



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC33 Contraception and Abortion Services (1990A111)

True Document Date: August 22, 1990

WHEREAS as Christians we affirm the sanctity of human life, born or unborn and that life is much more than physical existence; and

WHEREAS our concern must not be limited to a concern for the unborn but it must also include a concern for the quality of life as a whole; and

WHEREAS life in this imperfect world often places us in complex circumstances or moral dilemma and ambiguity where values ultimate in themselves seem at times to be in conflict with other values and rights; and

WHEREAS we are called as a people of God to take responsibility for our lives and the world in which we live and this may involve making grave decisions relating even to life itself; and

WHEREAS each of us is called upon in a freedom that is given by God and within the context of the community of faith to make responsible personal decisions, even when choosing between two wrongs; and

WHEREAS prevention of abortion is best accomplished by the prevention of unwanted pregnancy, the aim of education, research and social action must always be to promote effective contraception and thus reduce the incidence of abortion; and

WHEREAS at the present time, contraceptive techniques are imperfect and contraception ignorance is widespread resulting in unwanted pregnancies; and

WHEREAS many provinces have a high incidence of teenage pregnancy and Saskatchewan has one of the highest;

WHEREAS accessibility to abortion is inadequate in certain geographical areas in Canada as evidenced by:

- Prince Edward Island provides no access to abortion services;
- Newfoundland: one doctor in St. John's performs abortions;
- New Brunswick: no services north of Moncton;
- Nova Scotia: one Halifax hospital performs over 80 per cent of abortions;
- Quebec: 10-80 per cent of abortions are done in Montreal;
- Ontario: access concentrated in the southern cities;
- Manitoba: services available primarily in Winnipeg;
- Saskatchewan: women outside Saskatoon have little chance to obtain abortions;
- Alberta: abortions done in Edmonton, a few in Calgary, and fewer still in Lethbridge;
- British Columbia: situation precarious because of anti-abortionists elected to hospital boards; and

WHEREAS abortion is a medical act and the provinces are required to provide medical services according to federal standards of comprehensiveness and availability; and

WHEREAS under the Canada Health Act, the federal government can withhold health transfer payments from provinces which fail to provide medical services on a comprehensive, accessible, universal basis:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 33rd General Council:

1. urge the Government of Canada under the Canada health Act to monitor the provinces' provision of contraceptive and abortion services in the light of federal adequacy standards of comprehensiveness and availability; and if found inadequate to pressure the provincial governments to bring these services up to Canada Health Act standards;

2. urge all conferences to request their provincial governments to provide adequate contraceptive and abortion education, counselling and services; and to report on their actions and results to the 34th General Council

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