as sanction for our own views.

Recognition of the Nature of Principles. Appeals to biblical principles to speak to the abortion issue must show awareness of both the importance and limitations of principles. On the one hand, this is the most fruitful area for biblical exploration on issues such as abortion. On the other hand, in a sinful world where various biblical principles can point in different directions, this means that exceptions may be possible even when general biblical mandates are quite clear.[37]

Naturally the more basic the principle, the greater must be the burden of proof that appeals to other principles to make a case for the exception. We must always recognize every such action as less than ideal. But if we fail to acknowledge the possibility of conflicting principles we may well hear only a part of the biblical witness and miss the wide spectrum of its notes and tones. Therefore an adequate understanding of the nature of biblical principles will lead us to keep at least two considerations in mind.

First, we must weigh various principles and show on what basis one should take precedence over another in conflict dilemmas. This includes showing the kind of burden of proof that is necessary to override values and principles.

Secondly, we will weigh the conflicting claims of various beneficiaries of the principles set forth in Scripture. Thus, in contemplating an abortion, all the principal subjects, including both mother and fetus, must be taken into consideration.

Commitment to Community-wide Reflection

When confronted with difficult dilemmas we need one another. Our different backgrounds, perspectives, and ways of thinking all contribute to making us the body of Christ with its many members. Moral reflection is most effective in an atmosphere of give and take and mutual respect. The Bible is not the private possession of any one of us. It is the community's instrument for listening to God's voice, and that voice is heard best when the whole body, with its diverse parts, participates together.

This commitment will give us a spirit of humility that motivates us to listen carefully to one another with respect and welcome discussion, even with those who disagree with us.

Once we have set these ground rules for the discussion of abortion as it relates to biblical evidence, is there any hope that our study of Scripture will yield any positive results? Will it be possible for the Bible to bring us to any kind of consensus, or must we remain in a hopeless sea of confusion?

Given the nature of the biblical evidence, we must admit that no approach, including this one, will ever resolve all our differences. Even though the Bible will lead all those committed to its teaching to value life, it will never give unambiguous and undisputed answers to those difficult cases where conflicting values really are present. We will have to rely on Spirit-guided, reasoned reflection to evaluate these specific dilemmas. To reject such reflection in favor of an all-or-nothing position on abortion is in itself unbiblical.

However, the degree of positive consensus

revealed in the Adventist literature surveyed in this study should not be overlooked or underestimated. My hope is that we will celebrate this consensus, continuing to listen to the voice of Scripture with both intensity and care. The result will not only strengthen our individual commitments but our sense of participating in a vibrant moral community.

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34. Thomas W. Ogletree, *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 3.

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37. A biblical example of this may be seen in Paul's discussion of divorce in 1 Corinthians 7. Although he makes it very clear that the principle of the permanence of marriage is important even in cases where a believer is married to an unbeliever, and admonishes believers to preserve their marriages to unbelievers, he also allows for divorce when the unbelieving spouse wishes to leave on the basis that "God has called us to peace" (1 Corinthians 7:15, RSV). In this case the principles of peace and allowing freedom to others cause Paul to override the strong principle of the permanence of marriage.

Abortion: Some Questionable Arguments

by Timothy Crosby

It would be wonderful if Scripture provided answers to all social, ethical, and philosophical questions. But how should the church make ethical decisions in areas where the Bible gives no explicit counsel? Does the church have the right to forbid certain things that are not forbidden in Scripture? The earliest noncanonical Christian documents take a firm stand against abortion. Didache 2:2 forbids abortion, along with murder, adultery, pederasty, fornication, theft, magic, witchcraft. It is also forbidden in the epistle of Barnabas, Clement of Alexandria, Athenagoras, and Tertullian. It would be hazardous to speculate why the Bible is silent on an issue that occupied other religious writers of the times.[1] Whatever the reason, this silence has not deterred proponents on both sides of the debate from finding support for their position in Scripture.

When Does Human Life Begin?

Modern debates about abortion often center around the question of exactly when human life begins. Appeal is made to scriptural texts that indicate that God forms the fetus in the womb as proof that life begins at conception and that termination of the conceptus for any reason thereafter is murder. An examination of some of the passages most frequently cited to pinpoint the beginning of life suggests the hazards of using a passage to prove a point that was not under consideration in the mind of the original writer.

Texts such as Job 10:8-12, 31:15, Psalm 139:13-17, and Isaiah 49:5, describe God as forming the fetus in the womb, but they do not allow us to define the moment of personhood. Psalm 139 is particularly interesting. This text seems to teach a rigid predestination; it says that the days of our lives are planned in advance, and written down in some heavenly book before we are ever born. Is this literal truth, or is it a poetic way of saying that God knows all about us and cares for us? The passage also asserts that we were formed "in the depths of the earth."* Is this literal or metaphorical?

It is dangerous to take scriptural assertions—particularly when they occur in biblical poetry—and use them to prove a point that is different from the point that the writer was trying to make. For example, when Job wrote "Did not he who made me in the womb make them [Job's slaves]? Did not the same One form us both within our mothers?" (31:15) his point was that all men are brothers, equal before God. He was not addressing the modern question of precisely when life begins. Similarly, Psalm 51:5, "'Surely I have been a sinner from birth; sinful from the time my mother conceived me' " teaches the sinfulness of human beings, not their exact moment of origin.

The problem with such texts is that they prove too much, for there are passages that seem to indicate that personhood exists *before* conception. For example, Job 10:10 says " 'Did you not

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pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese' "? This is probably an allusion to the seminal fluid. The fact that it is called "me" might seem to imply life before conception. An even clearer passage is Hebrews 7:9, 10, which states that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek long before Levi was conceived, because he was in the body of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes. Jeremiah 1:5 says " 'Before [not "when"] I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations' "; and God outlined the career of Cyrus long before he was conceived in Isaiah 44:28-45:5. These passages could be taken to imply that personhood exists before conception–a ridiculous concept.

The pro-life proof texts simply do not speak to the modern issue of exactly when life begins. The pro-life position that life begins at conception is untenable. Clearly, life begins *before* conception.

None of these passages is helpful in deciding when life begins; they are probably examples of biblical prolepsis; a principle stated in Romans 4:17, "God . . . calls things that are not [yet] as though they were."

But what about texts such as Isaiah 49:1, "The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother he named Me" (NASB) (cf. "from birth" Galatians 1:15, Luke 1:15)? If God lays plans for a person before he is born, then isn't abortion frustrating the will of God? But in the Bible it is only living people who are said to have been foreknown by God. God is not foolish; he would not have preordained Isaiah or Jeremiah to be a prophet if he had known they were not going to survive.

One text that explicitly mentions conception is Matthew 1:20, "what is conceived in her [Mary] is from the Holy Spirit." But this says nothing about the status of the conceptus except to reveal who the "father" was. Even if it did, Christ might be considered a special case. Other passages indicate that life begins at birth. Genesis 2:7 says that "man became a living being" at the moment he began to breathe.

Other texts such as Job 27:3, 33:4, Ezekiel 37:5, and Psalm 104:29, 30 explicitly equate life with breath; these passages weaken the objection that Adam is a special case, and might be understood as paradigmatic for all human life.

Yet the concept that the "soul" or "life" is in the blood (Deuteronomy 12:23, Leviticus 17:10-14) might imply that personhood begins as soon as there is heartbeat and circulation.

Although many of these passages confirm the worth of the fetus, they cannot be used to pinpoint the beginning of personhood. Using these texts to resolve the abortion debate is like using Psalm 96:10, "The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved," to resolve the 15th-century debate over whether the Earth goes around the sun or not. The pro-life proof texts simply do not speak to the modern issue of exactly when life begins.

The pro-life position that life begins at conception is untenable. Clearly, life begins *before* conception. The unfertilized egg is alive, and has the capability to become a human being if it is fertilized by the sperm, just as the fertilized ovum has that capability if it is nurtured by the womb. An egg is a potential human being, and will become one, given the right conditions. An unfertilized female egg is just as "human" as a fertilized egg—it certainly isn't reptilian. The unfertilized sperm even manifests intelligent, goal-seeking behavior. I do not believe that human life begins at conception. It began in Eden.

It is true that only after fertilization does the cell have a complete complement of genes, giving it the potential to become an adult human being. The status of the embryo, then, boils down to its *potential*; that which it may become, given time. But, surely, potential things are less valuable than actual things. A potential election winner does not have the same rights as an actual election winner. A potential scholar does not enjoy the same respect as an actual scholar.

If it is true that having a full complement of genes constitutes personhood, then every cell in the adult human body is a "person." Even the requisite potential for differentiation may be present. If it should become possible to clone a human

being from a single cell (something that has already been done with cattle), then a cell from any part of the human body would be a potential human being (given the right conditions). In that case, should it be considered murder to destroy human cells by scratching oneself?

Since every living cell, fertilized or not, has life, the question is not "When does life begin?" but "When does personhood begin?" This is, to some extent, a legal question. The state is forced to choose some point on the continuum of human growth as the point beyond which termination of life is immoral.

An analogous problem is the speed limit. The 55-mph limit does not correspond to any ontological discontinuity; it is an arbitrary legal decision. One might argue that, as speed is dangerous, and higher speeds are responsible for great loss of life every year in this country, the only logical and safe position is to avoid speed altogether; otherwise we might find ourselves on a slippery slope that leads to greater and greater speed and consequent loss of life. But this slippery-slope argument is hardly convincing. Even though the recent increase in the speed limit from 55 to 65 on some interstate highways will probably result in the loss of thousands of additional lives—self-conscious, intelligent, adult lives—no one is accusing the legislature of legalizing murder.

I would argue that the very earliest the line of personhood could be drawn on the continuum of life would be late in the second month of pregnancy. Shettles, who argues that life begins at conception, writes:

> The so-called Harvard Criteria, established by a committee at the Harvard Medical School in 1968 to define death, would, if applied to the fetus, reveal a living human being. The Harvard Criteria, now widely used and accepted in medical schools and hospitals, state that death is determined by four things: lack of response to external stimuli, lack of deep reflex action, lack of spontaneous movement and respiratory effort, and lack of brain activity. . . . Movement of the fetus has been recorded on film as early as day 36, responds to touch in the sixth week and sometimes earlier. . . . EEG tracings have been detected as early as the fifth week.[2]

But Shettles' own data indicate that the embryo does not achieve "human life" until sometime in the second month of pregnancy. During the first month, although the organism is alive in the same sense as an amoeba or a tree, it is nevertheless "dead" according to the Harvard criteria. Surely an organism without breath or brain waves is not a living soul. We would not condemn a doctor for disconnecting a body with no brain from its life-support system; so we should not condemn a doctor for practicing menstrual extraction (the abortive procedure used up to the sixth week of pregnancy) for legitimate reasons, since, according to the Harvard criteria, the conceptus is no more alive than the vegetative, brain-dead body.

There are other indications that the embryo is not a person. According to James J. Diamand,[3] in the light of biological evidence, the conceptus cannot possibly be said to be a person before 14 to 22 days after conception, at which time a radical and categorical change in life form occurs. Before this point it is undifferentiated (i.e., it is a collection of homogeneous cells without specialization), and there is a capacity for twinning and there is a likelihood of spontaneous abortion.

The phenomenon of spontaneous abortion raises interesting questions. Henri Leridon finds

Fifty-six percent of all embryos spontaneously abort. Are these spontaneously aborted embryos persons? Will they be resurrected? If so, they will vastly outnumber the righteous who were born and lived on earth.

that 56 percent of all embryos spontaneously abort,[4] while J. Biggers indicates this figure may be as high as two-thirds.[5] Are these spontaneously aborted embryos persons? Will they be resurrected? If so, they will vastly outnumber the righteous who were born and lived on earth.

Spontaneous abortion often indicates an abnormality in the embryo. This is, of course, a natural process, but nature often works imperfectly. This brings us back to the question of deformity. What if this natural process is not working correctly, and allows grossly deformed children to be born? Should we help it along in the

same way that we would facilitate the process of birth in case of a birthing emergency, or should we allow nature to take its faulty course in both cases (allowing the deformed fetus to be born and allowing one with the cord around its neck to die)?

If it is wrong to imitate nature and abort an embryo, then is it wrong to kill a mature deer who cares for her young and feels pain? The one difference between humans and animals is that humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This cannot mean that humans, in contrast to the animals, possess an immortal soul, for in the Creation account both humans (Genesis 2:7) and animals (Genesis 1:24; 2:19) are called "souls" (Hebrew *nephesh,* also translated "living creature" RSV); and both are formed from the dust (Genesis 2:19). In fact, if the embryo did possess an immortal soul, that would weaken the pro-life case, for when we kill a deer we take all it has, but when we terminate a fetus we leave the essential part untouched (Matthew 10:28). To be consistent, pro-lifers should be vegetarians.

It is not helpful to cite the sixth commandment and charge abortionists with murder. The question to be decided is whether or not abortion fits into the category of murder. This is not something that can simply be assumed as a premise.

The statement that humans are made in the image of God means, at the very least, that men and women are physically more like God than is any other animal on earth.[6] Ellen G. White defines the image of God as "power to think and to do."[7] But regardless of how the image of God is defined, the embryo does not possess it. Even a normal (much less a deformed) embryo does not look human (it has a tail and apparent gills) and does not possess the power to think and to do. The image of God is something we grow into. We cannot leave the image of God undefined and argue that all fetuses possess it simply by virtue of being human. If that is so, then Hitler possessed just as much of the image of God as the greatest saint—an unacceptable conclusion.

Moreover, a deformed embryo has no hope of ever growing into that image. Anencephalic children, with little or no higher brain, die hours or days after birth. Children with Tay-Sachs disease develop normally at first but then go into prolonged deterioration leading to blindness, paralysis, and early death. There is no cure for these disorders. The argument that abortion is illegitimate in such cases because we do not kill adults who have similar maladies, such as cancer, is valid only on the questionable assumption that the fetus is on the same level as an adult.

Someone looking for a proof text that would settle the matter of deformed babies might seize upon Exodus 4:11, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him dumb or deaf? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" This would seem to indicate that God causes deformity. But his text proves too much, for if deformity were truly God's will for a baby, then it would be wrong to frustrate his will by surgically correcting the deformity!

If, as some argue, we have no right to play God, then we should not even perform abortions to save the life of the mother. What right do we have to decide that the mother should live if God/nature chooses to let the fetus live and the mother die? The false premise here is that things that are natural are right. But nature is fallen and sometimes needs our help. The "playing God" argument is an emotional red herring. Every surgeon who lifts the knife is "playing God." Legislators and judges "play God" every day.

Is Abortion Really Murder?

Finally, it is not helpful to cite the sixth commandment and charge abortionists with murder. First, because the Bible does not precisely define the beginning of life; and second, because the sixth commandment ("Thou shall not murder") does not forbid the taking of life under all circumstances. This commandment does not use the general-purpose word for killing (Hebrew *mooth*), but the more

precise Hebrew word *ratsach*, which generally means "murder"—i.e., killing that is malicious and unauthorized by higher authority. The sixth commandment was never understood in Bible times to condemn capital punishment or killing in war; i.e., it allows killing as long as the one who takes life is licensed to kill under civil authority. The question to be decided, then, is whether or not abortion fits into the category of murder. This is not a premise that can simply be assumed.

The Bible holds that it is morally justifiable to take human life under certain conditions—such as war—where those whose lives are taken may have no personal culpability. Neither in biblical nor secular philosophy is the preservation of life always an overriding ultimate value.

The most discussed text is Exodus 21:22-24. Since capital punishment is imposed only in the case of the death of the adult, not the fetus, it is alleged that termination of the fetus is not murder. The majority of the rabbis so taught, and held, as in Roman law, that the fetus is a part of the mother[8]; though some said that if the fetus is unformed (under 40 days) only a fine is called for, but if formed (and hence fully human) life for life is demanded.[9] Josephus gives the typical Jewish understanding of this verse:

> He that kicketh a woman with child, if the woman miscarry, shall be fined by the judges for having, by the destruction of the fruit of her womb, diminished the population, and a further sum shall be presented by him to the woman's husband. If she die of the blow, he also shall die, the law claiming as its due the sacrifice of life for life.[10]

Bruce Waltke argues that the evidence for this interpretation is strengthened by a comparison of the biblical text with ancient Near Eastern parallels.[11] But others, such as Bajema[12] and Geissler[13] dispute this because the attack on the fetus could be regarded as unintentional, and in cases of accidental death the penalty was not capital punishment but only a fine; or because the passage might refer not to miscarriage but to premature birth, with the penalty applying to the death of either the mother or the baby.

