

1 BRI/HM/Adhoc/ADCOM/PreC/GCDO19AC/19AC to AAS

2
3 145-19G STATEMENT ON THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF UNBORN LIFE
4 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORTION

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6 VOTED, To adopt the document, Statement on the Biblical View of Unborn Life and Its
7 Implications for Abortion, which reads as follows:

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11 Human beings are created in the image of God. Part of the gift that God has given us as
12 humans is procreation, the ability to participate in creation along with the Author of life. This
13 sacred gift should always be valued and treasured. In God’s original plan every pregnancy
14 should be the result of the expression of love between a man and a woman committed to each
15 other in marriage. A pregnancy should be wanted, and each baby should be loved, valued, and
16 nurtured even before birth. Unfortunately, since the entrance of sin, Satan has made intentional
17 efforts to mar the image of God by defacing all of God’s gifts—including the gift of procreation.
18 Consequently, individuals are at times faced with difficult dilemmas and decisions regarding a
19 pregnancy.

20
21 The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to the teachings and principles of the
22 Holy Scriptures which express God’s values on life and provide guidance for prospective
23 mothers and fathers, medical personnel, churches, and all believers in matters of faith, doctrine,
24 ethical behavior, and lifestyle. The Church while not being the conscience of individual believers
25 has the duty to convey the principles and teachings of the Word of God.

26
27 This statement affirms the sanctity of life and presents biblical principles bearing on
28 abortion. As used in this statement, abortion is defined as any action aimed at the termination of
29 a pregnancy and does not include the spontaneous termination of a pregnancy, known also as a
30 miscarriage.

31
32 *Biblical Principles and Teachings Relating to Abortion*

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34 As the practice of abortion must be weighed in the light of Scripture, the following
35 biblical principles and teachings provide guidance for the community of faith and individuals
36 affected by such difficult choices:

37
38 1. *God upholds the value and sacredness of human life.* Human life is of the greatest
39 value to God. Having created humanity in His image (Genesis 1:27; 2:7), God has a personal
40 interest in people. God loves them and communicates with them, and they in turn can love and
41 communicate with Him.

42
43 Life is a gift of God, and God is the Giver of life. In Jesus is life (John 1:4). He has life in
44 Himself (John 5:26). He is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25; 14:6). He provides abundant
45 life (John 10:10). Those who have the Son have life (1 John 5:12). He is also the Sustainer of life

145-19G STATEMENT ON THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF UNBORN LIFE
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORTION - 2

1 (Acts 17:25-28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:1-3), and the Holy Spirit is described as the Spirit of
2 life (Romans 8:2). God cares deeply for His creation and especially for humankind.

3
4 Furthermore, the importance of human life is made clear by the fact that, after the Fall
5 (Genesis 3), God “gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish
6 but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). While God could have abandoned and terminated sinful
7 humanity, He opted for life. Consequently, Christ’s followers will be raised from the dead and
8 will live in face-to-face communion with God (John 11:25-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16;
9 Revelation 21:3). Thus, human life is of inestimable value. This is true for all stages of human
10 life: the unborn, children of various ages, adolescents, adults, and seniors—independent of
11 physical, mental, and emotional capacities. It is also true for all humans regardless of sex,
12 ethnicity, social status, religion, and whatever else may distinguish them. Such an understanding
13 of the sanctity of life gives inviolable and equal value to each and every human life and requires
14 it to be treated with the utmost respect and care.

15
16 2. *God considers the unborn child as human life.* Prenatal life is precious in God’s
17 sight, and the Bible describes God’s knowledge of people before they were conceived. “Your
18 eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days
19 fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them” (Psalm 139:16). In certain cases, God
20 directly guided prenatal life. Samson was to “be a Nazirite to God from the womb” (Judges
21 13:5). The servant of God is “called from the womb” (Isaiah 49:1, 5). Jeremiah was already
22 chosen as a prophet before his birth (Jeremiah 1:5), as was Paul (Galatians 1:15), and John the
23 Baptist was to “be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15). Of
24 Jesus the angel Gabriel explained to Mary: “therefore the child to be born will be called holy—
25 the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). In His Incarnation Jesus Himself experienced the human prenatal
26 period and was recognized as the Messiah and Son of God soon after His conception (Luke 1:40-
27 45). The Bible already attributes to the unborn child joy (Luke 1:44) and even rivalry (Genesis
28 25:21-23). Those not-yet-born have a firm place with God (Job 10:8-12; 31:13-15). Biblical law
29 shows a strong regard for protecting human life and considers harm to or the loss of a baby or
30 mother as a result of a violent act a serious issue (Exodus 21:22-23).

