

Hope Matters Marriage Ministries

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STATEMENT OF FAITH—PREAMBLE & ALLEGORY

Preamble: Hope Matters Marriage Ministries presents this summary of our major positions in order to: record our stance on doctrinal matters, guard our thoughts from theological error, protect our decisions from cultural sway, and guide our actions on matters of faith.

We look to the Word of God and the God of the Word as our highest authority. Therefore, we affirm the following statements of faith in our mission to spread authentic Christianity around the world. To this end, Hope Matters Marriage Ministries seeks to share these truths by being both practical and relevant to a world in need of truth.

We believe that to support governing authorities is right ... unless their demands conflict with God's Truth as revealed in the Bible. If such conflict arises between God and government, we will submit to God, who is supreme. Hope Matters Marriage Ministries stands with the scriptural standard: "*We must obey God rather than human beings!*" (Acts 5:29).

An Allegory of Allegiance

Before there were cities or states or countries, there was a Creator. This Creator brought into being the universe and all that is in it. His last creation was His greatest, the human being. The Creator then placed human life over all other life to be a steward of His creation. At this time, only Right and Truth and Good existed in the world. And, *“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good”* (Genesis 1:31).

In the place where the Creator fashioned the first man and woman, He prohibited only one act. Yet this first couple deliberately disobeyed this one command. As a consequence, they were sent away from the peaceful, perfect world in which they had been placed. Now there existed not only Right, Truth, and Good, but also Wrong, Lies, and Evil (Genesis 4:7).

People began increasing in number. Eventually, they created organizations in the form of governments. Most governments created laws with the intent of prioritizing Right, Truth, and Good. These laws were designed to help people live in harmony as in the beginning when only the Author of Good governed (1 Peter 2:13–14).

Over time, conflict arose as “certain people” sought to prioritize human laws over the Creator’s laws. They created a belief system in government as the supreme authority in an effort to make people submit to government over God. Religious freedom was then challenged when all people had to choose between the laws of government in opposition to the laws of God ... even though the Bible says, *“Woe to those who make unjust laws”* (Isaiah 10:1).

In this belief system, unjust laws advocated that there are no moral absolutes—no absolute Truth, no absolute Wrong. Government without God asserted that all truth is relative and merely subject to interpretation. Thus, everyone could decide any matter based on their own beliefs. However, the Word of God gave this additional warning, *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter”* (Isaiah 5:20).

Yet God provided the way to restore people to what He originally created them to be. The Word of God states that absolute Right and Wrong does exist. Thus, everyone can know what is Right ... and what is Wrong. The God of the Bible even reveals, *"I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds"* (Hebrews 10:16).

But the Bible presents this predicament, *"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all"* (Isaiah 53:6). Undeniably, all wayward sheep need a shepherd.

Therefore, the Bible presents the solution. The way God provided for complete restoration is through the Good Shepherd, who said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6).

Those who accept the Good Shepherd will be saved and restored and follow His voice of truth. For He said, *"Everyone on the side of truth listens to me"* (John 18:37).

This is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). This is the Good Shepherd whose name is Jesus.



Doctrinal Beliefs

The Bible

- We believe the Holy Bible is the infallible Word of God—entirely without error based on the original handwritten documents.
- *“Every word of God is flawless” (Proverbs 30:5).*
- We believe God divinely inspired human beings to write all the words in the Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, to express His authoritative revelation to the world.
- *“Prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).*
- We believe the Bible provides the principles for our faith and practice, revealing how to live our lives.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

God

- We believe there is only one living and true God, the all-powerful Creator, Supreme Ruler, and Sustainer of the Universe. (See Deuteronomy 4:39; Psalm 90:2.)
- *“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you” (Nehemiah 9:6).*
- We believe the eternally existing God is revealed in three persons as the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each equally and fully deity and each equally possessing all the attributes and characteristics of personality—mind, will, and emotion.
- *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).*
- We believe no God exists apart from the eternal God of the Bible. He alone possesses *natural attributes* unique to the nature of God (e.g., God is always omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent). At the same time, He possesses *moral attributes* revealing the character of God (e.g., God is always wise, loving, and faithful). (See Jeremiah 9:24; 1 John 4:8.)
- *“I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ ... What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do” (Isaiah 46:9-11).*

Jesus Christ

- We believe Jesus Christ is God the Son and Savior of the World. He became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He is, therefore, perfect deity and

perfect humanity, which are fully united and exhibited in one person. (See [Matthew 1:18](#); [Luke 2:11](#); [John 1:1-3, 14; 4:42](#).)

- “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God ... has made him known” ([John 1:18](#)).
- We believe He lived a sinless life and voluntarily paid the penalty for the sins of all people by His sacrificial death on the cross as our substitute.
- “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” ([1 John 2:2](#)).
- We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His present ministry as High Priest and Mediator, and His future role as Judge of all humanity. (See [Mark 16:6](#); [Acts 1:9](#); [Hebrews 4:15](#).)

“The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son” ([John 5:22](#)).

