

Position Statements



**The Salvation Army
Canada & Bermuda Territory**

Position Statements of
The Salvation Army
Canada & Bermuda Territory
as at May 2004

Abortion
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A positional statement briefly sets out the considered view of The Salvation Army on a moral or social issue of current relevance. The statement should clearly articulate the gospel values and principles on which the Army takes its stand. Positional statements are not binding on individual Salvationists, but are published for their guidance, and for the information of the general public.

Orders & Regulations for Officers of The Salvation Army, Vol 2, Part 1, Chapter 12

For more information
regarding the Position Statements of
The Salvation Army, Canada & Bermuda Territory,
please contact:

The Social Issues Committee
c/o Salvation Army Ethics Centre
203-290 Vaughan Street
Winnipeg, MB CANADA R3B 2N8
Phone: 204-957-2412
Fax: 204-957-2418
Email: social_issues@can.salvationarmy.org

Position Statement on

Abortion

The Salvation Army believes in the sanctity of human life because human beings are made in the image of God. Each person is of eternal value and each life a gift from God worth cherishing, nurturing, and preserving.

The Salvation Army therefore takes seriously the needs, rights and responsibilities of parents and unborn children when considering the matter of abortion. We are committed to the protection and care of the unborn, and to the promotion of societal systems that promote wholeness, freedom, quality of life and the development of the potential of all persons.

The Salvation Army supports responsible measures necessary to avoid unwanted pregnancy and is opposed to abortion as a means of birth control. We are concerned about a growing social acceptance of abortions and believe that a genetic abnormality in the unborn child is not generally sufficient to warrant a termination of pregnancy.

When an unwanted pregnancy occurs, The Salvation Army counsels that the parents receive caring support for their emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs, and that the unborn child be carried to term.

The Salvation Army recognizes tragic and perplexing circumstances that require difficult decisions regarding a pregnancy. Such decisions should be made only after prayerful and thoughtful consideration, with appropriate involvement of the woman's family and pastoral, medical and other counsel.

Women who have had an abortion deserve care and respect, and The Salvation Army will offer them its services in a loving and compassionate manner without discrimination.



Canada and Bermuda

Position Statement on

Artificial Insemination & In Vitro Fertilization

Many married couples face the pain of childlessness, and their anguish elicits a compassionate response from those who are in the helping professions. That response includes understanding, counselling, and the provision of specialized services and procedures which may be helpful in eliminating impediments to fertility.

Reproductive technology today provides solutions to infertility for many couples, but it also opens doors to techniques, some of which are clearly immoral and others which are clouded in ethical uncertainties. Its use raises questions in the light of theological premises and is potentially dangerous to the sanctity and dignity of human life. With an array of possibilities for assistance, or interference, in the sacred act of procreation, man's knowledge and skill must be matched with a deep sense of responsibility and reverence for life.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION BY HUSBAND (AIH)

The Salvation Army recognizes artificial insemination, in which the husband's sperm is introduced into the uterus of his wife, as an acceptable procedure to assist the married couple to conceive, after natural methods have been unsuccessful and within the context of a stable heterosexual marriage.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION BY DONOR (AID)

For some married couples AIH will be unsuccessful and the deep desire to have a child may lead the husband and wife to consider the option of artificial insemination by a donor. The Salvation Army advises against this procedure because of the serious legal, ethical, moral and social implications that may adversely affect the couple, the donor, the child, and society at large.

IN VITRO FERTILIZATION - *HUSBAND AND WIFE*

The Salvation Army recognizes that for married couples who are unsuccessful in conceiving through normal copulation or artificial insemination (AIH), in vitro fertilization (IVF) may be considered, using the ova and sperm of the wife and husband.

The Army recommends that couples considering such a possibility be counselled and given a full explanation of the procedures, risks and potential consequences. This counselling ought to include alternatives to in vitro fertilization which are childlessness, adoption, and fostering.

The life that is conceived in vitro must be treated with respect, reverence and dignity. It is to be protected from harm, experimentation and death. Care must be taken so that unwanted or "extra" fertilized

ova are not produced. All fertilized ova are to be inserted for implantation, and every effort must be made to safeguard the pregnancy.

IN VITRO FERTILIZATION - *THIRD PARTY DONOR*

Many of the problems associated with AID apply equally to in vitro fertilization in which a third party donor is involved. The Salvation Army advises against IVF in which donor sperm and/or donor ova are used.

The use of a third party donor in IVF opens the door to a host of bizarre possibilities such as unlimited experimentation with unused gametes, foster wombs for the fetus' growth, selection for "super-babies", and children for homosexual couples.