31
32 3. *The will of God regarding human life is expressed in the Ten Commandments and*
33 *explained by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.* The Decalogue was given to God’s covenant
34 people and the world to guide their lives and protect them. Its commandments are unchanging
35 truths which should be cherished, respected, and obeyed. The Psalmist praises God’s law (e.g.,
36 Psalm 119), and Paul calls it holy, righteous, and good (Romans 7:12). The sixth commandment
37 states: “You shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13), which calls for the preservation of human life. The
38 principle to preserve life enshrined in the sixth commandment places abortion within its scope.
39 Jesus reinforced the commandment not to kill in Matthew 5:21-22. Life is protected by God. It is
40 not measured by individuals’ abilities or their usefulness, but by the value that God’s creation
41 and sacrificial love has placed on it. Personhood, human value, and salvation are not earned or
42 merited but graciously granted by God.

145-19G STATEMENT ON THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF UNBORN LIFE
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORTION - 3

1 4. *God is the Owner of life, and human beings are His stewards.* Scripture teaches
2 that God owns everything (Psalm 50:10-12). God has a dual claim on humans. They are His
3 because He is their Creator and therefore He owns them (Psalm 139:13-16). They are also His
4 because He is their Redeemer and has bought them with the highest possible price—His own life
5 (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This means that all human beings are stewards of whatever God has
6 entrusted to them, including their own lives, the lives of their children, and the unborn.
7

8 The stewardship of life also includes carrying responsibilities which in some ways limit
9 their choices (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). Since God is the Giver and Owner of life, human beings
10 do not have ultimate control over themselves and should seek to preserve life wherever possible.
11 The principle of the stewardship of life obligates the community of believers to guide, support,
12 care for, and love those facing decisions about pregnancies.
13

14 5. *The Bible teaches care for the weak and the vulnerable.* God Himself cares for
15 those who are disadvantaged and oppressed and protects them. He “shows no partiality nor takes
16 a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving
17 him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:17-18, cf. Psalm 82:3-4; James 1:27). He does not hold
18 children accountable for the sins of their fathers (Ezekiel 18:20). God expects the same of His
19 children. They are called to help vulnerable people and ease their lot (Psalm 41:1; 82:3-4; Acts
20 20:35). Jesus speaks of the least of His brothers (Matthew 25:40), for whom His followers are
21 responsible, and of the little ones who should not be despised or lost (Matthew 18:10-14). The
22 very youngest, namely the unborn, should be counted among them.
23

24 6. *God’s grace promotes life in a world marred by sin and death.* It is God’s nature
25 to protect, preserve, and sustain life. In addition to the providence of God over His creation
26 (Psalm 103:19; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3), the Bible acknowledges the wide-ranging,
27 devastating, and degrading effects of sin on the creation, including on human bodies. In Romans
28 8:20-24 Paul describes the impact of the Fall as subjecting the creation to futility. Consequently,
29 in rare and extreme cases, human conception may produce pregnancies with fatal prospects
30 and/or acute, life-threatening birth anomalies that present individuals and couples with
31 exceptional dilemmas. Decisions in such cases may be left to the conscience of the individuals
32 involved and their families. These decisions should be well-informed and guided by the Holy
33 Spirit and the biblical view of life outlined above. God’s grace promotes and protects life.
34 Individuals in these challenging situations may come to Him in sincerity and find direction,
35 comfort, and peace in the Lord.

145-19G STATEMENT ON THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF UNBORN LIFE
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORTION - 4

1 *Implications*

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church considers abortion out of harmony with God’s plan for human life. It affects the unborn, the mother, the father, immediate and extended family members, the church family, and society with long-term consequences for all. Believers aim to trust God and follow His will for them, knowing He has their best interests in mind.

While not condoning abortion, the Church and its members are called to follow the example of Jesus, being “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), to (1) create an atmosphere of true love and provide grace-filled, biblical pastoral care and loving support to those facing difficult decisions regarding abortion; (2) enlist the help of well-functioning and committed families and educate them to provide care for struggling individuals, couples, and families; (3) encourage church members to open their homes to those in need, including single parents, parentless children, and adoptive or foster care children; (4) care deeply for and support in various ways pregnant women who decide to keep their unborn children; and (5) provide emotional and spiritual support to those who have aborted a child for various reasons or were forced to have an abortion and may be hurting physically, emotionally, and/or spiritually.

The issue of abortion presents enormous challenges, but it gives individuals and the Church the opportunity to be what they aspire to be, the fellowship of brothers and sisters, the community of believers, the family of God, revealing His immeasurable and unfailing love.