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Medical ethics

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Item Type	Preprint
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Download date	2026-07-02 17:42:11
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/228468

Moravian Church in America, Northern Province

Resolutions prior to 2002

MEDICAL ETHICS

Whereas, we recognize and acknowledge:

- a. that research has furthered our understanding of genetic abnormalities;
- b. that experimentation in gene manipulation and splicing offers hope for corrective measures;
- c. that there are both possibilities and limitations in gene manipulation for the relief of human ills and in our ability to deal with human or natural disasters; and

Whereas, review and prior approval by the International Institutes of Health (NIH) are required only for government-funded experiments involving certain types of gene manipulation and their guidelines are only voluntary for such experiments under other sponsorship, and

Whereas, we recognize that, given the broad implications of genetic engineering, guidance from various professional disciplines in addition to the natural sciences is needed in monitoring experimentation and the application of discoveries, therefore be it RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, express its gratitude for the emerging technologies of genetic engineering, which offer the promise of the alleviation and ultimate prevention of abnormalities, diseases, and natural disasters, and in order that the development and application of these technologies may proceed in a responsible manner, be it further

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, urge the continuation of the NIH guidelines and requirements for governmentally-funded projects in genetic research and the extension of these guidelines to all parties engaged in such research and experimentation, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we encourage members of the Moravian Church, along with other Christians, to affirm the conviction that the sufferer is precious in the sight of God, Who leads us to accept lovingly persons with disabilities or deformities and help them develop the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of life, and we discourage the hedonistic attitude of demanding instant cures, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we support the development by an interdisciplinary group, of guidelines for experimentation in genetic engineering, and that such guidelines take into consideration:

- a. that the devotion of resources to research and experimentation in this area should be weighed against the need to provide aid for other human needs;

b. that where resources for research are limited, the utmost care be taken to assure that these resources be used to provide the greatest good for the greatest number;

c. that the goal for the application of discoveries be to bring relief in existing illnesses, e.g. diabetes, rather than to modify incidental personal characteristics or to experiment on the reproductive cells; and be it further

RESOLVED: that we encourage the development of mechanisms in the public and private sectors that would facilitate the equitable distribution of the benefits of the new genetic technology to all people in this and other lands, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we oppose the compelling of any individuals in any country to undergo genetic experimentation without their knowledge or consent, recognizing that minorities, children, the elderly, the mentally retarded, the poor, the terminally ill, and the incarcerated are particularly vulnerable to such treatment.

R&E 1986, pp. 39-40, R. 32-37

ABBREVIATIONS:

JNP —Journal of the Provincial Synod (of year indicated)

R&E —Resolutions and Elections of the Provincial Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church (of the year indicated)

R — Resolution number as noted in Journal or Resolutions and Elections

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