

TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS -

The Chairman of the Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society, the Rev. Bruce Reddrop, has requested that the following draft of a leaflet on "Moral Issues in Human Reproductive Science" be circulated among committee members prior to the National Committee Meeting. --

The REV. J. HENLEY, Lecturer in Christian Ethics, United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne. -

Increased medical skills, new drugs, more skilled nursing, have led to control and relief of painful and deforming illnesses and the prolongation of life at all ages. At the same time, partly as a result of this, and partly because of an awareness of the depletion of the earth's resources, in creasing interest and concern are centred on population control and the quality of individuals making up society. This has led to greater research in human reproductive science. Along with this there is a growing awareness among doctors, scientists and society at large that in this field we are dealing with human beings and potential human beings, and that much wider questions than medical skill are involved. Doctors feel that they are being required to make decisions the responsibility for which ought to be shared, and many people are becoming nervous about scientific discoveries reported in popular magazines or choices they have to make in their daily lives. People in every country, whatever their religious or social beliefs, agree that every human being is valuable, how valuable depends on the religious beliefs, social goals and needs of the particular society in which they live. For us who live in a community whose outlook is moulded by basically Christian standards with their emphasis on individual worth within a free and responsibility community, the problems are particularly acute.

The problems face us all, whatever our age. Young people face decisions about having children, about saving physically and mentally handicapped babies, middle-aged people face decisions about the care of elderly relatives and friends and about planning for their own old age. Old people face loss of dignity and the fear of life prolonged unhappily by intensive care. We all face the possibility of death or maimed life saved after road accidents.

Who decides what medical skill is to be used, what scientific research is proceeded with? Whose money is to be used?

Dr. Walters, Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Monash University says: "We have arrived at a stage in medicine where we need to make some agonisingly difficult decisions in order to plan sensibly for the future of man. Failure to make decisions and plan in the past has provided us today with one of the greatest problems ever confronting man - world overpopulation. Never before has the mind of man had to wrestle with the enormous practical and moral problems of giving, taking, and preserving human life. We cannot shelve our responsibility. We must make those agonising decisions, but in doing so we need all the guidance we can get from people in all walks of life." Christian people cannot refuse to share in these decisions. If we refuse to decide we have already made a decision.

To help you decide what are responsible Christian attitudes, this study will tell you what some doctors, scientists and theologians say about the new and sometimes frightening skills that are now available and the ethical problems which are involved in their use.

Medical skills are now available to significantly modify or even change patterns of human reproduction.

1. It is now possible to discover early in pregnancy whether the foetus will be born with certain physical or mental deformities, e.g. mongolism.
2. The lives of babies born with inherited defects which once would have caused early death can now be saved and those children can grow to maturity and carry the defect into the next generation, e.g. the French child living in a germ free tent.
3. By the use of intensive care, cardiac massage, respirators etc. life can be greatly prolonged.
4. Medical and nursing skills can very sharply increase the chance of life of even very prematurely born babies.
5. Childless couples, by hormone treatment or artificial insemination can have children of their own.
6. More sophisticated methods of contraception and abortion and inducing sterility are available and the legalisation of abortion appears to be on the way in many places.
7. Some surgical procedures allow treatment of the foetus before birth.
8. But of even more significance is the future possibility of egg transplants from one woman to another, of egg and embryo banks, of the choice of the sex of the child, and above all of the admittedly very difficult actual modifying of the basic genetic material of cells by removing a defective gene and replacing it by another normal gene, with the possibility of deciding what sort of child we want to be born. All these things are at present only possibilities but it is now that decisions about them must be made.

There are facts which must be seen alongside these possibilities:

1. Most of these procedures involve a great expenditure of human skill, energy, and money, as has the research which makes them possible.
2. The problem of overpopulation and the depletion of earth's resources face us with the urgent necessity for planning so that some equilibrium is reached.
3. The burden of genetic defects is growing heavier with each passing generation.

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4. The necessity for limiting population in some way emphasises the importance of quality in planning.
5. The unplanned conquest of diseases, the replacement of blood loss by transfusion, modern anaesthesia and other skills have reduced mortality and population has increased.
6. New services which medicine might soon be able to provide for the affluent minority of the world will often encourage these people to form expectations which will be opposed to the best interests of the human community as a whole. For instance new techniques may make it possible for affluent countries to provide sophisticated surgery to preserve life while poor countries cannot provide medical care to keep their surviving people healthy.

