



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA IN THE STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Church and Nation Committee

Positions stated by the NSW General Assembly on Moral and Social Issues (Listed in alphabetical order)

Aboriginal Reconciliation

1997

That the Assembly ...

(18) Note the report of the National Enquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families and acknowledge, to the indigenous people of Australia and to Almighty God:

(a) that the policy of Australian governments of separating indigenous children from their families and communities was based on sinful racist assumptions about indigenous people and their culture.

(b) that in certain instances members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales were involved in government in setting that policy and with government agencies and non-government agencies in implementing that policy and otherwise were involved in ministry to such indigenous people and their children.

(c) that although this ministry by Presbyterians was carried out with the genuine desire to help indigenous people and their children, and to glorify God, and although in many cases indigenous people and their children were helped through ministry by Presbyterians, yet that policy and its implementation has caused great harm to many indigenous children and their families and communities.

(d) that to the extent that it failed as an institution and through its members to understand and speak against the racist assumptions underlying that policy and the terrible damage done through its implementation, the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales sinned and deeply regrets the involvement of some of its members in setting and implementing that policy and unreservedly apologises to all indigenous Australians.

...

(21) Urge the Australian Prime Minister and the Australian Federal Parliament, for the sake of national reconciliation, to issue, on behalf of the Australian people, a strong and unequivocal apology to the indigenous Australians effected by the past policy of separating indigenous children from their families.

2003/Min 73

(5) Recognise the complexity of the issues involved in the way Europeans treated Aboriginal peoples at the time of European settlement of the Australian continent, and in the subsequent history of this country.

(6) Acknowledge that wrong has been done to Aboriginal people through the colonialisation process.

(7) Recognise the need for reconciliation between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people as a result of the events of Australian history.

(8) Acknowledge the church's responsibility to take the initiative in the reconciliation process.

(9) Encourage local congregations to explore ways to be involved with local Aboriginal people as an act of reconciliation.

(10) Encourage Aboriginal Christians to get involved in the reconciliation process.

Abortion

1978/Min 156

That the Assembly ...

a. affirm the sanctity of human life, including foetal life, as part of the creative and redemptive work of God.

- b. express total opposition to abortion being used as a means of birth control.
- c. recognise the need for therapeutic abortion but only on the recommendation of medical practitioners acting in accordance with the highest ethical principles of their profession, and concerned with the health of the mother.

Alcohol & Drugs

1978/Min 156

That the Assembly:

- (1) In view of the damaging effects that alcoholic beverages have upon the health of individuals and the welfare of society, urge the N.S.W. State Government
 - (a) to restrict the availability of alcoholic beverages by reducing the number of commercial outlets for the product by tighter restrictions and controls on the issue of new licences, and especially urge the removal of the sale of such products from supermarkets, theatres, cinemas and other public places.
 - (b) to implement an extensive educational campaign within the media to discourage people, especially the young, from misusing alcoholic beverages, drawing special attention to the medical and social harm caused by the abuse of such products.
 - (c) to deter motor vehicle-users from driving when alcohol in excess of the prescribed amount determined by the law is present by ratifying the use of random breathalyzer tests, particularly at car parks attached to or in the vicinity of licensed premises, and the closing of loopholes in the law whereby the drunk driver can avoid the full penalties of the law.
- (2) a. commend the Federal Government for action taken to stop the flow of narcotics into Australia.
 b. urge the enforcement of effective restrictions on advertisements promoting the so-called "soft drugs" especially alcohol, tobacco and analgesics.
 c. send these resolutions and the relevant section of the report to the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.
 ...
- (4) a. support moves by the State Government to provide facilities and finance to combat the drug problem, especially in the area of rehabilitation, but express strong opposition to any changes in the law which would endorse or imply the social acceptance of the use of cannabis.

1999

- (11) Commend the participants at the New South Wales drug summit in May 1999 for their desire to reduce the incidence and damage of drug abuse in the State, but:
 - (a) Strongly object to the provision of places for the "safe" administration of heroin ("shooting galleries") on the grounds that such provision will lead to a greater incidence of heroin use in our state and because only a minority of intravenous drug users will use such facilities there will ultimately be a greater number of casualties from the use of heroin.
 - (b) Strongly object to the decriminalisation of personally administering heroin and marijuana, on the grounds that decriminalising the use of these drugs will lead to greater incidence of drug abuse.

