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Resolutions – 1968 – 1986 – Reproductive Rights, A Summary

The CUC adopted nine resolutions between **1968 and 1986** on issues related to family planning, family life education, and abortion. Major points in the resolutions include:

- every child has the right to be wanted;
- human dignity requires that every woman have the right to decide whether or not she shall bear a child;
- social strains result from unwanted children;
- growth in population increases the demand on shrinking, non-renewable resources and finite space, as well as increasing the complexity of self-government;
- family life education, including teaching on human sexuality and dealing honestly and explicitly with the physical, emotional, moral and social aspects as a child is growing up, should be available in public schools at all levels;
- birth control information, voluntary sterilization and therapeutic abortion should be available as requested by patients in consultation with their doctors in all hospitals receiving public funds, and that federal, provincial, municipal and private health agencies should expand family planning services to all residents of Canada at all income levels.

Some of the resolutions on the population explosion deal with these issues as well.

- The first resolution on abortion, in 1968, advocated amending the Criminal Code to permit abortion on request to any woman, under the following conditions:
 - that adequate counselling services be made freely available;
 - that the operation be performed by a qualified physician, and
 - that except in unusual circumstances the consent of a husband be obtained or that of a parent or guardian of a girl under the age of eighteen.

In 1971 and 1974, support was given to Dr. Morgentaler and others challenging the abortion laws. In 1980, the policy was changed by a resolution which read:

“Be it resolved that the 19th Annual Meeting of the CUC promote changes in the law to permit that the right to abortion be determined exclusively by the woman in consultation with a physician.”

Action was encouraged to bring about this change, including affiliation with the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, which has continued until the present. This resolution was re-affirmed in 1980.

In October 1990, the Canadian Unitarian Council made representation to the Legal and



Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Senate on this issue. The Executive Director has represented the CUC at a press conference and a meeting with the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department on the issue of violence directed at clinics and abortion providers. At the present, birth control is easily available and abortion has been entirely removed from the Criminal Code. Family life education is available in some school districts. These resolutions would permit us to take action if there were attempts to re-criminalize abortion, or to restrict access to birth control or information about sexuality. They give us no guidance for responding to current issues, such as surrogate motherhood, abortion for sex selection, cloning, or other reproductive technologies.

Developed from resolutions adopted at Annual Meetings in 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975 (2), 1980, 1986.