

Elder Ronald Wisbey, President
Columbia Union Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
5427 Twin Knolls Road
Columbia, MD 21045

May 26, 1993

Dear Elder Wisbey,

Thank you for your informative and timely reply of March 22, 1993. We appreciate very much seeing the official statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding abortion. As you pointed out, there are many rumors circulating of which "the vast majority of them cannot be authenticated". Factual and informed discussion is always the most rewarding and productive.

The document is for the most part a clear and perceptive interpretation of the Scriptures to support the right and sanctity of unborn children while providing redemptive support for individuals finding themselves in this difficult situation. It is also a strong statement upholding God's Law. We are sincerely glad that after 20 years of legal abortion in the United States resulting in 30,000,000+ deaths of innocent children, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is beginning to take a public and scriptural stand on the issue. When we follow the revealed will of God from Scripture and support others in following it we perform our greatest service to God. It is assuring to hear you acknowledge that the document is "not perfect", not "placed in cement", and "will be revisited for evaluation and for change, if necessary".

What we would like you to explain to us is how our Church can make the leap from this document to justifying our hospitals performing abortions for reasons other than to save the life of the mother. While we agree with you that it is not our job to force and coerce people to obey God, neither is it our job to provide the means to disobey God. Following that logic it would be reasonable to set up cigarette vending machines in our hospitals for those exercising their liberty to choose to smoke. It would also seem reasonable to provide alcohol in our cafeterias, as well as pornography in our libraries. To our knowledge our church does not do this nor would we even consider it.

I read with great interest your appeal in the Visitor urging church members to write President Clinton for stronger anti-tobacco legislation due to the fact that nearly 400,000 deaths occur annually as a result of this insidious drug. I applaud you in this appeal and agree with you 100 per cent. I would like to see a similar appeal concerning abortion since there are nearly 1,600,000 deaths annually from abortion. Nearly 4

times the number of deaths from tobacco use. These figures do not include the accidental deaths of women during the procedure, nor suicides resulting from depression following the procedure. If you are unwilling to make the latter appeal to church members via the Visitor, then please make the appeal to our hospitals privately.

You said in your letter that our Church and hospitals stand "strongly against abortion as an elective issue". We would like for you to define elective, as used in this case. What is abortion if it is not elective? When is abortion not elective except to save the life of the mother?

You stated emphatically that "the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not in the abortion business". I apologize if I implied that abortion is the business of our church. I assure you I do not believe that. However, our hospitals are in the abortion business. I grant you it is not their primary business, but it is part of their business nonetheless.

In keeping with informed, factual and authenticated discussion, I have enclosed a set of statistics which reveal to what extent abortion is part of our hospitals' business (See Attachment 1). These statistics were obtained from St. Paul Computer Center, Inc. which is the repository for the databases of the State of Maryland Department of Health. They maintain the databases and provide statistical reports on information submitted by Maryland hospitals to the Department of Health on a yearly basis. These statistics cover the two year period of 1991-1992. In that time period Washington Adventist Hospital, Leland Memorial Hospital and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital performed 1,698 abortions with a total income from these procedures at \$1,859,167. That is close to \$1,000,000 a year of income directly from abortion business. This is in sharp contrast to Fairfax Hospital which performed 29 abortions in 1992, and Arlington Hospital which has a policy of only performing abortion to save the life of the mother. Both of these hospitals are public and secular.

I have enclosed a separate sheet to make the statistics easier to understand, and define the Diagnosis Related Group (DRG) codes 380 and 381, that specify the type of abortion performed and the total number of procedures done at the three hospitals listed (See Attachment 2).

We again appeal to you to consider carefully the facts enclosed as we continue our dialog. We appreciate your time, involvement and willingness to work with us. Let us not wait to revisit this issue years from now, since with each passing year the death count of thousands of innocent children increases.

Sincerely in Christian concern,

[REDACTED] member: Waldorf Seventh-day Adventist
Church

[REDACTED]
And concerned Seventh-day Adventists:

cc: Al Watson, Pastor of the Waldorf Seventh-day Adventist
Church