The Holy Spirit

- We believe the Holy Spirit is God, whose present ministry in the world is to reveal and glorify Christ and to convict and draw sinners to Christ. (See [John 16:14](#); [Acts 5:3-4](#).)
- “When he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment” ([John 16:8](#)).
- We believe His present ministry within Christians is to regenerate, baptize, and seal them into the body of Christ and impart spiritual gifts to each of them. (See [1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11](#); [Titus 3:5](#).)
- “You also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession” ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#)).
- We believe His permanent, indwelling presence within Christians empowers them to live godly lives. (See [Galatians 5:16](#).)

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)).

Creation

- We believe God created all things by His almighty power.

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” ([Hebrews 11:3](#)).

- We believe the Genesis account of creation is to be understood historically and literally, not allegorically or figuratively. (See Genesis chapters 1 and 2.)
- We believe all three members of the triune God participated in the Creation. (See [Genesis 1:1-2](#); [Revelation 4:11](#).)

“In him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him” ([Colossians 1:16](#)).

Humanity

- We believe all people everywhere are created in the image of God.

“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

- We believe Adam, the first man, sinned and as a result, all people inherited a natural bent to sin and thus are spiritually dead. (See Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23.)

“Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

- We believe God offers salvation and the gift of eternal life to all people through the Lord Jesus Christ, and He desires that no one should perish. (See 2 Peter 3:9.)

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Salvation

- We believe God saves people from the *penalty of sin* when they entrust their lives to Jesus Christ alone, receiving Him as their personal Lord and Savior. This salvation is a result not of good works, but of God’s grace—a gift no one deserves—when they put their faith in Jesus Christ. (See Romans 10:9; Acts 4:12.)

“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- We believe God saves people from the *power of sin* by giving them a new heart, a new spirit, and a new way of behaving. (See Ezekiel 36:26-27; Romans 7:21-25.)

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12-13).

- We believe God saves people from the *presence of sin*, where in heaven Christians will be like Christ and where He will keep them eternally secure. (See John 10:28; Hebrews 9:26.)

“What we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2).

The Christian Walk

- We believe Christians sin and are, therefore, called to confess their sins to God—not for salvation, since they are already saved, but to regain a clear conscience before God and to not give Satan a foothold in their lives. (See Psalm 32:3-5.)

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).

- We believe God calls all Christians to live holy lives through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (See Galatians 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:7.)

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

- We believe Christians are called to love one another as Christ loves them so that everyone will know they are His disciples. (See [John 13:34-35](#).)
- *“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law”* ([Romans 13:8](#)).

The Church

- We believe the church, “the body of Christ,” is composed of all those who have put their faith in Christ. (See [Colossians 1:18](#).)
- *“You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it”* ([1 Corinthians 12:27](#)).
- We believe baptism is a symbol of identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (See [Acts 10:47-48](#); [1 Corinthians 1:17](#).)

“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his” ([Romans 6:3-5](#)).

- We believe all Christians should assemble regularly in local churches for worship, for observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for mutual encouragement and discipline, and for carrying out God’s purpose in this world. (See [Matthew 18:15-17](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23-24](#).)

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another” ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)).

The Future

- We believe in the imminent, personal, visible return of Christ to inaugurate His kingdom in which He will reign in power and glory for 1,000 years.
- *“Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years”* ([Revelation 20:6](#)).
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, resulting in the everlasting, conscious, blessed state of the saved and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the unsaved. (See [Matthew 25:31-32, 34, 41, 46](#); [Revelation 20:12-13, 15](#).)
- *“I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books”* ([Revelation 20:12](#)).
- We believe in the second coming of Christ, the rapture of believers—both the living and the dead—and the establishment of a new order within a new heaven and new earth. (See [Isaiah 65:17](#); [Acts 1:11](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#).)
- *“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death” or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’”* ([Revelation 21:1-4](#)).

Scriptural Support

The Bible

Proverbs 30:5

“Every word of God is flawless.”

2 Peter 1:21

“Prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

God

Deuteronomy 4:39

“Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.”

Psalms 90:2

“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”

Nehemiah 9:6

“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”

Matthew 28:19

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Jeremiah 9:24

“‘I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.”

1 John 4:8

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Isaiah 46:9-11

“I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ ... 11What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.”

Jesus Christ

Matthew 1:18

“This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 2:11

“There has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (NASB).

John 1:1-3, 14

“In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning. 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ... 14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 4:42

“This man really is the Savior of the world.”

John 1:18

“No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God ... has made him known.”

1 John 2:2

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Mark 16:6

“You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”

Acts 1:9

“He [Jesus] was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.”

Hebrews 4:15

“We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one [Jesus] who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”

John 5:22

“The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”

The Holy Spirit

John 16:14

“He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”

Acts 5:3-4

“Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit ... 4You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”

John 16:8

“He [the Holy Spirit] will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:”

1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ... 7Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

Titus 3:5

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 1:13-14

“You also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession.”

Galatians 5:16

“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

1 Corinthians 6:19

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”

Creation

Hebrews 11:3

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

Genesis chapters 1 and 2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. 4God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. 6And God said, ‘Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.’ 7So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8God called the vault ‘sky.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. 9And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.’ And it was so. 10God called the dry ground ‘land,’ and the gathered waters he called ‘seas.’ And God saw that it was good. 11Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so. 12The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. 14And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so. 16God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. 20And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.’ 21So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.’ 23And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. 24And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so. 25God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 26Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ 27So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in

number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ 29Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.’ And it was so. 31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. 2:1Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. 4This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. 5Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, 6but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. 7Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. 8Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. 11The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) 13The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. 14The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. 15The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’ 18The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ 19Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. 22Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman,” for she was taken out of man.’ 24That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Revelation 4:11

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Colossians 1:16

“In him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”

Humanity

Genesis 1:27

“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Psalm 51:5

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

Romans 3:23

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:12

“Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.”