But all of this is beside the point, for Exodus 21:20, 21, when compared with verse 12, clearly implies that the life of a slave is of lesser value than the life of a free man. Yet we would not accept *this* as normative for us today, would we? Therefore, even if Exodus 21:22f. provided unambiguous evidence that the life of the fetus were regarded as of less value than the life of an adult, it would not settle the question.

Some issues that arise in connection with abortion are simple to solve from a Biblical standpoint. Pro-choice advocates maintain that a woman has the right to control her own body. This argument does not even stand up from a logical standpoint, much less a scriptural one. As far as Scripture is concerned, our bodies are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). From a logical standpoint, the embryo is not a part of the mother's body. Paul Jewett comments:

> Of all the tissues in the body, it [the fetal tissue] alone has a fixed genetic make-up different from that of the body in which it is lodged. A woman cannot say of fetal tissue, this is mine, in the sense she can say of her kidney tissue, this is mine. She cannot keep it, any more than she can give it to someone else; she must surrender it at birth—or die.[14]

But what about the rights of the fetus? Since the fetus cannot choose, the argument goes, we have no right to deprive it of its right to life. But the argument can go either way. Who is qualified to define the rights of the fetus? Why must the fetus be forced to be born? Who will protect the right of the fetus not to be born? Bestowing the "right to life" upon the unborn may under certain circumstances be like forcing "life" upon a terminally ill patient who wishes to be allowed to die, or bestowing the great boon of salvation via forced conversion upon unwilling pagans. There may be times when, if the fetus were able to foresee its fate, it would choose not to be born. Job (3:1-26, 10:18, 19) expressed regret that he had

There may be times when, if the fetus were able to foresee its fate, it would choose not to be born. Thus the proper reply to the argument "What if the mother of Beethoven had had an abortion?" is "What if the mother of Hitler had had one?"

ever been born, and indicated that death is preferable to certain types of life. Jesus said of Judas that " 'it would be better for him if he had not been born' " (Matthew 26:24, Mark 14:21). Thus the proper reply to the argument "What if the mother of Beethoven had had an abortion?" is "What if the mother of Hitler had had one?"

If Scripture Doesn't Prohibit, Does Scripture Permit?

Can we, then, assume that if abortion were wrong, Scripture would have condemned it? Should we conclude that anything that is not explicitly condemned in Scripture is allowed?

The church has not taken this position on other matters. Although slavery and polygamy are not explicitly condemned in Scripture, the church, along with society, has condemned these practices. Other practices, accepted by society, are proscribed by the church.

Another practice that is actually allowed in Scripture (and accepted by society) but that the church has chosen to prohibit is the drinking of alcoholic beverages. The biblical position on alcoholic beverages is moderation, not total abstinence.[15] But the fact that the Bible allows alcohol in moderation does not justify drinking today, anymore than the fact that it allows slavery or polygamy would justify those practices today. In the past God overlooked the times of ignorance (Acts 17:30) and allowed certain practices that should no longer be condoned in the light of advancing revelation (Matthew 19:4-8). Even in the Old Testament wine was forbidden to kings (Proverbs 31:4), Nazarites (Numbers 6:3), and priests (Leviticus 10:9), indicating that, ideally, it was not fit to drink. Today there are good medical arguments that cast doubt on the premise that one can drink "to the glory of God."

Moreover, it could be argued that Matthew 16:19 gives the church a limited authority to forbid and permit within the guidelines of Scripture. In matters of practice, then, we must, as we have in the past, continue to move beyond the Bible, rather than attempting to maintain that anything allowed in Scripture is legitimate behavior for the Christian today.

A Gradualist Position

The abortion debate will never be resolved as long as we insist on applying all-or-nothing categories to what is obviously a gradualist situation. There are degrees of wrong. To say that the abortion of a week-old blastocyst is the murder of a person, in the same league with the assassination of a President, is tantamount to saying that swatting a fly is the same as shooting a baboon, or that smashing an acorn underfoot is the same as cutting down a large oak. It is ridiculous to argue that a teenage son who stabs his mother to death and a doctor who does a menstrual extraction of a week-old embryo are equally guilty of the crime of murder. Such overzealous extremism discredits the pro-life cause: the best way to undo is to overdo.

However, there are crimes other than murder. While abortion may be justified in some cases of rape,[16] incest, abnormality, et cetera, such cases account for only one or two percent of all abortions. Rape pregnancy is very rare. The number of pregnancies in any given year in the United States as a result of rape is probably under 100. In Czechoslovakia, a careful study was made of 86,000 consecutive induced abortions, and it was found that only 22 were done for rape.[17] The vast majority of abortions are elective. As to these, I share the feelings of Mary Meehan:

> Often, in debates over ethics, people torture themselves with cases that are highly unlikely to occur. We ask, "Would I tell a lie to save the world?" when we are far more likely to face the question, "Will I tell a lie to stay in someone's good graces?" We ask, "Would I have an abortion to avoid having a severely retarded child?" The question is more likely to be "Will I have an abortion to avoid social embarrassment or interference with my career?"[18]

I consider myself to be pro-choice in this sense: a woman may freely choose to have intercourse or not. If intercourse has been forced upon her, she should not be forced to continue a resulting preg-

nancy. However, once human beings have freely chosen to enter into a sexual relationship, they cannot freely choose to reject the responsibilities that come with that privilege.

Even though I find it impossible to accept the idea that the embryo is a person immediately after conception, I oppose all abortions of convenience at any time after conception. Why? For a similar reason that I oppose showing disrespect for the American flag or wearing a swastika. When someone tramples on a flag or wears a swastika, no rule of Scripture is being violated and no individual is being directly injured, but from a symbolic standpoint something important, perhaps even sacred, is being degraded. Again, why do civilized people go to such lengths to dispose of a dead body in an honorable way? Why not toss it out with the garbage? Because there is a symbolic content that goes well beyond the literal content. To treat a corpse—or a fetus—with casual disrespect, is to cheapen and debase humanity. We sink to the level of savages.

Intuitively, mothers know this. In one study of 30 women dealing with the long-term manifestations of abortion, 72 percent did not claim to be particularly religious at the time they had the abortion, but 96 percent afterward felt that abortion was the "taking of a life" or "murder." Eighty-five percent were surprised at the intensity of their emotional reaction, while 81 percent felt "victimized by the abortion process."[19]

Thus psychic trauma to the mother is probably more likely to result from an abortion than from a birth.[20] And other than harm to the mother, I cannot imagine any financial or emotional consideration (embarrassment of mother, resentment of fetus, et cetera) that would be sufficient reason for taking the life of the potential person. In regard to the mother's feelings toward the fetus, several studies have found that most pregnant women who initially reject their pregnancy end up wanting it.[21] And even if the parents do not want the child, there are thousands of barren couples who would cherish it. There is no such thing as an unwanted child.

While I am opposed to the black-and-white, all-or-nothing position, I believe that the vast majority of abortions done today are wrong. I do not believe church institutions should have any part in this cheapening of life. I hope that the church will take a stand against elective abortion, as it belatedly did against unequal pay for women, and cease to impair its credibility by ignoring the moral climate regarding such issues.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Michael J. Gorman, *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish, and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1982), p. 48 suggests that references to *pharmakeia* in Galatians 5:20, Revelation 9:21, 18:23, 21:8, 22:15 may be an implicit reference to abortion. The word may refer to poisons and mind-disturbing drugs, potions supplied by a sorcerer or magician, or abortifacients.

2. Landrum B. Shettles and David Rorvik, *Rites of Life: The Scientific Evidence for Life Before Birth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983), p. 56.

3. James J. Diamand, "Abortion, Animation, and Biological Hominization," *Theological Studies*, 36 (1975), pp. 305-324, cited in Carol A. Tauer, "The Tradition of Probabilism and the Moral Status of the Early Embryo," *Theological Studies*, 45 (March 1984), pp. 3-33.

4. Henri Leridon, *Human Fertility: The Basic Components* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), p. 81, cited in Tauer, op. cit.

5. J. D. Biggers, "In Vitro Fertilization, Embryo Culture and Embryo Transfer in the Human; Appendix to Report and Conclusions of the Report of the Ethics Advisory Board: HEW Support of Research Involving Human In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer," *Federal Register*, 44:118:35033-35058 (June 18, 1979).

6. The word *image*, as used in the Old Testament, has to do primarily with physical, not psychological, resemblance (Genesis 5:3; Exodus 20:4; Psalms 106:19; Isaiah 40:19, 20; 44:9, 10, 15, 17).

7. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), p. 17.

8. Gorman, p. 41.

9. Gorman, p. 35ff.

10. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 278. Similar understandings of Exodus 21 are found in TB *Sanhedrin* 74a and 79a and *Baba Kamma* 5:4.

11. Bruce K. Waltke, "The Old Testament and Birth Control," *Christianity Today* (November 8, 1968), p. 3.

12. Bajema, *Abortion and the Meaning of Personhood.* Passim.

13. Norman L. Geissler, "The Bible, Abortion, and Common Sense," *Fundamentalist Journal*, 4:5 (May 1985), p. 25.

14. Paul K. Jewett, "The Relation of the Soul to the Fetus," *Christianity Today* (November 8, 1968), p. 6.

15. In Deuteronomy 14:26 the Israelites are allowed to drink "wine and strong drink." Strong drink is regarded as undesirable for men in positions of authority, but it has its legitimate uses for the depressed afflicted, according to Proverbs 31:4-7. Indeed, wine that "gladdens the heart of man" is said to be one of the gifts of God (Psalm 104:15). Even Daniel, after refusing the king's wine (Daniel 1), mainly because it had been offered to idols, may have later drunk it (Daniel 10:3), presumably because in his position of authority he could obtain wine that hadn't been offered to idols.

In the New Testament deacons are forbidden to overindulge in wine (1 Timothy 3:8) but total abstinence was not required. It is drinking to the point of intoxication which is forbidden in the Bible (Proverbs 20:1; 21:17; Isaiah 5:11, 22; 28:7, 8; 56:11, 12; Hosea 4:11; Ephesians 5:18). The strongest injunction against drinking, in Proverbs 23:29-35, refers to a particular kind of spiced wine (cf. Canticles 8:2) also called mixed wine (Proverbs 9:2; 23:30) which was prepared with herbs after the manner of the heathen Near Eastern nations and served at a banquet. This wine, being especially intoxicating, was forbidden. Otherwise the principle seems to be one of moderation.

In biblical times it was customary at this time to mix the fermented wine with water, one part wine to two parts water. The resulting beverage was quite weak and relatively innocuous; it would take a lot of it to make a person intoxicated. And when fresh water was not always available, the alcohol in wine served a useful function in purifying the water by killing the germs in it.

16. Judith Jarvis Thompson, "A Defense of Abortion," in Marshall Cohen, Thomas Nagel, and Thomas Scanlon, *The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 4, 5, offers the following analogy to refusing a woman an abortion because of rape:

> You wake up in the morning and find yourself back to back in bed with an unconscious violinist. A famous unconscious violinist. He has been found to have a fatal kidney ailment, and the Society of Music Lovers has canvassed all the available medical records and found that you alone have the right blood type to help. They have therefore kidnapped you, and last night the violinist's circulatory system was plugged into yours, so that your kidneys can be used to extract poisons from his blood as well as your own. The director of the hospital now tells you, "Look, we're sorry the Society of Music Lovers did this to you—we would never have permitted it if we had known. But still, they did it, and the violinist now is plugged into you. To unplug you would be to kill him. But never mind, it's only for nine months. By then he will have recovered from his ailment, and can safely be unplugged from you." Is it morally incombent on you to accede to this situation?

17. Vance Farrell, *Pilgrim's Rest*, Waymarks 71 (September 1, 1983).

18. Mary Meehan, "More Trouble Than They're Worth?" cited in Sidney Callahan and Daniel Callahan, *Abortion: Understanding Differences* (New York: Plenum Press, 1984), p. 168.

19. Anne Catherine Speckhard, Ph.D., "The Psycho-Social Aspects of Stress Following Abortion" (Study, University of Minnesota), cited in Ardyce Sweem, "Laura's Question: Three Perspectives on Abortion," *Adventist Review* (September 25, 1986), p. 12.

20. According to Dr. Vincent M. Rue, psychotherapist and executive director of the Sir Thomas More Clinic of Southern California, women who have had abortions are at far greater risk for psychiatric hospitalization than are women who allow their babies to live. Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS), a stress disorder similar to that suffered by many Vietnam veterans, afflicts up to half of all women who have abortions, often leading to other problems such as substance abuse and suicide. A study cited by Paula Vandergaer, editor of *Living World*, has documented that 60 percent of the 3,000 women calling a suicide hotline service in Milwaukee had undergone abortions (*Signs of the Times* [July 1988], p. 6). On the other hand, the very recent survey by Surgeon General Everett Koop, himself pro-life, finds the evidence on this point ambiguous. Perhaps it is safe to say that a large minority of those who undergo abortion experience very painful emotional reactions.

21. "There is a contention that unwanted conceptions tend to have undesirable effects . . . [but] direct evidence for such a relationship is almost completely lacking . . . . It was the hope of the article to find more convincing systematic research evidence and to give some idea of the amount of relationship between unwanted conception and undesired effect on children. This hope has been disappointed." (E. Pohlman, "Unwanted Conception, Research on Undesirable Consequences," *Eugenics Quarterly*, 14 [1967], p. 143.)

"It is clear that mothers who initially believed their pregnancy to be 'the worst thing that ever happened to them' came to feel about the same degree of affection for their children as the mothers who were initially 'ecstatic' about the pregnancy. Most women who were most regretful of the pregnancy now claim they would have the child again if given the opportunity" whereas "one of every six mothers who were initially pleased with pregnancy would choose not to have the child again." (P. Cameron, et al., "How Much Do Mothers Love Their Children?" *Rocky Mountain Psychological Association*, May 12, 1972.)

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* All Bible texts in this article are taken from the New International Version, unless otherwise indicated.

A Biblical Response to Abortion

by Richard Fredericks

As I became involved in the abortion issue a young female Adventist pediatrician told me of a late saline abortion in an Adventist hospital. The abortion failed. The baby was born alive and crying, but placed in a sealed bucket to suffocate. She was horrified by such an act of murder. Beyond the initial horror she was stunned on two accounts: first, during her own training she had stated she would withdraw from medical school (University of Virginia) rather than perform or participate in an abortion due to her religious convictions as an Adventist. After first saying she must assist in an abortion to graduate, the university backed down. Second, she assumed that as a church we took a strong stand against abortion. Then she found that abortions for convenience (nonmedical emergencies) were regular occurrences in Adventist hospitals. I will never forget her tears as she looked at me and said: "How can we do this?"

I then learned that in Adventist hospitals where abortions are done the overwhelming percentage are elective abortions (no defect in the child or danger to the life of the mother); a practice allowed for under No. 5 of the church's official guidelines. Next, I saw pictures—real pictures—of what happens in an abortion. What was being torn apart by suction curette 10-13 weeks into a pregnancy is not a "blob" or "unwanted tissue" but a child with perfectly formed little arms, hands, fingers and even fingernails; with feet that have toes and toenails; with faces showing eyes and changing expressions; with a brain that had already emitted strong brainwaves for a month before the "termination." I was looking at a human being with potential, and not at potential life.

In the United States, I discovered, three out of every ten pregnancies end in abortion. In 14 metropolitan areas, such as Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and Seattle, abortions outnumber live births.[1] Three abortions are done per minute, 4,200 abortions per day, 1.5 million per year—a total of more than 21 million since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973. Since 1975 the "war on the unborn" has produced twice as many casualties *each year* as have the combined deaths in all the major wars in U.S. history, from the Revolutionary War through Vietnam.

During this time I met Patti McKinney, the president of the fastest-growing organization in America: WEBA (Women Exploited by Abortion). Starting five years ago with two members, it currently has 36,000 members with chapters in 30 states. Patti introduced me to the "women's issue" in abortion from another angle—the incredible sense of betrayal and the equally tremendous physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional scars left with many who choose to abort.[2]

Meeting Patti had an impact on me for another reason. This courageous lady, who appears regularly on national television, was at one time an Adventist. She left us because she believed we were not serious about our call to keep all the commandments of God. Her question was "OK, Adventists, what about the sixth commandment?"

