

**Assembly of Confessing Congregations
within the Uniting Church in Australia**

Social Responsibility Commission

ABORTION IN THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

The full form of this statement can be found at <www.confessingcongregations.com>. It discusses the situation and laws regarding abortion in Australia and appropriate attitudes and actions, including (a fuller version of) these affirmations:

- Christians understand all humans to be made in the image of God, who is both the origin and destiny of all human life. We affirm the sacred and intrinsic value of all human life from conception.
- Christian attention must always be directed to the vulnerable, the suffering and the weakest members of the human family. This includes the fetus and a mother who is under serious stress.
- When we consider the morality of abortion, we note the responsibility of each Christian to form or inform their conscience and determine their actions in the light of the teaching of God's Word.
- The sacredness of human life requires a 'principle of presumption for life', i.e. that wherever possible the life of the unborn child ought not be taken. Nonetheless this presumption may be challenged in the most serious situations as when the life of the mother is seriously endangered.
- We strongly resist the idea of abortion being considered a morally appropriate 'lifestyle choice'. Nor should it be regarded as an alternative to contraception.
- For some people, in certain contexts, giving birth and parenthood may appear impossibly difficult.
- Life for the unborn child is always to be sought but we resist laws which prohibit all abortion. Yet the law has an important role in regulating abortion. Hence we resist (a) the changing medical definition (to include later babies *in utero*); (b) the more and more liberal interpretations of existing law; and (c) changes to abortion laws which have the effect of leading towards abortion on request at any stage of pregnancy.
- We recognise the community's responsibility for attitudes and behaviours which influence the context of many pregnancies and hence its responsibility to care for all those involved. It is important that Christians offer pastoral care and support.
- We affirm the need for the Church to exercise a healing ministry for those who suffer the consequences of abortion and for a ministry of education in homes, schools, churches and health centres about sexual relationships, marriage, family planning and parenting.