

First Baptist Church of New Sweden, Maine, Statement on Medical Conscience Issues

This statement is a focused addition to the general Statement on Conscience. The purpose of this statement is to clearly apply the Biblical principles of conscience outlined in the general statement to specific issues within our current cultural context in the first half of the twenty-first century in the region of New England in the United States.

The leadership of First Baptist Church of New Sweden, Maine, recognize three overarching concerns to be addressed: abortion and possible requirements for medical professionals to participate in abortion within their roles as medical professionals; transgenderism or other gender fluidity and possible requirements for medical professionals to participate in procedures aimed at rejecting the God-given creation of humans as male and female, unalterable no matter the technology, without other defined sexes or classifications; and the inherent right of individuals to make their own individual choices for medical care.

Abortion

The Bible is clear that every human life is unique and valuable. Each person is an image bearer of God. (Genesis 1:27) Each person is uniquely crafted by God. (Psalm 139:13-16) This crafting occurs at the point of conception. (Psalm 51:5; Luke 1:39-45) The Bible is clear that it is wrong to murder another person. (Exodus 20:13) Because Christians, living out their faith based upon the clear teaching of Scripture, understand that human life begins at conception, we know that abortion (whether prenatal, perinatal, or postnatal) is the murder of a living human.

Medical professionals who are Christians must not be required or coerced to participate in abortion at any level. Thus, we affirm the following:

1. We affirm that participation in an abortion procedure is akin to participation in murder in that it is murder (no matter the terminology used). No Christian may be coerced to do this as it offends conscience based upon the clear teaching of the Bible.
2. We affirm that conscience may also preclude a Christian medical professional from participating in procedures for *in vitro* fertilization as this process creates numerous babies which often do not result in being brought to full term and delivery, which may result in the destruction of some of these one-celled babies.
3. We affirm that conscience may also preclude a Christian medical professional from participating in the development, the trial, the sale, or the distribution of medicines created using fetal cells from aborted babies.
4. We affirm that conscience may preclude a Christian from selling, using, prescribing, or distributing abortifacients.
5. We affirm that conscience may preclude a Christian medical professional from working with another medical professional who is known to participate in abortion, thus necessitating being assigned to a different department, medical procedure, or supervisor as a reasonable accommodation.
6. We affirm that a Christian who is a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other professional counselor may not be coerced to counsel a patient to have an abortion or procedure which leads to

abortion. Likewise, these professional counselors who are Christians may not be dissuaded, harassed, prevented, or discouraged from providing counsel that upholds the value of the baby in the womb, that exposes the murderous nature of abortion, or that encourages the only options which are truly ethical: the family keeps the baby or places the baby up for adoption.

7. We affirm that conscience may preclude a Christian patient from being served by medical professionals who are involved in abortions in cases where patients are assigned health care administrators such as insurance companies and medical groups, thus necessitating being reassigned primary care physicians or other medical professionals as a reasonable accommodation.
8. We affirm that, in accordance with their conscience, those in the field of research may refuse to participate in studies, research, development, projects, or programs which involve aborted babies in any manner.

Transgenderism and Gender Fluidity

The Bible is clear that God specifically created humans as male and female (Genesis 1:27) that each would uniquely glorify Him through the specific and distinct aspects of maleness and femaleness. Thus, there are two, and only two, human sexes. God has imbued every cell of each person with the reality of either maleness or femaleness. God, through His creative act, has given equal value to male and female as image bearers of God, though He has distinguished specific natures and roles for each. We deny that either sex or gender are socially derived aspects of humanity. God has defined the sex of a person biologically and created the clear gender roles. While various cultures may have nuances in the application of gender roles, the underlying reality of gender roles is given by God. He gave these roles as the Creator Who knows how we will best function and thrive.

Medical professionals who are Christians must not be required or coerced to participate in transgenderism or gender fluidity at any level. Thus, we affirm the following:

1. We affirm that participation in any therapies, procedures, regimen, or programs which support gender fluidity or transgenderism, or such that result in transitioning from one sex to another, is a rejection of God's defined order for His creation, and thus, a rejection of God Himself.
2. We affirm that conscience may preclude a medical professional from participating in or assigning therapies, procedures, regimen, or programs which would result in affirming gender fluidity or transitioning to a different gender. This includes such occasions assigned by a supervisor, an administrator, an insurance company, a referral, or a patient (including a patient's legal guardian).
3. We affirm that conscience may preclude a pharmaceutical professional from providing legally prescribed medicines and treatments intended to cause sexual or gender transitioning or fluidity.
4. We affirm that medical professionals, needing to properly examine, diagnose, and treat individuals, must be able to identify patients by their God-given sex and gender. This includes indicating such characteristics on medical charts, in correspondence, on medical directives or prescriptions, and in verbal discussions. This also includes the use of the pronouns which align with the objective sex and gender of the person as given to them by God at conception.