1992/Min 30

- (18) (a) Note with concern the incidence of under-age consumption of alcohol within the State of New South Wales.
- (b) Express the view that all Christians have an individual responsibility to ensure that they are not consciously guilty of causing a brother to stumble (Romans 14) or cause offence to children (Matthew 18).
- (c) Encourage all communicants and adherents of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales to be mindful of these things and to consider, as a matter of conscience, their need to set an example in the matter of the consumption of alcohol.
- (d) Express the view that voluntary total abstinence is a decision to be encouraged rather than ignored or ridiculed.

2000/Min 35

- (1) Commend the Federal Government's proposals for the Drug Offensive and encourages free access to rehabilitation for all those who present or are apprehended for drug use.
- (2) Commend the N.S.W. Education Department's initiative on drug education in schools, so that

- children may be strongly influenced to realise the dangerous and destructive nature of drug taking.
- (3) Disagree with the N.S.W. Government establishment of supervised injecting rooms as intended.. Any person apprehended or presented for treatment should be required to undertake rapid detox-rehabilitation.
 - (4) Consider that any proposal for 'harm minimisation' needs to be considered in the light of the following.
 - (a) Is it likely that the proposal will lead to an overall reduction of harm caused by a particular problem which includes not just individuals but the community as a whole?
 - (b) Does the proposal involve the giving of encouragement or aid to persons to do inherently sinful acts?

Australian values

1992/30

That the Assembly:

- (1) While acknowledging the multi-cultural nature of Australian society at present, urge members and adherents of the Church and other individual Christians to accept responsibility for ensuring that biblical values are neither violated nor watered down by the normal processes of the law or in accommodating the beliefs of non-Christians.

Blasphemy

1997

That the Assembly ...

- (2) Declare its continued indignation at the increasing use and tolerance of blasphemous and profane language - particularly in the mass media.
- (3) Reaffirm its support for the retention of laws and regulations against blasphemy (BB 1992, Min. 35).
- (4) Request the Church and Nation Committee to liaise with both Christian denominations and others offended by the gratuitous use of blasphemy and profanity in society, with a view to minimising its occurrence in the mass media.
- (5) Refer the subject of the use and tolerance of blasphemous and profane language to the G.A.A. Church and Nation Committee, requesting it to recommend to the 1997 G.A.A. a national strategy to combat this growing phenomenon.
- (6) Write both to relevant Government ministers and peak media bodies outlining the Assembly's position concerning the use and tolerance of blasphemy and profanity giving reasoned arguments.

Christian Conscience (also Education)

2000

That the Assembly ...

- (13) Advise the New South Wales Parliament and its leaders that the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales and all other Christian denominations in New South Wales, their congregations, schools aged care facilities and other institutions:
 - (a) as a matter of conscience must be legally free to require their leaders and both paid and voluntary workers to adhere to certain basic tenets of the Christian faith;
 - (b) as a matter of conscience must be legally free to require their leaders and both paid and voluntary workers to adhere to certain Christian moral values including abstinence from sexual intercourse outside of marriage and the avoidance of same sex 'de facto' relationships;
 - (c) as a matter of conscience must be legally free to discipline (including, if necessary, excommunicate) their members who reject foundational Christian beliefs;
 - (d) as a matter of conscience must be legally free to deny persons or groups access to their premises where such groups promote teachings or practices that contradict foundational Christian beliefs;
 - (e) must have the Legal freedom to discriminate (including on the grounds of religion and marital status) accordingly.

Constitutional Reform

1998

That the Assembly ...

- (9) Urge Australian Christians in the anticipated Australian Constitutional Referendum, to support the continued and unabridged reference in the Constitution to Almighty God, and otherwise to support the proposal which they as voters consider will be more likely to allow the continued freedom of Australian Christians to worship and proclaim God in Jesus Christ.

Discrimination (Also Education)

1995

That the Assembly ...

- (17) Recognise the wise provision and appropriateness within State and Federal Anti- Discrimination legislation of exemption for bodies established to propagate religion.
- (18) Note the pledge of the Federal Attorney General, the Hon. Michael Lavarch, reported in the "Sydney Morning Herald" of May 19, 1995, to consider extending the Sex Discrimination Act to ban discrimination on the basis of family responsibilities and removing exemptions from the act for religious schools, clubs and sport.
- (19) Vigorously assert the need for this exemption to be retained, as this is a crucial matter in Church/State relations.
- (20) Declare that the removal of this exemption would mark a conflict between the Word of God and the law of the State, in which case we must obey the Word of God.

