

The American Association of Lutheran Churches

www.taalc.com

Position Statement Regarding the Sanctity of Life and Abortion

In dependence upon God, with love for those who are fearful of bearing children and with charity toward those holding differing opinions regarding the sanctity of life and abortion, we of the AALC:

1. Affirm that human life from conception is created in the image of God and is always sacred. Galatians 1:15, Jeremiah 1:5
2. Understand that an induced abortion is a sin before God against mankind because it ends a unique human life for which God has a plan that would bring glory to Him and benefit to fellow human beings. Psalm 139:1,7,13
3. Advocate the exercise of sexual and procreative acts only in the framework of marriage in accordance with the teaching of God's Word so as to diminish the temptation to turn to abortion.
4. Deplore the legal permissiveness that denies protection to the weakest and most defenseless of the human family, the unborn. We view this as an irresponsible and morally reprehensible neglect of God's gift of human life.
5. Reject the practice of induced abortion.
6. Acknowledge that there may be rare cases in which the mother's physical life is clearly and directly threatened and where all other possible alternatives to saving the lives of both mother and child have been exhausted, that abortion may be a tragic option.
7. Recognize that civil law is a significant factor in shaping the judgment of citizens concerning that which is right and wrong. The current legal climate of total permissiveness regarding abortion, teaches that human life has diminished significance or value.
8. Urge that pastors, counselors, and others dealing with the "other victim," the mother herself, as well as fathers and others responsible for and involved in the practice of abortion, be knowledgeable and sensitive about the profound guilt, remorse, and shame that accompanies abortion and be diligent in ministering the Gospel of forgiveness and new life through Jesus Christ to them.
9. Urge pastors to lovingly counsel women with problem pregnancies to avail themselves of options in dealing with the child other than abortion and that we strive to provide loving care, guidance, and means to facilitate such options to the mother.
10. Urge Christians everywhere to patiently strive through prayer, proclamation of God's Word regarding the sanctity of human life, and all Christian and legal means to effect the changes in law necessary to provide full protection for all unborn and born children.

ADOPTED BY THE CONSTITUTING CONVENTION, NOVEMBER 1987

Resolutions on the Sanctity of Human Life by Pro-Life Lutheran Church Bodies

We affirm the Policy Statement of the AALC regarding the Sanctity of Life and Abortion.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

That the AALC, here meeting in convention, urges its congregations and members to take a strong stand against abortion and become actively involved in supporting those groups and ministries that are endeavoring to protect the sanctity of human life and are providing positive support and ministry to men and women who are experiencing crisis pregnancies or otherwise need Christian care and comfort and the forgiving love of Christ.

ADOPTED AT THE THIRD GENERAL CONVENTION, JUNE 1990

Affirmation of Lutherans For Life

WHEREAS, God is the creator of all life and has declared that His creation is good (Genesis 1); and

WHEREAS, God declares His love for all human life (John 3:16) and is intimately involved in life from the time of conception (Psalm 139:13-14, Jeremiah 1:5); and

WHEREAS, God does not abandon people when they are in the womb or when they are old and unable to care for themselves (Isaiah 46:4); and

WHEREAS, The American Association of Lutheran Churches has taken a strong for life position at both its Constituting Convention, November 1987, and at its Third General Convention in June 1990; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans For Life is a pro-life and family organization founded on the inerrant Word of God which believes that every human life—from conception to natural death regardless of physical or mental challenges, or condition of dependence—is precious in God’s sight, and

WHEREAS, Lutherans For Life is a voluntary, pan-Lutheran, pro-life and family organization which networks pastors with lay volunteers to make a positive difference in people’s lives and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Lutherans For Life seeks to change hearts and minds through the Word of God, trusting that changed people will endeavor to change laws;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the American Association of Lutheran Churches meeting in its Eleventh General Convention urges its congregations and pastors to take a firm stand against the depersonalization and devaluation of human life that has resulted from the legalizing of elective abortion by the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AALC, at its Eleventh General Convention endorse the Lutherans For Life organization and commend it to our congregations and pastors for their participation through individual membership, financial support and prayer.

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Endorsement of Lutherans For Life

WHEREAS, the Holy Scripture teaches that God is the Creator of the unborn (Job 10:8-12; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5) and that life and death belong to God (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 20:13), and

WHEREAS, the sanctity of human life is imperiled with legalized abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, cloning, embryonic stem cell research, etc., and WHEREAS, the mission of Lutherans For Life is to witness to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the delegates of the 16th General Convention of the American Association of Lutheran Churches wholeheartedly endorse the ministry of Lutherans For Life, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend appreciation to the Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, Executive Director of Lutherans For Life, for serving as the Keynote Speaker for the 16th General Convention of The American Association of Lutheran Churches.