5. We affirm that Biblical ethics precludes Christians from participation in gene therapies, medical trials and tests, or other medical or laboratory procedure which results, or may result in, gender fluidity or transitioning (in full or part).
6. We affirm the right of Christian parents to oppose and deny any procedure, program, or treatment of gender fluidity or transitioning for their own minor children. No medical professional, co-parent, law enforcement personnel, counseling professional, court, or law may remand this right from Christian parents. Because transgenderism, sex change, and gender fluidity are objectively wrong before God, the authority who upholds God's created order for the child – the sex of the child at conception – is to be adhered to.
7. We affirm that Christians are precluded from therapies, procedures, tests, trials, or programs which are involved with the transitioning of the human species or combining of human and other species or combining of humans and technology to create a new or enhanced human species. Genesis 1:26-30 and Genesis 2:18-22 clearly teach that man is a unique creation of God as His image bearers. This difference between humans and all of the created animals is complete: biological, intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual. The difference between humans and angelic beings or alien beings is likewise complete since humans are the sole image bearers of God. While this is not directly an issue of transgenderism and gender fluidity, it is a natural progression of moral acceptance and scientific pursuit using the reasoning associated with transgenderism.
8. We affirm that Christians may provide counsel based upon the Bible regarding the standard which God has set of two sexes and genders, male and female, and sexual activities to be conducted only between a man and a woman in the context of a monogamous marriage as defined by the Bible. Such counsel may be provided by licensed professionals, clergy, trained laypersons, and maturing Christians using the full counsel of the Word of God.
9. We affirm that Christians may provide counsel based upon the Bible which calls those involved in transgenderism or gender fluidity to understand their choices in this area as sin and to repent of the sin. Additionally, Christians may provide counsel which may be defined in some contexts as conversion therapy. This is counsel which calls for conversion through faith in Jesus Christ and a subsequent life which embraces the life of Christ in all holiness and rejects the former life of sin, including the sin of transgenderism. (Ephesians 4:17 – 5:14)
10. We affirm that Christians are to live by truth. Therefore, no Christian may be required to lie by using gender fluid language, preferred pronouns, alternative names, or gender/sex assignments which are not in line with the objective sex of a person. Such speech may not be compelled by government officials, law enforcement, courts, laws, employers, contractors, religious organizations, civic organizations, social media platforms, or any other entity.

Medical Care

The Bible portrays the responsibility for medical care decisions as being the role of the family primarily. The church and the community have roles in supporting and assisting the family, but the weight of decisions rests upon the family.

1. We affirm that all medical decisions are the responsibility of the individual and his or her family. This affirmation requires the denial that any other realm of authority may require any medical

care, regimen, therapy, or prescription. These realms of authority include all government entities, courts, medical personnel, law enforcement, military personnel, employers, and religious leaders.

2. We affirm that participation in any therapies, procedures, regimen, or programs which support abortion, use fetal tissue, or involve transitioning technology may be refused by a Christian as justifiably offending the conscience. Christians may not be and are not to be forced against their conscience to participate for any reason.
3. We affirm the right of employers to create whatever medical requirements for employment. We recognize that employees and employers enter into a volitional agreement upon employment. If a Christian has a concern of conscience with any requirement, this must be discussed and agreed upon prior to employment. We deny that employers may change medical requirements after employment has occurred without breaking their contract with their employees unless a conscience exemption is provided.
4. We affirm the right of Christian employers to make decisions regarding medical requirements for their own companies based upon the employer's biblically informed conscience, regardless of other directives by outside authorities.
5. We affirm that the civil magistrate (including elected positions, law enforcement, military, administrative bodies, and the judiciary) may not make requirements upon churches regarding medical requirements for attendance or participation, though they may make suggestions. Nor may the civil magistrate require any version of tracking of attendees, whether for health or other reasons.
6. We affirm that children are directly under the authority of their parents regarding medical requirements and treatment. The civil magistrate, law enforcement, educators, medical personnel, and religious personnel may not take that authority from the parents unless the parents have either endangered or assaulted their children through breaking clear biblical moral law or the parents have abandoned their children.

Other Issues

This is not an exhaustive list of areas of conscience concerns for Christians in the medical arena. The general principals from the Bible of valuing human life (Genesis 9:4-7; Exodus 20:13) and upholding human dignity (Genesis 1:26-28; 5:1-2) apply across the entire spectrum of human existence and the ethical decisions faced by every generation. Other issues in the medical field include without limitation:

1. Euthanasia – We affirm it is God's prerogative to both give life and take life, thus adherence to God's law and conscience require that Christians not participate in euthanasia in any form: the elderly (mercy killing), the physically or mentally disabled, a specific ethnicity (defined by culture, skin color, genealogy, DNA, or place of origin), any defined religion or sect, etc. This Christian refusal to participate in euthanasia includes medical professionals, care givers, family, law enforcement, employees, military, or any others who may be involved.
2. Cloning – We affirm that, since it is God's prerogative to give humans life, cloning is an abhorrent act by humans attempting to act as God. No Christians can or should be compelled to participate. Christians should and do have complete freedom in expressing concerns regarding this.
3. Population Control – We affirm that God has given the clear command for humans to be fruitful and multiply. (Genesis 1:28; 9:7) We deny that there is an overpopulation issue on the earth

since the Creator is clear in His command and is aware of the true limits upon His creation. No Christian may be subject to any requirement for limited procreation or forced infertility. No Christian in the medical community may be compelled to participate in any population control plan or program, whether it is named as such or not.