

A Seventh-day Adventist Statement on Well-being and Value of Children

Seventh-day Adventists affirm the right of every child to a happy and stable home environment, and the freedom and support to grow up to be the person God intended. In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the fundamental importance of children by voting the "Convention on the Rights of the Child." In harmony with many of these lofty principles, and considering the value Jesus placed on children when He said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt 19:14, NIV), we seek to aid children who suffer from the following destructive influences:

Poverty-Poverty impacts children's development, robbing them of necessary food, clothing, and shelter, and adversely affecting their health and education.

Illiteracy-Illiteracy makes it difficult for the parents to earn wages or care for their family or for the child to reach his or her potential.

Poor health care-Millions of children have no access to health care because they lack the proper insurance coverage or they live where medical care is unavailable.

Exploitation and vulnerability-Children are corrupted and exploited when they are used for cheap labor, sweat shops, armed conflict, and the perverted sexual pleasure of adult predators, and are exposed to sexually explicit materials in the mass media and on the Internet.

Violence-Every year many children die violent deaths. The vast majority of individuals who suffer in armed conflicts are women and children. Children bear deep physical and psychological scars, even after the fighting stops.

In response to the above issues and needs, Seventh-day Adventists stand for the following rights of children:

- The right to a loving and stable home where there is safety and freedom from abuse.
- The right to adequate food, clothing, and shelter.
- The right to proper health/medical care.
- The right to an education that prepares children for a positive role in society by developing their personal potential and giving them earning capacity.
- The right to a religious and moral education in the home and church.
- The right to freedom from discrimination and exploitation.
- The right to personhood, respect, and the development of positive self-esteem.

This statement was voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM), for release at the time of the General Conference Session in Toronto, Canada, June 29-July 9, 2000.