Recommended by Executive Committee, June 19, 2003

RESOLUTION of the 16th General Convention of The American Association of Lutheran Churches, June 2003

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations:

www.aflc.org

AFLC and the Sanctity of Life

WHEREAS, the 1977 Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations resolved to oppose therapeutic abortions as a means of birth control and to encourage each congregation and individual to protest in writing to their respective legislative officials; and

WHEREAS, the 1978 Annual Conference resolved to continue to oppose the sin of abortion; and

WHEREAS, the 1980 Annual Conference reaffirmed the “conservative stand taken by the AFLC based on the Word of God and His Laws concerning the moral issues of our day;” and

WHEREAS, the destruction of millions of lives by means of abortion which began with the 1973 Supreme Court decision still continues; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations affirms that

- the unborn children are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception (Job 10:9-10; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-17; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41-44);
- the unborn children stand under the protection of God’s command against murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 20:13; Numbers 35:33; Acts 7:19; I John 3:15); and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage a clear witness on behalf of the sanctity of unborn life, including the support of responsible pro-life groups in our communities, such as “Lutherans for Life;” and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage prayerful support for the development of alternatives to abortion programs, providing compassionate help for those in need; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we boldly proclaim Law and Gospel, which alone can change the sinful hearts of men and women and turn them from sin to salvation.

(adopted by the 1986 Annual Conference)

RESOLVED, that the 1995 Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations reaffirms our biblical convictions that unborn children are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception and stand under the protection of God’s command against murder; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the employment of every peaceful and legal avenue to enact laws restoring protection to unborn children be encouraged, while relying on the spiritual resources available to God’s people for fighting the spiritual battle for the sanctity of human life; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the conference also expresses its opposition to the violent actions of some abortion opponents, convinced that the violence of abortion will not be overcome by further violence, and that Christians must not take the law into their own hands in opposing evil.

Resolutions on the Sanctity of Human Life by Pro-Life Lutheran Church Bodies

AFLC Marriage and Family Resolutions

WHEREAS, the attack against Biblical Christianity is so intense in society today, including a direct assault against the Bible's teaching on marriage and the family,

BE IT RESOLVED, that we as the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations reaffirm our uncompromising stand on God's Word that marriage is instituted by God to be between one man and one woman.

WHEREAS, we live in a culture in which homosexuality is being more aggressively promoted and more broadly accepted,

BE IT RESOLVED, that we the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations reaffirm our love in Christ for every person including those involved in the homosexual lifestyle while rejecting their lifestyle itself as sin,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage our congregations to pray for and support with their gifts those individuals and organizations seeking to reach and rescue those in a homosexual lifestyle by Biblical means and message.

(Adopted by the 2000 Annual Conference)

The Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America

www.clba.org

What About Abortion?

WHEREAS, The members of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America throughout the synod's history have spoken individually to condemn "willful abortion as contrary to the will of God"; and

WHEREAS, We as members of Christian congregations have the obligation to protest this heinous crime against the will of God, a crime legally sanctioned in the United States and other lands; and

WHEREAS, The practice of abortion, its promotion, and legal acceptance are destructive of the moral consciousness and character of the people of any nation;

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America in convention urgently call upon Christians

1. To hold firmly to the clear biblical truth that, (a) the living but unborn are "person" in the sight of God from the time of conception (Job 10:9-11; Ps. 51:5; 139:13-17; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41-44); (b) as persons the unborn stand under the full protection of God's own prohibition against murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:33; Acts 7:19; 1 John 3:15); and (c) since abortion takes a human life, abortion is not a moral option, except as a tragically unavoidable by-product of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother; and
2. To speak and act as responsible citizens in the civic and political arena on behalf of the living but unborn, to secure for these defenseless persons due protection under the law; and
3. To offer as an alternative to abortion supportive understanding, compassion, and help to the expectant parent(s) and family, and to foster concern for the unwanted babies, encouraging agencies and families to open hearts and homes to these children in their need for life in a family;

And be it further

Resolved, That the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America earnestly encourage its pastors, teachers, officers, and boards

1. To warn, publicly and privately (Proverbs 31:8-9) against the sin of abortion;
2. To instruct the community of God that abortion is not in the realm of Christian liberty, private choice, personal opinion, or political preference;
3. To nurture a deep reverence and gratitude for God's gracious gift of human life;
4. To oppose in a responsible way attitudes and policies in congregations, schools, hospitals, and other institutions within their sphere of influence and work which suggest that abortion is a matter of personal choice;
5. To support the efforts of responsible pro-life groups in their communities; and

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6. To promote clear instruction of Christian morality in our homes, schools, and churches, showing the blessings and safeguards inherent in God's will for sexual chastity before marriage and faithfulness in marriage; and
7. To teach the biological, social, and parental functions of child-bearing within our Lutheran Brethren schools and churches; and
8. To support the efforts to secure the Human Life Amendment to the United States Constitution;

To show love and compassion to those who have had abortions and show them through the Gospel that there is a way of forgiveness.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:

www.lcms.org

1. Leadership

a. Pastoral

1992: “That pastors of the LCMS be encouraged to provide strong leadership in reaffirming the LCMS position of sanctity of life . . .” (Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

b. Synodical

1992: “That our Synod continue to be a strong advocate for the protection of human life, for the improvement of its quality, and for the safety of defenseless human beings of all ages endangered by the current carelessness and ruthless selfishness of our society.”
(Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