The Salvation Army believes IVF should be limited to couples in stable heterosexual marriages.

SURROGATE MOTHERHOOD

The Salvation Army is opposed to surrogate motherhood. A third party implanted with the sperm of a man whose wife is unable or unwilling to bear a child is in opposition to the Army's concept of Christian ethics. It is also fraught with legal complications and deep psychological forces that can scar for life. It is in conflict with the Army's attempt to support and promote stable family life, and infringes on marriage relationships.

SUMMARY

Artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization are acceptable when the sperm and ova of a husband and wife are used. The Salvation Army strongly advises against the use of donors because of legal, moral, social, psychological and ethical complications and implications.

The issues in the use of human assisted reproduction are many and complex. There are no easy answers. The Salvation Army will continue to make every effort to balance strong doctrine and principle with strong mercy and sensitivity. The Salvationist will not alter his beliefs, but neither will he condemn those who choose extraordinary means of achieving parenthood. The ultimate desire should be to offer love and counsel in Christ's name.



Canada and Bermuda

Position Statement on

Capital Punishment

Because Salvationists believe in the sanctity of all human life and in a Christian gospel that offers the hope of redemption to fallen mankind, The Salvation Army in Canada would never campaign for the re-introduction of the death penalty as an ultimate punishment for any crime. It is contrary to our convictions to declare anyone hopeless and deny the possibility of reclamation.

However, Salvation Army territorial administration acknowledges there are Salvationists who very sincerely would uphold the state's right to execute in certain circumstances.

Long experience of rendering service within the criminal justice systems of many lands, and in ministering both to offenders and the victims of crime, has confirmed The Salvation Army's continuing belief in the possibility of redemption for all through repentance toward God, faith in Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

The Salvation Army affirms that society must be protected from the violent criminal. Church, judiciary and medicine must together further explore crime prevention and treatment. Society itself must honestly examine what it now tolerates in mass media communication and courageously legislate against all that reduces the dignity of man, corrupts moral values and incites the worst of human passion.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1990

Position Statement on

Responsibility for the Environment

As people made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), we have been entrusted with the care of the earth's resources (Genesis 2:15). Stewardship requires that we use these resources in a manner which ensures the well-being of present and future generations.

God's instruction to 'subdue' the earth and 'rule' over every living thing (Genesis 1:28) cannot be interpreted to justify abuse or disregard for any life, not only human life. The privileges granted require our accountability to Him and one another.

Given the finite resources of our world, its expanding population, and the impact of industrialization, development must take account of environmental needs.

Salvationists as individuals and The Salvation Army as an organization should accept responsibility for the environment by taking practical steps to regenerate and conserve God's creation.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1995

Position Statement on

Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide and Advance Health Care Directives

Human life is a sacred gift from God. The Salvation Army believes, as a consequence, that euthanasia and assisted suicide are morally wrong. The Christian faith puts death into its proper perspective as the transition from earthly life to life eternal. It is appropriate to make suitable preparation for death, especially spiritual preparation, and to inform loved ones and caregivers about one's wishes.

Euthanasia undermines, rather than enhances, human dignity. "Euthanasia" is defined as a deliberate act undertaken by one person with the intention of ending the life of another person, intended to relieve that other person's suffering, where that act is the cause of death. Euthanasia does not include withholding or withdrawing medical treatment which serves only to prolong the dying process where the burden of the treatment on the dying person outweighs its benefit. Euthanasia does not include the proper medical use of pain controlling drugs for a dying person, even if the secondary effect may be to shorten life. Nor is it euthanasia to respect a competent adult's refusal of treatment or request to discontinue treatment.

Assisted suicide undermines, rather than enhances, human dignity. "Assisted suicide" is defined as counselling, abetting, aiding or otherwise assisting someone with the intention of ending the life of the person being assisted.

Advance health care directives which take effect when one is no longer able to make decisions about one's own medical care can provide valuable assistance to loved ones and caregivers. However, the possibility does exist that subtle pressure will be placed on the sick, the elderly, the disabled and the dying to act contrary to their true interests and wishes in order not to become an unwanted burden. It is important to communicate by word and deed that all persons are worthy of respect, that they are loved and that they will not be abandoned.

Palliative care, as a program of active, compassionate care provided to patients and their families when the hope for cure is no longer medically possible, is promoted by The Salvation Army.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1997

Position Statement on

Family

The Salvation Army believes the family, as the basic community in society, ought to be the principal way in which values and morality are nourished. In an environment of love and respect, children and adults find security and wellbeing. Here they are free to develop morally, spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally.