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord ... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Romans 6:23

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Salvation

Romans 10:9

“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Acts 4:12

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

*“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
9not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

Ezekiel 36:26-27

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

Romans 7:21-25

“Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Philippians 2:12-13

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

John 10:28

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

Hebrews 9:26

“Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

1 John 3:2

“What we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

The Christian Walk

Psalm 32:3-5

3When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. 5Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not coverup my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin.”

1 John 1:8-9

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

1 Thessalonians 4:7

“God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”

Galatians 5:16

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Romans 13:8

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.”

The Church

Colossians 1:18

“He [Christ] is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”

1 Corinthians 12:27

“Now you [Christians] are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

Acts 10:47-48

“‘Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.’ 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 1:17

“Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

Romans 6:3-5

“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were

therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.”

Matthew 18:15-17

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ 17If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

“The Lord Jesus ... took bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’”

Hebrews 10:24-25

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”

The Future

Revelation 20:6

“Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

Matthew 25:31-32, 34, 41, 46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32All the nations will be gathered before him ... 34Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ...’ 41Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ...’ 46Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Revelation 20:12-13, 15

“I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. ... 13The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 15Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Revelation 20:12

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”

Isaiah 65:17

“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”

Acts 1:11

“‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’”

1 Thessalonians 4:17

“We who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Revelation 21:1-4

“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death” or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”

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Sanctity of Life

Preamble

- We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of the Holy Bible (the “Bible” and the “Scriptures”), which is our infallible guide. Since the Bible speaks directly to creation and human life, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)).

- We believe that God created humankind in His image, though currently flawed by sin, and designed humanity to be stewards of all creation. God, in His infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability above all the works of creation.

“God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground’” ([Genesis 1:26](#)).

- We believe that human life begins at conception and human beings have been made to be in relationship with God, who created each person’s inmost being, knit together in the mother’s womb. As God’s individual, personal creation, each person is awesomely and wonderfully made. God has planned and ordained all the days of every person’s life—even before a single day began.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ... Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” ([Psalm 139:13-14, 16](#)).

Religious Beliefs based on Biblical Statements

Based on the truths recorded in the Bible that have been embraced and taught throughout the centuries, we believe in the following core truths:

- **Human life begins at conception.**

From the moment of conception until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God.

“This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself” (Isaiah 44:24).

- **Human life before conception is designed by God for a specific purpose.**

From the moment of conception, every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the irrevocable right to life.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5).

- **Human life is created in the image of God.**

The right to life of every unborn human being is inherent by virtue of being created in the image of God.

“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).

- **Human life is precious and deserves to be saved.**

All life is precious. Therefore, deliberately terminating human life after conception is a sin against God for which individuals are held accountable. Extremely rare situations exist where saving the life of the mother can result in losing the life of the baby. However, this is a matter of trying to save one life or two lives, as opposed to causing the death of one or both.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives” (Proverbs 11:30).

- **Human life must be protected and defended from conception to natural death.**

We are ethically bound to defend all human life from destruction, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs, devices, or procedures with the intent of terminating human life.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?” (Proverbs 24:11-12).

- **Human life must be publicly and peacefully proclaimed as sacred.**

Those who make up the Christian church, including and led by Christian ministers and ministries, should be public witnesses regarding the intrinsic and irrevocable dignity of all human life, from conception to natural death.

“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

- **Human life at conception defies that a fetus is just a “mass of tissue.”**

According to the Bible, a fetus is not merely a *mass of tissue*. God’s Word does not distinguish between a “potential baby” and a “newborn baby.” In the Bible, the same Greek word *brephos*, which means “babe,” is used to describe both a fetus and a newborn baby.

Fetus: “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb” (Luke 1:41).

Babies: “People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them” (Luke 18:15).

- **Human life at conception negates that females have the right to choose abortion by asserting, “It’s her body!”**

A woman should have rights over her own body, but in pregnancy there are at least two different bodies, two different heartbeats, two different brain wave patterns, two different genetic codes (DNA), and often two different genders and blood types. Every woman has choices within her own life, but not the freedom to destroy the life of a developing human being within her.

“Is this the way you repay the Lord, you foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?” (Deuteronomy 32:6).

- **Human life is unique from all other forms of life.**

A human being is defined as a member of the species *Homo sapiens*. All human beings have their own genetic codes (DNA), singularly unique and established at conception. The DNA of a human fetus is distinct not only from animals, fowls, and fish, but also from the mother’s DNA.

“Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another” (1 Corinthians 15:39).

Early Church Fathers—Statements

Barnabas, (AD 74) *Letter 19*

“Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born.”

Tertullian (ca. AD 155-240), *De Anima* 26.5

“Thus, you read the word of God, spoken to Jeremiah: ‘Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.’ If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: ‘And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life.’ Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man. ‘And before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee.’ Was it, then, a dead body at that stage? Surely it was not, for ‘God is the God of the living and not the dead.’ [Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38].”