1989: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod reaffirm its position that abortion is not a moral option except as the tragically unavoidable by-product of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother.”
(Res. 3-09A, Wichita)

1983: “That the Synod direct its appropriate officials (synodical president, district presidents, boards, and commissions, etc.) to communicate formally the official position of the synod against all abortions to all clergymen, social service agencies, auxiliaries, and hospitals associated with the LCMS, and that those officials do all in their power to see to it that they take a clear and forthright stand against willful abortion by all associated with the Synod, so that the witness given to the world demonstrates the commitment of the LCMS to provide protection and care for the living but unborn . . .” (Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

1983: “That the Synod repeat its instruction to its program boards and instruct them to give high priority to the preparation of materials for all age levels in the church which present the Synod’s opposition on the basis of Scripture to willful abortion . . .”
(Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

1983: “That the Synod reaffirm its position (that) abortion is not a moral option, except as a tragically unavoidable by-product of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother . . .” (Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

1981: “That the Synod encourage its President to ask the pastors of the LCMS for a clear witness and wholehearted support of our church’s position on this question . . .”
(Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention assembled instructs its program boards, particularly the Board for Youth Services, the Board for Parish Services, and the Board for Social Ministry Services to prepare materials for all age levels in the church which present the Synod’s opposition on the basis of Scripture to willful abortion . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

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1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod encourage its auxiliary organizations—the International Lutheran Laymen’s League, the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, and the Lutheran Youth Fellowship—to lend support and witness to the efforts of the church in this area of concern . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1979: “That the Synod earnestly encourage its pastors, teachers, officers, and boards:

1. To warn publicly and privately (Proverbs 31:8-9) against the sin of abortion;
2. To instruct the community of God that abortion is not in the realm of Christian liberty, private choice, personal opinion, or political preference;
3. To nurture a deep reverence and gratitude for God’s gracious gift of human life;
4. To oppose in a responsible way attitudes and policies in congregations, schools, hospitals, Lutheran social service agencies, and other institutions within their sphere of influence and work which suggest that abortion is a matter of personal choice;
5. To support the efforts of responsible pro-life groups in their communities, e.g. “Lutherans For Life”;
6. To promote clear instruction of Christian morality in homes, schools, and churches of the Synod, showing the blessings and safeguards inherent in God’s will for sexual chastity before marriage and faithfulness in marriage;
7. To teach within our Lutheran schools and churches the biological, social, and parental functions of childbearing;
8. To support the efforts to secure the human life amendment to the United States Constitution (Res. 3-02A, St. Louis)

1977: “That the LCMS, under Law and Gospel, urge its members to become yet more sensitive to the dilemmas of individuals who contemplate abortion and stand in need of a Christian community that will deal pastorally with them as they have made or are making decisions under God that bear on this important matter.” (Res. 3-08C, Dallas)

1977: “That the Synod encourage all of its members to support both corporately and individually programs designed to speak for the living but unborn child and to protest publicly the sin of abortion on demand.” (Res. 3-08C, Dallas)

1971: “We affirm that life is God’s gift. By reason of the Father’s creation and the Son’s redemption of man, God has exalted him above all other creatures and given to him the privilege of becoming His child. Therefore, human life must be treasured, supported, and protected.”

“We support efforts to achieve these goals, such as working for the elimination of those forces and factors that cause wars, violence in our communities, and destruction on our highways.”

“We encourage all people to avoid perverting God’s will by resorting to indiscriminate termination of life, either directly through such acts as abortion or euthanasia, or indirectly through the improper use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or any of God’s means for sustaining life.”

“We support a system of values that places importance on people rather than on things, on persons rather than on programs, on men rather than on means.”
(Res. 9-07, Milwaukee)

1971: “That the Synod regard willful abortion as contrary to the will of God; and be it further resolved that the Synod recognize that in a fallen world it becomes necessary at times to choose between one life and another; and be it further resolved, that if such a choice must be made by the

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children of God, they do so recognizing that it is neither our motives nor the necessity that justifies them before God, but only the grace of God in Christ Jesus.” (Res. 2-39, Milwaukee)

2. Crisis Outreach

1992: “That the pastors of the LCMS be encouraged to provide strong leadership . . . to help those who suffer stress due to a variety of causes leading to consideration of abortion . . .” (Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

1983: “That all members of the LCMS be reminded of their responsibility to apply Law and Gospel properly as they offer compassionate counsel to all those troubled by matters pertaining to abortion . . .” (Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

1977: “That the LCMS encourage its members to become involved in the development of alternatives to abortion programs, offering compassionate counsel and assistance to pregnant women who are in spiritual and material need . . .” (Res. 3-08C, Dallas)

3. Post Abortion Reconciliation and Outreach

1992: “That the pastors of the LCMS be encouraged to provide strong leadership . . . to provide counsel for those who face the tragic reality of post-abortion syndrome.” (Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

