

GLOBAL LIFE CAMPAIGN™

Biblical and Unbiblical Church Positions on Abortion

Thomas W. Jacobson, Executive Director, Global Life Campaign (2020-09-16)

Based on the responses from two prior *GLC Series* emails in recent weeks on this topic, this email contains short actual excerpts from 14 church denomination positions: 9 uphold the sanctity of human life and oppose abortion (though 2 of these have some questionable statements), and 5 support abortion. Yet there are pro-life ministries formed by members of the latter denominations. The title of the full 14-page brief with more complete excerpts is: [Church Denominations Who Stand for Sanctity of Human Life, Contrasted by Denominations Who Support Abortion](#). It is available on the GLC website (www.GlobalLifeCampaign.com), and at GLC Publications (www.GLCPublications.com).

A. Church denominations who stand for the sanctity of human life, and oppose abortion:

1. Anglican Church

“The defencelessness of the unborn entails a great responsibility on the part of every Christian, and especially on the part of each of his or her parents. The deliberate and wilful abortion, directly procured, of any unborn child at any time from the moment of conception, is always an act of grave sin not only by the person who procures the same, but also by such person or persons who effectuate the same or acquiesce therein” (Canon 15.1.01).

http://anglican catholic.org/system/media_files/attachments/4/original/ACC%20Canons%20-%202007.pdf?1317846094

2. Assemblies of God

“Let Us make man in Our image . . . So God created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:26-27). . . . Every human life, from conception through death, is therefore to be valued, respected, nurtured, and protected. . . . At the end of life, all persons will stand before God to give account for their actions. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). . . . (T)he practice of abortion as an evil that has been inflicted upon millions of innocent babies . . . Abortion is a morally unacceptable alternative for birth control, population control, sex selection, and elimination of the physically and mentally handicapped. . . . *The personhood of the unborn*. The Scriptures regularly treat the unborn child as a person under the care of God . . . God’s Word is very explicit concerning the taking of innocent human life. ‘You shall not murder’ (Exodus 20:13) . . . Whenever abortion and other immoral life-threatening practices present themselves, Christians have an obligation to address these evils in public forums and to seek legislative and judicial redress” (<https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Abortion-Sanctity-of-Human-Life>).

3. Catholic Church

“The fundamental message of Sacred Scripture proclaims that the human person is a creature of God (cf. Ps 139:14-18), and sees in his being in the image of God the element that characterizes and distinguishes him: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen 1:27). . . . (T)he right to life, an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception . . . The first right presented in this list is the right to life, from conception to its natural end,[318] which is the condition for the exercise of all other rights and, in particular, implies the illicitness of every form of procured abortion and of euthanasia.”[319] (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 108, 112, 155, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#Creatures%20in%20the%20image%20of%20God).

4. Church of God

“WHEREAS life originated in the creative work of Almighty God; and
WHEREAS man himself is created in the image and likeness of God; and
WHEREAS God assigned special value to human life; and
WHEREAS divine law forbids the indiscriminate taking of human life, exacting heavy penalties of those who violate this commandment; . . .
WHEREAS abortion is a vicious attack on the weakest and most helpless form of human life; and
WHEREAS the unborn are unable to speak in their own defense; . . .
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the General Assembly of the Church of God, reaffirm our historic commitment to the sacredness of human life; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge our entire constituency to actively oppose any liberalization of abortion laws by state legislatures and by the Congress of the (U.S.); and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no individual should ever consider abortion as an option except in the gravest circumstances, after medical and religious consultation of the most serious nature” (<http://www.churchofgod.org/resolutions/abortion-1976>). [Editor note: the last statement is not clear if would go beyond true necessity to save the life of the mother.]