Tertullian (AD 155-240), *Apologia*, cap 25, line 42

“It is not permissible for us to destroy the seed by means of illicit manslaughter once it has been conceived in the womb, so long as blood remains in the person.”

John Chrysostom (AD 347-407), *Homily 24 on Romans*

“Why sow where the ground makes it its care to destroy the fruit? Where there are many efforts at abortion? Where there is murder before the birth? ... Why then do thou abuse the gift of God, and fight with His laws, and follow after what is a curse as if a blessing, and make the place of procreation a chamber for murder, and arm the woman that was given for childbearing unto slaughter?”

Augustine (AD 354-430), *De Nube et Concupiscentia* 1.17 (15)

“This lustful cruelty, or; if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born.”

Augustine (AD 354-430), *Sermon 126, line 12*

“Therefore brothers, you see how perverse they are and hastening wickedness, who are immature, they seek abortion of the conception before the birth; they are those who tell us, ‘I do not see that which you say must be believed.’”

Multinational Proclamations—Global Impact

The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that abortion is “the procuring of premature delivery so as to destroy offspring.”

Hippocrates (460 BC-370 BC), as written in *The Hippocratic Oath* (400 BC)

“The regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of my patients according to my ability and judgment, and not for their hurt or for any wrong. I will give no deadly drug to any, though it be asked of me, nor will I counsel such, and *especially I will not aid a woman to procure abortion.*”

“Your hands shaped me and made me. ... Remember that you molded me like clay..... You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit” (Job 10:8-9, 12).

Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997), *National Prayer Breakfast, Washington, DC (February 3, 1994)*

“I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion. ... It is really a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? ... By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. ... Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.”

“This is what the Lord says, ‘Do what is just and right. ... Do not shed innocent blood in this place’” (Jeremiah 22:3).

Dr. Jerome Lejeune (1926-1994), M.D., Ph.D., *Father of Modern Genetics and Professor at Rene Descartes University of Paris Faculty of Medicine*

“If a fertilized egg is not by itself a full human being, it could never become a man, because something would have to be added to it, and we know that does not happen.”

“The enemies of life know that to destroy Christian civilization, they must first destroy the family at its weakest point—the child. And among the weakest, they must choose the least protected of all—the child who has never been seen; the child who is not yet known or loved in the usual meaning of the word; who has not yet seen the light of day, who cannot even cry out in distress.”

“This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you” (Isaiah 44:2).

Official Church Statements

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

What About ... Abortion—Excerpts

Our church’s explanation of the Small Catechism puts the matter well when it says, “The living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception. Since abortion takes a human life, it is not a moral option except to prevent the death of another person, the mother.” The sin of willfully aborting a child, except in those very rare situations where it may be necessary to save the life of the mother, is a sinful act, totally contrary to the will of God.

Since 1973, abortions have been legal in the United States. Abortion remains a sin against God, whether or not it is legal in our society; therefore, *“We must obey God rather than human beings!” (Acts 5:29).*

A personal decision is not necessarily a private decision. The church and the church's ministers, have God-given responsibilities to warn, exhort, and rebuke from the Word of God with all authority. "*Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction*" (2 Timothy 4:2).

The church is very concerned when Christians make decisions that are contrary to the Word of God and thus place themselves outside the will of God. Living in a state of unrepentant sin is a very serious situation. Thus, the church must warn its members against the temptations of abortions. Furthermore, the church needs to speak out against the sin of abortion, since it is widely presented in our culture as perfectly acceptable.

Presbyterian Church in America

6th General Assembly, 1978, Appendix O—Excerpts

Abortion is in distinction from miscarriage, and is the intentional killing of an unborn child between conception and birth. The moral question raised in any abortion is whether the life of the unborn child is included in the biblical teaching respecting the sanctity of life. The special protection God gives to human life is founded upon His making man "*in His own image*" (Genesis 1:26-27).

What we see revealed in Scripture is a marvelous truth, often expressed in doxological language, that there is a continuity of the individual man from "before the foundation of the world" into eternity. (See Psalm 139; Isaiah 44:2; 49:5; Hosea 12:3; Luke 1:24-56.)

In Psalm 51:5, the continuity extends back to the actual time of conception. "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*"

The point of continuity is David's humanness even at conception. To speak of oneself at conception in terms of personal sinfulness is to affirm one's humanity.

Our obedience to the Word of God leaves us with no option regarding how we perceive the unborn child. He is a person, providentially given and cared for by God, with uninterrupted continuity into post-natal life. There are many explicit and implicit passages of Scripture that further support this conclusion.

We are not given unlimited or autonomous sovereignty over our own bodies or the bodies of others. (See 1 Corinthians 6:15.)

Scripture repeatedly affirms the joy and blessing of conception, while barrenness is seen as a curse. God's involvement with the unborn child has already been mentioned. We are even told that John the Baptist was "*filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb*" (Luke 1:15).

These and many other references are adequately set forth in other studies.

Although there has been much discussion of when life begins, the scientific community does not seem to have much doubt on this issue. The question is usually raised to obscure the real issue, namely, that abortion is the intentional killing of a living unborn child. The conclusion of the First International Conference on Abortion held in Washington, D.C., in October of 1967, was that no point in time could be found between the union of sperm and egg and the birth of the infant which could not be considered human life.