1989: “That pastors and church professionals be encouraged to avail themselves of resources such as the training workshops that are co-sponsored by the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Task Force, Lutherans For Life, and various social ministry organizations to provide clinical skills for the diagnosis and treatment of post-abortion stress disorder . . .” (Res. 3-09A, Wichita)

1971: “That the members of the Synod remember to deal lovingly also with the offense of sinful abortion, ‘for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.’”
(Res. 2-39, Milwaukee)

4. Establishment of Congregational Committees

1992: “That we encourage all congregations to place life issues under the auspices of a congregational committee, working with a pro-life resource and contact person to become better informed about all aspects surrounding the issue of abortion . . .”
(Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

5. Observation of an Annual Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

1992: “That we encourage all congregations . . . to observe an annual Life Sunday . . .” (Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod set aside the third Sunday of January each year as Pro-Life Sunday in order to give special consideration to the sanctity of life . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

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6. Greater Involvement in Public Policy Efforts

1992: “That we encourage all congregations to . . . seek out all opportunities for extending the fullest protection of law for all human life from the time of conception to natural death and exercise those opportunities in a responsible manner . . .”
(Res. 3-10, Pittsburgh)

1989: “That we call upon all members of the Synod to seek out all legal opportunities for extending the fullest protection of law for human life from the time of conception until natural death . . .” (Res. 3-09A, Wichita)

1989: “That individuals throughout our Synod and our nation be encouraged by this resolution to reaffirm the sanctity of human life through the exercise of civic responsibilities and through winsome Christian witness.” (Res. 7-14, Wichita)

1989: “That congregations and districts be urged to address life issues, working toward local, state federal legislation which upholds the sanctity of all human life, including that of the unborn child . . .” (Res. 7-14, Wichita)

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, through its appropriate agencies, continue to give testimony to its Pro-Life stance to all levels of government in the U.S. . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1979: “To support the efforts to secure the human life amendment to the United States Constitution.” (Res. 3-02A, St. Louis)

1977: “That the Synod urge its members to support efforts by public officials and private citizens at every level—national, state, and local—to provide protection for all human life, including living but unborn, under our judicial concept of well-ordered liberty . . .” (Res. 3-08C, Dallas)

7. Support Ministry of Lutherans For Life & Establish LFL Chapters

1992: “That each Circuit of our Synod be encouraged to establish an active Lutherans For Life group, thereby availing themselves of resources to promote the principles of human life . . .”
(Res. 3-10)

1989: “That members of LCMS congregations be encouraged to support Lutherans For Life.”
(Res. 3-09A, Wichita)

1986: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod encourage its congregations to provide increased support which will allow Lutherans For Life to become more effective.”
(Res. 7-09A, “To Support Lutherans For Life,” Indianapolis)

1986: “That the Synod thank and praise God for those volunteers who have given so freely of their time and talents for Lutherans For Life . . .”
(Res. 7-09A, “To Support Lutherans For Life,” Indianapolis)

1983: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commend Lutherans For Life for its clear witness in behalf of sanctity of life, also the unborn, and that we encourage the members of the Synod to support its efforts.” (Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

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1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod urge its congregations to form new chapters of Lutherans For Life as part of a common witness to the sanctity of life . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commend Lutherans For Life for its clear witness in behalf of sanctity of life, and also the unborn, while at the same time urging Lutherans For Life to greater efforts toward this end . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1979: “To support the efforts of responsible pro-life groups in their communities, e.g. ‘Lutherans For Life.’” (Res. 3-02A, St. Louis)

8. Goals of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR)

1989: “That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations continue to monitor and study various life related issues, such as spiritual consequences to an aborted child, to the child’s parents, and to those in complicity with the act of unjust killing; the use of abortifacient drugs; eugenic experimentation in human biology; the use of tissues taken from intentionally aborted fetuses, and advise the church on these issues so that we all might act responsibly according to the Word of God . . .” (Res. 3-09A, Wichita)

9. Goals of the Sanctity of Human Life Task Force

1989: “That this convention direct the Sanctity of Life Task Force of the Board for Social Ministry Services to accomplish the following: (1) to keep the church and community aware of Biblical answers to issues that threaten the sanctity of all human life; (2) to continue to provide information regarding alternatives to abortion; (3) to serve as a resource to congregations and districts who seek to address pro-life concerns in their unique local and state contexts; (4) to provide encouragement and support for social ministry agencies recognized by the LCMS as these agencies minister to those facing sanctity of life issues . . .” (Res. 7-14, Wichita)

10. Goals of the Board for Youth Services

1983: “That the Board for Youth Services develop new materials regarding premarital relationships, abortion, and adoption that are pertinent to our youth in society today . . .” (Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention assembled instructs its program boards, particularly the Board for Youth Services, the Board for Parish Services, and the Board for Social Ministry Services to prepare materials for all age levels in the church which present the Synod’s opposition on the basis of Scripture to willful abortion . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