Education

1985/Min 114

That the Assembly ...

- (1) Declare that all children should have access to a balanced high-quality education.
- (2) Declare that it supports the principle of access to some community funding for all non-government schools and reaffirms the right of parents and members of the community to add to the quality of education provided by any school by active support including support by way of school fees.
- (3) Believes that all schools should be accountable publicly for the ways they use community funds.
- (4) Declare that Presbyterian Schools must advance God's Kingdom by placing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at the heart of their philosophies.
- (5) Urge all ministers, home missionaries and congregations to continue to extend pastoral care and sound Christian teaching into all schools as an essential part of spreading of the Gospel.
- (6) Believes there should be as great a choice of schools as possible both within the government system and between government and non-government schools.

Energy Use and the Environment

1978/Min 156

That the Assembly ...

- a. urge the Federal Government to ensure that the most stringent safeguards against contamination from the radioactive wastes produced from nuclear power generation are rigidly enforced.
- b. request the Federal Government to give high priority to the funding of research into the use of solar energy.

1992/30

That the Assembly ...

- 3) Urge upon all members and adherents the importance of energy conservation.
- 4) Urge members and adherents to consider the environmental implications of different means of transport, and to practice Christian stewardship as they choose means of transport to meet their travel needs.
- 5) Call upon the Federal and State Governments to encourage research into the development of renewable energy resources, and to use fiscal Policies to discourage the use of non-renewable resources.

Ethical Investments

2000

That the Assembly ...

- (6) Recommend to members of the Church:
 - a) the need to consider wise stewardship of income and capital, so as to provide for retirement whilst maintaining a keen dependence on God and generous giving to gospel ministry.
 - (b) a desire to invest in ethically sound businesses, either directly or through Ethical Trusts whose guidelines reflect Biblical priorities for environmental stewardship and godly individual and community life.

Euthanasia

1995

That the Assembly ...

- (24) (a) Upholds the doctrine of the sanctity of human life, which is the gift of God the Creator, and expresses the view that Active Euthanasia, defined as the deliberate administration of a life-shortening treatment with the intention of terminating the life of an individual patient, is in breach of the Sixth Commandment.
 - (b) Recognises and upholds the right of a patient to refuse or to have withdrawn any treatment, even treatment on which life depends; in other words, upholds the right of a patient to let nature take its course.
 - (c) Affirms its strong support for the development and establishment of adequate palliative care facilities for the terminally ill, including competent pastoral care for patients and their families in what are usually very difficult circumstances.

1996

- 3) Reaffirm the resolutions of the 1995 General Assembly regarding Euthanasia, viz:
 - (a) Upholds the doctrine of the sanctity of human life, which is the gift of God the Creator, and expresses the view that Active Euthanasia, defined as the deliberate administration of a life-shortening treatment with the intention of terminating the life of an individual patient, is in breach of the Sixth Commandment.
 - (b) Recognises and upholds the right of a patient to refuse or to have withdrawn any treatment, even treatment on which life depends; in other words, upholds the right of a patient to let nature take its course.
 - (c) Affirms its strong support for the development and establishment of adequate palliative care facilities for the terminally ill, including competent pastoral care for patients and their families in what are usually very difficult circumstances.

Gambling

1992/Min 30

That the Assembly ...

- 16) (a) Note with concern the increase of gambling facilities, outlets and opportunities available within New South Wales.
 - (b) Express the view that gambling is detrimental to the social, moral, spiritual and economic welfare of many people in New South Wales.
 - (c) Encourage all communicants and adherents of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales to seriously review their attitude to gambling and to refrain from involvement in gambling activities as witness to their faith and as examples to young people in particular.

2000/Min 35

- 15) a) Commend the Federal Parliament on its moratorium on internet gambling in Australia and its Territories and urge the Federal Parliament to enact laws banning internet gambling in Australia and its Territories.
 - (b) Urge the New South Wales Parliament to continue to address the harm caused by all forms of gambling in New South Wales and to consider:

- (i) curbing the proliferation of gambling facilities in the State;
- (ii) preventing the use by criminals of Star City Casino and other gambling outlets for 'laundering' the proceeds of crime;
- (iii) reducing the considerable harm caused by gambling addiction;
- (iv) urgently considering the 'rolling back' of the gambling industry in New South Wales with a reduction of gambling opportunities in both the public and private sector, including a prohibition on advertising by gambling business.