It must be pointed out here that this developing baby is a separate but dependent new life with its own chromosomal pattern and at no stage of development can be considered as an appendage or part of the mother's own body. Physiologically it is the baby that determines the development of the pregnancy not the mother. The baby, however, is highly dependent upon its mother for protection and nourishment.

Roman Catholic Church

Catechism of the Catholic Church—Excerpts

2270—Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you*” (Jeremiah 1:5). “*My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth*” (Psalm 139:15).

2271—Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law: “You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.” ... “God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.”

2272—Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life: “A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,” “by the very commission of the offense,” and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

2273—The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation: “The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being’s right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death.” “The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. ... As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child’s rights.”

2274—Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being. Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit, “if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual ... It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence.”

2275—“One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival.”... “It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material.” “Certain attempts to influence chromosomic or genetic inheritance are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity,” which are unique and unrepeatable.

In Brief

2318—“*In his [God’s] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind*” (Job 12:10).

2319—Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God.

2320—The murder of a human being is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and the holiness of the Creator.

2322—From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, is a “criminal” practice (GS 27 § 3), gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.

2323—Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being.

Southern Baptist Convention

Southern Baptist Resolutions, 2015: “On the Sanctity of Human Life”—Excerpts

WHEREAS, Biblical revelation clearly and consistently affirms that human life is formed by God in His image and is therefore worthy of honor and dignity:

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). ... “Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind” (Genesis 9:6).

WHEREAS, God alone is the Author of life and He alone numbers our days, from the moment of conception until natural death:

“A person’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed” (Job 14:5). ... “Show me, Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is” (Psalm 39:4).

WHEREAS, The Bible commands us to honor our parents and the aged:

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12). ... “Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:32).

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith & Message (2000) affirms that “children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord” and calls us to “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death”; and

WHEREAS, Legislation or court rulings have effectively legalized physician-assisted suicide in several states and additional states are considering similar action; and

WHEREAS, Recent federal directives seek to compel religious organizations to provide coverage for abortifacient technologies and services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Columbus, Ohio, June 16-17, 2015, affirm the dignity and sanctity of human life at all stages of development, from conception to natural death; and be it further

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; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we welcome and commend legislation that ensures that all mothers will be fully informed by medical providers of the life development of their unborn children; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call on our fellow citizens of good will to collaborate with us on behalf of justice, the protection of human life, and the cause of human flourishing; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to continue and to expand their local ministries that care for and protect the unborn, the vulnerable, and the aged; and be it further

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; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call on our churches and all believers to care for the elderly among us, to show them honor and dignity, and to prayerfully support and counsel those who are providing end-of-life care for the aged, the terminally ill, and the chronically infirmed.

Application

All of our Board members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to this Statement of Faith on the Sanctity of Life to qualify for active involvement with The Hope Center. This adherence is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals, and purpose. Therefore, any contrary behavior or counter-witnessing will hurt our integrity and harm our religious mission. We believe that God's grace can wipe clean the slate of guilt and sin, even though the consequences may still be incurred.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7 NKJV)

Authority

The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, acting as the source of authority over every area of our lives—including morality, Christian beliefs, conduct, and lifestyle. The Designated Authority—a group of three (3): Board Chair, President, and Governance Committee—is charged with the ministerial responsibility of biblical interpretation and establishing religious policy. The Designated Authority will determine life application of the Bible as well as final matters relating to organizational theology, Christian practice, philosophy, faith, morality, divine truth, and doctrinal resolutions. (See [Psalm 19:8-11; 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; James 1:22.](#))

"The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Scriptural Support

Preamble

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Genesis 1:26

"God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

Psalm 139:13-14, 16

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ... 16Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be"

Religious Beliefs based on Biblical Positions

Isaiah 44:24

“This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself.”

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Genesis 1:27

“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Proverbs 11:30

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives.”

Proverbs 24:11-12

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. 12If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?”

Deuteronomy 30:19

“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.”

Luke 1:41

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb.”

Luke 18:15

“People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them.”

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Early Church Fathers—Statements

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Genesis 2:7

“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

Mark 12:27

“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Luke 20:38

“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

Multinational proclamations_Global impact

Job 10:8-9, 12

“Your hands shaped me and made me. ... Remember that you molded me like clay. ... You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.”

Jeremiah 22:3

“This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.”

Isaiah 44:2

“This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.”

Official Church Statements

Lutheran Church—Mission Synod

Acts 5:29

“We must obey God rather than human beings!”

2 Timothy 4:2

“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

Presbyterian Church in America

Genesis 1:26-27

“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Psalms 139:1-24

“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. 2You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. 5You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. 6Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. 7Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ 12even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. 13For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15My 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. 16Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you. 19If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! 20They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name.”

21Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? 22I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. 23Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Isaiah 44:2

“This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.”

Isaiah 49:5

“And now the Lord says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength.”

Hosea 12:3

“In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel; as a man he struggled with God.”

Luke 1:24-56

“After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. 25‘The Lord has done this for me,’ she said. ‘In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.’ 26In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’ 29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.’ 34“‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’ 35The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37For no word from God will ever fail.’ 38‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’ Then the angel left her. 39At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!’ 46And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord 47and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. 50His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. 54He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.’ 56Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.” “In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel; as a man he struggled with God.”

