

**Lutheran Church of Australia:  
Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions**

## **ATTITUDE TO BIRTH CONTROL**

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*Prepared by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations (the LCA had not yet formed the CSBQ). Approved by the General Pastors Conference, 1968. Adopted by the General Synod, 1968 Convention.*

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1. Definition of term: We mean by the term 'birth control' control not in the sense of the prevention of all conception, but in the sense of 'planned parenthood' or 'responsible parenthood'.
2. The question of birth control, ie the question of whether it is right and proper for married couples to use contraceptives, is closely bound up with another question: whether the sole purpose of sexual intercourse in marriage is procreation. The answer depends on what we regard as the scriptural purpose or purposes of marriage. This, according to Scripture, is threefold:
  - (a) mutual help and companionship (Eph 5:25; Gen 2:18);
  - (b) procreation (Gen 1:28);
  - (c) avoidance of sexual immorality (1 Cor 7:2).Procreation thus cannot be regarded as the only purpose of marriage. For married couples sexual intercourse, therefore, apart from the purpose of procreation is right and proper.
3. But it is the will of God expressed in the divine blessing, 'Be fruitful', that normally married couples should have children. Children are a gift of God (Ps 127:3).
4. Nowhere in Scripture, however, is there any indication that married couples should produce offspring to the extent of their biological maximum. Nor has the church ever taught this.
5. It could be a violation of the law of love to bring children into the world without any regard to
  - (a) the welfare of the mother;
  - (b) the welfare of the children (eg will such children be adequately fed, clothed, sheltered and otherwise cared for without suffering perhaps irreparable harm to their physical, mental, ethical, and spiritual life?); and
  - (c) the welfare of the community and nation.
6. This means that parenthood will be responsible parenthood. It will be undertaken prayerfully, with full responsibility both toward God and humanity, and joyfully.
7. The decision as to the number of children a married couple has, under the blessing of God, and how the births will be spaced, is a matter for the

Christian conscience of the parents to make in full responsibility toward God, themselves, the children, and the nation.

8. As to the means used to bring about such limitation and planning these must not be in violation of the will of God. Thus abortion as a means of limiting the family is prohibited by God's word (see Statement on Abortion). Abstinence by mutual consent of husband and wife for a period of time is recommended as a God-pleasing means. However, this good pastoral advice is fraught with so many problems (1 Cor 7:5) that it cannot be regarded as the only solution. Married couples should consult Christian medical advisers as to what in their case is the best method of birth control.
9. All avoidance of parenthood for selfish reasons, such as unwillingness to assume the responsibilities and sacrifices of bearing and rearing children, is opposed to the will of God. We warn especially against a self-indulgent use of contraceptives. The problem is not so much the use of birth control itself but its abuse.
10. We express our grave concern at the alarming increase in extra- and pre-marital sexual relationships which has been encouraged by the easy availability of contraceptives. Such relationships are a violation of the will of God. The wide use of contraceptives has aided the general decline in sexual morality. We believe that the whole problem should not merely be the subject of private counselling but also of public teachings and preaching.