
“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 deplors 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 offi-

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— *R. R. Bietz*

cers 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 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 com-

munity 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.D.s. 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 its 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 institu-

tions 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.