The uncertainty of the future is not something which the Christian individual or a Christian community is in a position to avoid. The Christian gospel does not promise men and women the kind of revelation that would save them from having to decide how to deal with novel problems for themselves. As the apostle Paul advised the Christian community at Rome, the gospel promises men and women that their minds can be transformed, that they can find a new way of looking at and dealing with the world, in the light of which they themselves "will be able to discern the will of God".

Jesuit Theologian
FATHER DANIELS, Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, Melbourne. -

Resistance to change can come from the intense attitude which looks to definitions and so on to fix rules, and sees in that our only moral security. It is indeed far more important that we should get behind the rules to see what ideals are enshrined there, and if they are good ideals then they should be applicable, they should have a flexibility for new and changing situations. So from that point of view one can have a continuity between and old ethic and a new, even though the results, the prescriptions it comes up with will be different, and have to be different, to deal with the changing circumstances.

The REVEREND J. HENLEY -

Christians should be free to propose novel solutions to novel problems. They should not need to stake their security on the preservation of patterns of thought which they have inherited from the past, however venerable some of these may be. On the contrary they should welcome the occurrence of novelty as an opportunity "to account for the hope that is in them".

DR. WALTERS, Monash University.

In a world which is rapidly becoming overpopulated we may doubt whether everyone who wants to have a child has the right to give birth to one. Instead of providing artificial means of impregnation and so encouraging childless couples to bring a new child into the world we would do better to find means of encouraging them to believe that there is nothing wrong with a marriage which produces no children, or else to adopt a child who has already been brought into the world.

Report of address by PROFESSOR DOBZANSKY of U.S.A., W.C.C. conference on technology, faith and the future of man.

The burden of genetic defects is growing heavier with each passing generation. Natural selection, which in the past defended the genetic health of homo sapiens, is being frustrated by modern medicine and technology. Genetic weaklings who in previous centuries would have been weeded out now survive, reproduce and pass on their accumulating inferior genes to succeeding generations. Should we try to play God by interfering in the "natural" processes which shape our genetical future? For most of the scientists present the answer was obvious: we are already engaged in such interference, since the earliest days of medical science. The real question concerns the goals and the means to be employed in directing our future. One way or another tough decisions will have to be made. "Mankind is no longer free to choose to take on or leave this awesome burden of its evolution. It is inescapable because we know something about evolution, and because this knowledge is rapidly increasing. Therefore if we resolve to do nothing, to leave the knowledge unused, this will be a decision the consequences of which are predictable, and which carries a serious responsibility. One way or another, the problems will have to be faced".

PROFESSOR PARMAR, Economist, Allahabad University, India.

Until recently we were perhaps over-enchanted by the possibilities of power But the setbacks and disillusionment of the sixties both in the areas of development and world peace have proved to be a sobering experience. Technology can strengthen the balance of hope only if its unregulated progression is checked. Growth of power must be undergirded by growth of wisdom to use this power; otherwise technology can go berserk and develop a tyranny that enslaves and dehumanizes people and nations.

DR. BREHENY of the Mercy Maternity Hospital. -

Not everything we can do is moral, but on the other hand not everything that is in my power to do is what I must do. There will be limits to what is wise - the reasonable use of resources - the question of the insatiable curiosity of science to find out what we can do in these very very tricky areas, - the extent to which the scientist as a responsible member of the community should say these are luxuries at the present moment, there are other important things to be done. As a doctor serving the health care of the community one obviously has a responsibility to avoid meddlesome interference in relation to patient care. This is important in the area of intensive care, using respirators and cardiac massage, to restore life to some otherwise dignified citizen hopefully reaching his end in a form that we would like for ourselves and our loved ones. We have a responsibility to develop an attitude that will temper enthusiasm, and to ensure that reasonable attitudes are again adopted.

PROFESSOR WALTERS -

In planning for a rich future we should surely not be excluding people whose contribution to the life of society may be limited and whose satisfaction may be less than that which the more normal can obtain. We should rather hope and plan for a society which is prepared to make room and take responsibility for the less fortunate of its members.