Next to basic apathy ("I don't want to get involved," or "If the church is neutral so am I"), the predominant response I have found among Adventists, especially clergy, is a denial that the

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scriptural principles have anything to say concerning this issue. Because no proof text against abortion can be found, it is argued, the Bible is neutral or, at best, nondefinitive. This, to me, is a view that discredits Scripture and God himself.

Two basic perspectives guide the following discussion: Scripture (not human reason) is the final arbitrator of all significant ethical and moral issues; and Scripture is far from silent about abortion.[3]

The Old Testament

God is against murder. "You shall not murder" (Hebrew: *ratsach*, Exodus 20:13). The sixth commandment may allow for some forms of capital punishment or self-defense. But the Hebrew term, and its context, consistently defines as murder, then forbids and unequivocally condemns the taking of any innocent human life by violent means (Exodus 23:7). No exceptions are offered, no conditions (economic, emotional, or otherwise) are given where taking an innocent life is acceptable to God. He repeatedly condemns (literally, "declares a curse upon")those who take the life of an innocent human being in a futile attempt to atone for their own sins as in Deuteronomy 24:16. Proverbs 6:16, 17 states "six things the Lord hates. . . . hands that shed innocent blood"(NIV).

Those who are without a power base in society are the objects of God's special regard.

More specifically, God views as especially heinous the sacrifice of children for the sins of the parents (see Jeremiah 7:30-34 and Micah 6:7); and those who "ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead [double murder] in order to enlarge their borders" (Amos 1:13, NIV). In Psalm 106, verses 35-40, God sends destructive judgments upon his people who have accepted the practices of the Canaanites, leading them to "shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters" (KJV). In Jeremiah 22 God directly links child sacrifice with greed, the desire for materialistic self-fulfillment (22:3, 13-17).

This link is confirmed in the *Biblical Archeological Review* (January/February 1984). Archeologists have discovered that the practice of child sacrifices in Carthage similar to those condemned in the Old Testament were motivated by economic reasons, but with religious justification. Child sacrifice was more prevalent in wealthy homes than in poor ones. The wealthy were disposing of their "unwanted" children in order to preserve their life-style and standard of living.[4] God declares this mindset both fatal and alien to His kingdom.

God affirms the personhood of the unborn. In both the Old and New Testament the term used to describe a human being in the womb is *child*, the same term used to describe an infant after birth. There is nothing anywhere in Scripture to indicate God views the unborn child as only a potential life. Rather, all babies in the womb are spoken of as persons, as unique and distinct individuals with identity and worth, for whom God already has a destiny:

> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).[5]
>
> "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the One who formed you from the womb, I, the Lord am the maker of all things, . . . Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you" (Isaiah 44: 24, 2).
>
> "Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. . . Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them" (Psalm 139:13, 16).[6]

God is especially for the weak, the orphan, the voiceless, and the oppressed. Those who are without a power base in society are the objects of his special regard; and are to be so treated by his people: "Vindicate the weak and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:3, 4). If the unborn are persons to God, they are the most defenseless of persons. To be God's servant is to defend such as these in a selfish, brutal world.

The New Testament

The Gospels elicit an immediate sense that Jesus formed a kingdom where the self-centered, materialistic values of the world are turned upside down. Fulfillment, in Jesus' terms, is redefined as valuing all others, especially children,[7] more than we value personal comfort, autonomy, or the pursuit of individual rights. This participation, even if it is in the "fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10) with one who gave himself on the cross for sinners, is the heart of Christianity. It declares all human life valuable. This *agape* life-style is illustrated in a number of New Testament themes.

The gospel reveals a God who accepts and values each of us as persons, not on the basis of our achievements. Christ offered himself in sacrificial love to those who were unworthy and incapable of earning such love by their attractiveness, achievements, or assets. God loves us in our morally and spiritually defective state and declares us acceptable by grace.[8]

Abortion is a false gospel. The Christian gospel declares that the Son of God, in divine love offered himself as the all-sufficient ("once-for-all") atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. Abortion promises peace and redemption through the blood of the unborn rather than the blood of Christ.

Abortion also assaults the gospel by breeding sociological perfectionism; people who are inconvenient or fail to measure up are denied human value and subsequently denied life. It makes a big difference whether we communicate to our children: "Grandma is no longer a functional person and it is expensive to take care of her, so we're going to help her have a good death"; or we say "Grandma can't communicate with us but she is still Grandma; and we can still love her and take care of her until she dies." Children raised with the first orientation grow up eliminating people who are inconvenient. Those taught the second perspective grow up understanding the power of grace. When she accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Mother Teresa said:

> To me, the nations with legalized abortions are the poorest nations. The great destroyer of peace today is the crime against the innocent unborn child.... In destroying the child, we are destroying love, destroying the image of God in the world.[9]

The apostles' concept of love grew out of a concrete, historical reality—a bloody cross on a windswept hill called Golgotha. Jesus' death for sinners taught them that genuine love is always costly, and above all else, sacrificial and redemptive. Their values were different, above all, the value they put on human life. This became evident in their relationships, as the earliest nonbiblical Christian moral code, the *Didache*, illustrates:

> Our oldest moral catechism prepared candidates for baptism by instructing them: "You will not kill. You will not have sex with other people's spouses. You will not abuse young children. You will not have sex outside of marriage. *You will not abort fetuses.*"[10] [Italics supplied.]

For these early Christians, the value of the unborn child was a logical extension of the gospel. This put them at odds with the prevailing practice in Roman society where abortion was rampant. In every age, the way in which the Christian community deals with the weakest and most needy in its midst is an accurate reflection of how personally real the power of the gospel is to its members.

Jesus was born into poverty and hardship, such a low "quality of life" by modern reasoning it would have been far better for Mary to terminate her pregnancy. Yet this life is the ultimate revelation of the "glory" of God.

The Incarnation speaks strongly against abortion and the ethic supporting it. When the "Word became flesh" he began as an unborn child, a fetus. Part of the revelation of his "glory" (John 1:14) was to enter into the womb of an unmarried but pregnant teenager. Was he at that moment "potential life" with only relative value?[11]

Remember, Jesus was born into poverty and hardship, destined for suffering. If we look at the nativity story in all its harsh reality, one wonders

what advice we would have offered Mary today about her pregnancy. Birth in a filthy stable. Only rags available to dress the child. Jesus' identification with the poor and underprivileged rather than the successful, powerful, or prosperous was so real he had literally "nowhere to lay His head" (Luke 9:58). This is such a low "quality of life" by modern reasoning it would have been far better for Mary to terminate her pregnancy. Yet this life is the ultimate revelation of the "glory" of God (John 17:1-5).

The "love of money" is not the key to happiness, but "the root of all evil." It is a mindset that causes "people who want to get rich" to "fall into temptation" and wander "away from the faith" (1 Timothy 6:5-11, NIV). Jesus emphatically declared that "you cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24, NIV); that "life does not consist in the abundance of . . . possessions," therefore, his disciples must "be on . . . guard against every form of greed" (Luke 12:16-21). When John, in Revelation, describes Babylon, the great harlot in whom is found the blood of "all who were slain on the earth" (18:24, NIV), he pictures her as that spirit in humanity that values gold and silver above human lives (18:11-13).

Many arguments for abortion or killing the defective appeal to economic self-interest. The biblical priority is radically different.

This is crucial. Many arguments for abortion or killing the defective, if listened to carefully, appeal to economic self-interest. They warn that preserving and protecting such people threatens either present or potential financial prosperity. The biblical priority is radically different. Paul identifies greed as the sin of idolatry—the most fatal sin in the New Testament (Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). More than any other topic, Jesus talked about the danger of basing life's decisions and goals on money, and flatly declared "it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," and "turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say, 'Blessed are [even] you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."[12] This meaning, derived from discipleship, is in direct opposition to the belief that a life of potential material hardship is a life not worth living.[13]

Happiness is found in the company of the committed whose purpose is to mirror Christ's unearned, undeserved love by indentifying with those who need it most: the weak, the frail, the poor, and the helpless. "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40, KJV).

Abortion is rooted in the greatest sin of all: humanity's desire to play God. Trying to be autonomous, the creature living as if his finite reason were the highest authority and therefore taking the prerogatives of the Creator—this is the essence of sin. Paul speaks of "the lie" as worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25; see context, verses 18-32).

The first lie the Bible records is Satan's assertion to Eve that she could "be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Isaiah identifies the one overpowering determination of the Satanic spirit as: "'I will exalt myself. . . . I will make myself like the Most High'" (Isaiah 14:14), and he described spiritual Babylon (the archetypal kingdom of human rebellion against God, cf. Daniel 4:30) in these words: "You sensual one, who dwells securely, who says in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me' " (Isaiah 47:8).[14]

Some defenses of abortion appeal to the "absolute rights" of men and women to total sexual freedom, and of each woman to do what she wants with "her own body" (meaning the unborn child). But do we have absolute rights to do what we want with our bodies? Is personal autonomy a "Christian right" to be defended by the church? "You are not your own; you were bought with a price; therefore, honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV). The New Testament calls us to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It never defends "personal autonomy" or defines freedom in terms of autonomy: 'If anyone would to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me' (Luke 9:23, NIV).

God's grace never covers willful, cherished sin, and autonomy is the primordial sin (Isaiah 14:12-14). *Auto-nomy* literally means "self-

law"—the sinful desire to be one's own ultimate authority. Again, in Genesis 3:4-6, it is the serpent who distorts true freedom into personal autonomy ("ye shall be as gods"[KJV]). Jesus' own discussion of authentic freedom is found in John 8:28-36; here it is defined within the context of discipleship and abiding in his Word. Biblical freedom is the opposite of autonomy.

Another defense of abortion, the argument that those who might be born with physical, mental, or economic handicaps would be better off dead, leads physicians and others to play God. They act as if they are omniscient, speaking with certainty about the misery "unwanted" children will both cause and experience.

Really? Who gave these prophets their crystal ball? Will this new child's life be a continual burden or a joyful praise to God? How can we know?[15] The greatest gospel singer of this century was the illegitimate daughter of a 16-year-old poor, black girl who was raped. Beethoven's family background included a deranged father, a syphilitic mother, a mentally retarded older brother, and a sibling born blind. Surely Planned Parenthood would have said to Ludwig's mother: "Protect your freedom, terminate the poor thing." Their "god" is human speculation, and that god is small and impotent. To argue for death as the best answer to life's problems lacks imagination and a sense of God's redemptive might. For an atheist this limitedness is understandable, from a Christian it is bankrupt.

Biblically, then, God is actively involved with the unborn as persons of value. Since abortion is the taking of such an innocent human life, it is not only for the Bible an act of murder, but an assault on the purpose of Christ's life, his gospel, and his call to discipleship.

The Biblical Call to Commitment Now

Should the Adventist church take a stand against the practice of abortion? Yes, for many reasons. The most common argument against this step is a very legitimate desire to protect personal freedom of choice. But for the Christian community the crucial question is not whether God has given freedom of choice to His people. He certainly has. Rather, for us the question is whether our choices are just and moral.

Individuals are free to practice adultery, or cruelty, but such choices are neither moral nor Christlike. Neither is the choice to kill an unborn child in an attempt to solve a present crisis.

They were told the fetus was their hindrance to a happy life. The counselor at the clinic promised a quick escape back to freedom once the unwanted "blob of tissue" was removed quickly and painlessly.

Another roadblock to a biblically consistent Adventist position is a curious denial of ethical accountability because of eschatological speculations. What may happen is causing us to deny what *is* happening. Prominent speakers within our church have said that those on the side of the sanctity of life are the vanguard of the "religious right," those who would bring in legislation limiting our religious freedom. They conclude we must avoid being identified with these Christians in their struggle against abortion and infanticide. This is curious and sad. Speculations about a future death decree should not make us actively participate in a present one. Surely for the unborn of America this is already a time of trouble such as has never been (Matthew 24:21).

Other church leaders have said "it is a Catholic issue." But is protecting innocent life the private domain of the Catholic church? Proverbs 24:11, 12, and a host of other warnings from God (in the minor prophets especially) call us to defend the weak, voiceless, and oppressed (Jeremiah 22:16; cf. Jeremiah 5:26-29).

Compassion must be our common ground, our point of agreement as a church. Those on both sides of this debate often see themselves as the defenders of compassion, either compassion for the unborn child or for the woman in crisis. Must this be an "either/or" choice? A response that is truly and consistently compassionate to everyone

involved in a crisis pregnancy should be our goal.

Consensus on compassion might lead to consensus on two specific points. First, the realization that abortion has a second victim—the woman. Abortion not only destroys a child, but damages and sometimes destroys the very person it is suggested it will help. Because of this, compassion for the woman (as well as the child) dictates alternate answers.

Here, I want to speak from personal experience. I have counseled with six students and one close friend following their abortions. The story in each case was sickeningly similar. Career plans, money, self-esteem, boyfriend's affection: abortion promised to keep all intact. They were told the fetus was their hindrance to a happy life. The counselor at the clinic promised a quick escape back to freedom once the unwanted "blob of tissue" was removed quickly and painlessly (for only $500, thank you).

In each case, the abortion only deepened the crisis and hastened the already deteriorating relationships and self-worth. Two girls who had abortions to stay in school ended up leaving. Another who had it against her will because of extreme pressure by her boyfriend and parents

Fredericks' Suggested Guidelines for Crisis Pregnancies and Medical Protocol Within Seventh-day Adventist Institutions

1. Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) medical institutions do not allow abortions to be performed for social or economic reasons.[1] Such procedures, commonly referred to as "elective abortions," are inconsistent with the biblically derived belief that human life (including the life of the unborn child) is sacred, and of higher value than individual or corporate considerations of convenience, life-style preference, or economic prosperity.

2. SDA medical institutions will allow an abortion to be performed only if:

a. It is required to save the physical life of the mother;

b. In exceptional cases of anacephalic fetuses or equally rare cases of clearly diagnosed fatal congenital defects.[2]

In such situations the abortion will be performed only after professional consultation between the primary physician, two advising physicians, and a hospital chaplain.

3. Individual SDA church congregations will be assisted in establishing a crisis pregnancy network to assist, as necessary, Adventist women and their families in a crisis pregnancy. Such assistance should include affordable pre- and postnatal medical care, support in helping students continue their education, financial planning and assistance, and spiritual and emotional nurture.

4. The SDA church requires at the elementary, academy, and college level (appropriate to the maturity level of each), scripturally-based, values-oriented seminars focused on Christian principles of sexual behavior and accountability [i.e., stressing the significant consequences of all moral choices].

[NOTE: On issues of this nature, church discipline on a denominational level is a conundrum. No rule or set of rules deal with all possible situations adequately and redemptively. Within the individual congregation, disfellowship should be seriously considered against physicians who routinely perform elective abortions. The woman in crisis who receives an abortion is a dramatically different situation. When a Christian woman in a moral or emotional crisis feels abortion is her only viable option, it signifies a failure on the part of her entire church community to create a redemptive atmosphere that allows acceptance, repentance, and forgiveness to occur—and tangible support to be given. In such cases, deeper issues need to be addressed by everyone involved with a corporate attitude of compassion and repentance.]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This does not imply that social (including psychological and emotional) or economic considerations are trivial. Very few, if any, women consider an abortion for trivial reasons. But emotional and economic crises are best resolved within the Christian community, not by killing the unborn child, but by compassionate and tangible support for the mother.

2. Perhaps the toughest exception often discussed is the extremely rare request for abortion resulting from violent rape. The caution here should be the reality that it is not the unborn child who is a criminal or enemy. The child is an innocent life. If anyone should die, a more logical argument would be in favor of the death penalty for the rapist, not the child. But in those very rare cases where a woman conceives due to a violent assault and rape, and believes she cannot carry such a child to term, the protocol committee of each hospital should consider her needs seriously and compassionately. The Christian ideal remains the redemption of both the mother and the child.

now refuses to have any contact with either, and suffers from severe depression. Another girl, who worked in the women's residence hall, following a suction abortion, vomited uncontrollably every time she turned on a vacuum sweeper. Another suffered from recurring nightmares of a baby girl crying. She found herself illogically hoping, each time she saw a little girl from the back, that it would be the child she had aborted. Still another of my students wrote this letter before we talked:

> I am writing to explain the many times I was absent to your class in the month of March. I can't really say the exact reason why I did not come because it is very, very personal. It is so personal, that my parents or friends do not even know what I have gone and is [sic] still going through. A reason, I can mention, for not coming is that some times I was just to [sic] depressed to be around people, and my problem too complicated to concentrate on anything else. Sometimes all I wanted to do was stay in bed. Things got so bad that I felt there was no hope anymore —I now know what it feels like to cry for help within the depths of your soul... when you feel like you are in hell.[16]

Recently I have had two single young ladies come to me for help who are pregnant and determined to keep this child as a means of compensating for the terrible regret and loss of self-respect they felt from an earlier abortion.