5. Church of God in Christ

Family Life Campaign statement: “Save a life; to build a family; and change our world.”
Goals include: “Decrease the number of children being killed through abortion . . . Reaffirm one of the most powerful institutions....that being family... #familylife.”
(<http://cogicworldmissions.org/missions/family-life/>)

6. Evangelical Presbyterian Church

“(T)he Bible strongly affirms the dignity and value of every human life based on what the Scriptures clearly teach: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you’ (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV). . . . ‘My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven

together in the depths of the earth' (Psalm 139:15 NIV). . . . 'The Sixth Commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others'; (and) forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly.' . . . God's people are called upon to speak for the oppressed and defenseless. The Scripture passages cited above are evidence that God accords human value and dignity to the unborn child. . . . (T)he Bible does not distinguish between prenatal and postnatal life. It attributes human personhood to the unborn child. This extends to the unborn child ex utero as no less a human being than the child in the mother's womb" (<http://epcoga.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/Files/1-Who-We-Are/B-About-The-EPC/Position-Papers/PositionPaper-Abortion.pdf>)

7. Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

"Life, not death, is the goal of humanity. History testifies that death is never the means through which justice and human rights prevail. We do not advance on the graves of our children. . . . Yet abortion laws have allowed the abortion of more than 61,000,000 children since Roe v. Wade. That's nearly 50 times the number of American soldiers killed in all wars. . . . Our Christian faith teaches us to value life and to love each and every person as our neighbor. Love is life, and life is the great gift of love. Death is our natural enemy. . . . Therefore, we stand against . . . all laws that sanction abortion or the taking of innocent life. We cannot stand silent when people elected to positions in which they are to protect citizens continue to pass laws and advocate for legislation that undermines the sanctity of human life. Our conscience is bound by both the Word of God and reason to speak for life as a precious gift of God and to speak against any and all who promote the killing of unborn children. We cannot hide the evil of these laws under the banner of 'rights' or 'privilege.' Children's lives are at stake. They cannot speak for themselves. We will speak for them, and we will work to protect their lives" (<https://blogs.lcms.org/2019/lcms-presidents-statement-regarding-gubernatorial-actions-expanding-abortion-in-new-york-and-illinois/>).

8. North American Lutheran Church

"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. . . . 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 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 . . ." (<https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Word-of-Counsel-on-Sanctity-of-Nascent-Life.pdf>). [Editor's note: the statement later is unclear when addressing of abortions for "therapeutic reasons."]

9. Southern Baptist Convention

“Sanctity of Life. Procreation is a gift from God, a precious trust reserved for marriage. At the moment of conception, a new being enters the universe, a human being, a being created in God's image. This human being deserves our protection, whatever the circumstances of conception.” (<http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/positionstatements.asp>)

“RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our repudiation of the genocide of legalized abortion in the United States and call on civil authorities to enact laws that defend the lives of the unborn; . . .

“RESOLVED, That we call on Southern Baptist churches and entities to show the love of Christ through appropriate means to those women most vulnerable to the victimization of the abortion industry, and to show grace and mercy to those individuals who grieve with repentance over past abortions; . . .

“RESOLVED, That we commend the efforts of our denominational entities, especially The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, in the defense and protection of human life at every stage; . . .

“RESOLVED, That we pray and work for the repeal of unjust laws and inhumane practices that degrade human life . . .” (<http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2256/on-the-sanctity-of-human-life>).

B. Church denominations supporting abortion:

1. American Baptist Church USA

“We condemn violence and harassment directed against abortion clinics, their staff and clients . . . We acknowledge the diversity of deeply held convictions within our fellowship . . . Many . . . believe that while abortion is a regrettable reality, it can be a morally acceptable action and they choose to act on the biblical principles of compassion and justice . . . and freedom of will” (<https://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Abortion-and-Ministry-in-the-Local-Church.pdf>)

2. Episcopal Church

“Resolved . . . That the position of this Church, stated at the 62nd General Convention of the Church in Seattle in 1967 which declared support for the "termination of pregnancy" particularly in those cases where "the physical or mental health of the mother is threatened seriously, or where there is substantial reason to believe that the child would be born badly deformed in mind or body, or where the pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest" is reaffirmed. Termination of pregnancy for these reasons is permissible. . . . That the Episcopal Church express its unequivocal opposition to any legislation on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter and to act upon them” (https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=1976-D095). Also, “Opposition to the Human Life Amendment to the U.S. Constitution” (https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/executive_council/EXCresolution.pl?exc_id=EXC021981.10).