PROFESSOR BIRCH, Sydney University. -

The new sorts of ethical judgements involved as a result of biological discoveries force upon us the need to reconsider the relationship between

- (a) individual freedom to make decisions, and
- (b) the need for society to make decisions which will limit the area in which individuals are free to decide.

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POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Since findings in genetical engineering might be used either for good or ill, should research proceed regardless, and for its own sake?
2. In a society which may have the means of controlling individual behaviour by a variety of means, what safeguards would be necessary to prevent manipulation of a community and manipulation of individuals?
3. Who should decide the priorities in scientific and medical research and the money which should be used for this purpose:
 - A. a body of elected representatives from various walks of life, elected for various periods of time?
 - OR
 - B. a body of doctors and scientists?
 - OR
 - C. a government commission?
 - OR
 - D. Who?
4. Who is deciding our future now, you and I, doctors, scientists, politicians, teachers, or the Church?

PROBLEMS and ISSUES

Following are brief extracts from Reports contained in the Working Documents. It is intended to provide opportunity during the National Committee Meeting for discussion of the points, problems or issues raised and for constructive comment to be made in regard to them.

From Report of New South Wales Unit:

"Some centres have found that they only receive response to one service per year, usually Fellowship Day, but they support the F.L.C. Comments regarding services indicate the form of service needs changing and that there is a lack of knowledge of the true significance of the service."

From Report of Victoria Unit:

"Action for World Development: Individual members were engaged in local discussion groups. It was noted that in a few cases, this additional exercise was given as a reason for not holding Community Day as it covered the same period."

"Concerns: What is the future of Fellowship and World Community Days? - more especially the latter. Groups who have withdrawn from observances state in the main their preference for the support of Women's World Day of Prayer. (Since 1970, twenty groups have discontinued either Fellowship or World Community Day.)

That projects chosen for support are related to World Christian Action. (World Community Day Offering). That confusion still exists concerning the administration of the three 'Days' observed in the year."

From Report of Tasmania Unit:

"During this year I have been wondering whether in this age of organisational plethora the habit of churches "sending a representative" (or two) to functions and gatherings such as Fellowship Day, etc. is not an inhibiting one, excluding "involvement" on the part of both the representative and the church congregation whom they represent. To break down the wall of "disinterested interest" and get involvement - that is the question."

From Report of South Australia Unit:

"Special Days are greeted with a mixed reception. In some places where our days have been celebrated for some years, there are murmurs of "monotony" regarding the services.

"Issues: Could A.C.W. sponsor a scholarship for Aboriginal children at the early secondary school level?

What is the future role of A.C.W.?"

From Report of the Congregational Women's Fellowship of Australia:

"It is noted that it is only nine months since the last National A.C.W. Meetings. This seems to be too short a period to assess the work of an organisation from a national stand-point in a country as large as ours, and for projects to be brought into being and the results seen. Added to this is the difficulty for an organisation like C.W.F.A., which is not a money-raising body, to find money for the travel of its delegates and so this report starts with a plea that consideration be given to holding National A.C.W. Meetings every second or third year."

From Report of the Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society:

"Publications: The committee has seen part of its task to produce discussion leaflets for use of groups of men and women in the church. Questions have been raised as to the extent to which these leaflets have been used. In each case 2000 have been printed and 1770 of the "Parents and the Teenage Revolution" leaflet have been sold, but only 350 of the "Children are People" leaflet have been sold. A further question is: how many of those sold have in fact been used?

The Committee would like the advice of A.C.W. on the use of these leaflets including questions of promotion and printing costs."

" PROJECT INFORMATION "

The following information has been submitted by the N.S.W. Unit of A.C.W. for the consideration of the National Committee, with a view to possible financial support during 1973 (World Community Day Offering or submission to F.L.C. International).

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ORPHANS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S STORMThe Suffering Behind the Statistics

"There was hardly a crippling complaint was not present among them, not to mention the minor problems of scabies, warts and nits. A high proportion were polios and spastics and nearly all had discharging eyes and ears; but the worst were those with ever-present symptoms of emotional disturbance: the rockers, the whitewash lickers, the food refusers, the apathetic, the compulsive destroyers."

