

A Statement on Responsible Parenthood

Adopted by the Second Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Church in America—Canada Section
Port Arthur, Ontario, June 23-24, 1965

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolved, That Lutheran Church in America - Canada Section, in accordance with the position of the Lutheran Church in America and in support of the action of the Canadian Council of Churches, November 16-19, 1964, call upon the Government "to amend the Criminal Code of Canada in such a way as to make legal the dispensing of information and means under competent medical or other professional guidance, so as to enable spouses, irrespective of their economic circumstances who wish according to their religious convictions, to exercise their freedom in planning and spacing their families in accordance with their physical and economic means, to do so with adequate knowledge and instruction".

Background Information

We have in Canada at the present time the paradoxical situation whereby the law of the country dictates against information and guidance being given by professional persons to families to plan their parenthood, while responsible organizations, including churches, are calling upon husband and wife to exercise the power of procreation responsibility.

The law of the country, to which reference is made above, is Section 150, sub-section 2(c), of the Criminal Code which makes it an offence for any person in Canada to sell, advertise, publish an advertisement of, or have for sale or disposal any means, instructions, medicine, drug or article intended or represented as a method of preventing conception.

In connection with this situation, reference is made to the first four paragraphs of the Statement on Marriage and Family adopted by the Second Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Church in America, July 29, 1964.

1. Marriage is that order of creation given by God in love which binds one man and one woman in a life-long union of the most intimate fellowship of body and life. This one-flesh relation, when properly based on fidelity and love, serves as a witness to God's grace and leads husband and wife into service one of the other. In their marriage, husband and wife are responsible to God for keeping their vows and must depend upon his love and mercy to fulfil them.
2. God has established the sexual relation for the purpose of bringing husband and wife into full unity so that they may enrich and be a blessing to each other. Such oneness, depending upon lifelong fidelity between the marriage partners and loving service one of the other, is the essential characteristic of marriage. Marriage should be consummated in love with the intention of maintaining a permanent and responsible relation. Continence outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage are binding on all.
3. Procreation is a gift inherent in the sex relation. In children the one-flesh idea finds embodiment. Children bring great joy to marriage and reveal how God permits men to share in his continuing creation. Married couples should seek to fulfil their responsibilities in marriage by conceiving and nurturing their children in the light of Christian faith.

4. Husband and wife are called to exercise the power of procreation responsibility before God. This implies planning their parenthood in accordance with their ability to provide for their children and carefully nurture them in fullness of Christian faith and life. The health and welfare of the mother-wife should be a major concern in such decisions. Irresponsible conception of children up to the limit of biological capacity and selfish limitation of the number of children are equally detrimental. Choice as to means of conception control should be made upon profession medical advice.

The Canadian Council of Churches meeting in biennial session in Niagara Falls, Ontario, November 16-19, 1964, took action on a statement regarding planned parenthood in relation to the present law of the country.