A woman does have the "legal right" and the personal freedom to take the life of her child. But as Christians we must recognize she does not have God's grace or approval for such an action. Killing the fetus is a violation of God's commandment; it is sin and is therefore futile for healing a damaged life. Doing so will not solve an emotional and moral crisis, but will only horribly deepen it. As Dr. John Willke has stated: "It is easier to scrape the baby out of a woman's womb than to scrape the memory of that baby out of her conscience."[17]

We are false to our calling as Christ's disciples when we intimate to a woman who may lack the support and emotional strength she needs to face her pregnancy that she will find healing and emotional strength by aborting her child. In reality, abortion only terminates innocent children, not the moral or emotional crises of their parents.

The second specific point that might emerge from a consensus on compassion is a commitment to offer sacrificial and redemptive support to these women. All truly compassionate people are individually involved people. (See 2 Corinthians 9:8.) Talk is cheap. Our task as individuals and as a community is to provide the support women need to be givers—not takers—of life. To encourage women in crisis pregnancies to give their unborn children life we must stand by them and help meet their needs. The real question is not: "What should we tell a woman in crisis *to do?*"; but rather: "What should we, as Christ's disciples, *do for her* when she reaches out for help?" We need to love, not just with "word nor with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18).

This point is illustrated by the story of Joan, a story referred to in several articles within Adventist publications. Joan, after disassociating herself from the church and her parents following high school, became involved sexually with a married man. Realizing the futility of her life-style, Joan ended the relationship and found a renewed relationship with Christ. She returned to college with her parents' help, intent on studying for dentistry, but only to realize six weeks later that she was pregnant.

She sought counsel. She did not want to contact the man nor tell her parents. The author states: "She had considered continuing the pregnancy and putting the baby up for adoption, but she saw no way of finding a place to live, support herself, and explaining her actions to her family and friends." Her options, he says, seemed to be suicide, abortion, or dropping out of school and disappearing, and then concludes her story with these words:

> The conclusion to Joan's story will not help—her story has no fairy tale ending. After much indecision, Joan finally elected to leave school and confront her parents with her problem. She also decided to continue the pregnancy and relinquish the infant for adoption. But when the baby was born, she changed her mind and chose to keep it. She felt so little acceptance by her parents and her church that she sought public assistance and now lives alone with her child. She has not returned to college and has no hope of doing so at this time. She, her child, and all whose lives touch theirs will continue to need a special measure of God's forgiving and redeeming love.[18]

What is the tragedy in this story? Is it Joan's courageous decision to give her child life? Not at all. The tragedy is the failure of the affluent, upper-middle class Adventist college community to whom she turned to be authentic and sacrificial Christians. Listen again to the options listed by Joan's counselor. Abortion, suicide, or "disappearing." Why was he and his community incapable of coming up with a fourth? Where were the heart and hands of this church?

Joan should have found, not platitudes or "nonjudgmental feedback," but the continued assurance of God's forgiveness and help (in the context of her own recent recommitment to him), followed by a tangible, practical outpouring of financial, emotional, and medical support.

William Willimon, a professor of Christian ministry at Duke University, gives a practical and beautiful example of what it really means to be Christ's agents to someone in crisis:

> One Monday morning I was attending a ministers' morning coffee hour. We got in a discussion about abortion. A bunch of older clergy were against it, a bunch of younger clergy for it. One of those who was against it was asked, "Now wait a minute. You're not going to tell me that you think some 15-, 16-year-old is capable of bearing a child are you?"
>
> "Well," the fellow replied, backing off a little bit, "there are some circumstances when an abortion might be OK."
>
> Sitting there stirring his coffee was a pastor of one of the largest black United Methodist churches in Greenville. He said, "What's wrong with a 16-year-old giving birth? She can get pregnant, can't she?"
>
> Then we said, "Joe, you can't believe a 16-year-old could care for a child."
>
> He replied, "No, I don't believe that. I don't believe a 26-year-old can care for a child. Or a 36-year-old. Pick any age. One person can't raise a child."
>
> So I said, "Look, Joe, the statistics show that by the year 1990, half of all American children will be raised in single-parent households."
>
> "So?" he replied. "They can't do it."
>
> We asked, "What do you do when you have a 16-year-old get pregnant in your church?"
>
> He explained, "Well, it happened last week. We baptized the baby last Sunday, and I said how glad we were to have this new member in this church. Then I called down an elderly couple in the church, and I said, 'Now we're going to baptize this baby, and bring it into the family. What I want you all to do is to raise this baby, and while you're doing that raise the momma with it because the momma right now needs it.' This couple is in their 60s, and they've raised about 20 kids. They know what they're doing. And I said, 'If you need any of us, let us know. We're here. It's our child too.' That's what we do at my church."[19]

As Adventists, our challenge is to actively adopt the world view of Scripture and find a better alternative than death in the face of economic and emotional problems. Armed with a commitment to life, and confident in the resources of our Creator, we are called to demonstrate Christ's alternative within a decaying society.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Curt Young, *The Least of These* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), p. 30; Susan Okie, "Abortion Since Roe v. Wade: Safer, Earlier, and at a 'Plateau'" *The Washington Post* (March 21, 1989), p. A1.

2. WEBA is not alone in this type of ministry. There are numerous organizations at the grass roots level for women suffering from what is medically termed "post-abortion syndrome" (PAS). Also at the national level is American Victims of Abortions (AVA), founded and directed by Dr. Olivia Gans.

3. Personally, I have not seen a "pro-choice" ethic that is even remotely derived from a biblical base. While the Bible may be referred to as a starting point, the thought forms and language which undergird a defense of abortion are (and I believe, must be) consistently relativistic, humanistic, and hedonistic (e.g., personal "rights to autonomy and self-fulfillment," thought forms alien to biblical Christianity).

4. Lawrence E. Stager and Samuel R. Wolff, "Child Sacrifice at Carthage: Religious Rite or Population Control?"—*Biblical Archeology Review* (January/February 1984), pp. 31-49.

5. Bible texts in this article are taken from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise specified.

6. Some religious scholars, seeking to avoid the twin facts that, scripturally, an unborn baby is a human child and killing any innocent human, especially a child, is murder, have used a very curious rationalization. They argue that since no Bible text specifically states "aborting an unborn child is murder" it therefore is not murder in Scripture. If one were to accept this, then one could argue with equal validity that it is all right to murder a six-year-old or a 36-year-old, for there is not a single text that states specifically: "Thou shall not murder a six-year-old child."

7. See especially Mark 10:13-16 and Matthew 18:1-6. It should be remembered that Jesus did not say that unless children become as adults they cannot enter the kingdom, but just the opposite.

8. Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:3-6; 1 Timothy 1:15; Titus 3:4, 5. We must not miss this point. While the "quality of life" ethic is totally consistent with an evolutionary, atheistic "survival of the fittest" world view; it is antithetical to the spirit of the gospel. Since Eden God has shown himself to be redemptive through great personal self-sacrifice. He didn't respond to sin by ripping Adam and Eve to pieces, even though they were now morally deformed and would cause him great suffering and inconvenience. Instead he opened a way back to the tree of life by giving himself.

9. John Powell, *Abortion: The Silent Holocaust* (Allen, Texas: Argus Publishers, 1981), p. 15.

10. William Willimon, "A Crisis of Identity: The Struggle of Mainline Protestant Churches," *Sojourners*, 15: 5 (1986), p. 28.

11. In this context it is valuable to notice how Luke, a physician, documents the conception of John the Baptist. An angel tells Zechariah that his son will be "filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15; see also vs. 41-44, NASB).

12. The Epistle of James, while not directly referring to abortion, concerns itself with human injustice and the link between greed and violence against the innocent (James 4:1-4; 5:5, 6, 3).

13. See Matthew 25:40. "The rest of the world goes about disposing of the very young and the very old, the very weak, the very vulnerable, and the very poor, calling that reality. But the church is called to adopt and embrace the little ones in the name of the Lord, who was once a little one."—William Willimon, "A Crisis of Identity: The Struggle of Mainline Modern Protestantism," *Sojourners*, 15: 5 (May 1986), p. 28.

14. Emil Brunner writes: "All human sin has an element of weakness; it is mingled with anxiety for one's life, a fear of losing something by obedience to God. . . . Man's arrogance consists in believing that he can look after himself better than God can, that he knows what is good for him better than his Creator."—Emil Brummer, *Man in Revolt* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1939), p. 131. Ellen White, in describing the voice of Satan to the soul, writes: "I can give you riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness. Hearken to my council. Do not allow yourself to be carried away with whimsical notions of honesty or self-sacrifice. Thus multitudes are deceived. They consent to live for the service of self, and Satan is satisfied."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), p. 130.

15. "To have destroyed the defective infant, Helen Keller, would have been to destroy also the teacher-humanitarian who was Anne Sullivan. We will never know how many Helen Kellers and Beethovens are destroyed each year in America's abortion mills, or how many Anne Sullivans are left without the challenge that makes an Anne Sullivan."—George Tribou, quoted in John Powell, *Abortion, The Silent Holocaust* (Allen, Texas: Argus Communications, 1981), p. 129.

16. Pam Koerbel cites a study of the emotional state of 46 randomly selected postabortion women responding to a questionnaire. In this study, 87 percent of the women reported an increase in feelings of guilt, 78 percent an increase in a sense of grief, 76 percent had increased depression and remorse, 67 percent experienced an increase in anger, and more than 60 percent struggled with a sense of shame and bitterness about their abortion decision. Pam Koerbal, *Abortion's Second Victim* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1986), pp. 140, 141.

17. Ibid., pp. 123, 124. Cf. Gerald Winslow, "Abortion and Christian Principles," *Ministry*, 61:5 (1988), pp. 12-16.

18. Ibid., p. 16.

19. William Willimon, p. 27.

"The Wisdom of Solomon"? The General Conference Abortion Statements of 1970-1971

by George B. Gainer

My question about abortion and the Seventh-day Adventist church began on a cold day in January 1985.[1] A "chance" encounter with a non-Adventist pastor while searching for parking at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., had led to an invitation to visit his church. The following Sunday, I arrived late for the worship service and sat in the back, unnoticed. The preacher announced at the beginning of the sermon that this was "Sanctity of Life" Sunday. After spending some time on the biblical basis for the sanctity of life position, he told the following story:

> During my wife's pregnancy with our son, Seth, we decided to look for a Christian doctor who shared our sanctity of life convictions. So we drove to Takoma Park, Maryland, to the office of Dr. _____, a Seventh-day Adventist. Following the test and examination which confirmed that she was pregnant, the very first question she was asked was "do you want this baby or do you want an abortion?" We looked at each other in shock and disbelief. We then turned and said, "We are sorry. We must be in the wrong place." We got up and left.[2]

At the close of his sermon he invited questions and comments from the congregation. One lady stood and asked, "Are you sure that what you said about the Seventh-day Adventists is true? I always thought that they were Bible-believing Christians." He answered, "I am sorry to tell you that the Seventh-day Adventists are aborting hundreds of babies in their hospitals."[3]

I remembered seeing an editorial in the *Adventist Review* which had stated that, "the Adventist church has no official position on abortion."[4] But what did that mean? Specifically, what did the lack of an "official position" mean in the actual day-to-day practice of the hospitals of the Adventist Health System?

I discovered that *Ministry* magazine had published, in 1971, an entire issue on the abortion question. Along with several articles, *Ministry* had published denominational guidelines for Adventist medical institutions. They approved therapeutic abortions only in cases of rape, incest, a threat to the life (or serious impairment of the health) of the mother, and grave physical deformities or mental retardation of the future child. All of these instances would be limited to the first three months of pregnancy.

It was only six months after I had heard the nondenominational preacher referring to Adventists in his sermon, that a nurse employed at Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) claimed that "some doctors treat us like their own private abortion clinic." In October, Protestant pastors and congregations demonstrating outside the hospital and the Sligo Church charged, according to the *Washington Post*, that 1,494 abortions had been performed at WAH from 1975-1982. The pastors reported that these "statistics were furnished by the Medical Records section of the Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Maryland."[5]

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What, after all, was the truth about Adventists and abortion? Did we or did we not have a consistent and effective position on abortion? I discovered that the years 1970 and 1971 were pivotal for the Seventh-day Adventist church and its stance on abortion.

The Community Pressures Hawaiian Hospital

It all began in Hawaii. In January 1970, a bill was introduced in the state legislature to repeal the state abortion laws. Three weeks later the bill was law. Castle Memorial Hospital, a Seventh-day Adventist institution, suddenly found itself needing to establish a position regarding abortion. On the Island of Oahu, Hawaii, only two hospitals were open to the public for maternity or OB cases. There was Kapiloani Hospital, which was exclusively an OB-GYN facility and Castle Memorial Hospital, which was the only general hospital that accepted OB-GYN patients. (A third institution, Kaiser Hospital, cared only for those people enrolled in the Kaiser Health Plan.)

Upon repeal of Hawaii's abortion laws, Castle Memorial, due to its unique position of being a general hospital that provided OB-GYN services, received numerous requests for elective abortions. Requests for abortion were not new and Castle Memorial had in the past performed what it termed therapeutic abortions in order to save the life of the mother, to terminate forced pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, or even to alleviate severe mental anxiety in the mother.[6] But the repeal of all state abortion laws had created a new situation for which the hospital was unprepared.

Marvin C. Midkiff, the administrator of Castle Memorial Hospital at that time, tells the following story:

> A prominent man in this community came to me and said, "my 16-year-old daughter has got herself in trouble. She is in her second month of pregnancy, and I want an abortion for her at this hospital." He brought out a brochure that had been used for fund raising in this community when this hospital was being planned. The brochure stated, "this hospital will be a *full service hospital* and will provide every service that is needed by the residents of the community." He brought me the $25,000 check that he had given towards the construction several years ago. What would you do?[7]

The pressure on Castle Memorial to be a "full service hospital" by providing abortion on demand began to grow. Midkiff called W. J. Blacker, president of the Pacific Union Conference, and asked for guidance from the denomination on how to proceed. Blacker informed the General Conference of the situation and then, according to Midkiff, called to tell him that "no one knows of any position the church has taken on it [abortion]."[8]

In response to that information, Castle Memorial Hospital made an interim decision. Midkiff, the C.E.O. of the hospital, told the community in a Rotary Club speech:

> In the absence of any decision by our church organization on whether or not we approve or disapprove of abortion, or whether or not we permit abortions in the hospital, our management group has made the decision to permit abortion for other than therapeutic reasons through the first trimester (3 months) of pregnancy, provided there has been counselling by a clergyman, and by two qualified physicians, and written consultations have been entered in the patients' records. I want to make it clear that this is a temporary ruling until such time as a decision is handed down from our church headquarters in Washington, D.C.[9]

On March 11, 1970, the General Conference officers appointed a committee to consider counsel to be given to the Seventh-day Adventist hospitals. The thinking at this time was that the church would consider the abortion question at the General Conference Session meeting later that year in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Six days later, on March 17, Neal C. Wilson, president of the North American Division, made a statement carried by the Religious News Service. He predicted that the General Conference Session would steer a middle-of-the-road course on abortion. He was quoted saying that,

> The church deplores anything that would contribute to declining morals and would steer away from anything which would encourage promiscuousness. . . . Therefore, we would not feel it our responsibility to promote laws to legalize abortion . . . nor oppose them. . . . Though we walk the fence, SDA's lean towards abortion rather

than against it. Because we realize we are confronted by big problems of hunger and over-population, we do not oppose family planning and appropriate endeavors to control population.[10]

He stated that because the denomination is active in 220 different countries and would therefore have a difficult time taking a hard and fast position against sterilization and might favor abortion in some instances (rape, mental or physical illnesses in the mother or in cases of probably severe illness in the fetus).[11]

On May 13, 1970, after considerable discussion and rewriting, the General Conference officers voted to accept "suggestive guidelines for therapeutic abortions." (The guidelines were of necessity "suggestive" since they were voted by the General Conference officers and not by the General Conference Committee.) The guidelines were as follows:

"It may well be that the church will want to tell each hospital to solve its own problem . . . . We could be easily misunderstood in this question if it is not handled wisely. . . . The wisdom of Solomon is something we need to pray for."