Gun Control

1998

That the Assembly ...

- (7) Express its opposition to reported unilateral moves to liberalise the ownership of semi-automatic firearms in some States and note that in its opinion, for the Firearms Laws of each State and Territory to be their most effective, a uniform national approach must be maintained.

Homosexuality

1978/Min 156

That the Assembly ...

Oppose any change to the laws of N.S.W. whereby homosexuality in any respect, is accepted as a valid alternative life style for such lifestyle would be contrary to the revealed will of God in the Scriptures.

1984/Min 107

- (18) Express opposition to any changes to the law which would convey approval of homosexual activities, or regard homosexuality as a valid alternative to heterosexuality, or which would place homosexuality on the same basis in law as heterosexuality, especially in relation to the teaching of school children and the welfare system.

Human Rights (incl Rights of the Child)

1986/Min 102

That the Assembly ...

- (b) that Christian love and education, but not legislation beyond the Common Law, will guarantee human rights.
- (c) that the Federal Government, if it believes a Bill of Rights is necessary for the Australian people:
 - (i) should seek to entrench such Bill within the Australian constitution:
 - (ii) should provide in the legislation that the Federal Court of Australia, or some other court, rather than the Human Rights Commission, shall supervise the application of any Bill of Rights.
 - (iii) Should not attempt to enact any such legislation without popular approval by means of a referendum.

1990/Min 128

- (13) Urge the Federal Government not to ratify the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child for the following reasons:
 1. Such ratification would require the legislation of the convention into the law of Australia, which law can only be changed with the approval of the United Nations:
 2. Such ratification would grant the Australian Government authority, by legislative process, (always subject to the United Nations), to interpret what are the "best interests" and "well being" of the child, what are "appropriate legislative and administrative means" to safeguard the child, what are "competent authorities" to establish standards (Article 3), what are the "evolving capacities of the child" and what is the "appropriate direction and guidance" and who should give such guidance (Article 5):
 3. Such ratification would require the Australian Government (always subject to the United Nations) to implement and enact "all appropriate legislation, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in their convention (Article 4):
 4. "the rights set forth in this convention" (Article 2) are arrived at by consensus within

humanity without necessary reference to God:

5. Our rights and responsibilities come ultimately from God alone as recognised historically under our present constitution:

6. Thereby the value system underlying our present constitution based on christian theistic humanism would be replaced by a value system based on secular non-theistic humanism;

7. The Australian Government by the adoption of this new system would take to itself the power to control the citizens of their country at their most basic level, the family:

8. By the adoption of such value system the constitution is being re-interpreted, so that changes are being made which previously would only have been made by a referenda (in this instance the re-interpreting of internal law by external affairs means).

9. There is a surrendering of national sovereignty with regard to such a fundamental internal matter.

1991/Min 26

- 11) Express concern to the Federal Government that its ratification of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child was neither announced nor debated in the House of Representatives, and reaffirm its strong opposition to such ratification.
- (12) Request the Federal Government to ensure that all international treaties (excluding National security) are debated by the Parliament. (13) Request the Federal Government to take action in the Parliament to have the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child amended to pay the highest regard to the importance of the family unit, and to the rights and responsibilities of parent

1994/Min 22

- (15) Adopt the position of the Royal Australian College of Gynaecologists in which it states categorically that it is opposed to any form of female circumcision being performed for non-medical reasons.
- (16) Agree with the position of the College that such practices are harmful to women and girls and support the College in its efforts to eliminate such practices through education of the community and healthcare providers.
- (17) Encourage ministers and elders to consult the RACOG continuing education recourse units on the matter of female circumcision and related procedures.
- (18) Through the Church and Nation Standing Committee, communicate with the Federal Attorney General offering him strong support in his recently publicly stated intention to legislate to make female circumcision illegal in Australia providing him with a concise summary of the committee's reports on female circumcision.
- (19) That the Assembly, through the Church and Nation Standing Committee, communicate with the Federal Minister for Immigration requesting him to make it a condition of entry into Australia to sign an undertaking not to perform female circumcision.

Industrial Relations

1982/Min 131

That the Assembly ...