We believe that the family is ideally rooted in the biblical concept of a marriage covenant of one man and one woman. An enduring commitment to loving care reflects God's design for family life which allows no justification for abuse.

The Salvation Army acknowledges that families of all types struggle, and at times fail to be communities of love. In following the example of Jesus Christ, The Salvation Army seeks to strengthen marriage and enrich family life, extending appropriate ministries of a caring Christian community to all people in all types of family relationships.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 2004

Position Statement on

Gambling

Gambling has become a worldwide obsession with tentacles reaching into almost every aspect of daily life.

Government and private lotteries, boosted by sports betting, have served cunningly to work gambling into the very fabric of the family.

The Salvation Army deplores the fact that, with the advent and proliferation of government lotteries, legislators have encouraged the tendency to prey on the greed and weakness of human nature.

The Salvation Army continues to resist this insidious occurrence and cautions both governments and individuals of the inherent dangers in this gambling craze.

The Salvation Army warns of the selfishness in gambling in which individuals seek gain at the expense of others, and is saddened by the plight of those suffering from gambling addiction. Its social welfare experience underscores the fact that there are those who disregard the needs of family in order to indulge.

The Salvation Army asserts that gambling runs counter to Christian love which respects and shows concern for others. Even in its simplest form gambling can lead to excess and undermine the personality and character of the individual.

Salvationists should resist participation in any scheme which would give them material advantage on the basis of chance.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1990

Position Statement on

Gay & Lesbian Sexuality

The Salvation Army upholds the dignity of all persons. For this reason, and in obedience to the example of Jesus Christ, whose compassionate love is all-embracing, The Salvation Army does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in the delivery of its services.

The Salvation Army believes that God's will for the expression of sexual intimacy is revealed in the Bible, and that living fully in accordance with biblical standards calls for chastity outside of heterosexual marriage and faithfulness within it. We do not believe that same-sex attraction is necessarily blameworthy and we oppose the vilification and mistreatment of gays and lesbians. We believe that we are accountable for the ways in which we express our sexuality. While recognizing the challenge that this presents, The Salvation Army believes firmly in the power of God's grace to enable all to live in a manner that is pleasing to Him.

In keeping with our mission, we are committed to proclaiming the good news of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and transformation by the Holy Spirit. We welcome all seekers of faith in Christ to explore Salvation Army church life.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 2002

Position Statement on

Human Diversity

The Salvation Army believes that all people are made in the image of God and are thus of equal intrinsic value.

We seek to treat all people with dignity and respect in response to Jesus' call to love our neighbors as ourselves. We oppose oppression or unjust discrimination based on such differences as race, gender, age, belief, lifestyle, economic status, or physical or mental ability.

We believe that diversity strengthens and shapes community and ministry. Therefore, in our community services, employment practices and church life, we will seek to actively promote sensitivity, understanding and communication in both intent and practice.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 2004

Position Statement on

Marriage

The Salvation Army believes marriage is the covenanting together of one man and one woman for life in a union to the exclusion of all others. This union is established by an authorized ceremony.

Marriage is a unique reflection of God's faithful love for all humankind. The relationship of husband and wife reflects the covenant of self-giving love between Christ and His church, central to a Christian understanding of marriage.

The pledge of mutual faithfulness is not tentative or conditional. The permanent nature of the marriage bond gives security and promotes the development of a trusting relationship. The Christian community has a responsibility to care for, nurture and prayerfully support the marriage relationship.

The Salvation Army affirms that marriage is the basis of sound family life and foundational to a healthy society.



Canada and Bermuda

Position Statement on

Pornography

The Salvation Army believes that male and female are created equal and in God's image with full personhood of body, soul and spirit and that human sexuality is a divine gift. We abhor the prevalence and escalation of pornography with its images of domination, perversion, submission and violence in publications, the theatre, the cinema and videos.

The Salvation Army wholeheartedly supports the proper education of the young on matters relating to the sanctity of right sexual relationships based on the teaching of Scripture.

The corrupt depiction of that which God created as potentially pure and holy, desensitizes and promotes offensive attitudes and aggression against men, women and children. Pornography commercializes sex in ways that ensure financial gain for the exploiters and distorts values in the lives of the exploited and in society.