— R. R. Bietz

It is believed that therapeutic abortions may be performed for the following established indications:

1.When continuation of pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or seriously impair her health.

2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with grave physical deformities or mental retardation.

3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest. When indicated therapeutic abortions are done, they should be performed during the first trimester of pregnancy.

The plan to take the guidelines to the floor of the General Conference session at Atlantic City in June 1970, for discussion and a vote, was dropped. Some of the Adventist medical community felt that the abortion guidelines were inadequate because therapeutic abortions had been performed all along, even before the repeal of Hawaii's abortion statutes. Midkiff went home from Atlantic City to administer Castle Memorial unable to fulfill his promise of returning with the official position of the church.[12]

Moving Toward a Liberalized Policy

However, the issue remained alive. The failure to approve the May 13, 1970, abortion guidelines signaled the beginning of serious discussions regarding the feasibility of Adventist hospitals performing abortions on demand. During the first week of July 1970, R. R. Bietz, a general vice-president of the General Conference, met in Honolulu with A. G. Streifling, chairman of the board of trustees of Castle Memorial Hospital, and M. C. Midkiff, the administrator. Bietz quickly relayed the substance of their conversation in a revealing letter to W. J. Blacker.

Five or six non-Adventist M.D.s who patronize Castle Memorial Hospital wish to go beyond the present policy of performing therapeutic abortions only. If they are not allowed to do this in Castle Memorial, they will take their patients to other hospitals in the city of Honolulu. If this is done, chances are fairly good that they will take their patients over there for other treatments as well. This could mean a loss of goodwill and a loss of patronage for Castle Memorial. . . .

Our own Seventh-day Adventist doctors strongly oppose, except for therapeutic reasons, abortions.[13] This further complicates the problem. If we change our policy we may have the ill-will of our own men, and if we don't change we'll be misunderstood by the non-Adventist M.Ds. Some heavy contributors to the Castle Memorial Hospital feel we should be willing to work in harmony with the laws of the state. In their opinion the community, federal, and state monies have for all practical purposes made this a community hospital. They reason, therefore, that community wishes should be taken into consideration . . .

It is important that either the Pacific Union Conference, the North American Division, or the General Conference take a position in regard to this matter. The hospital administration and Board need support no

matter which direction they might go. *Should the decision be to have abortions beyond what they are doing now, the Adventist doctors could no doubt be satisfied or at least silenced if the administration would have the support of the higher church organization.*

As I see it, the crux of the matter is mostly theological.[14] [Italics provided.]

Bietz concluded his letter by suggesting that,

> It may well be that the church will want to tell each hospital to solve its own problem.... We could be easily misunderstood in this question if it is not handled wisely. ... The wisdom of Solomon is something we need to pray for.[15]

About this same time the General Conference officers voted to enlarge "the former committee so as to study what counsel should be given regarding elective abortions."[16] Although some members of the committee met in July and September 1970, nothing happened except a recommendation that expanded committee need for two days to develop new guidelines.[17]

Finally, in December, an exasperated Raymond deHay, M.D., chief of staff at Castle Memorial, wrote to R. H. Pierson, president of the General Conference.

> It is our understanding that the Seventh-day Adventist church in all of it history has never taken a stand or made any ruling regarding either birth control or abortion.... We recognize that Castle Memorial Hospital is a church-operated hospital but we also feel that you must concede to being at least a quasi public hospital in the eyes of many local residents who consider Castle Memorial Hospital to be a community hospital. ... Many people in the community who were not Seventh-day Adventists gave of their time and resources to make this hospital a reality. I believe it is also timely for me to point out that the State has appropriated on two occasions the total sum of over one million dollars to assist in construction costs of your medical institution. Considering these matters we on the Medical Executive Committee feel that perhaps the local public is justified in requesting total care at Castle Memorial Hospital.[18]

deHay then said,

> we have rather reliable information that a number of your west coast hospitals are permitting abortion which is termed therapeutic but appears to be greatly liberalized as to the actual definition of therapeutic abortion as we in the medical profession have come to understand it over the years. We feel that there is already a precedent for permitting this surgical procedure at this hospital.[19]

Pierson's response to Dr. deHay on January 5, 1971, defended the May 13, 1970, "Abortion Guidelines" document by saying that "They are based upon our appreciation for the *sanctity of life*, respect for the person image, and our sense of responsibility for the care of fellowmen."[20] (Italics provided.) Pierson then stated:

> We stand ready to assist in making total health care available to all. However, Doctor, we have not conceded to the assumption that total health care includes abortion on demand. Our guidelines allow for therapeutic abortions when life or health of the expectant mother are jeopardized. We do not feel the term "health care" rightfully includes a procedure that is requested merely because of desire based upon convenience.[21]

Pierson then informed Dr. deHay that, "A competent committee will be meeting in Loma Linda, California, January 25 to discuss the matter further."[22]

So, one year after the abortion issue had been brought again to the attention of the 20th-century church, an *ad hoc* committee convened in Loma Linda on January 25, 1971, "to make sure that the cause of truth and humanity are recognized theologically, medically and philosophically in this large area of concern today."[23] Of the 18 individuals named to the "restructured" committee, 11 were present. To these 11 were added 4 new members, making it an *ad hoc* committee of 15 members.[24]

W. R. Beach, secretary of the General Conference and committee chairman, in his opening remarks, reviewed the work of the abortion committee. He said that the abortion guidelines of May 13, 1970, had been helpful, but that the rapidly changing situation, especially in Hawaii and New York, made a new and updated statement necessary.[25] After a paper presented by Harold Ziprick, M.D., the head of Loma Linda University's OB-GYN department, the rest of the morning was spent discussing the numbers of therapeutic abortions in Adventist hospitals (e.g., Glendale Hospital—1966, 1 abortion; 1967, 3 abortions; 1968, 4 abortions; 1969, 10 abortions; 1970, 34 abortions. White Memorial Hospital—1968, 3 abortions; 1969, 12 abortions; 1970, 79 abortions.)[26] Also discussed were the problems Castle Memorial was facing due to the repeal of Hawaii's abortion laws.

In the afternoon session Jack Provonsha, M.D., professor of Christian ethics at Loma Linda University, read a paper in which he advocated, among other things, that before any abortion is performed every attempt should be made to save both the pregnant woman and the developing fetus. "But if this cannot be achieved and one must be sacrificed, the lower must be sacrificed in favor of the higher human value."[27] Following Dr. Provonsha's presentation, the committee voted to amend and revise the May 13, 1970, abortion guidelines and recommended that the General Conference officers appoint yet another committee to give continued study to the issue.

"When, oh when, are we going to get the 'Guidelines on Abortion'? We cannot hold this matter any longer. Is this one of the problems that we face because we do not have a North American Division organization as such?"

— W. R. Blacker

Back in Washington this committee developed an entirely new document entitled "Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines." This document contained both a statement of principles and guidelines to acceptable "interruptions of pregnancy." A comparison of this document with the papers presented at the Loma Linda meeting by Ziprick and Provonsha shows that their ideas and wording served as primary sources for both the statement of principles and the guidelines.

The work on the guidelines involved a number of rewrites and revision. During the month of February the statement of principles was first composed and then expanded. Between February and June of 1971 the guidelines themselves were composed in at least three different forms. During this process a fourth guideline was added to the three from the original abortion guidelines, stating that, "In case of an unwed child under 15 years of age," abortion was permitted. Then a fifth guideline was added that permitted abortion "When, in harmony with the statement of principles above, the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value." Soon thereafter guideline No. 5 underwent still another revision.

W. R. Beach referred to guideline No. 5 in a letter responding to Neal Wilson on March 8, 1971. He thanked Wilson for his observations on the report of the committee on abortion. He then continued, "I think some of your observations are indispensable. I am therefore suggesting that all but three be incorporated immediately into our text."[28] After this exchange in early March, guidelines one and five were revised in the direction suggested by Wilson. For example, guideline five now read, "When for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value," abortion is permitted. (Italics provided.)

The statement that included the revisions noted above was then filed with the General Conference Officers in a "tentative report." But no action was taken and pressure from the Pacific Union for a decision continued to build. Beach wrote to Wilson regarding the delay on May 11, 1971, and said,

> The field continues to harass me on the problem of abortions. The Pacific Union seems to be hard pressed in this area. I am never sure, of course, if one of my friends at the office (he could be vice president for North America!) is not behind the pressure and harassment.[29]

Beach gives an insight into why he delayed pushing the statement when later in his letter he stated,

> My opinion is that we must avoid opening the door to abortion on demand, but rather keep it within the context of a total philosophy. If I read the literature aright, there is a growing feeling in favor of a more conservative line than that promoted by the liberation movement and adopted, more or less, in some of the States. We need to watch this and make sure that our philosophy is basically sound.[30]

A month later the General Conference Officers voted:

> To request Neal C. Wilson, C. E. Bradford, and R. F. Waddell to serve as a committee to refine certain aspects of the report (Interruption of Pregnancy) submitted by the Committee on Abortions.[31]

That same day Blacker wrote to N. C. Wilson:

> When, oh when, are we going to get the "Guidelines on Abortion"?
>
> Please do all you can to jar this matter loose or we are just going to have to proceed on our own because we cannot hold this matter any longer. Is this one of the problems that we face because we do not have a North American Division organization as such?[32]

Wilson responded to Blacker on July 13, 1971, and said,

> Please contain yourself and do not become too ecstatic, but at long last we have a report for you regarding the interruption of pregnancy. This is a more sophisticated term than "abortions," and since there are therapeutic and elective, we feel that the new term covers the whole spectrum. To be sure, we have not answered every question that can come up, nor have we made provision for opening up the door in harmony with certain pressures that are being brought to bear on the medical profession today. We feel it is a fair position and one that we can defend. I hope it will be helpful to you and to our brethren who have been facing the music for over a year now in Hawaii.[33]

Wilson's letter referred to the fact that finally, on June 21, 1971, the General Conference Officers had voted to accept the "Interruption of Pregnancy Statement of Principles."

Still, it wasn't until August 10, 1971, that C. E. Bradford, secretary of the now-named Committee on Interruption of Pregnancy released the statement,

> as the opinion of a representative committee of theologians, physicians, teachers, nurses, psychiatrists, laymen, et cetera, who met at Loma Linda, California January 25, 1971, with the understanding that the report is to be used as counsel to denominational medical institutions. . . .[34]

The statement was subtitled, "Recommendations to SDA Medical Institutions." Bradford, in his covering letter, made the following observation: "I suppose you would say this is *quasi official* without the full imprimatur of the brethren."[35] (Italics provided.)

Jack Provonsha stated from the floor at Loma Linda University's "Conference on Abortion," November 15, 1988, that although his paper's wording was used in the 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Statement, that it was used out of context and that he did not see or vote on the statement until it was released to the SDA medical institutions as a completed document.

So, after more than a year and a half of intermittent committee work and discussion, the Seventh-day Adventist church still had no "official position" on the abortion question. Did this mean that Castle Memorial Hospital was in the same quandary it had been when Hawaii's abortion laws had been repealed in January 1970? The answer was *No*. The wording of the new guidelines was "broad enough to interpret any way you chose to."[36] This allowed Castle Memorial to open its doors to abortion on demand through the 20th week of pregnancy (and even later for "compelling social or medical reasons")[37] and still be in harmony with General Conference guidelines. It would appear that the wisdom of allowing "each hospital to solve its own problem"[38] had prevailed.

Continuing Confusion Regarding the Church's Policy

So, what is the truth about Adventism and abortion? Frankly, a straight answer is hard to come by. A flow of confusing and misleading information began even before the abortion committee had finished its work in 1971, and has continued through the subsequent 17 years. Statements in *Ministry* and the *Adventist Review* have confused, even misled members and the public.[39]

And exchanges between key officials of the General Conference reveal that they knew what was appearing in print was confusing, and some may not have been unhappy with the confusion. Robert E. Osborn, an associate treasurer of the General Conference, wrote a letter to a colleague objecting to *Ministry* magazine's printing in 1971 the older, more restrictive 1970 guidelines, when new, more permissive guidelines had already been drafted.

> It seems to me that the articles are completely premature, or else the appointment of a committee to look into the matter in depth is a farce.[40]

The secretary of the General Conference, W. R. Beach, defended the decision to publish in *Ministry* the old 1970 guidelines. In a letter to Osborn

of March 8, 1971, he said,

> . . . in view of the fact that the upcoming report of the committee which met in Loma Linda will liberalize somewhat the current guidelines, I believe that from a practical viewpoint, it was well to give the rationale for the current situation and the future viewpoints. I think it will be evident that our viewpoint has been liberalized. I feel, however, that this liberalization will be understood and accepted.
>
> Perhaps now we are both confused![41]

But the publishing of the new guidelines, which would have allowed the "liberalization" to be "understood and accepted" never happened.

In effect, the church, citing the more restrictive 1970 guidelines, has told its clergy, its laity, and the general public that it has a restrictive stance toward abortion. The church, by largely relying on its 1971 guidelines, has quietly, behind the scenes, permitted its hospitals a free hand to decide for themselves whether or not to practice abortion on demand. Not until 1986 did any church publication print for church members the more permissive 1971 guidelines.

The fact is that abortion on demand is practiced in major Adventist hospitals, and this practice is not out of harmony with current church guidelines.

A Once and Future Antiabortion Adventism?

We still confront the moral question "Should the hospitals that represent the Seventh-day Adventist church be offering this 'service'?" It would appear that founders of Adventism would say No.

As early as 1869 the *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald* (under the editorship of J. N. Andrews) printed an editorial, "A Few Words Concerning Great Sin."

> One of the most shocking, and yet one of the most prevalent sins of this generation, is the murder of unborn infants. Let those who think this a small sin, read Psalm 139:16. They will see that even the unborn child is written in God's book. And they may be well assured that God will not pass unnoticed the murder of such children.[42]

In 1870 James White, while president of the General Conference, edited *A Solemn Appeal.* One of the excerpts he included was taken from *Exhausted Vitality*, by Dr. E. P. Miller. The quotation James White selected reflects the strong sentiments of those physicians involved in the crusade then raging against abortion.

> Few are aware of the fearful extent to which this nefarious business, this worse than devilish practice, is carried on in all classes of society! Many a woman determines that she will not become a mother, and subjects herself to the vilest treatment, committing the basest crime to carry out her purpose. And many a man, who has "as many children as he can support," instead of restraining his passions, aids in the destruction of the babes he has begotten.[43]

The use of these statements by the General Conference president indicates where early Adventist leadership stood on this issue.

John Henry Kellogg agreed. In his book, *Man, the Masterpiece,* published in 1894, he condemned abortion.

> The idea held by many that the destruction of foetal life is not a crime until after "quickening" has occurred, is a gross and mischievous error. No change occurs in the developing human being at this period. The so-called period of "quickening" is simply the period at which the movements of the little one become sufficiently active and vigorous to attract the attention of the mother. Long before this, slight movements have been taking place, and from the very moment of conception, those processes have been in operation which result in the production of a fully developed human being from a mere jelly drop, a minute cell. As soon as this development begins, a new human being has come into existence,—in embryo, it is true, but possessed of its own individuality, with its own future, its possibilities of joy, grief, success, failure, fame, and ignominy. From this moment, it acquires the right to life, a right so sacred that in every land to violate it is to incur the penalty of death. How many murderers and murderesses have gone unpunished! None but God knows the full extent of this most heinous crime; but the Searcher of all hearts knows and remembers every one who has thus transgressed; and in the day of final reckoning, what will the verdict be? Murder?—*murder*, child-murder, the slaughter of the innocents, more cruel than Herod, more cold-blooded than the midnight assassin, more criminal than the man who slays his enemy—the most unnatural . . . the most revolting of all crimes against human life.[44]

Kellogg affirms the unique "individuality" of this "new human being" and its "right to life" from

"the very moment of conception."

It is a little-known fact that while the church did not directly involve itself in the 40-year Physicians Crusade Against Abortion, Adventist leaders took the same antiabortion position as did the leaders of social movement that had, by 1890, successfully translated moral outrage into laws throughout the United States banning abortions.

The difference between the position on abortion between the founders of Adventism and our present policy, and the difference, all too often, between our policy and actual practice in our Adventist hospitals understandably leads to a rising concern among a growing number of Adventists. Should a church that claims to "keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus" continue to remain confused or even neutral about abortion? Perhaps a sign carried by a protester in front of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church on October 5, 1985, sums up the urgency of this issue for the church. It read: "Adventists—Remember the Sixth Commandment too!"