3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Induced abortion, the act of intentionally terminating a developing life in the womb, is one of the issues about which members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have serious differences. . . . The topic of abortion evokes strong and varied convictions . . . It involves powerful feelings . . . Nor is it helpful to use the language of ‘rights’ in absolute ways . . . A developing life in the womb does not have an absolute right to be born, nor does a pregnant woman have an absolute right to terminate a pregnancy. . . . Abortion ought to be an option only of last resort. Therefore, as a church we seek to reduce the need to turn to abortion as the answer to unintended pregnancies. . . . Regardless of the decisions, our pastoral response must be a gracious affirmation of the value of women’s lives and assistance in dealing with ongoing implications of their decisions for their own well-being and their relationships. . . . This church recognizes that there can be sound reasons for ending a pregnancy through induced abortion” (https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AbortionSS.pdf?_ga=2.112788620.948839174.1599493154-1910180805.1599493154).

4. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

“General Assembly Resolution on Reproductive Health (2012): . . .

- (a) The state has a limited legitimate interest in regulating abortions and in restricting abortions and in restricting abortions in certain circumstances.
- (b) Within this context of the state’s limited legitimate interest, no law should impose criminal penalties against any woman who chooses or physician who performs a medically safe abortion.
- (c) Within this same context of the state’s limited legitimate interest, no law should deny access to safe and affordable services for the persons seeking to terminate a problem pregnancy.
- (d) No law or administrative decision should provide for a complete ban on abortion.
- (e) No law or administrative decision should
 - (i) limit access to abortions;
 - (ii) limit information and counseling concerning abortions; or
 - (iii) limit or prohibit public funding for necessary abortions for the socially and economically disadvantaged” (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-res_on_reproductive_health_care_access-2012.pdf).

5. United Methodist Church

“We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children . . .

“**Abortion:** . . . (I)ndividuals . . . now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. . . . We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. . . . We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice [with exceptions] . . . Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia” (<https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-nurturing-community>).

C. Pro-Life Organizations Within Pro-Abortion Church Denominations:

Some clergy and members of the above church denominations that support abortion have created sanctity of human life ministries and stand in opposition to abortion, including:

- Episcopalians for Life (<https://www.facebook.com/Episcopalians4Life/>).
- Lutherans For Life (<https://lutheransforlife.org>).
- Presbyterians Protecting Life (www.ppl.org).
- Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion (<https://lifewatch.org>).

Conclusion: From these church denomination statements, I hope you can see a primary source of the confusion and division in the United States (and beyond) over abortion; namely, there is division in the church, among the leadership, clergy, and members. The churches, church denominations, and believers in Jesus Christ who stand for the sanctity of human life and oppose abortion are representing Him correctly, and are being the true Church, “the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). However those “churches,” denominations and people who are unwilling to stand against abortion fail to be Christ’s light and salt, and “to testify to the truth” as was Jesus’ purpose (Matthew 5:13-16; John 18:37). Church leaders, clergy and persons who support abortion misrepresent the Creator and Giver of life, the LORD and Savior of the world, and the Head of the Church; and they are like false shepherds leading their flocks astray.

The human conscience is vulnerable to deception, and we may discover that we are actually believing a lie to be the truth. The truth is always consistent with the Word of God, His Law, nature, and honest scientific research, because He created everything and ordained the laws that govern. When church leadership, priests, pastors or rabbi’s fail to teach their congregations the Truth, or give them unclear or dualistic messages, or teach a lie as if it was the truth, then people who claim to be “Christian” may actually be holding views that are contrary to Christ and the Christian faith. A church that supports abortion is either not the Church or is in direct conflict with the Head of the Church. A “Christian” who supports abortion is either not a Christian, or is supporting something antithetical to God Almighty, Jesus Christ, and the Christian faith. We have a very serious problem in the Church.

SDG and for the sanctity of human life,

Thomas W. Jacobson
Executive Director, Global Life Campaign
info@GlobalLifeCampaign.com
www.GlobalLifeCampaign.com
www.GLCPublications.com

“If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods . . . or the gods . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).