"There are exceptions where a good family atmosphere prevails, but for most it is the tiny iron cot, the dirty cushion, the bottle of thin condensed milk with the scissor-slashed teat. The tiniest baby has to cope with the ensuing rush of milk round his tonsils unhelped, unwinded. If in a gasp for breath, the bottle topples over, it empties into his clothing, hair and bedding ... It is not long before the fat, rosy, golden little creature with its soft pouting little lips is reduced to a pale, ill-fitting skin stretched over the usual complement of articulated bones: its lusty cry to an apologetic wail."

"Round my feet Ut drags himself along: he is spastic, but he is always in the thick of everything. Once, before the toys came, when all that could be found was a bit of crumpled paper, we dropped it a hundred times while, puppy-like the children picked it up and gave it back; every time Ut would pull himself along to catch it while his nimbler fellows snatched it up. But he never gave up; he tried to the end."

The GORDON BARCLAY VIETNAM FUND is merely one of many voluntary organisations working for children of Vietnam. But their work is distinctive - and vital.

The greatest tragedy about Vietnam is the extent to which we've grown used to it. Perhaps it is the impersonal language of modern war, the talk of offensives, defoliation and de-militarised zones; or perhaps it is simply the fact that the conflict has been depicted in our newspapers and newsreels for a decade or more. Whatever the reasons, we have become blasé.

It is a reaction which does us no credit, for the tragedy of Vietnam will far outlive the peace conferences and the troop withdrawals. It is a tragedy of millions of broken homes, of two whole generations that have grown up to accept the cruelty and callousness of war as the normal way of life. Above all, it is a tragedy of children.

Not all the children in Vietnamese orphanages are what we would call orphans. Some are handicapped and have been abandoned by their families, some have been separated from their parents by the war. It is estimated that there are 250,000 such children in Vietnamese orphanages. Their plight is truly tragic, for no one is pretending that the domestic social services can cope with the problem on this scale. In some orphanages 90% of the children who enter at birth die before their first birthday. Disease is rife, and the children are often denied the simple human attentions that could keep them alive. Arrested development is common - children of 3 and 4 unable to walk, talk or play, sometimes unable even to grasp a ball.

They are frail, defenceless children, caught up in someone else's quarrel, denied everything that we take for granted for our own children. They deserve our help.

Celia Barclay first accompanied her surgeon husband to Vietnam in 1968. Exposed to the horrific conditions in the orphanages for the first time, she began an experimental play group for the children of Go Vap. It was a revolutionary idea - play is regarded in Vietnam with distrust, and the provision of simple educational toys was, and is an enormous problem. But the results were tremendous. As the children became accustomed to a new sensation - play - they began to develop. The three-year-old non-walkers began to walk. They began to be able to feed themselves, to laugh, to respond to each other. They were probably happy for the first time in their lives. All this after a play group experiment that lasted for one hour a day, six days a week.

THE GORDON BARCLAY VIETNAM FUND is now trying to extend this experiment to some of Vietnam's 400 other orphanages. It is an educational job. We have two (and hope for three more trained educational-cum-play leaders) and two fully-equipped vans. With this, we could reach 800 to 1,000 children a day: simultaneously other play leaders could be trained to carry on the work. Each orphanage visit could result in the creation of 4 play groups: 5 years' such work should be enough to maintain continuity and the principle of play would become an accepted part of Vietnamese child care. The implications for the post-war growth of the country would be incalculable. And the cost of the exercise would be just \$50,000, which would cover the cost of the van, equipment, running repairs and teachers' salaries. \$50,000 to reach thousands of neglected children. The human dividend cannot be calculated, but it means 16 cents a child, six children reached per dollar given or \$6.00 to run each Play Group a week for 30 or 40 children (or \$300 per annum).

-- THE GORDON BARCLAY VIETNAM FUND, 33 Amherst St., CAMMERAY, N.S.W. 2062.

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" PROJECT INFORMATION "

Queensland submits the following information concerning two projects for the consideration of the National Committee, also with a view to possible financial assistance.