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 14, 1985.
2. Sermon by Barry E. Wood, pastor, Solid Rock Church, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, Md., January 20, 1985.
3. Ibid.
4. *Adventist Review* (September 1, 1983), p. 14 (854).
5. Washington Adventist Hospital—Abortions document.
6. Conversation with Marvin C. Midkiff, October 22, 1986.
7. Marvin C. Midkiff, Speech to Kailua Rotary Club, Jan./Feb. (?), 1970.
8. Conversation with Midkiff.
9. Midkiff speech.
10. *Religious News Service* (March 17, 1970), pp. 16, 17.
11. Ibid.
12. Conversation with Midkiff.
13. Marvin Midkiff remembers one non-SDA doctor and one SDA doctor who pushed for a policy change allowing elective abortions.
14. R. R. Bietz, GC vice-president, to W. J. Blacker, president of the Pacific Union, July 8, 1970.
15. Ibid., p. 3.
16. General Conference Officers' meeting, July 6, 1970, pp. 70-330.
17. The committee met again on September 25, 1970, and recommended that "the enlarged committee appointed July 20, 1970, be further expanded to make it representative of additional areas of concern and that it be authorized to meet for approximately two days to study the problem in depth hopefully to develop guidelines that will be useful in bringing uniformity into the direction given our health care institutions in North America. (Abortion Problems Committee minutes, September 25, 1970.)
18. Raymond deHay, M.D., chief of staff, to A. G. Streifling, chairman of board of trustees, December 13, 1970.
19. Raymond deHay, M.D., chief of staff, to R. H. Pierson, GC president, December 16, 1970.
20. R. H. Pierson, GC president, to R. deHay, M.D., chief of staff, January 5, 1971.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. The decision to hold the Loma Linda meeting on January 25, 1971, had been made at the General Conference Officers' meeting on January 4, 1971. By the January 6, 1971, Officers' meeting, the "expanded" committee became a "reconstituted" committee. (Arthur H. Roth to N. C. Wilson, January 5, 1971.)
23. W. R. Beach, chairman, to abortion committee, January 11, 1971.
24. Those members present were: W. R. Beach; David Hinshaw, M.D.; P. C. Heubach; C. B. Hirsch; Gordon Hyde; Joann Krause; Elizabeth Larsen, M.D.; R. E. Osborn; Jack W. Provonsha, M.D.; A. G. Streifling; W. D. Walton; N. C. Wilson; Mrs. C. Woodward; Harold Ziprick, M.D.; C. E. Bradford. (The most notable committee member not present was R. H. Pierson, who had declared just 20 days earlier his support for the existing guidelines.)
25. Minutes of GC committee on abortions, January 25, 1971.
26. Ibid.
27. Jack Provonsha, M.D., "An Adventist Position Regarding the Abortion Problem," pp. 10, 11.
28. W. R. Beach to N.C. Wilson, March 8, 1971. Referring to one of Wilson's three observations that he questioned (regarding consultation before an abortion), Beach cautioned that, "your wording could liberalize our viewpoint a little more than perhaps we should at present." Later in the letter, he agreed with Wilson that the word *grave* as pertaining to physical deformities and *mental retardation* in guideline No. 2 should be dropped. He then stated his

preference to retain the word *seriously* in guideline No. 1. Beach also referred to guideline No. 5 by saying that it would, "cover less definitive reasons for any interruptions of pregnancy."

29. W. R. Beach to N. C. Wilson, May 11, 1971.

30. Ibid.

31. General Conference Officers' meeting, June 14, 1971, pp. 71-218.

32. W. J. Blacker to N. C. Wilson, June 14, 1971.

33. N. C. Wilson to W. J. Blacker, July 13, 1971.

34. C. E. Bradford, August 10, 1971.

35. Bradford.

36. Conversation with Midkiff.

37. Bietz to Blacker, p. 2.

38. Ibid.

39. Perhaps the greatest single example of misinformation on abortion came from the president of AHS/U.S., Donald Welch. In its February 13, 1986, "In-Depth Look at the Adventist Health System," the *Adventist Review* featured a seven-page interview with Donald Welch. It included the following statement on abortion:

> The Church developed guidelines for hospitals and health-care institutions in regard to abortions back in 1969 [sic.]. Those guidelines strongly discourage abortions. They do allow for abortions in certain cases where there is medical consultation—several doctors agree that it needs to be done for the health of the mother—and in certain other cases such as rape. — *Adventist Review* (February 13, 1986), p. 15 (183).

It is important to note once again that Donald Welch is referring to the 1970 abortion guidelines rather than the 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines. The interview also flatly claimed that our Adventist hospitals "don't do abortions for social or economic reasons, but are doing them only when a number of physicians feel it is medically justified for the safety and health of the mother."—*Adventist Review* (183), p. 15.

40. R. E. Osborn to W. R. Beach, March 2, 1971.

41. W. R. Beach to R. E. Osborn, March 8, 1971.

42. *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, 34:23 (November 30, 1869), p. 184.

43. James White, *A Solemn Appeal* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1870), pp. 100, 101.

44. J. H. Kellogg, *Man, the Masterpiece* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Illinois; New York: Modern Medicine Publishing Co., 1894), pp. 423-425.

Abortion Policies in Adventist Hospitals

by Gerald R. Winslow

A 1988 survey of Adventist hospital administrators in North America representing 26 of the 51 hospitals in Adventist Health Systems/U.S. (eight of the hospitals were the largest or "flagship" medical centers) revealed that only one officially permits elective abortions without restrictions. Nearly all the hospitals whose administrators responded to the questionnaire limit abortions to those that they consider "therapeutic." If an unbridled practice of abortion is occurring in many (or most) Adventist hospitals, it is not because of the announced policies of those hospitals.

To gain a clearer picture of what policies have been adopted by Adventist hospitals in North America, short questionnaires concerning abortion policies were sent, in August 1988, to the chief executive officers of 51 Adventist hospitals in the United States whose addresses are listed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*.[1] Responses were received from 26 administrators. This is a response rate of 51 percent, which is generally considered good for this type of survey.

Responses came from the entire range of hospital sizes, including eight of the largest, or "flagship" hospitals. The responses were appropriately scattered throughout all areas of the United States. Though sampling bias is a perennial problem of such surveys, it would appear that the 26 responding institutions are an adequately representative sample of Adventist hospitals in the United States.

Two points of caution, however, are in order. First, since the number of respondents is relatively small, no attempt is made to describe possible differences between various categories of institutions, such as large or small hospitals or those in various geographical areas. Such comparisons probably would be interesting, but they are not useful for my present purpose, which is merely to understand in broad terms the range of approaches to abortion policy that Adventist hospitals in the United States are taking. Second, I have made no attempt to discover the relationship between stated policies and actual practices. Rumors about discrepancies abound, and some are probably true. But my purpose here is only to consider the policies and the comments of Adventist hospital administrators regarding those policies.

Of the responding administrators, 16 (64 percent) were presidents, seven (28 percent) were vice-presidents, one was a director of nursing services, and one was a chaplain who is vice-chairman of his hospital's ethics committee. The average length of experience in hospital administration was 12.2 years. Though anonymity was not promised either for the respondents or their institutions, and though only two respondents asked not to be identified, I have chosen to report the results in a way that will preserve anonymity. What follows are the key questions from the questionnaire and the results:

Does your hospital currently have a policy

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concerning abortions performed in the facility?

Yes = 23 (88%) No = 3 (12%) No answer = 0

Of the three who responded "No," one explained that the hospital has no obstetrics department at this time, but will be adding such a department and plans to develop an abortion policy. Another stated tersely, "It has not been discussed." The third did not comment, but indicated on the questionnaire that there was no plan to develop a policy and that only one abortion had been performed at the facility in 1987.

Most of the respondents (18, or 72 percent) included copies of their hospital's abortion policies with the returned questionnaires.

Are elective abortions currently permitted in your hospital?

Yes = 5 (19%) No = 21 (81%) No Answer = 0

The word *elective* was meant to distinguish between "therapeutic" and "elective" abortions. The problem, of course, is that almost all abortions are "elective" in the sense that they are not "emergency" procedures. In the case of a least two respondents, this ambiguity probably led to confusion, because "Yes" was checked but the words "therapeutic only" or "therapeutic" were written beside the checks. Another respondent, representing a very large hospital, checked "Yes" but then commented that the hospital had performed only one abortion in 1987. Yet another respondent marked "Yes" but then attached his hospital's policy, which limits abortion according the the therapeutic indications specified in the General Conference guidelines.

The majority of Adventist hospitals are attempting to hold the middle ground—allowing some abortions, but using a number of stipulated procedures to limit the practice to *therapeutic* abortions.

A close reading of all the questionnaires and their accompanying policy statements reveals that one Adventist hospital that officially permits elective abortions without restrictions only limits abortion after the 20th week of gestation. Indeed, six of the respondents (23 percent) clearly have policies more restrictive than the General Conference guidelines. Four (15 percent) stated that no abortions whatsoever are permitted in their facilities. (Though one of these four allowed that the reason is that the facility currently has no obstetrics department, and will be reconsidering its abortion policy soon when it adds that department.) Two others stated that the only permissible indication for therapeutic abortion is that the pregnancy clearly threatens the physical life of the mother. One of these even insists on two physicians' consultations to confirm that level of medical need.

At the other extreme is the one hospital reporting that officially permits elective abortion without restrictions through the 20th week of gestation. However, according to this survey, the large majority of respondents are attempting officially to hold the moderate, middle ground, allowing some abortions, but using a number of stipulated procedures and indications to limit the practice to *therapeutic* abortions. In this category are 19 (73 percent) of the responding facilities. Typical, for example, is one respondent who answered the question about allowing "elective" abortions by checking "No" and adding the comment: "The abortions we would perform are 'therapeutic' in nature and would be done under very limited, non-elective circumstances."

This is the basic pattern called for by the General Conference guidelines. However, only seven (27 percent) hospitals actually state as their policy an unreconstructed version of all or part of the General Conference guidelines. Of these, six incorporate in their policies the second set of indications for therapeutic abortions, including the fourth and fifth indications that were added in 1971. Only one facility uses the original guidelines with their three indications for abortion, as circulated in 1970.

The other 12 hospitals (46 percent), taking the middle way, have evolved an interesting range of policies, from the highly elaborate to the very simple.

On the elaborate end is one hospital whose abortion policy fills more than three pages of relatively fine, single-spaced print.[2] Most hospi-

tals' policies were considerably shorter and simpler. For example, one manages to state its policy in a mere three sentences:

> _____ Hospital Medical Staff takes the position that in order to preserve regard for the sanctity of life, and yet have concern for people, abortion shall not be done without serious consideration of the indications. An approach which will minimize the need for abortions as a form of medical therapy is favored and abortion is opposed except on adequate medical grounds, and being a last resort measure. When indicated interruptions of pregnancy are done, they should be performed as early as possible, preferably during the first trimester of pregnancy.

The brevity of this policy might leave the impression that much flexibility exists in its application. However, the hospital's responding administrator states flatly that there is no debate about this policy, "because we do not do abortions."[3]

Another example, interesting for more than its brevity, says:

> Abortions will be performed for medical reasons (pertaining or relating to the mother) only and will require two consultations: From the department which relates to the medical reason, and from another surgeon or OB-GYN person on the Active Staff not associated in practice with the surgeon doing the abortion. No abortion will be performed for fetal reasons other than anencephaly. (The above does not pertain to known fetal demise where an evacuation of the uterine contents is indicated.)

Most of the policies of the middle type are somewhat more detailed than the previous two examples. Typically, they insist that the abortions performed in the facility be "therapeutic," they specify a brief list of indications for such abortions (usually close to the first four of the General Conference's 1971 statement), they call for two medical consultations, they require some type of committee review, and they make provision for employees' conscientious objection to participation in abortions.

If your hospital has a stated policy, is there any plan, at present, to revise it?

Yes = 2 (8%) No = 18 (58%) No answer or Not applicable = 6 (23%)

Many respondents stated that their policies are given routine reviews annually. One person wrote: "[We] need to revise and update current policy —10+ years old." Another said that his hospital is currently rewriting its policy. However, it appears that most hospitals have no plan to change policies in the near future.

Do you presently sense any debate on the part of those connected with your hospital (for example, the medical staff, hospital personnel, or constituency) concerning abortion at the facility?

Yes = 5 (19%) No = 18 (69%) No answer = 3 (12%)

One respondent commented that, "There is considerable debate possible within the Medical Staff and Board relating to the issue . . ." But he went on to say that most of the members of the obstetrics department were unified. Another said: "There is definitely a variety of opinions." But most of the respondents indicated that there is no significant debate. Some added that difficulties with their hospital personnel were eased by a policy granting employees the right to refuse involvement. Given the conflicted nature of the issue in society and in the church at large, the widely reported absence of debate within most Adventist facilities seems somewhat surprising.

Most of the respondents indicated that there is no significant debate. Given the conflicted nature of the issue in society and in the church at large, the widely reported absence of debate within most Adventist facilities seems surprising.

Do you think that it would be a good idea for the Adventist church to take an official stand on abortion and insist that all Adventist facilities abide by that position?

Yes = 11 (42%) No = 14 (54%) No answer = 1 (4%)

This question prompted the most abundant and vigorous comments by the respondents. And it plainly split the group. Those on the "Yes" side offered comments like these:

> An absolute ban on abortion in our facilities would be easy to administer and remove us from the spotlight of the religious right, [but] it would not allow for an objective evaluation of cases on an individual basis.

Once an official position is adopted, however, Adventist facilities should abide within that position.

A general policy, with some latitude, should be developed to insure that no elective abortions take place at Seventh-day Adventist hospitals.

Something this critical and sensitive should not be a "local options" issue.

Yes on official stand, but what are the implications of enforcement — can the church police it well?

On the other side were comments such as these:

This would be very difficult for the church and possibly for hospitals to follow the "letter" of the law.

That decision is best made by each hospital.

The current position works for us.

Abortion prior to 20 weeks is a personal choice by law and a matter of conscience spiritually. The Adventist hospitals cannot take a stronger stand than the Church on this issue. I would hope our Church doctrines never mandate an individually responsible choice.

The fact that a slim majority of the surveyed administrators would not want to see a definite position taken by the church and the fact that even those who favor a more definite position often express doubts about its practicality indicates that the impetus for such a move will not come from this quarter. However, it may be that hospital administrators and others in the church would benefit from the denomination articulating a consensus of some sort on the issue of abortion. I suggest that the way to proceed is for the church to assist its hospitals by stating more clearly than in the past the *broad principles* that should govern Adventist abortion policies, and by suggesting how those principles could be applied in a model policy. Each hospital, in my view, should then continue to develop its policies within the bounds of the broadly stated principles and in consideration of the model policy.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1988), pp. 265-267.

2. This policy stipulates that therapeutic abortions should not be performed "without serious consideration of the implications." It includes a list of "bases" for first trimester abortions that is nearly identical to the five indications circulated by the General Conference. However, in place of the General Conference's vague fifth indication, this hospital's policy states: "When continuation of the pregnancy may significantly threaten the psychological health of the woman." The policy also includes the curious statement that "only intentional interruptions based on termination of pregnancy for socio-economic reasons is [sic] prohibited . . ." Second-trimester abortions, except in cases of rape or incest, are permitted only if two consulting physicians agree that they are medically indicated. And third-trimester abortions are forbidden except in cases of very serious threat to the pregnant woman's life or health, as confirmed by two consulting physicians in writing. Further stipulations include a rule protecting potentially viable, aborted fetuses, rules regarding proper record keeping, and a standing committee to review all cases retrospectively.

3. For the purposes of this survey, however, I have not included this facility among those that forbid all abortions, since the hospital's official policy, which is the primary concern of this study, does not prohibit all abortions.

Abortion and Adventists: Significant Theological Themes

by Ginger Hanks-Harwood

Women usually come to the church for support and counsel long after they have decided whether or not to bring their pregnancy to term. In those rare instances where a decision has not yet been made, we can stand with a woman making her decision. In our presence she may be able to see herself reflected as the treasured moral agent that she is. Without trying to abrogate her own process, we may be able to provide information, ask questions that help her examine her choices, and assist her to realize that she at least has moral choices.

We may begin by helping her envision the significance of pregnancy itself: woman as lifegiver, a cocreator with God. The decision to bring a person into the world is a sacred one, and the pregnancy a sacred interval in which women participate in a mystery with God.