Psalms 51:5

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

1 Corinthians 6:15

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!”

Luke 1:15

“For he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.”

Roman Catholic Church

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Psalms 139:15

“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.”

Job 12:10

“In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”

Southern Baptist Convention

Genesis 1:27

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 9:6

“Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.”

Job 14:5

“A person’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.”

Psalms 39:4

“Show me, Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is.”

Exodus 20:12

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

Leviticus 19:32

“Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.”

Application

Galatians 6:7

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

Authority

Psalms 19:8-11

“The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. 10They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than

honey, than honey from the honeycomb. 11By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Psalm 119:89

“Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.”

Isaiah 40:8

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

James 1:22

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

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Marriage & Human Sexuality

Preamble

- We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of the Holy Bible (the “Bible” and the “Scriptures”), which is our infallible guide. Since the Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that the Board of Directors, employees, and volunteers (the “Representatives”) of our ministry correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- We believe that God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. We are committed to the home and family as set forth in the Scriptures. We believe the Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, as well as children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth. The Bible says of God ...

“You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed” (Psalm 119:4).

Religious Beliefs Based on Biblical Positions

Based on the Bible and the traditional moral teaching of the universal Christian Church throughout the centuries, our ministry believes in the following core truths:

- **Marriage**—We believe that God designed marriage to be the permanent, exclusive, complete, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman. In this marriage union, the two are joined together with the unique potential of creating a biological family, which binds father, mother, and child together for the moral, spiritual, and public good. (See [Genesis 2:18, 24](#); [Matthew 19:4-6](#); [Mark 10:6-9](#); [Ephesians 5:31](#); [1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:6](#).)

“‘Haven’t you read,’ he [Jesus] replied ‘that at the beginning the Creator “made them male and female,” and said “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?”’” (Matthew 19:4-5).

- **Sexual Immorality**—We believe that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited and considered sinful. Consequently, our Representatives must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage between one man and one woman—including but not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, zoophilia, bestiality, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, sologamy, or same-sex sexual acts. (See Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23; 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27-28; 15:19; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:18-19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.)

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Hebrews 13:4).

- **Sexual Identity**—We believe that God created humanity in His image: male (man) and female (woman)—collectively called “gender”—sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, our Representatives must affirm their own biological gender from birth and refrain from any and all attempts to physically alter or conflict with their predominant, biological sexual identity as naturally born—including, but not limited to, elective sex reassignment, transvestite or transgender acts, or non-binary (asexual or gender fluid) conduct. (See Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 1:26-32.)

“God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27 NLT).

- **Sexual Orientation**—We believe that the Bible describes appropriate sexual orientation as sexual attraction and conduct only toward someone of the opposite gender. Therefore, our Representatives are to refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts. (See Genesis 19:4-7; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-23; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.)

“Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ... Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ... Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error” (Romans 1:21, 24, 26-27).

- **Sexual Redemption**—We believe that “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23) and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to the principles of the Bible. Consequently, our Representatives should treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who confess sexually immoral acts, including same-sex acts, and who are also refraining from sexual immorality and conforming their behavior to this *Statement of Faith*. (See Romans 3:23-24; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:1-5; 2:8-10; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; James 1:25; 5:19-20.)

“Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ... And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 11).

- **Celibacy**—We believe that the Bible grants only two options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift

from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Therefore, celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed. (See Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7:1, 27, 32-35; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7.)

“Now to the unmarried and the widows I [the apostle Paul] say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. ... I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:8, 35).

Application

All of our Board members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to our *Statements of Faith* to qualify for active involvement with our ministry. This is necessary to accomplish our religious purpose: our mission and our vision. Therefore, any contrary behavior or counter-witnessing will hurt our integrity and harm our mission. However, we believe that God’s grace can wipe the slate of guilt clean, even though consequences may still be incurred.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7 NKJV).

Authority

The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, acting as the source of authority over every area of our lives—including morality, Christian beliefs, conduct, and lifestyle. The Designated Authority—a group of three (3): Board Chair, President, and Legal Counsel of our ministry—is charged with the ministerial responsibility of biblical interpretation and establishing religious policy. The Designated Authority will determine life application of the Bible as well as final matters relating to organizational theology, Christian practice, philosophy, faith, morality, divine truth, and doctrinal resolutions. (See Psalms 19:8-11; 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22.)

“The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Scriptural Support

Preamble

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Psalms 119:4

“You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.”

Religious Beliefs Based on Biblical Positions

Marriage

Genesis 2:18

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

Genesis 2:24

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Matthew 19:4-6

“‘Haven’t you read,’ he replied, ‘that at the beginning the Creator “made them male and female,”’ 5and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh”? 6So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Mark 10:6-9

“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ 7‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Ephesians 5:31

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

1 Timothy 3:2

“Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.”

Titus 1:6

“An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.”

Sexual Immorality

Exodus 20:14

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Leviticus 18:7-23

“Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. 8Do not have sexual relations with your father’s wife; that would dishonor your father. 9Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. 10Do not have sexual relations with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter; that would dishonor you. 11Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father’s wife, born to your father; she is your sister. 12Do not have sexual relations with your father’s sister; she is your father’s close relative. 13Do not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister, because she is your mother’s close relative. 14Do not dishonor your father’s brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt. 15Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife; do not have relations with her. 16Do not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife; that would dishonor your brother. 17Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness. 18Do not take your wife’s sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living. ... 20Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor’s wife and defile yourself with her. ... 22Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable. 23Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.”