11. Goals of the Board for Social Ministry

1983: “That the Board for Social Ministry Services be directed to develop proposals by which congregations might help expectant parents and families, might encourage adoption for those who may regard abortion as their only option, and might provide supportive services for those experiencing an untimely pregnancy . . .”
(Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

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1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention assembled instructs its program boards, particularly the Board for Youth Services, the Board for Parish Services, and the Board for Social Ministry Services to prepare materials for all age levels in the church which present the Synod's opposition on the basis of Scripture to willful abortion . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1979: “To oppose in a responsible way attitudes and policies in congregations, schools, hospitals, Lutheran social service agencies, and other institutions within their sphere of influence and work which suggest that abortion is a matter of personal choice . . .”
(Res. 3-02A, St. Louis)

12. Goals of the Board for Parish Services

1983: “That the Board for Parish Services prepare and distribute to all the congregations materials suitable for the observation of the annual Life Sunday the third Sunday in January which stress the sanctity of life for all human beings regardless of age or condition . . .” (Res. 3-04B, St. Louis)

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention assembled instructs its program boards, particularly the Board for Youth Services, the Board for Parish Services, and the Board for Social Ministry Services to prepare materials for all age levels in the church which present the Synod's opposition on the basis of Scripture to willful abortion . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1979: “To teach within our Lutheran schools and churches the biological, social, and parental functions of childbearing . . .” (Res. 3-02A, St. Louis)

13. Encouragement of a pan-Lutheran pro-life voice

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod encourage all of Lutheranism to develop a common voice in opposition to abortion on demand and to support a pro-life amendment to the United States Constitution.” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

14. Goals for the Lutheran Hour

1981: “That The Lutheran Hour be encouraged to devote one of its programs annually to the support of the Pro-Life cause and also that *This Is the Life* be encouraged to make this issue one of its programs . . .” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

15. Goals of LCMS Auxiliary Organizations

1981: “That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod encourage its auxiliary organizations—the International Lutheran Laymen's League, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, and the Lutheran Youth Fellowship—to lend support and witness to the efforts of the church in this area of concern.” (Res. 3-02, St. Louis)

1979: “To oppose in a responsible way attitudes and policies in congregations, schools, hospitals, Lutheran social service agencies, and other institutions within their sphere of influence and work which suggest that abortion is a matter of personal choice . . .”

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(Res. 3-02A, St. Louis)

Resolution Adopted By the Commission on Theology and Church Relations

1979: “That the CTCR through its staff, employ available publicity means to encourage the widest possible use of its own documents and reports on the subject of abortion, express its gratification at the founding of ‘Lutherans For Life,’ indicate its support and interest to the officers of this new organization by letter, and use available means to encourage members of the LCMS to support all such organizations which work toward the protection of the living but unborn.”

Numerous LCMS Districts Resolutions Affirm Many of the Same Goals as Adopted by our Synod in convention.

To Speak Out against Legalization of Assisted Suicide (1995)

Resolution 6-02

Overture 6-08 (*CW*, p. 221)

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod affirms the sanctity of human life and recognizes the reality of human suffering; and

WHEREAS, Any attempt to legalize assisted suicide is an affront to the Lord, who gives life, and opens the door for abuse and future legislation that would deny the freedom of many; and

WHEREAS, Suffering and depression are also opportunities for helping, healing, encouragement, and hope through the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, Physicians in particular have a responsibility to sustain and promote life; and

WHEREAS, We respect the individual's right to refuse treatment or to forbid life-support systems by a prior directive and to be allowed to die; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention express its objection to medical personnel having any part in actively inducing death, even at the patient's request or at the request of the family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Gospel be applied to situations of suffering and depression as opportunities to help, heal, encourage, and provide hope; and be it, finally

RESOLVED, That the Synod speak out against any attempt to legalize physician-assisted suicide and encourage its pastors and people to do the same.

Action: *Adopted (10).*

(The floor committee changed the word *Legislation* to *Legalization* in the title. By common consent the words *Lord who gives* were substituted for *gift of* in the first whereas. The fifth whereas was added by amendment. An amendment to modify the last resolve to read, *“Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage its pastors and people to speak out against any attempt to legalize physician-assisted suicide as citizens of this nation”* was declined. The words or at the request of the family were added by common consent to the first resolve.)