The Salvation Army stands against this evil which threatens the quality of personal relationships and national character. We seek constantly to arouse the public conscience and to encourage involvement in the struggle against it.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1990

Position Statement on

Poverty & Economic Justice

The measure of any society is how well it cares for its weakest citizens. The persistence both of widespread poverty and indifference to that poverty in Canada and Bermuda is morally unacceptable. Jesus Christ motivates us to love our neighbour in practical ways. Our response to the poor is a measure of our obedience to and love for God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ should free us from the enticements of consumerism and desire for individualistic gain. As Salvationists, we remain committed to The Salvation Army's historic mission to care for the poor and marginalized. Therefore, individually and corporately, we will work to eliminate poverty by:

- ◆ Providing empowering practical assistance to people who are poor—both in our personal, family and vocational lives and in our congregational and organizational practices—through prayer, listening and dedication of our time and resources.
- ◆ Making relational and financial choices that promote economic opportunity and justice for those in poverty.
- ◆ Evaluating public policies by how they respond to people who are poor.
- ◆ Challenging racism and other attitudes that promote inequality and seeking reconciliation among all groups in our society.
- ◆ Building community capacity, nurturing the bonds of family and community, and protecting the dignity of each person.
- ◆ Partnering with other denominations and agencies in common commitment and action to overcome poverty in our own communities, our nation and our world.



Canada and Bermuda Territory

Approved 2001

Position Statement on

Substance Abuse

The Salvation Army encourages a healthy spiritual, emotional, mental and physical lifestyle. The misuse of many substances and drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, has the potential to harm the body, impair judgement and lead to addiction. Therefore, we actively support legislation and policy that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Guided by Christian faith and practice, we hold to the Bible's wisdom regarding the destructive consequences of alcohol misuse. Scriptural principles also inform us about the misuse of other harmful substances. Salvation Army members (soldiers) make a covenant to abstain from alcohol, tobacco and the harmful use of other substances.

The Salvation Army is committed to excellence in working with individuals, families and communities whose health, relationships and social well-being have been damaged by misuse of and addiction to harmful substances. We place a high priority on education, treatment and counselling that offer spiritual, emotional, mental and physical healing for persons affected by addiction.

We believe that abstinence is the most certain way to avoid and overcome dependencies on harmful substances. Regardless of the choices people make, we are committed to loving and supporting individuals through to recovery.

We support Christian communities as places of fellowship, help and healing for all who face these challenges and we believe that by the grace of God people are freed from substance abuse to lead healthy lives.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 2004

Position Statement on

Sunday Observance

Sunday is the day on which the Salvationist especially enjoys an opportunity for worship, reflection and the proclamation of the gospel. The Salvationist accepts that the observance of a day of rest is part of the divine law, enunciated in the Old Testament in the fourth commandment and in the New Testament by the example and teaching of Jesus. In its recognition of Sunday as the Lord's Day (as distinct from the Jewish Sabbath), The Salvation Army aligns itself with what came to be the custom of the Early Church in joyful commemoration of Christ's resurrection.

The Salvationist believes that Sunday should be a day not merely kept free from unnecessary labor but allowing for the fullest opportunity for worship and witness. 'The Sabbath was made for man,' said Jesus (Mark 2:27), i.e. for his rest, peace and renewal. The Army is aware that in any highly-organized society some forms of labor will be essential, but it is opposed to the use of Sunday for commercial sport, political meetings or any activities tending to the secularization of a day intended for man's spiritual refreshment. At the same time it accepts that legalized compulsion cannot fully secure this end, especially in multi-cultural communities.

The Salvationist will exert every influence possible to keep or make Sunday a holy day. He himself will witness to his beliefs by the way he uses Sunday.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1990

Position Statement on

World Peace

The Salvation Army, as part of the universal Christian church, seeks the establishment of peace as proclaimed by Jesus Christ. The Army recognizes that the world's problems cannot be solved by force, and that greed and pride, coupled with the widespread desire for domination, poison the souls of men and sow seeds of conflict.

Since there exists in thermonuclear weapons a destructive power of vast proportions almost too frightful to contemplate, The Salvation Army believes that nuclear disarmament by all nations is a necessary element of world peace. However, a nation has the right to defend itself against the aggression of another nation.

The Salvation Army continues to be deeply concerned with the investment of huge financial resources to aid the escalating production of terrifying weapons of mass destruction, rather than the diversion of these funds to socioeconomic growth throughout the world. Disarmament, peace and development are inextricably linked.

The Salvation Army pledges its members to pray and work for peace and to seek to revitalize the Church's unique witness to the source of true peace, God Himself.



Canada and Bermuda

Approved 1990