Leviticus 20:10-21

“If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death. 11If a man has sexual relations with his father’s wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. 12If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them are to be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads. 13If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death;

their blood will be on their own heads. 14If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you. 15If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he is to be put to death, and you must kill the animal. 16If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. 17If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They are to be publicly removed from their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible. ... 19Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible. 20If a man has sexual relations with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless. 21If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless."

Deuteronomy 5:18

"You shall not commit adultery."

Matthew 5:27-28

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Matthew 15:19

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."

Romans 1:26-27

"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error."

1 Corinthians 6:9-13

"Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 12'I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13You say, 'Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.' The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."

Galatians 5:19

"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery."

Ephesians 4:18-19

"They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed."

Colossians 3:5

"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."

1 Thessalonians 4:3

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality."

Hebrews 13:4

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

Sexual Identity

Genesis 1:26-28

“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ 27So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”

Romans 1:26-32

“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”

Genesis 1:27

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Sexual Orientation

Genesis 19:4-7

“Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. 5They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.’ 6Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him 7and said, ‘No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing.’”

Leviticus 18:22

“Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.”

Leviticus 20:13

“If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”

Judges 19:22-23

“While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.’ 23The owner of the house went outside and said to them, ‘No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this outrageous thing.’”

Romans 13:14

“Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Romans 1:21

“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

Romans 1:24

“God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.”

Romans 1:26-27

“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

Sexual Redemption

Romans 3:23-24

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

1 Corinthians 10:13

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Ephesians 2:1-5

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

Ephesians 2:8-10

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Hebrews 2:17-18

“For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Hebrews 4:14-16

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

James 1:25

“But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

James 5:19-20

“My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”

1 Corinthians 6:9

“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men.”

1 Corinthians 6:11

“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Celibacy

Matthew 19:12

“For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

1 Corinthians 7:1

“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

1 Corinthians 7:27

“Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife.”

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

“I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. 33But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—34and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. 35I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; 6and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. 7For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”

1 Corinthians 7:8

“Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.”

1 Corinthians 7:35

“I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.”

Application

Galatians 6:7

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

Authority

Psalms 19:8-11

“The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. 10They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. 11By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Psalms 119:89

“Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.”

Isaiah 40:8

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

James 1:22

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

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Prosperity Theology

Preamble

- We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of the Holy Bible (the “Bible” and the “Scriptures”), which is our infallible guide. Because we believe in the whole counsel of God as expressed throughout the Bible, our ministry cautions against taking any one verse out of the context of the whole Bible. Therefore, biblical principles expressed in the Scriptures should be confirmed with other Scriptures to ensure an accurate understanding. The Bible states...

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

- We do not support any concept of “Prosperity Theology.” *Prosperity Theology* teaches that: (1) every Christian should *always* be happy, healthy, and wealthy—*never* in a state of need and (2) that a lack in these areas is due to lack of faith, failure to “sow financially,” outright sin, “negative confession” (e.g., stating, “I am sick”), or lack of “positive confession” (e.g., not stating “I am healthy”). Our ministry does not believe that God’s blessing and favor or a person’s spiritual status can be determined or measured by material wealth, affluence, success, and/or physical health or comfort. Proverbs, the biblical book on wisdom, states...

“Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread” (Proverbs 30:8).

- We affirm that the Almighty, all-powerful God of the Bible can and will perform any miracle of His choosing—including physical healing—at any time and in any way. However, *prosperity theology* directly contradicts God’s actions in the lives of both godly believers who lived in biblical times as well as followers of Jesus Christ in today’s world. Scripture repeatedly describes how God uses difficulties, physical challenges, financial dilemmas, and other life challenges to accomplish His will in the lives of His followers. For example, Job—whom God called “blameless” (Job 1:8)—experienced the loss of his children, livestock, livelihood, and even his own health. Notice...

“His [Job’s] wife said to him, ‘Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!’ He replied, ‘You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’” (Job 2:9-10).

- We also hold that God’s blessing on behalf of His followers is not determined by the “amount” of their faith, but rather by the *object* of their faith, Jesus Christ, and His will. We fully refute the belief that people may simply “name and claim” what they desire regarding physical healing, possessions, or people and then expect to receive from God what they have already claimed from Him. For example, the Bible presents physical affliction—the normal “wasting away” of the human body here on earth—as natural yet temporal, for that all changes in eternity.

“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18, emphasis added).

Religious Beliefs Based on Biblical Positions

- **Affliction**

Prosperity Theology: It is never God’s will for Christians to be afflicted.

Biblical Truth: God uses affliction for our greater good.

- From the book of Psalms (emphasis added):
 - “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word” (Psalm 119:67).
 - “It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees” (Psalm 119:71).
 - “I know, Lord, that your laws are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me” (Psalm 119:75).

- **Answered Prayer**

Prosperity Theology: It is God’s will for Christians to “name and claim” whatever they desire from Him and, if they have enough faith, they are guaranteed to receive it.

Biblical Truth: God can deny the prayer requests of godly people—people not lacking in faith—if those requests are not “according to God’s will.”

