

**Synod of Victoria 1994**  
**re: Affirming the Committee on Bioethics Report on Abortion**

94.4.2.9

- (a) That the report of the Committee on Bioethics on abortion be commended to the presbyteries and parishes and to their members as a contribution to their thinking, and their decision making;
- (b) In the light of paragraph 2.2.5 of the Report of the Synod Commission for Mission, "Biblical and Theological Framework" to adopt the following as a statement of the Synod's position on abortion:

"In dealing with the issue of abortion, we have faced the question of whether in an imperfect world there are situations in which responsible moral action may involve taking human life. We have concluded that such situations do exist. However they ought to be regarded as exceptions. Such action cannot be taken with an absolutely clear conscience, for although we may believe we are acting responsibly and make these decisions as carefully and prayerfully as we can, we recognise that we may be wrong. We acknowledge our continuous need for God's grace and forgiveness, knowing that eventually we will be answerable to God in our actions.

In the light of this understanding, we affirm:

- (i) that we reject two extreme positions in regard to abortion: one, that abortion should never be an available option; the other, that abortion should be always available on request.

We recognise that there are circumstances in which the decision to have an abortion is a responsible decision for a woman to make.

We cannot take a position of absolute rejection of abortion. Moral decisions cannot be made on the basis of one value, even the right of the foetus to life. There are always other values, other claims which must be identified and taken into consideration.

- (ii) that, after consulting those whom she trusts, the pregnant woman has the responsibility to make the final decision, either to have an abortion, or not have an abortion, assuming that her decision is within the law;

(iii) that there are many cases in which, on balance, termination of a pregnancy would seem to be the most loving and responsible course of action. The reasons that lead to this decision may be varied. On the other hand there are many problematic cases in which the continuation of the pregnancy would seem to be the most loving and responsible course of action;

- (iv) that all steps should be taken to ensure that sensitive, mature and non-judgemental pastoral care is readily available within the Church community, for those who are - or who have been - involved in the difficult decision as to whether or not to have an abortion."