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GIRLS' WELFARE ASSOCIATION
IPO BOX 1125
SEOUL, KOREA

The GWA is an international inter-denominational group of women who have united to assist girls in trouble. It embraces all the major denominations working in Korea: there are representatives on the Board of Directors from Korea Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, ROK Presbyterian Church, Korea Baptist Church, World Vision and Lutheran Church. Although two-thirds of the women who compose the Association are Korean, membership comes from Australia, Canada, Germany, Norway and America. Being an ecumenical Association has its limitations in that no single agency assumes major financial responsibility. Two-thirds of the support is now budgeted by Korean Churches and agencies; the balance coming from personal and group gifts from the various countries mentioned. All capital improvements have been accomplished by small capital grants from outside the country. The GWA maintains a Cottage Program to provide a variety of small-group and one-to-one relationships in its treatment of girls in trouble. The program works toward four basic goals:

1. training in moral values by the staff and local church workers,
2. fundamental education for those with no or inadequate education,
3. vocational training for learning one or more employable skills utilizing existing schools in the city,
4. family services before returning home to motivate family over-sight in employment or marriage.

Three cottages are presently equipped to supply these services with a fourth in the planning for 1973. These cottages are HOUSE OF GRACE (home for ten former prostitute girls), HOUSE OF FAITH (home for ten GI business girls), HOUSE OF HOPE (home for fifteen delinquent girls - non-prostitutes). HOUSE OF JOY will be launched in 1973 to become a home for ten unwed mothers during confinement and during vocational training afterwards. Each cottage is equipped with a housemother (a trained Bible woman) who teaches household skills and provides spiritual support plus a caseworker who gives weekly counselling and offers group work and group therapy opportunities to aid in the rehabilitation process. Each cottage costs \$5000 a year to operate. We have received capital funds to purchase House of Joy but we are still seeking funds for operating; no date can be set for opening until funds do come forth. From 1960-8 all funds (except a token, less than 10%) came from abroad. Since that time Korean church groups have assumed support until it is expected that in 1973 only a token 10-20% will come from abroad. Thus we are fully confident that in one or two years the Korean Church will not only be able to budget full support of our present Cottage Program but will also be able to absorb our new House of Joy as well. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has requested that a home for unwed mothers be begun by our agency. They have pointed out that the GWA's 12 years of experience with delinquent girls, utilizing the cottage program-type facilities and services makes the GWA an ideal place for such a home. Our agency has always served as a private, pilot project agency, whose Christian witness means providing the best in casework, thoughtfully and prayerfully planned to meet the needs of girls in trouble. The city of Seoul has grown from 400,000 in 1949, to a population of 6,000,000. The country village can no longer support all the people who live there in the style they now aspire to. Thus with the great influx of villagers to the city for jobs, unemployment results - especially for the uneducated girl, untrained in anything but housework. When these girls are taught a skill which provides an income sufficient to their needs, geared to the girl's personal abilities and aptitudes, one that is creative in nature, they become dependable and devoted workers. Hair-dressing, tailoring, barbering, nurse aid, taxi-driving, telephone operator, and clerical work are some of the occupations which seem to be most fulfilling for this kind of girl.

From Mrs. Peter van Lierop, ACSW GWA Social Work
Consultant.

PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, P.O. Box 388, SUVA, FIJI ISLANDS

The Gilbert Islands Protestant Church has made application for a woman and some financial help will be required. They wish to send us a young woman in 1973 to study for the Diploma in Christian Education, a two year course. Our total fee here next year for a normal student will be about \$540, covering full board, tuition, text-books, clothing and pocket money allowance. This student will have to live in the new YWCA Hostel and as well as extra board, she will have to travel here by bus daily. The total extra required will be \$4.50 per week or \$180 for the academic year of 40 weeks. .. Now this, of course, is a very large sum for the Church in the Gilberts to find. Help to make up the extra costs would be much appreciated and such assistance would be a real investment in the future of the Church in the Pacific; it would be gratefully received by the Gilbertese Church.

It is worth noting that the people of the Gilbert Is. have contributed much to Australia's and New Zealand's living standards through Ocean Island phosphate! The Church in the Gilberts is, along with the people, very poor, and is facing now many new issues in twentieth century life. Any assistance we can give them is worth-while. It would be a privilege to stand by such a church.

From the Principal, Alan Quigley.