- From the apostle John (revealing when a prayer request is *guaranteed* to be granted): “*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him*” (1 John 5:14-15, emphasis added).
- From the Lord Jesus Christ (revealing His will that His prayer request be in submission to and contingent upon the Father’s will):

“*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me: yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42, emphasis added). [“*This cup*” refers to the *cup of suffering* inherent in His crucifixion.]*

- From the apostle Paul (revealing when and why his prayer request for physical healing is denied):

“*In order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh... Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he [the Lord] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9, emphasis added).*

- **Suffering/Persecution**

Prosperity Theology: It is never God’s will for Christians to suffer.

Biblical Truth: God “calls” Christians to suffer and endure persecution.

- From the apostle Peter:

“*It is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God... But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:19-21, emphasis added).*

- From the book of Romans:

“*We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame” (Romans 5:3-5, emphasis added).*

- From the book of 2 Timothy:

“*Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12, emphasis added).*

- **Trials/Troubles**

Prosperity Theology: It is never God’s will for Christians to experience trials or troubles.

Biblical Truth: God uses trials and troubles to develop Christlike character in Christians.

- From the book of James—trials produce perseverance and spiritual maturity:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4, emphasis added).

- From the book of 1 Peter—trials prove and refine our faith:

“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:6-7, emphasis added).

- From the apostle Paul—trials produce comfort and compassion toward others:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, emphasis added).

- **Wealth**

Prosperity Theology: It is God’s will that Christians be rich.

Biblical Truth: God prioritizes the pursuit of contentment over the pursuit of riches.

- From the book of Proverbs—be content with the basics (“daily bread”):

“Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread” (Proverbs 30:8, emphasis added).

- From the book of 1 Timothy—be content with the basics (“food and clothing”):

“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:6-10, emphasis added).

- From the book of Philippians—be content in every circumstance (“in plenty or in want”):

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:11-13, emphasis added).

- **Positive Confessions**

Prosperity Theology: It is God’s will for Christians to make “positive confessions” with the absolute faith that speaking positive words will release the power for desires to come true. With enough faith, whatever is spoken will be received or will come to pass. Example: “I will receive the promotion ... the new car ... the healing—in the name of Jesus.

Biblical Truth: Our faith must be in the person of Christ alone—not faith in our faith—so that our words reflect His heart’s desire, not our own desires.

- From the book of Philippians:

“I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier... Indeed he was ill, and almost died” (Philippians 2:25, 27, emphasis added).

- From the Gospel of Matthew:

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need” (Matthew 6:33 NLT, emphasis added). [Notice the wording states “everything you need” not “everything you want.”]

- From the Gospel of John:

“Jesus said, ‘This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it’” (John 11:4, emphasis added).

- **Negative Confessions**

Prosperity Theology: Christians must never make “negative confessions”—never speak negative words or think negative thoughts because any negative words produce negative consequences. Example: If you say, “I feel sick. ... I feel troubled” you have caused your negative thoughts and words to become your reality.

Biblical Truth: God recorded in His Word many of the negative thoughts, feelings, and experiences of godly men, prophets, kings, apostles, and even Jesus Himself.

- Job, the godly man whom God called “*blameless*”:

“I loathe my very life ... Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave!” (Job 10:1, 18-19, emphasis added).

- Paul, the godly apostle spoke about his illness and his many trials:

“I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, emphasis added).

- Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

“Now my soul is troubled... In this world you will have trouble” (John 12:27; 16:33, emphasis added).

Application

Our Board members, employees, and volunteers must affirm that they do not believe in, promote, or teach prosperity theology, and will not propagate such a view in any manner. Whatever trials or hardships arise, the Bible states “*we are more than conquerors*” through Christ, when we receive Him as our Lord and Savior and give Him control of our lives.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:35, 37).

Scriptural Support

Preamble

2 Timothy 2:15

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

Proverbs 30:8

“Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.”

Job 1:8

“Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.’”

Job 2:9-10

“His wife said to him, ‘Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!’ 10He replied, ‘You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’ In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.”

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Religious Beliefs Based on Biblical Positions

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“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.”

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1 John 5:14-15

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

Luke 22:42

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

“In order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

Suffering/Persecution

1 Peter 2:19-21

“For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

Romans 5:3-5

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

2 Timothy 3:12

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Trials/Troubles

James 1:2-4

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

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“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

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“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

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Philippians 4:11-13

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

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“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

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“Jesus said, ‘This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’”

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2 Corinthians 12:9-10

“But he [Jesus] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I [Paul] will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

John 12:27; 16:33

“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ... In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Application

Romans 8:35, 37

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

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FOOTNOTES:

1. The Oxford English Dictionary, eds. James A. H. Murray, Henry Bradley, W. A. Craigie, and C. T. Onions, vol. 1, A-B (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 28.

2. Professor Jerome Lejeune and Edward C. Freiling, *The Position of Modern Science on the Beginning of Human Life* (Faxton, VA: Sun Life, 1983), 18, quoted in John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *When Does Life Begin? And 39 Other Tough Questions About Abortion* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989), 10.

3. Lejeune, Jerome, “‘21 Thoughts’ by Dr. Jerome Lejeune,” from Jerome Lejeune Foundation USA website, quote 16, <https://lejeuneusa.org/advocacy/21-thoughts-dr-jérôme-lejeune>.

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