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To Affirm Sanctity of Life Position (1995)

RESOLUTION 6-01B

Overtures 6-01-06 (*CW*, pp. 219-20)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod by synodical and District convention actions has repeatedly expressed its concerns and its position regarding developments in our society which have resulted in the “disregard and denial of the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures regarding the sanctity of all human life beginning at conception; and

WHEREAS, These developments have led to equally tragic, actions by others whose use of violence resulted in physical harm and the destruction of human life; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans for Life has represented very ably the interests of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod by providing encouragement and education regarding the principle of the sanctity of human life; and

WHEREAS, A Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Task Force on the Sanctity of Life has existed for over a decade and a President’s Commission on the Sanctity of Life has been appointed, both of which exist to promote a distinct and vigorous LCMS effort to honor and uphold the sanctity of all human life; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That in the face of new societal threats and assaults upon this clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod again go on record reiterating and underscoring its unwavering position regarding the sanctity of human life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod also go on record as deplored, renouncing, and repudiating in the strongest terms any use of violence as a means of protest; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod enthusiastically support the efforts of the Board for Human Care Ministries, the LCMS Task Force on the Sanctity of Life, the CTCR, the President’s Commission on the Sanctity of Life, Lutherans for Life, and all other proper efforts to educate church and society regarding the important considerations associated with life issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Districts, congregations, pastors, teachers, and lay leaders be encouraged to use every opportunity to affirm the Synod’s pro-life stand to their members and encourage the use of appropriate pro-life materials; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod be encouraged to boldly exercise their responsibility as Christian citizens to influence legislation for the protection of all human life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod encourage its congregations to commit themselves to active, non-violent promotion and defense of the sanctity of all human life, and be it finally

RESOLVED, That pastors and congregations be encouraged to minister evangelically, through Law and Gospel, to those who support a position contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures regarding the sanctity of human life.

Action: Adopted (10).

(Res. 6-01A was introduced for consideration in session 3. After some discussion it was referred back to the committee. In session 10 Res. 6-01B was brought forward. By common consent the word *human* was

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inserted before *life* in the first resolve. An amendment to add the words *deploring abortion, euthanasia, and the newest threat, physician-assisted suicide* at the end of the last whereas was declined.)

From the 1998 LCMS Synodical Convention – St. Louis

To Reaffirm Sanctity of Human Life

RESOLUTION 6-02

Overture 6-28 (CW, p. 234)

WHEREAS, After a quarter of a century abortion continues to be a legal choice in the United States for women who want to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, although the Holy Scriptures clearly teach that this killing of the unborn is an abomination to the Lord (Genesis 9:6; Proverbs 6:16-17); and

WHEREAS, Partial-birth abortion remains a legal choice for late-term abortions; and

WHEREAS, The legalization of assisted suicide is being promoted throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, God is the Author and Perfecter of life, and it is within His wisdom to judge its quality and effectiveness; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention reaffirm its historic position on the sanctity of life; and be it further

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod denounce partial-birth abortion as a barbaric procedure; and be it further

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod reject the legalization of assisted suicide; and be it finally

Resolved, That the congregations and schools of the Synod proclaim the sanctity of human life through the teaching and preaching ministry.

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From the 2019 LCMS Synodical Convention – Tampa Florida

To Commend Lutherans for Life and LCMS Life Ministries

RESOLUTION 3-02A

Report R1.2, R38 (CW, 16–68, 149–50); Overtures 3-01–02 (CW, 401)

WHEREAS, The value of life is an ongoing debate in the public square where some state legislatures have devalued life and other state legislatures have placed an increased value on life; and

WHEREAS, God is the Author of life and has declared an inherent value for human life and dignity (Gen. 1:27; Jer. 1:5; Psalm 127; Psalm 139); and

WHEREAS, The fall into sin has caused human life to be devalued, as evidenced by cultural support for abortion and the horrific concept of “post-birth abortion,” e.g., infanticide, as well as so-called “quality of life” measures for the disabled and aging, e.g., euthanasia; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Himself proclaims, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” (John 14:6); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Life Ministry has conducted national life conferences in conjunction with the March for Life in 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Life Ministry has prepared an informational campaign known as Eyes of Life (www.eyesoflife.org) to help each person see the God-given value of all human lives; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Life Ministry is working closely with the newly formed Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) to advocate for life-affirming policies and practices within the civil realm; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans For Life (LFL) is serving the congregations of the LCMS and all Lutherans who support life; and

WHEREAS, LFL is a recognized service organization within the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, LFL advocates for people at all stages of life through various educational and service activities; and

WHEREAS, LFL is organized at the local level in chapters organized within congregations or groupings of congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That we boldly condemn the most recent actions of the states of New York (2017 Senate Bill [SB] S2796), Illinois (2019 SB 25), Virginia (2019 House Bill [HB] 2491), and similar legislative actions, and stand with the recent actions of the states of Missouri (2019 HB 126), Alabama (2019 HB 314), Louisiana (2019 SB 184), Georgia (2019 HB 481), and similar actions; and be it further

Resolved, That we actively and purposely continue to proclaim the forgiveness of sins and provide Gospel love and care for those who are hurting from the guilt of the devastation of abortion or from premature loss of life, especially mothers and fathers; and be it further

Resolved, That we commend the LCMS Life Ministry and LFL for their work in advocating for the life, dignity, and health of all people from conception to natural death, particularly mothers, unborn children, those with physical and/or mental disabilities, those who are gravely ill, and those who are dying; and be it further

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Resolved, That we encourage each circuit of the LCMS districts to send at least one pastor, one lay adult, and one youth representative to future LCMS Life Ministry life conferences; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage LCMS congregations and church workers to participate in national (Jan. 24, 2020) and local life marches and events; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage each congregation of the Synod to avail itself of the resources available from LCMS Life Ministry through Eyes of Life (www.eyesoflife.org) and from LFL, to encourage its members toward a more life-affirming outlook; and be it finally

Resolved, That we encourage each congregation of the Synod to utilize the work and materials of the LCRL in effecting change toward more God-pleasing policies and practices at the federal, state, and local levels.