- (1) Encourage all Presbyterians to be involved actively in their trade union, chamber of commerce or professional body in order to exert a Christian influence in the deliberations of such bodies.
- (2) Express to the Commonwealth Minister for Industrial Relations support for the work performed by the Clyde Cameron College for Trade Unionists in creating a more informed and skilled trade union movement.
- (3) Urge all participants in commerce and industry to exercise a proper regard for the consequences of their actions, especially in relation to closures and strike action, and to foster a genuine interest in the common good.
- (4) Support the view that management in commerce and industry should provide facilities and opportunities for all employees to achieve satisfaction from work performed, attain a high degree of excellence, and provide a service to the public, and to that end encourage all groups in commerce and industry to strive for better communication and understanding, to provide incentives and rewards, and to foster a spirit of co-operation between all parties within each specific work situation.

- (5) Encourage Commonwealth and State Governments to introduce the principle of accountability for industrial action, and compensation for losses resulting from unjustified industrial action, into the commercial and industrial laws.
- (6) Affirm the desirability of the concept "just strike", as outlined in the report, being introduced into the industrial laws of the land, to provide protection for just strikes, and with appropriate penalties for industrial actions of management or labour being determined "unjustified" by a properly constituted authority.
- (7) Is of the mind that the entire system of arbitration and conciliation should be reviewed to eliminate delays in hearings and the appeal system, and to place greater emphasis on conciliation, round table bargaining and self-discipline, rather than on arbitration, while at the same time affirms the necessity of the rule of law to protect justice for all parties and the public interest.
- (8) Condemns the system whereby a worker when on strike either remains on the payroll or the worker or spouse receives unemployment benefits.

International Relations

1988/Min 125

That the Assembly ...

- 11) Express its deep concern at the continuing killings and violence in Israeli Occupied Territory and convey that concern to the Australian Government.
- 12) Ask the Australian Government to protest to the Israeli Government about the treatment of Mordecai Vanunu

1989/125

- 4) Urge members and adherents to pray for peace and the relief of suffering in Israel and the occupied territories.
- 7) Urge members and adherents to support with prayer the witness of the Christian Churches in the Middle East, particularly in Israel and the Occupied Territories.
- 8) Urge Presbyterians who are visiting the Middle East to make a special effort to visit Christian Churches in Israel and the Occupied Territories.
- 9) Advise the Australian Government that this General Assembly supports the main conclusion reached by the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the Middle East, 6-21 June 1988, that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question must be based on two fundamental points: Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognised borders, and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and, if they so choose, independence including the possibility of their own independent state.
- 10) Request the Israeli Ambassador to Australia to congratulate Prime Minister Shamir on behalf of this General Assembly on his courageous proposal for Palestinian elections in the Occupied Territories, and to urge him to press such initiative for peace to a just conclusion without delay.
- 11) While strongly condemning previous terrorist activities, welcomes the apparent willingness of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to work for a just and peaceful resolution of the long and tragic conflict in Israel and the Occupied Territories; and urges the P.L.O., through its Australian representative, to continue working for resolution of the conflict.

1994/Min 22

- 12) Express its grave concern to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs at the actions of the Sudanese Government in consistently persecuting the Christian Church in the Sudan, and request that the government give consideration of raising these concerns with the appropriate Sudanese authorities and the United Nations.
- 13) Call Sessions and congregations to prayer for our persecuted brothers and sisters in the Sudan, for an end to the warfare and for the delivery of emergency aid, encouraging them to make representations to the Australian Government on behalf of Christians in the Sudan.

International Trade and Economic Aid (see also Taxation reform)

1986/102

That the Assembly ...

- (9) Take a positive position encouraging both domestic and international trade, but qualify this positive position where there are obvious injustices or where trading interests are trying to use the Church for their own particular purposes.
- (10) Encourage international trade between countries which are antagonistic to each other.
- (11) Encourage the Federal and State Governments and charity organisations to develop trade rather than to give aid to the less developed countries.
- (12) Speak out against those governments or companies which allow unsafe products or techniques to be sold or exported especially to unsuspecting less-developed countries.
- (13) Ensure that the Church or Christianity is not used as a justification for war or economic action which is in reality an issue of power or trade.
- (14) Encourage individual members to use their own personal purchasing power to support causes they believe in, and to withdraw support from causes they oppose.
- (15) Recognise the delicate balance for Australia between the normal aspirations of our people for an improving standing of living and quality of life, and the reality of a world where more than 50% of the population of working age have no jobs, or at best have jobs which barely pay enough for subsistence.
- (16) Encourage the development of cultural relations with countries in our region, and with countries with whom we have special links, both at the Assembly and individual levels.
- (17) Advise the Prime Minister, the Premier of New South Wales and the Leaders of the Federal and State Opposition parties, that the Assembly recognises that to increase Australia's export income is essential for economic viability.