The decision to participate in such a project is not to be undertaken lightly, and is not without serious and lifelong effects. Does she possess the reserves required to complete the project adequately, so that she is not like the poor stewards whom Jesus chided for not counting the cost before the project was undertaken and so ended up in disaster? What is her particular situation, and what are the specific needs of the child she would carry?

As we together gain clarity regarding the significance of the choice to be made, the mother-to-be faces the responsibility that creation entails and the consequences of accepting or denying that privilege. As she recognizes her human limitations and the enduring significance of the decision she must make, she simultaneously samples humanity and divinity. For many of us confronted with the same choice, the conflict we would experience would be unendurable if it were not for the assurance of God's presence and grace.

With that assurance, all of us can explore the human tragedy and dilemma faced by women contemplating abortion. Our first premise, as Adventist Christians, must be that human life, as a gift of God, is always precious and sacred. This will be the first principle to be consulted before any ethical decision is made. Is a certain decision harmonious with respect to both the Giver of life and the gift? How may the principle of sanctity of life best be ratified in this situation?

Ultimately, however, this argument will only be as convincing as we are: If we do not treat the poor, the despised, the handicapped, and the criminal as a valued part of our community, then the rest will be regarded as rhetoric. Only a consistent program that extends grace to the undervalued and augments respect for the living creatures of the earth will render us credible witnesses, with a right to pontificate on the inviolability of the gift of life.

The emphasis on the sanctity of life will, of course, lead us to a position of marked conservatism vis-à-vis the practice of abortion. It will be our premise, as Adventist Christians, that abortion is a sign of failure within the human community, a cipher attesting to the tragedy of our fallen

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state and the plight which has subsequently evolved. As Jesus once observed concering divorce, "In the beginning, it was not so." We cannot help but be moved to sadness and compassion for both the fetus and the mother. We cannot help but abhor the situation. Moral sensitivity and Christian compassion dictate that we mourn the great loss represented by each abortion and be prepared to intervene where we may, to prevent such tragedy and to facilitate healing among its survivors.

The moral mandate of choice decrees that women cannot be passive observers in the Grand Drama. Rather, each woman must make the choices (and bear the ensuing responsibility).

At the same time, we must also recognize stewardship as a quality defining us as humans, creating a duty to respect one another. Every woman and every man have been made stewards over their own physical resources. Both humility and faithfulness to the creation story require that we acknowledge the integrity of each individual, that we do not attempt to enforce our perspective on others. Rather, we must defer to each person's sovereignty within his or her own domain, and assign to God the right to censure and convict of wrongdoing in cases of abuse.

For the woman who is considering becoming pregnant or the woman for whom pregnancy has catastrophic overtones, stewardship is exercised through a careful examination of the resources which she has at her disposal to bring the pregnancy to successful culmination and the baby to Spirit-filled adulthood. While crystal balls are anathema (to say nothing of unreliable), and Christianity is a walk of daily revelation rather than a static totem, a woman is not without the capacity to weigh the judiciousness of a particular pregnancy. While she may not know the calamitous (or favorable) events which may unfold in the future, she can assess her present condition. She can learn whether it is probable that her body is able to sustain a pregnancy, bring a fetus to birth, and take care of it after it has arrived. She can make a judgment as to her own psychological stamina, and the effect (or risk) that a pregnancy (or additional child) would have on her ability to function productively. Far better than anyone else in the situation, she may consciously or intuitively know the reverberation the pregnancy would have on her familial and social community. Finally, she may be able to evaluate the support she will receive both during and after the pregnancy, and whether that would be sufficient, not only to bring a sacred being into the world but subsequently guide it.

As female physiology designates women as the door to human embodiment, it is women to whom the stewardship of population has ultimately been assigned. While this does not nullify male procreative responsibility, the final decision has been placed with women. In this way, women, just as they must appraise their personal, familial, and spiritual resources and how those need to be allocated, must also evaluate the capacity of the society and the earth to welcome new additions to the human population. The conduct of stewardship will necessitate painful decisions as women realistically survey the finite resources of the community and the demands that specific additions (i.e., children with severe physical handicaps) would make on those resources, as well as the impossibility of providing for a limitless potential number of new humans. Women, through the execution of their role in procreation, assume a distinct and peculiar custodianship of the earth.

The moral mandate of choice decrees that women cannot be passive observers in the Grand Drama. Rather, each woman must make the choices (and bear the ensuing reponsibility) with respect to her generative capacity. Some women, after careful assessment of their desire and ability to embrace parenthood, have intentionally become pregnant, only to discover their pregnancy threatens their lives or exceeds their capacity to provide care. Other women face an unwanted pregnancy because of self-abasement and neglect. In either case, each woman, as an endowed moral agent, must exercise her obligation to make a choice. In making that choice, whatever it is, she

reflects the will of God toward her as a human being. She functions as a moral actor; she assumes agency for her destiny and procreativity.

It is easy to critique the obvious lack of self-awareness and personal respect demonstrated by the woman who approaches abortion as a "quick-fix" for a situation engendered by delinquent sexuality. Neither her attitudes nor her actions seems congruent with sensitivity to the moral dimensions involved. While she may seem an unlikely candidate for adequately processed ethical decision-making, the gift of choice remains hers to exercise. With her alone stands the final decision on how she will utilize the temple given, whether to her glory or her destruction, as a stronghold of the Spirit or the defiled shell of a dwelling place. Except in cases where she loses the ability to speak for herself through catastrophic mental or physical debilitation, the gift of choice must stand and be respected. Even at such a point, those who would speak on her behalf must continue to exhibit respect for her integrity as a person, not sacrificing her for the benefit of a "new" or "more deserving" other.

Perhaps it is central to God's plan that those who make the choices bear the consequences, as women most certainly do in the case of abortion. Abortion, while posing less physical risk (if done under proper medical circumstances) than full-term pregnancy and delivery, still poses several threats to the well-being of women. The first is that of possible infection and other gynecological complications which may result in future sterility. Repeated abortion, even without infection, significantly increases the chances of miscarriage in future, planned pregnancy, and may result in the inability either to conceive or to be able to carry a baby to term. The elimination of one's potential to reproduce and thereby effect biological continuation of their family line, to create a concrete expression of the love shared between a man and a woman, or to participate in the wonders of gestational development, is the heavy price many women pay for choosing abortion.

The physical scarring is only a material manifestation of the emotional and psychological scars born by women who have taken this path. Awareness is just beginning to dawn within the therapeutic community of the intense need for grief counseling for women who have been through this trauma. Anorexia and suicide are only the more dramatic manifestations of the depression, anxiety, grief, and sense of loss that are typical residual effects of abortion. The loss of any child is a significant event in the life of a woman. In the case of abortion, the death is not simply mourned it is complicated by doubts as to the ultimate validity of the decision: its reflection on the woman's maternal qualities, its impact on the woman's position within her faith community, its effect on her relationship with God. Whatever else abortion is, it is not "an easy way out" or "a way to escape the consequences of sexuality" any more than pregnancy itself is a punishment for sexual expression.

Women's lives are shaped and permanently sculpted by their generative power and their decisions surrounding it. Pregnancy, whether one's first or fifth, always augurs change, transition, and peril for women. For those of us who receive the news in circumstances where we cannot provide adequate prenatal care (those of us addicted to drugs or alcohol, or who are too diseased, poor, or ignorant to find proper nutrition and medical information), the jeopardy is immediately transferred to the child. In many of these cases, there is no opportunity to gestate a holy thing in the image of God. The only thing we can produce at such a point is formed in the image of our own brokenness, suffering, and shame.

In many of these cases, there is no opportunity to gestate a holy thing in the image of God. The only thing we can produce at such a point is formed in the image of our own brokenness, suffering, and shame.

Pregnancy finds some of us outside of a committed relationship, or in a relationship marked by abuse, degradation, and violence. Our resources

are consumed by efforts to survive or to protect other family members (perhaps even other children). We have not discovered enough love for ourselves to nurture even the holy within ourselves, and are not likely to bring a baby into the world enveloped in love. We know that any child we bear will have received nine months of trial, trauma, and distress that may have chemically altered the very physiology of its existence. For others of us who have been careful stewards of our own resources and would seem to be ideal candidates for maternity, the pregnancy of dreams is transformed into a nightmare when it is discovered that our baby is incompatible with life.

In addition to these cases, there are those of us who become pregnant because we are small or very young and do not know of our right to say No to a stepfather or brother or uncle or family friend, or we have had a brutal and forced sexual encounter with a stranger or former friend. While these situations are in many ways very dissimilar, they have at least two things in common. First, the great discrepancy between God's intention to provide procreativity to humanity as a gift, and the actual circumstances of procreativity in the fallen creation; secondly, in all these cases, procreativity is experienced as an injury.

The gift, once bequeathed so that we might experience the joy of creating new physical life, has become transmuted into a curse. That which was given to put us in communion with God alienates us not only from God but also from our lovers, our community, even ourselves. The choices with which we are confronted, often through no fault of our own, are no longer between good and evil, but only between bad and worse.

It is within this situation that redemption, the one gift that cannot be perverted to work our destruction, must be found. Where human beings are required to make moral decisions that exceed their wisdom, where it is impossible to know fully the ramifications of the choices involved, we are left with the mandate to accept our responsibility to make a choice. We must choose and rely on God to bring something salvific out of the experience. The promise that "My grace is sufficient unto thee" functions to allow us to retain the vestiges of God's original plan for humanity. That promise allows us to remain moral actors in the universe; allows us to exercise our God-given obligation to choose.

When a decision whether or not to disrupt a pregnancy has been made, there is always then the opportunity for self-doubt and recrimination. There is the endless reflection on the possibility that we have, in our human fallibility, deceived ourselves and made a mistake. Without the intervention of divine grace and the mediation of the Spirit, the woman may wound and rewound herself for years. The recognition of our own inadequacy to preside over such decisions, and the verity that our decisions are frequently the product of myopia, confusion, and pain, may be the first step in healing the wound. The knowledge that our insufficiency has been compassionately recognized and provided for by the God of grace gives us permission to forgive ourselves for the finiteness and fallibility that characterize our fallen state.

As we have shared the questions, fears, and hopes of the woman facing an unwanted pregnancy, we become aware that we have participated in the approach of the Great Physician, the great Lover of Souls. We have sensed, as we explored biblical themes and stories, the presence of Christ the healer restoring wholeness in the midst of a fractured and aching world. And in that experience of healing we have glimpsed the mission of the Adventist church: to make it possible for beleagured, bewildered, vulnerable human beings to experience the reassuring power and goodness of God's presence.

Control of the Body, Control of the Mind: A Personal Abortion Ethic

by Michael Pearson

If you wish to attach a label to me, it would have to be the pro-choice label. Such labels are often unhelpful, and oversimplify all kinds of complexities, but in the end I do believe that there are circumstances in which it is legitimate to abort the fetus—to do so is the best of a range of evil options available.

I hold this view against a background of experience which is clearly deficient in important respects. Not being a member of the medical profession, I have never been present on an occasion when a fetus was being aborted; I have never seen the contents of the womb in the dish; I have never had to consign the contents of the womb to the waste-bin. I have never confronted at the level of my own family the guilt and the remorse of a woman who has had an abortion, nor have I shared in any intimate way the relief of a woman who has chosen abortion as a way of extricating herself from difficulties that seem to her otherwise insurmountable. These are all important deficiencies in my experience.

Personal Experience

The first rather obvious but extremely important biographical detail about me is that I am male. I have never experienced, could never experience, the process of bonding with the child that is growing within. An adequate Adventist response to the question of abortion can never be formulated until Adventist women, and particularly Adventist mothers, have articulated their views on the subject. Any conclusions formed in a male-dominated forum like this must remain partial.

Like many males I am attracted to solutions to problems that are tidy and simple, and so in a crisis am likely to consider abortion as a serious option. Many males are, of course, strongly opposed to termination—that is also, in a sense, a tidy solution. I suspect, however, that they are mostly opposed to other people's abortions . . .

Furthermore, I am politically "liberal," inclined to "live and let live." Thus I am prone to favor legislation that provides a range of possible options for personal behavior. I therefore favor abortion law that is relatively permissive, though I greatly dislike the way in which many people use the freedom that the law confers. There is more to be lost than to be gained by a return to the days before abortion law reform, in Britain in 1967, and in the United States following the Supreme Court decision of 1973.

At this point the autobiographical detail becomes a little more precise. I acknowledge that I have been particularly influenced by the experience of counseling a student who had had an abortion. The relationship that eventuated in the pregnancy was not a serious one; the father had

Michael Pearson, professor of religion at Newbold College in England, received his doctorate from Oxford University. His dissertation has been published: *Seventh-day Adventist Responses to Some Contemporary Ethical Issues* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

had some history of drug abuse. There was a history of antagonism within the young woman's family, a history that, one suspects, had driven her to seek affection elsewhere. Without much prospect of support, she had opted for an abortion, and by and large felt relief afterwards, though she still had to deal with feelings of guilt. It seemed to me to be a case where the law permitted her to choose the lesser of two evils.

I asked myself, at a deep level, the question: Would you consider an abortion under such circumstances? The answer was "Yes."

I find that conviction disturbed but not dislodged by the case of a delightful and intelligent student whom I have taught. She gives a most moving testimony to the courage of her mother who rejected medical advice to abort her on the grounds that she (the mother) had a serious heart condition.

I am influenced by the experience of a friend who discovered that her contraceptive coil had become embedded in a fetus that she discovered she was bearing. She was told that the fetus, if it survived, was likely to be seriously malformed. In the distressing circumstances, it seemed to me that she and her husband were justified in electing to abort the fetus.

I am keenly aware also of a distressing experience I had once in an Adventist church. During Sabbath school I sat behind a young but haggard-looking couple who carried on their laps a child who moaned throughout the proceedings and whose body periodically jerked violently and uncontrollably. I later discovered that the couple had been warned at a fairly early stage by their doctors that their child would be severely mentally handicapped. I also learned that their pastor had advised them that abortion was a sinful act that God could not condone. Casual observer that I was, I felt that the pastor himself bore a heavy responsibility in the matter. My instinct was that it would have been better had the child never been born.

All of these experiences were poignant and formative in their own way, but they were sufficiently distant from me that I could, to some extent, throw them off. But now I have to come the closest to home. There has been one experience of my life that has brought me closest to the abortion dilemma. Immediately after the birth of our second child, my wife suffered from post-natal depression and other symptoms of hormone imbalance that it took us months to unravel before we could return to a normal life. Despite all her courage and initiative in trying to resolve the problem, we entered into what at times seemed a long, dark tunnel from which it took us some 18 months to emerge. It was not unrelieved darkness; it was a roller-coaster experience, but with more downs than ups. It was perhaps the most painful experience of my life, but, paradoxically, probably the most fruitful as well.

As the darkness deepened, I found myself asking, and yet hardly daring to ask, questions about what we should do if my wife became pregnant now. I felt that with two children under the age of three, it would have been a desperate situation. I asked myself, at a deep level, the question: Would you consider an abortion under such circumstances? The answer came back "Yes."

Significantly, my wife has subsequently told me that she would never have considered abortion an option. I am glad to say that the dilemma never actually confronted us, but the prospect of it was sufficient to make us seek a permanent contraceptive solution. I was obliged in that time to confront myself in a way that I had never had to before, and that moment of self-awareness has led me not to wish to preclude anyone from electing for abortion in circumstances that they perceive to be as threatening as mine then seemed. It would lack integrity to deny anyone a right which I might then have wanted to claim for myself. . .

Adventist Beliefs

In addition to the relation of our personal feelings to our other views on abortion, we need to pay more attention

to the relation of distinctive Adventist beliefs to the topic. For example, our attitude toward immortality is more directly relevant than we have acknowledged. In Catholic theology, a soul is infused into the embryo at the very moment of conception, and it, as an inheritor of original sin, must not be allowed to perish without baptism. The matter is clear-cut. There is a soul to save as soon as the sperm fertilizes the egg. The situation in Adventist theology is far less clear. At death, a person "goes down into the grave there to lie unconscious until the resurrection day."[1] Adventists do not believe that there exists a separate entity called a soul; rather, in the gestation period, a human being "becomes a soul."[2]

Adventists have tended to explicate their doctrine of conditional immortality from the point of view of the one who dies. He or she "sleeps," unconscious of the years that intervene between death and resurrection. He or she awakens then as if it were the next moment of life, rather as someone who awakens from sleep may express surprise at the fact that he or she has been asleep. From the point of view of the bereaved, however, Adventist doctrine may offer less immediate comfort than traditional Christian doctrine. The loved one dies, the body decays, there is no soul that endures. Where is the loved one? What is this identity that will be reconstituted at the second advent? It seems that there is a kind of genotype, a unique formula, that exists in the mind of God—but nothing else.