Action: Adopted as amended (6)

Without objection, the word “from” was added to the second resolve, prior to the words “premature loss of life.” It was also proposed and received without objection, in the third-final resolve, to add after “life marches,” the words “and events.”

It was moved to amend the first resolve to insert, after “legislative actions,” the words “which will result in a greater number of abortions and loss of innocent life” and, after “similar actions,” the words “which will protect more children from abortion.” The amendment was ruled out of order by the chair as not substantively modifying the resolution. After further discussion by the assembly, closure of debate was moved and seconded, and carried [Yes: 935; No: 27]. Res. 3-02A was adopted as modified [Yes: 951; No: 19].

North American Lutheran Church

thenalc.org

“The Lord Is with You”

A Word of Counsel to the Church – The Sanctity of Nascent Life

The Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine

North American Lutheran Church

Lutheran CORE

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The beginning of human existence, i.e., nascent life, carries in it the fullness of the genetic code, the complete chromosomal material of an individual. The strengths and characteristics given to us by God have not yet blossomed for all the world to see, yet they are fully present in the beauty of His love.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5) Luther’s Small Catechism proclaims, “I believe that God has created me and all that exists,” so in faith we continue to proclaim that our life, and every life, comes from God and belongs to God. In our earthly dependency upon the womb of our mothers for protection, nourishment, and love from the first moments of our lives, we see in the creation of each life the shape of faith. We will always be fully dependent upon God for life, for shelter, and for mercy—the God who uses men and women to bring forth every generation of His creation.

How we in the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE speak about the dignity of nascent life is indicative of so much more. As the fullness of God’s mercy calls us into newness in each day, we come to know that no day in our lives is beyond His care. God himself has given us a pattern by which we know His love: the conception, gestation, and birth of our Lord Jesus. As we reflect upon when life begins and what life means, we look to what God has done in sending His Son to live among us from conception, to death, to resurrected life.

In the Annunciation of the Good News given to Mary, the Mother of our Lord, we come to know the gift of every life in a new way, and we come to know the holiness of her womb as a sanctuary of mercy for all humankind. She who is our Mother in the faith shelters the One who is the Savior of the world with her very body, a model of love beyond all fear, of obedience beyond all personal security, of faith in the One who is yet unseen.

In the self-emptying (kenotic) movement of God in the incarnation, He was never more vulnerable, more helpless than when He was *in utero*, swaddled in amniotic fluid. He was also never more intimately protected, swaddled in the myriad layers of a mother’s love. It is the vision of this love that is ever so needed in this day—a death defying love, an eternal love, a fierce love, a sacrificing love. It is this vision that we are called to bear for the sake of generations to come. For in the disordered loving of a fallen world that removes sexual intercourse from the fidelity, trust, and delight of the marriage bed, there will continue to be the littlest among us, made in the image and likeness of God, who without a holy love, will be unprotected from the lies that say they are neither human nor of any value. In a time in human history when the laws of many nations sanction the destruction of new lives simply because they are an inconvenience, the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE, and all who belong to the Body of Christ, are called to teach and preach the message that the Lord who created the heavens and the earth, the Lord, who in the power of the Holy Spirit grew in His mother’s womb, the Lord, who in obedience gave His life for all, The Lord is with you.

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“The Lord is with you.” This is what we are called to speak to every woman with a child in her womb. The Lord is with you, regardless of the circumstances of your pregnancy. We urge the NALC to commit itself as a church, as the Body of our Lord on earth, along with those joined with it in mission in Lutheran CORE, to be with you as well. We seek to attend to your needs, to help you, to guard you, and to guide you that you may bear your child in a community of love. Whether a husband and wife, or a mother alone raises that child or puts provide spiritual counsel so that parents and child will have the abundant life that Christ Jesus has promised them. We do not want a woman who is overwhelmed by the news of an unintended pregnancy to abort an innocent child, a child whose cries for life cannot yet be heard, a child who is of great value to God, regardless of the circumstances of the child’s birth. Whatever the circumstances of the pregnancy, the termination of the life of their child will not make a mother’s or father’s life better.

