

SACBC STATEMENT ON ABORTION (31/1/94)

LIFE IS SACRED, IT BELONGS TO GOD. ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHEN IT IS TO BEGIN AND END.

As followers of Jesus, who said of Himself: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full', (John 10:10) we are totally opposed to any attempt to liberalise abortion legislation.

This was our stance in 1990 when the Department of Health and Population Development wished to consider liberalising the existing legislation.

Now we stand on the threshold of a new dispensation, which will offer life and hope to millions of people whose very lives counted for little under apartheid.

In this time of new hope we find it alarming that there are those who are advocating that it should be lawful to take the lives of unborn children.

We uphold the position of the Church as stated by the Second Vatican Council.

'God the Lord of life has conferred on people the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life, a ministry which must be fulfilled in a manner that is worthy of the human person. Therefore, from the moment of its conception, life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes' (Church and World 51).

And thus we repeat what we stated in 1972 and again in 1990. '...The life of the foetus from the moment of conception is regarded as inviolable, so that any direct attack on it, as an end or a means, is rejected as immoral.'

'No medical, eugenic, social, ethical or other indications can be accepted as justifying the direct killing of what is recognised as an innocent human being.'

'Abortion stands condemned by the Catholic Church. Its judgement on the evil of terminating life derives from a Christian awareness that people are not the masters but the ministers of life' (SACBC Statements 1972 and 1990).

We are aware that a government is faced with the dilemma of having to legislate for all citizens, some of whom advocate abortion as providing a solution for 'unwanted pregnancies'. The remedy however is not the taking of innocent lives.

EVERYONE INCLUDING THE UNBORN HAS THE RIGHT TO LIFE.