

The American Medical Association's Positions on Abortion 1859 - 1996

WHAT IS ABORTION?

1859--"The slaughter of countless children; no mere misdemeanor or no mere attempt upon the life of the mother, but the wanton and murderous destruction of her child; such unwarrantable destruction of human life."

1871--"The work of destruction; The wholesale destruction of unborn infants."

1967--"The interruption of an unwanted pregnancy."

1992--"Abortion is a medical procedure and should be performed . . . with standards of good medical practice."

WHO SHOULD PERFORM ABORTIONS?

1871--"It will be unlawful and unprofessional for any physician to induce abortion or premature labor. . . and then always with a view to the safety of the child--if that be possible."

1970--"Abortion should be performed only by a duly licensed physician and surgeon in an accredited hospital."

1992--Only physicians who want to should perform abortions.

WHO ARE PHYSICIAN ABORTIONISTS?

1871--"Men who cling to a noble profession only to dishonor it; false brethren; educated assassins, an enemy to the human family, modern Herods, monsters of iniquity, the executioners." "These men who, with corrupt hearts and blood-stained hands, destroy what they cannot reinstate, corrupt souls, and destroy the fairest fabric that God has ever created . . . under the cloak of that medical profession."

1967--"Conscientious practitioners performing therapeutic abortions for reasons other than those posing a threat to the life of the mother. Equally conscientious physicians who believe that all women should be masters of their own reproductive destinies and that the interruption of an unwanted pregnancy, no matter what the circumstances, should be solely an individual matter between the patient and her doctor."

1992--Since the AMA supports abortion, it makes no comment.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO PHYSICIAN ABORTIONISTS?

1871--"The members of the profession should shrink with horror from all interaction with them professionally or otherwise; These men should be marked as Cain was marked: They should be made the outcasts of society. It becomes the duty of every physician in the United States to resort to every honorable and legal means in his power to crush out from among us this pest of society."

1871--"Resolved, That we repudiate and denounce the conduct of abortionists, and that we hold no intercourse with them professionally or otherwise and that we will, whenever an opportunity presents, guard and protect the public against the machinations of these characters by pointing out the physical and moral ruin which follows in their wake."

1970--"They should be allowed to perform abortions as long as they are done in an accredited hospital acting only after consultation with two other physicians."

1992--Since the AMA supports abortion, it makes no comment.

WHAT SHOULD THE ETHICS OF ABORTION BE?

1871--"Thou shalt not kill: This Commandment is given to all and applies to all without exception; It matters not at what stage of development his victim may have arrived. It matters not how small or how apparently insignificant it may be. It is murder. A foul, unprovoked murder, and its blood, like the blood of Abel, will cry from earth to Heaven for vengeance."

1967--"The Committee does not intend to raise the question of the rightness or wrongness of therapeutic abortion. This is a personal and moral consideration which in all cases must be faced according to the dictates of the conscience of the patient and her physician."

1992--". . . the early termination of pregnancy is a medical matter between the patient and the physician, . . ." ". . . the issue of support or of opposition to abortion is a matter for members of the AMA to decide individually, based on personal values or beliefs." "The AMA shall take no action which may be construed as an attempt to alter or influence the personal views of individual physicians regarding abortion procedures."