Apart from victims of sexual violence, the NALC and Lutheran CORE should call to repentance all men and women who have engaged in sexual behaviors outside of marriage. Men and women who are not married to each another and who have used their procreative abilities irresponsibly and then have chosen to abort a child, as well as husbands and wives who have aborted children whom they do not want, are called to confession, contrition, and amendment of life. God wants us to know His joy, and until we acknowledge our sin and throw ourselves upon His mercy, we can never live rightly. The wanton destruction of a human life for matters of one’s own convenience is sin. The casual use of abortion as a final solution for a conception born of recreational sex is sin. The intimidation and emotional blackmail to undergo an abortion that women have received from the men who have impregnated them is sin. The church also has great concern for those among us, who under the advice, counsel, or persuasion of family and/or medical personnel, have aborted a life *in utero* as a result of rape, incest, severe abnormalities of fetus, or endangerment to the life of the mother. In these cases, we as a church seek to be a vessel of compassion and consolation. Even in the most difficult situation, the termination of the pregnancy will not necessarily bring an end to the intensity of the current pain. The end of any of new life, even when it comes to be the only apparent solution that one believes can be endured, will still carry layers of sorrow. Again, we urge the NALC to commit itself as a church body, along with its partners in Lutheran CORE, to provide pastoral care to all parties who are involved, for there are no decisions in such times that will be without familial grief. We seek not to condemn but to console. As anger, abandonment, regret, and the depths of despair each come in their turn, so the mercy of our ever-present God will need to be spoken. The Lord is with you. The Lord is still with you.

The rationales, however, for legalizing abortions in North America are far from these limited cases of “therapeutic” abortion. The arguments have changed throughout the 20th and 21st centuries from easing the burdens of the poor on the society, to the right of a woman to have autonomy over her own body (*Roe v. Wade*; *Morgentaler v. Her Majesty the Queen*, Supreme Court of Canada, 1976), to sex-selection of children from cultures that value male progeny over female, to simply one of economic gain, (i.e., not wanting to support another child). In too many cases, legalized abortion has simply become a form of retroactive birth control. Abortion dehumanizes and diminishes all who are involved. It affects the father, who has lost what it means to be a guardian to his family and who has lost the learning that comes from a relationship in which spirituality and sexuality are not divorced. It affects the mother, whose denial may break down if she later conceives and bears a child, or is later unable to conceive a child, or whose guilt may spiral into the bondage of shame as she seeks to keep her abortion a secret. At last, it affects the child, the blessed child, a living human presence who is denied the fullness of body that was intended for him in this life and in the age to come.

Legalization of abortion puts the state at odds with the historic witness of the church, and so we are called to listen again to the Word of God as proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures, the wisdom of the Church Fathers, and the insight of the Reformers as we seek to follow Christ faithfully in our day. The *Didache* clearly speaks the law as stated in the fifth commandment to the issues of abortion and infanticide in the

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ancient world, “Thou shalt not murder a child by abortion, nor again shall thou kill it when it is born.”¹ *The Epistle of Barnabas* speaks of those who seek to end the life of one *in utero* as “killers of the child, who abort the mold of God.”² The Nicene Creed professes that Jesus is fully human and fully divine from the moment of His conception and in doing so declares that human life begins at conception.³ Again and again the Psalter sings that fearfully and wonderfully made, we are the work of God’s hands (Ps 139:14). John Calvin, in concert with the early Fathers, regards an unborn child as “already a human being.”⁴ Martin Luther regards procreation as “the work of God” and speaks of those who kill the growing fetus as an example of the wickedness of human nature.⁵ The witness of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church is clear: There is no life that is beyond God’s care, beginning at the moment of conception. The child *in utero* is not simply the possession of the father or the mother, for each nascent life is the handiwork of God. “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.” (Psalm 139:15).

The North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE strive to witness to the all-encompassing love of God in early 21st century North America, when nearly 50 million abortions have been legally performed since 1973 in the United States and 1988 in Canada. We urge the NALC and Lutheran CORE to commit not only to protecting the next generation of children during those first exquisite nine months of life, but to helping those for whom abortion mars their procreative histories. As parents come to healing through the counsel and ministries of the church, their witness will be invaluable. In the renewal of their faith, the lies that were told against the littlest among us will come to an end. As their voices then sound within the assembly of all who believe that He who is the Savior of the world is fully human and fully divine from the moment of His conception, so we come yet again to understand the giftedness of the creation of our own bodies. May each of us seek to live out the dignity with which we were created, so that our lives as the enfleshment of God’s love will bear witness to His love for all the world.

December 14, 2012

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¹ *Didache* 2:2.

² *The Epistle of Barnabas* 19:5.

³ The Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) is explicit, “We confess the Holy Virgin to be the Mother of God because God the Word was made flesh, and became man from the moment of conception.” See also the Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII.10, “Therefore we believe teach, and confess that the Son of man according to his human nature is really (that is, in deed and in truth) exalted to the right hand of the omnipotent majesty and power of God, because he was assumed into God when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in his mother’s womb and his human nature was personally united with the Son of the Most high.” *Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. and ed. by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 488.

⁴ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses*, trans. Charles Bingham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 3:41,42.

⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works* vol. 4. ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1964), 304.

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To read *An Analysis of the ELCA [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] Social Statement on Abortion* (SSOA) (PDF file) go to: <http://www.lutheransforlife.org/elca-ssoa.pdf>.