

Sanctity of Life Memorial Study Committee

General Board Meeting Report: May 2025

Purpose

The Sanctity of Life Memorial Study Committee was appointed by the 14th General Conference (GC) to review Memorial 53, Constitution: The Sanctity of Life. The memorial, which proposed adding a 14th subparagraph to Discipline 265, was not recommended by the Committee on Memorials, in advance of GC. Memorial 53 was approved for consideration during GC, however discussion ended with approval to refer Memorial 53 to a study committee. The referral was intended to ensure the sufficient time and focused attention a study committee could provide.

Responsibilities

1. To first review Memorial 53 and decide if there is any merit to recommending it (as amended at GC) at face value, or with some form of revision, to the GBA.
2. In addition, the committee may also...
 - Provide recommendations to the GBA on a possible memorial related to 410:11 (Special Directions - Abortion)
 - Provide recommendations to the General Secretary for the denomination's position paper on the Sanctity of Life (to assist with a possible revision/update)
 - Provide Sanctity of Life resource recommendations... books, articles, etc. for the denomination's "Resource Center" page
3. The committee's work and recommendation(s) must be submitted to the GBA by Nov. 2025, in preparation for the 15th General Conference, May 17-20, 2026.

Report

It has been our honor to serve as the study committee tasked with reviewing Memorial 53, Constitution: The Sanctity of Life. In our review, we sought to thoughtfully consider the motivation(s) behind the memorial, the memorial in its original form, and also as it was amended by the 2022 General Conference. We also took into consideration The Wesleyan Discipline structure and the purpose of each section. Ultimately, we sought to review Memorial 53, and to formulate, if any, recommendations to the GBA, in light of TWC's strong stance on the sanctity of life.

Our work as a committee has resulted in the following;

1. A decision to not recommend Memorial 53 in its original and amended forms
2. A decision to recommend a revision of Discipline 265:12
3. A decision to recommend a revision of Discipline 410:11
4. Topics and matters for consideration in a revision of the Sanctity of Life Position Paper
5. Possible resources for the sanctity of life resource page on the denomination's website

Committee Members

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MEMORIAL 53

CONSTITUTION: THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

Whereas, There exists in our day many immoral and unethical human institutions in which are pernicious to the worth and being of humanity and individual human beings;

Whereas, We believe that all human life is created in the image of God, and therefore has intrinsic and eternal worth and value;

Whereas, We are commanded in the Holy Scriptures to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to love the Lord Jesus Christ by loving the “least of these”;

Whereas, We as Wesleyans find our genesis and our historical heritage in the concept and practice of the abolition of institutions such as slavery, which stand contrary to the God-given rights of human beings, and to the love for our fellow man to which God calls us; and

Whereas, The Basic Principles of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* have traditionally carried more weight than the area of *The Discipline* labeled Special Directions in the way that we teach and admonish our membership;

Resolved, That this clause be added to the Basic Principles of *The Discipline*, Section 265, under the sub-section, “Toward Others,” which shall read:

(Memorial 53 as originally presented, without GC amendment)

265:14 To respect all human life by abstaining from participation in abortion or the abortion industry, euthanasia, human slavery or trafficking, pornography and the production and distribution thereof, the sex trade, forced or unjust labor practices, institutional and personal forms of racism, and any other institution which degrades or destroys human beings who have been created in the image of God; standing against, and seeking to bring an immediate end to all such practices.

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Gen. 1:27; Exo. 20:13; Lev. 19:13; Job 31:1; Psa. 139:13; Prov. 23:22; Jer. 1:5; Hab. 2:15; Gal.3:28; 1 Tim. 5:2; 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Tim. 5:18; Phil. 1:16-17