Mandatory Sentencing

1999

That the Assembly ...

- (3) Reject moves in Australia to increase the use of mandatory sentencing in criminal law and note that mandatory sentences are inherently arbitrary and therefore more likely to be unjust.

2000

- (5) Call on the National Parliament to proscribe the mandatory sentencing laws in the Northern Territory.

Marriage, Family and Divorce

1984/Min 107

That the Assembly ...

- (22) Convey to the appropriate authorities its deep concern for the future of the family as the foundation of our society, if politicians living in de facto relationships are accorded the same travelling privileges as those living in stable marriage relationships.

1995

Advise the Federal and State Governments of its protect against any Bill which undermines the exclusiveness of marriage as being between one male and one female and call upon the Federal Government to amend the Marriage Act, 1961, Part III 23(2), with a new clause (c) so that it should read as follows:

- (a) between a person and an ancestor or descendant of the person;
- (b) between a brother and a sister (whether of the whole blood or the half blood); or
- (c) between a male and a male or between a female and a female.

1997

- (9) Affirm that marriage is the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others and:
 - (a) Should be the only relationship legally sanctioned or given the status of marriage.
 - (b) Should be the only context for the adoption of children
 - (c) Should be the only context for access to assisted reproduction
- (10) Protest against the legal changes that allow registered gender to be changed by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages on application of a person who has had a gender reassignment.

1998

- (3) Express its opposition to Clover Moore's Significant Personal Relationships Bill, and urge the State Government and Parliament not to pass any laws giving the status or any of the legal rights or benefits of marriage to relationships (including homosexual and lesbian relationships) which are not legal relationships.

1999

- (3) Reject moves to grant quasi-legal status to same-sex relationships.
- (4) Reject any proposal to change New South Wales law so as to jeopardise a married person's enjoyment of legal entitlements as their marriage partner's legal "spouse"
- ...
- 10) (a) Protest the passing of the Property (Relationships) Legislation Amendment Act 1999 by the New South Wales Parliament.
(b) Reject the redefinition of "spouse" in New South Wales Legislation to include De Facto Relationships.
(c) Strongly object to the provisions in the Property (Relationships) Legislation Amendment Act 1999 amending some State Laws so that "where more than one person would ... qualify as a spouse ..." the rights of a husband or wife will be terminated in favour of the rights of a later de facto "spouse" without even a divorce or separation having taken place.

Reproductive Technology

1983/Min 120

- (1) Records its sympathy and understanding towards married couples who are unable to have children.
- (2) Remind members of the Church that 'childlessness' does not signify a failure in marriage nor that their marriage may not be satisfying and may be fulfilling and that childlessness is not necessarily a sign of God's displeasure on them personally but may open other doors for valuable service in the name of Christ to his people in need.
- (3) Acknowledge the skill and kindness shown by medical practitioners in devising medical procedures designed to treat conditions that prevent or hinder married couples having children.
- (4) Affirm that the procedures of in vitro fertilisation, when applied to a childless married couple who consent to the programme and who have been counselled on all aspects of the situation, are ethically compatible with the Christian faith.
- (5) Is of the opinion that in vitro fertilisation procedures should be limited to couples committed to each other in marriage.
- (6) Believes that with procedures now existing for the independent storage of sperm and ova, and for the independent fertilization of any one ovum, ova should be fertilized independently, one at a time as necessary, and implanted as fertilized until a successful pregnancy is achieved.
- (7) Urge that experimentation on live human embryos should be forbidden by law to prevent, in particular, programmes resulting in cloning, genetic engineering, surrogate motherhood, human/animal hybrids and embryo freezing.

1991/Min 26

That the Assembly:

- (1) Urge that technology not be allowed to undermine the sanctity of marriage or the place of the family as the environment for the begetting and nurture of children.
- (2) Re-iterate that the techniques for artificial insemination should be made available only to legally married couples, that is, excluding couples in de facto relationships.
- (3) Urge that experimentation on live human embryos, except to further the survival and interests of a particular embryo, should be forbidden by law to prevent, in particular, programmes resulting in cloning, genetic engineering, surrogate motherhood and human/animal hybrids.
- (4) Believes that embryo-freezing, where the embryo(s) result from fertilisation of ova from a wife by her husband's sperm, should be permissible in the first place to allow implantation of such embryo(s) in the wife from whom the ova have been collected.
- (5) Believes that such married couples should be required by law to offer any frozen embryo(s) excess to their own requirements for adoption by married couples who have been unable to achieve a pregnancy by any other means.

