

On the Ethical Realities of Reproductive Technologies and the Dignity of the Human Embryo

WHEREAS, Every human being is made in God's image (Genesis 1:27-28) and is thus to be respected and protected from the moment of fertilization until natural death, without regard to developmental stage or location; and

WHEREAS, Human beings possess an inherent right to life and the opportunity to reach their full developmental maturity (Exodus 20:13); and

WHEREAS, Governments are ordained by God to safeguard human dignity and promote human flourishing at all stages of life (Genesis 9:5-6; Romans 13:1-7); and

WHEREAS, Biblical creation order portrays the embodied union of husband and wife as the singular normative expression for procreation (Genesis 1:27-28); and

WHEREAS, Infertility affects many married couples who have the good and godly desire to bring children into the world; and

WHEREAS, Couples who experience the searing pain of infertility can turn to God, look to Scripture for numerous examples of infertility, and know that their lament is heard by the Lord, who offers compassion and grace to those deeply afflicted by such realities (Genesis 16:1-16, 25:21; Judges 13:2; 1 Samuel 1:11; Luke 1:5-13); and

WHEREAS, All children are a gift from the Lord regardless of the circumstances of their conception (Psalm 127:3); and

WHEREAS, Though all children are to be fully respected and protected, not all technological means of assisting human reproduction are equally God-honoring or morally justified; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have historically affirmed the value of every human life and opposed the use of technology that disregards the sanctity of human life; and

WHEREAS, The In Vitro Fertilization process routinely generates more embryos than can be safely implanted, thus resulting in the continued freezing, stockpiling, and ultimate destruction of human embryos, some of whom may also be subjected to medical experimentation; and

WHEREAS, In Vitro Fertilization most often participates in the destruction of embryonic

human life and increasingly engages in dehumanizing methods for determining suitability for life and genetic sorting, based on notions of genetic fitness and parental preferences; and

WHEREAS, Estimates suggest that between 1 million and 1.5 million human beings are currently stored in cryogenic freezers in an embryonic state throughout the United States, with most unquestionably destined for eventual destruction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, call on Southern Baptists to reaffirm the unconditional value and right to life of every human being, including those in an embryonic stage, and to only utilize reproductive technologies consistent with that affirmation especially in the number of embryos generated in the IVF process; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm all children, no matter the circumstances of their conception, are gifts from God and loved by him; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call on Southern Baptists to love all of their neighbors in accordance with their God-given dignity as image bearers and to advocate for the government to restrain actions inconsistent with the dignity and value of every human being, which necessarily includes frozen embryonic human beings; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to continue to promote adoption as one way God may call upon couples to grow their families and to consider adopting frozen embryos in order to rescue those who are eventually to be destroyed (Proverbs 24:11-12); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we grieve alongside couples who have been diagnosed with infertility or are currently struggling to conceive, affirm their godly desire for children, and encourage them to consider the ethical implications of assisted reproductive technologies as they look to God for hope, grace, and wisdom amid suffering; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we commend couples who at great cost have earnestly sought to only utilize infertility treatments and reproductive technologies in ways consistent with the dignity of the human embryo as well as those who have adopted frozen embryos; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we commit to pray to our God who hears, sees, and remembers on behalf of those couples struggling with infertility (1 Samuel 1:11-20).