The idea that a woman bears in her body a genotype that is going to pass into a genotype again—rather than an immortal soul—via the circular route of life, is perhaps sufficient in itself to diminish respect for the fetus. But more than that, countless millions of genotypes existing after their death in the mind of God will be called into life at the second advent only then to face the extinction of judgment—the second death. I fear that this comes uncomfortably close to being a model of abortion on a cosmic scale. In the center of Adventist theology then, we have a story of countless millions of lives, having been reactivated or reconstituted, being jettisoned, even if for the best of reasons or "therapeutic grounds." Such a mechanism may predispose some Adventists to regard human potential in a less serious way than would those who believe quite unequivocally that at conception there exists an entity that is of eternal significance. You may think that my explication of the second death as an abortion procedure writ large is farfetched, but we would be unwise to exclude entirely the possibility that the particular Adventist view of immortality affects our perceptions of the abortion decision. It does seem to contain within it the principle of the expendability of human life.

On the other hand, other Adventist doctrines might in some subtle ways encourage an antiabortion stance; for example, our view on Creation. A common argument in favor of abortion is that through the evolutionary process the body has developed a mechanism for expelling the abnormal fetus from the womb spontaneously. Induced abortion becomes then only an extension of that process. As creationists, Adventists are unlikely to find that kind of explanation convincing. Furthermore, our belief in an imminent Advent might lead some Adventists to ignore the justification for abortion on the grounds of a spiraling world population. Moreover, some members would undoubtedly regard widespread abortion as evidence of the evils attending the climactic last days of human history. Again the notion of a detailed scrutiny of individual behavior—the investigative judgment—will only enhance this effect.

No matter how better informed we may become on the subject of abortion ethics, no one has the right to tell a woman or a couple that a particular course of action is right or wrong, in a given situation.

Surely, even if we are not aware at a conscious level of the correlation between Adventist doctrine and our decisions about abortion, years of living in the spiritual and theological ambiance we call Adventism will affect at a deep level each individual's response to deep personal crisis.

Of course, no matter how more clear we may become about the relation of our deep feelings and

beliefs to our own attitudes to abortion, and no matter how better informed we may become on the subject of abortion ethics, no one has the right to tell a woman or a couple that a particular course of action is right or wrong, in a given situation. To do so would be to usurp the role of God's good Spirit in guiding them to a free and wise decision. We can only help to fill in details on the map; we cannot tell them which route to take. Until such time as we are prepared to carry one another's burdens more effectively than we now do, we dare not, whatever their decision, cast the first stone.

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Psychological and Social Effects of Abortion– Some Recent Data

by Sara Karkkainen Terian

Considerable amounts of research have been carried out attempting to assess the psychological effects of abortion on women. Many of these studies report data to prove the absence of harmful effects.[1] However, studies on women's self-reported responses to abortion show conflicting evidence, or perhaps more accurately, are used to prove contradictory points, since obviously both positive and negative reactions are present.

Personal Reponses

One study involving mostly married women shows that more than 50 percent felt relieved after abortion; negative responses were reported by less than 20 percent. According to this report, during the months after the abortion, women were increasingly satisfied with their decision, viewing it in "increasingly positive terms with the passage of time."[2] Another study of unmarried adolescents reports that more than 80 percent of the subjects would make the same decision again, whether that decision was abortion, single motherhood, or marriage. Among those who chose to abort, a positive attitude toward abortion in general, consistent contraceptive use following abortion, and mother's higher educational attainment accounted for about 20 percent of the variance in satisfaction.[3] In more than one study, family support has been found to be crucial.[4] Obviously, married women had it in the context of their own nuclear families, whereas adolescents would need to receive it from their families of orientation.

However, a high number of women have admitted to having notable psychological problems after abortion. Some have experienced emotional and behavioral symptoms similar to "post-combat stress reactions" of soldiers returning from war.[5] Others have had symptoms similar to the grief experienced after involuntary loss of an infant, and for many this grief reaction began with the decision to terminate the pregnancy.[6] In many cases, nightmares, depression, and other kinds of trauma are experienced by the women for years—periods as long as 12 years have been reported. Often the trauma emerges many years after the event, sometimes with the arrival of subsequent children.

Sometimes women may not consciously acknowledge such trauma for many years; as one young woman said, "I threw myself into my studies. . . . From the outside, you'd never guess how it hurt me."[7] It is doubtful that such hidden hurts will be reported accurately in quantitative studies in which the subjects often respond in socially acceptable ways. Justification of one's decision is also to be expected, which would explain some of the contradicting findings re-

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ported above.

In addition to the mother, the decision about a pregnancy directly concerns other individuals. The most obvious, of course, is the biological father. Although men's attitudes toward abortion are generally more liberal than women's, disputes between couples in which the man wants the fetus to be carried to term are not uncommon.[8] Men's interest in pregnancies that women may define as unwanted has not received much attention. There are indications that men involved in the abortion experience also have psychological and emotional stress. In about half of the 1.5 million annual abortions in the United States, the women are accompanied by their male partners, but clinics extend no assistance to the men who often feel totally shut out.[9] From time to time, the news media reports cases of dispute between a man and a woman whose mutual offspring is on the way. Pro-abortion feminists usually welcome the woman's victory in such cases.[10] However, as some writers have noted, it would seem reasonable that biological fathers who oppose the abortion should have their rights weighed against the mother's rights.[11] Against the feminist argument it can be said that one wrong cannot be made right by another wrong; it is true that women have been discriminated against, but reverse discrimination cannot solve the problem.

The prevalent definition of abortion as a method of birth control obviously colors the decision to abort. In fact, many consider abortions "not fundamentally different from other conventional goods and services."

Social Issues

Much depends on whether abortion is viewed as "a personal trouble of milieu" or as a "public issue of social structure."[12] Evidence is not conclusive enough to squarely place the problem on one side or the other; elements of both appear to be present, and perhaps in a different fashion than expected. Some data, however, suggest placing it more on the "issue" side.[13] One study found that among younger adolescents (under age 15), almost half of the abortions occur among minority youths, especially the disadvantaged groups. This, and its frequency among adolescents in general, led the American Psychological Association's Interdivisional Committee on Adolescent Abortion to define it as a social phenomenon.[14] Another study reexamined previous findings that showed abortion to be most prevalent among unmarried white women. Controlling for certain factors, such as increased accessibility—whether geographical or financial—revealed that blacks are more likely to abort than whites, and that variance between married and unmarried women is smaller than among whites. The odds of black married women aborting rather than giving birth are 2.8 times higher than the odds for white married women. However, unmarried black women are somewhat less likely to obtain an abortion than give birth, whereas white women are far more likely to obtain an abortion.[15]

These data are suggestive of socio-economic considerations. Perhaps the established fact of absentee fathers in black families leads married black women to resort to abortion more often than white women who generally have more support from their husbands. In the case of unmarried black women, it has been suggested that welfare payments might provide an incentive to carry the baby to term.[16] A study in New York in 1975 showed that abortions were not related to welfare status, but a study in California in 1976 showed that girls who receive state aid are more likely to carry their babies to term and remain unmarried. Those teenagers who place greater value than others on time and better grades, and those women who are self-supporting were more likely to choose abortion.[17] The prevalent definition of abortion as a method of birth control obviously colors those decisions. In fact, many consider abortions "not fundamentally different from other conventional goods and services."[18]

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
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Loma Linda University put on probation for two years

Medical school seceding from faculty senate

BY JOHN WHITEHAIR
Sun Staff Writer

LOMA LINDA—Loma Linda University's School of Medicine has voted to secede from the university's faculty senate to distance itself from the institution's academic probation, officials said Monday.

The action by the School of Medicine comes on the heels of an order by the accrediting commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges placing the university on probation for two years.

In a letter to the university, the commission said it found the Seventh-day Adventist institution hasn't resolved financial and other problems uncovered six years earlier.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges is one of the most important of 23 organizations that provide accreditation for the university. Institutions seek accreditation as a reflection of their ability to provide quality education.

While on probation, the university will be subject to special scrutiny by the commission.

University spokesman W. Augustus Cheatham said the probation order was not expected.

"We were surprised and disappointed to receive probation status. That is not something they do very often. . . . We're taking it very seriously," he said. "We're not accustomed to having this kind of challenge from accreditation agencies."

Accreditation commission members visited Loma Linda University from Nov. 29 through Dec. 2 and met with faculty and other people. It then issued a 52-page report saying that three main areas of concern parallel similar findings in 1983. They are:

- The quality and scope of faculty participation in governing the institution.
- The functioning of the university's board of trustees as effective advocates of the university.
- The quality and scope of university-wide academic and financial planning.

The commission expressed concern about low salaries for employees and financial instability of the university.

According to guidelines for accreditation folowed by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institution can be placed on probation when it fails to repond to conditions imposed by the commission, or when it deviates significantly from the commision's standards or policies.

Chetham said university officials were surprised the association didn't issue a warning before the probation was imposed.

After probation, the next step (phrase missing) cause why accreditation should not be terminated. The final step is to remove accreditation. The loss of accreditation would affect the university's ability to obtain low-interest student loans.

Stephen S. Weiner, the commission's executive director, said probation was given rather than a warning because of the nature of the concerns and the number of problems.

Only a few of the more than 100 institutions it accredits are on probation.

"Our experience has been in the vast majority of cases, institutions get off probation quickly," he said. "In general, it has a healthy effect on the institution."

Another concern outlined in the commission report is that the issue of consolidation of the La Sierra and Loma Linda campuses be decided. Since the commission visited the school, the board of trustees has decided not to merge the two but is considering operating them as separate campuses.

In support of its efforts to distance itself from the academic probation, the School of Medicine faculty also voted Friday to support a separation of the two campuses.

Members of the School of Medicine faculty said instructors at La Sierra are dissatisfied with the way the university is operated and that factor weighed heavily in the probation decision.

The School of Medicine faculty voted 100-2 to secede and 81-22 to ask that the two campuses be separated.

Cheatham said the School of Medicine is the only medical college operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Last year, the School of Medicine was accredited separately from the university, but it still is affected by the probation.

"It puts a cloud over the entire university, including the School of Medicine," Cheatham said.

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Redrawing the Changing of the Guard

To the Editor: The article entitled "Changing of the Guard at the SDA Seminary" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 19, No. 2), reveals a lack of accurate data and, consequently, erroneous conclusions were drawn providing a distorted picture. Inasmuch as the author of the article was not present at the seminary faculty meetings of February 5 and 18, 1988, the readers of *Spectrum* deserve a more complete and accurate report.

The seminary has been engaged in a self-study in preparation for the 1989 visit of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accreditation team. Because we were expected to produce a mission statement (none existed prior to this) that would, among other things, clarify the relationship of the seminary to both the church and the university, a committee was charged with the task.

The committee presented its first draft for discussion at the February 5 faculty meeting. The number of faculty in attendance at that meeting (18) was quite typical and did not represent a decline as the article suggests. Average attendance over the previous year was 22.3 with a high of 27 and a low of 18.

Two actions were taken by the faculty present at the February 5 meeting. The *first* was to request clarification of the relationship of the seminary to the university from the university administration, and the seminary executive committee. The *second* action was to change the preposition in the proposed mission statement, identifying the seminary as a school "at" Andrews University rather than "of" Andrews University.

Contrary to what the *Spectrum* article states, the action to make the change was not proposed by the dean. Dr. Hasel's role at that meeting was to urge caution, not isolationism, and the discussion concerning the prepositional change was lengthy. The change was adopted with only one dissenting vote, and was viewed by faculty as part of a developemental process requiring clarification rather than a definitive position. The rationale discussed in favor of the preposition "at" contained nowhere near the extreme implications given to it later by others.

The minutes reveal the content of the discussion: the relationship of the seminary to the university, and the seminary's confessional/professional uniqueness as a training school for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. The discussion also reflected some serious uncertainty regarding the role of the new graduate school and graduate council vis-a-vis the seminary.

Following the requested clarification at the February 18 meeting, a unanimous action was taken to return to the preposition "of" in the proposed mission statement. Every faculty member who had previously voted in favor of "at" now supported a return to "of".

It is important to note that Dean Hasel's summary at the latter meeting included the following: "the preposition 'at' conveys an inappropriate impression." *(Minutes)*

Faculty present at the February 5 meeting did not interpret the action as promoting an autonomous seminary. It was understood then, and continues to be understood, as part of the self-study process in which the seminary and the entire university is presently engaged, which is taken extremely seriously.

The article in *Spectrum* perpetuates an erroneous interpretation of the actions taken by the seminary faculty at both the February 5 and 18 meetings. It indicts not only Dr. Gerhard Hasel, but nearly every member of the faculty present on February 5, as promotors of an autonomous seminary—*which is simply not true!*

It is difficult to understand the sinister interpretation of seminary faculty actions on February 5 and 18, 1988, in light of the fact that the introduction to the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, recently published by the Ministerial Association, refers to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary "at" Andrews University.

To interpret the creation of the seminary executive committee as "evidence" of Hasel's "increasing interest in the seminary's autonomy," constitutes a major distortion of the facts. A change in the way the seminary's affairs are administered had been seriously discussed by denominational leadership for at least five years (see seminary faculty *Minutes*, December 9, 1986). Furthermore, the seminary executive committee was established by the board of trustees of Andrews University with the concurrence of the General Conference. The members of the board were certainly not promoting an autonomous seminary by that action.

We trust that the above will serve to correct the false impressions made by the *Spectrum* article.

Richard Davidson, Chairman
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Ripley Replies

I appreciated the desire for and interest in responsible journalism demonstrated by the writers of this letter. I am also sorry that these five perceived the news article so intensely as to use such emotive words as "erroneous conclusions", "extreme implications", "indicts", "sinister", et cetera.

As the reporter, I maintain that 18 is a low attendance at faculty meetings, and that the question of autonomy, as supported by their letter, was discussed at both meetings mentioned. I am surprised that the issue of autonomy for the Seminary can be called "sinister" and don't believe that the news article suggested whether autonomy would be good or bad for that institution.

This strong response seems to be evidence that this has been a painful time for the Seminary and I view their response in the context of what must have been, and continues to be, a difficult time for all those experiencing it.

Wendy Ripley
Andrews University

Perestroika or Theological Honesty?

To the Editor: The cluster of articles on the church's future (Vol. 19, No. 2) seemed to be summed up aptly by Susan Sickler: "The issues are definitely money and control." Fay Blix's "call for drastic measures, for a dismantling of systems and programs, for a shifting of power bases and positions," sounded much like Gorbachev's call for *perestroika* (restructuring) of the Soviet system. Tom Wehtje's article made the comparison explicit by calling for *glasnost* (openness) in the church. Such efforts, in my view, are as doomed to failure in the church as they are in Russia, not because they are without merit, but rather because they only deal with peripheral issues of structure and function rather than the core issue of ideology (theology in Adventism).

Adventism, like communism, faces a crisis today due to the passage of time and the increase of knowledge and experience which has resulted in the discrediting of some of the original doctrines. For many members, *perestroika* and *glasnost* will result in a more acceptable and efficient system, and for them this is all that is needed. But for what is probably a minority of members who place truth and honesty above a sense of identity and a feeling of community, the changes need to go beyond issues of power, structure, and function, and to deal with the issues of discredited doctrines. They do not doubt that the system will survive (witness the Mormon Church's prosperity in spite of discredited doctrines), but they question whether such a system, even restructured and made more open, can continue to legitimately claim their allegiance if it fails to maintain its commitment to truth and honesty, what constituted its original reason for being.

Arlin Baldwin
Coarsegold, California

Share and Share Alike

To the Editor: I was delighted and surprised to see the SDA Subcultural Literacy List from *Focus* magazine reprinted in February's *Spectrum.* Delighted, because the committee that compiled it hoped that the list would spark interest and comment. Surprised, because—contrary to your notification—*Spectrum* did not obtain permission from the *Focus* editors to reprint the list.

Your "scholarly" critique ["From the *Little Flock* to *Little Debbies*"] of the list was very clever. May we reprint it in *Focus?*

Jane Thayer

We are surprised and delighted. Surprised, because we always ask permission to reprint (note the many reprints of essays on the Chamberlain case.). Inexplicably, we failed to do so in this case. Delighted, because we would love for Focus *to reprint our "scholarly" critique of their Adventist Literacy List.*

— The Editors

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