- (6) Believes that such potential adopting parents be properly counselled in the first place, and then be required to conform with the laws for adopted children should birth of a child or children result from the adoption of such embryo or embryos.
- (7) Believes that when possible the technique known as G.I.F.T. (Gamete Intra-Fallopian Transfer) using husband's sperm and wife's ova is the preferable technology.

Prostitution

1998

That the Assembly ...

- (2) Commend congregations and members who have taken action to oppose applications to Local Councils for the approval of brothels and encourage them, where their local Council has not formulated any policies, to raise and discuss the formulation of such regulations before any application is received.

Racism

1987/ Min 41

That the Assembly:

- (1) Declare, as it has done in earlier years, that the policy of Apartheid, or separate development as it operates in the Republic of South Africa, is unacceptable.
- (2) Urge our sister Churches in the Republic of South Africa of whatever colour or race to disavow any theological justification of Apartheid.
- (3) Urge our sister Churches in the Republic of South Africa of whatever colour or race to work for a just and peaceful society.
- (4) Urge the Government of the Republic of South Africa rapidly to eliminate Apartheid, to involve people of all racial groups in the government of the state, and to establish a society where there is justice and peace for all.
- (5) Inform the President of South Africa, the Government of South Africa and our sister churches in that country of our continual prayer for a just and peaceful solution to the problems facing their country.

Sexual Reassignment

1998

That the Assembly ...

- (13) Declare that, whilst errors in registered sex ought to be corrected, gender reassignment cannot legally change a person's sex, and ought not to be the basis of any change to a birth certificate.
- (14) Declare its support for the Commonwealth's view that a person's sex is a biological matter.
- (15) Declare that a person's sex is determined by God even before conception and that nothing can change this determined sex.
- (16) Declare that, whilst errors in registered sex ought to be corrected, it opposes the N.S.W. Transgender Legislation (Anti-Discrimination and Legal Recognition) Act 1996, in which a person may apply for the alteration of a person's gender in the registration of the person's birth.
- (17) Declare that, whilst errors in registered sex ought to be corrected, it opposes the N.S.W. legislation in which provision is made for the issue of a new birth certificate showing the person's "new" "altered" sex after the alteration of the record.
- (18) Declare its opposition to any amendments to the N.S.W. law which allows a married person who has undergone sexual reassignment surgery to have the birth record altered, or to be issued with a new certificate, regardless of the person's marital status.
- (19) Whilst errors in registered sex ought to be corrected, call upon the N.S.W. Attorney General to entirely remove the legal recognition of surgical sexual reassignment.

Social Change and Protest

1984/Min 107

That the Assembly:

- (1) Endorse the right of individuals and groups of citizens to agitate to change public opinion, and the laws of the land, but affirm also that such agitation, when it is likely to interfere with the rights of other citizens, should of necessity have to gain approval from some appropriate authority such as the Police, before it is implemented.
...
- (3). (c) encourage members of the Church to participate in social movements designed to preserve freedom, establish justice and promote peace amongst individuals and nations, according to the dictates of their consciences in the light of the Christian ethic.
- (4) Declare that all war is a consequence of human sin, but add that in a fallen world it may sometimes be necessary to maintain justice.

Tax Reform (incl overseas aid)

1998

That the Assembly ...

- (4) Express its desire for tax reform to take place to address growing vertical inequity in the Australian taxation system.
- (5) Express its desire for tax reform to take place in the corporate sector to address the growing inequity of some multi-national companies and individuals paying little or no tax through the use of tax avoidance schemes and other means.
...
- (8) Express its desire for tax reform to take place, so that adequate government services may be properly funded, and particularly so as to develop and maintain good quality health, education and justice systems that are readily accessible to all Australians.
- (9) Express its desire for tax reform to take place so that adequate funds are available for the Australian government to increase the percentage of Gross National Product directed to overseas aid to at least a total of 0.7%.

World Peace

1995

That the Assembly ...

- 16) Call upon the Australian Government to make strong representations in the international arena to all nations, particularly the five nuclear powers - France, China, Russia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom - to honour their commitment under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to disarm at an early date, and to end nuclear testing.