

Submission
No 6

INQUIRY INTO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Organisation: St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Normanhurst

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"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." - Psalm 139:13

Dear Ministers,

I understand that presently before your consideration is the "Reproductive Healthcare Reform Bill". As the Bill is to be debated next week, I would like to plead with each of you to consider as a matter of conscience, God's deep compassion for the frail and vulnerable. As political leaders appointed under the sovereign hand of God to serve, it is your responsibility before God to ensure that life is not snatched away from the unborn before they yet draw breath.

You need no reminding that many voices in our culture will shout you down for any opposition you may give to the ever swelling tide of nihilism in our country. If you oppose unrestricted access to abortion you will be hated by those who value economic gain, unfettered sexuality, and unchecked individualism; over and above even the sanctity of human life. You will be called bigots, misogynists, and equated with tyrants.

Whatever you choose, you will not be hated or cursed by those whose lives are extinguished, just as their flame has begun to flicker and spark. You will never be shouted down or cursed by those unborn who are truly voiceless; and the children whose lungs are only partly formed will never draw a single breath against you, nor will they raise their feeble arms in protest. You will not have to look in their partly formed eyes as you vote on whether they should be allowed to open.

But I pray you consider that the God who thunders his Law from Sinai will speak for those who cannot speak. And the God who cast down Pharaoh by his strong right arm will surely lash out against those who cause little ones to suffer. And you will look upon his countenance at the end of your life and give an account for whatever you should choose to do.

King Solomon once commended his young heir to *"Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable. Speak out in order to judge with righteousness and to defend the needy and the poor"* (Proverbs 31:8-9).

The Prophet Amos pronounced the utter destruction of the kingdom of Ammon, because chief among their sins *"they ripped open the pregnant women"* for political gain (Amos 1:13). If we permit such evils, then God will have to apologize to Ammon if he does not judge Australia.

My prayer is that you will strongly oppose the content of this Bill, and especially section 5 which allows the unqualified murder of a 22 week old infant who has ten fingers, a beating heart, and is already able to kick and play. Section 6 (1) and (2) is equally appalling, as it is obvious that the grounds upon which a doctor may permit "termination" are extremely broad and unqualified. Under this legislation, I do not doubt that anybody could find two such doctors to permit a late term abortion without real medical jeopardy, as every pregnancy carries with it some risk to physical, social, and psychological well-being, and these concerns can easily be justified in

every case. The third clause under section 6 which permits abortion for the sake of a mothers life or to save another fetus is a tragic necessity and by no means should be opposed, but our present laws already give suitable provisions for these cases and require no expansion.

I would commend the Liberal party of Australia, not to betray the trust of their voters who align with them more on social issues than on economic policy, as many such religious voters would also prefer more spending on foreign aid, social welfare programs, and education. As such, our broad consensus is that in the triage of political policies, abortion is most critical and for many (including myself) a vote for the Liberal party was first and foremost a vote against the Labor parties commitment to unrestricted access to abortion.

My plea comes to you, as you know, with that of my Arch Bishop, my Church, and the whole Sydney Anglican Archdiocese. This should not trouble you too much though, as you will not answer to any of us at the end of your life. Neither will you be called to give an account to the Pope, the ArchBishop of Canterbury, or even your electorate. God alone is judge, and the judgement for those who lead is surely harsher, commensurate to their greater influence and responsibility. I hope that you will neither support this Bill, nor disengage from debate, but will passionately oppose it and fight these "reformatations" which are really deformations.

I commend your responsibilities before God to your consciences.

Prayerfully, and hopefully, The Reverend Karl Bonner.

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