

March 14, 1994

Albert S. Whiting, M.D., Director
Health and Temperance Department
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-1608

Dear Dr. Whiting,

I appreciated your timely response of November 10, 1993, as well as the attached hospital guidelines concerning abortion. I delayed my response to that letter while waiting for the abortion statistics to arrive at the St. Paul Computer Center, Inc., from the Maryland Department of Health. The 1993 figures were not available until after February. Even at this date only the first six months of 1993 data for out patient procedures are available. The available data, however, show no meaningful change in the number of abortions performed at either Washington Adventist Hospital or Shady Grove Adventist Hospital. Six hundred to eight hundred terminations of unborn children per year, executed by two Seventh-day Adventist hospitals is unacceptable at the very least, and tragically horrible at the most. Therefore I have decided to write now even without the data for the second half of 1993.

You stated in your letter that "If the recommendations of the guidelines voted by the Annual Council were followed universally, 95% of all abortions would never be done." If this truly is the case, and if applied to the two hospitals mentioned above, why have the number of abortions performed by them not decreased to thirty or forty procedures per year. Or could it possibly mean that the six to eight hundred abortions currently performed each year are 5% of the 12,000 to 16,000 abortions they would perform each year without the guidelines to provide control? What would that be? Roughly four times the membership of Sligo Church?

The statement that "The guidelines as voted support the sanctity of life and stand as a 'pro-life' stance" could not be farther from the truth. In fact the statement as voted reads very much the same as the "Freedom of Choice Act", which is probably the most unrestrictive "pro-choice" document to date. I would be more than willing to send a copy to you for review if you find that hard to believe. As for the guidelines standing as "pro-life", I would like to know by whose definition. I am willing to send a copy of our guidelines to any five or ten "pro-life" organizations in the United States and solicit their comments and "pro-life" rating of the guidelines, and share the results with you. I feel extremely safe to say that the guidelines would never be

considered "pro-life." Especially troubling in our guidelines is Section B INTENTIONAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY AFTER VIABILITY. By the definition of viability stated right in Section B, and personal conversations with obstetricians; if a woman's life or health is in danger after the child is viable, delivery of the child would be the preferable treatment rather than ending the child's life. The only provision that the guidelines set forth to save a viable child, is that if in "the course of termination" (which is an aseptic way to say killing) the baby accidentally lives. This is abhorrent and is in direct opposition to the teaching of the Scriptures and, up to this point in time, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I am truly saddened by the responses from the Union and now the General Conference. In each case I feel that the appeals I am making are falling on deaf ears. I know that you are extremely busy men, and my prayers and support are with you. Please believe me when I say that. But I cannot in good conscience support this document because we are talking about people's lives. I truly believe that if our hospitals were taking two and three year old children into operating rooms and killing them by tearing off their heads and limbs, or injecting them with salt or chemicals, that you would be one of the first ones there to save them. So what then makes doing this to children who happen to be younger any different?

I suppose this leads me to the only real issue in this discussion - Do you believe that the unborn child is a person? The guidelines begin by saying that "Prenatal human life is a magnificent gift of God and deserves respect and protection." Do you believe that? Because if you do, the remainder of the guidelines are far from consistent with that statement. I realize that you are not solely responsible for the document, but you are in a God appointed position to change it. If you have never reached a conclusion as to whether or not the unborn child is a person, I appeal to you to consider it and decide one way or the other. I personally made that decision years after being a Seventh-day Adventist, having been pro-abortion in my own philosophy and never having or taking the time to be informed. I highly recommend the book "Aborting America" by Dr. Bernard Nathanson (I have a copy that I would be glad to lend you if you cannot obtain one). He is the OB-GYN that started the abortion rights movement (NARAL) in the 1970s. He presents the issue in a very non-biased, medical way. It could be that these sins are being committed out of blindness.

In the mean time however, we as a Church must not say what is right and then proceed to foster that which is wrong. This is not a Sabbath School discussion nor a classroom ethics exercise. This is six to eight hundred people a year who will

never live because of two Seventh-day Adventist hospitals. In ten years that number increases to six or eight thousand.

I now believe I must pursue other alternatives to aid in the cessation of these abortion practices in our hospitals. The advice from the Union and you is to accept and support this position, and one day down the road there may be changes. I deeply regret that my church's leadership takes this position. How many more children have to be killed? In the past year it has been six to seven hundred more. It is my feeling that the church leadership would like me to accept and forget, but I cannot.

If you believe that the majority of Seventh-day Adventist Church members support these abortions, I think you are wrong. As I talk with members and inform them of what is going on, most are shocked, surprised and had no idea that this was happening to this extent. There is a "sleeping giant" out there that will awaken. Therefore, I believe that an important step for me to take now is to publicize to our members and to the people using our hospital facilities just what is being done in them, since, if I understand what you are saying, we have reached the end of the road in our dialog.

I appreciate the time you have taken to listen, and I certainly appreciate belonging to a church that allows this type of freedom to express concerns. But if all we ever do is discuss the issues and write letters back and forth, we have done nothing to prevent the deaths of innocent children. True, there are circumstances where abortions are at times necessary. But I have researched this issue too deeply to believe that the large number of abortions performed by our hospitals fall into that category, when two area public hospitals perform fewer than fifty abortions a year. We as a Christian church must stop this outrageous and senseless killing in our hospitals, and the time is now. I plead with you in the name of Jesus to do what you can to stop this.

I have enclosed a statistic sheet that shows the 1993 figures as well as the two previous years data. My prayers are with you in your work, and I ask that your prayers be with me.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
New Life Community Church of Seventh-day Adventists
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