

On developing support for women and babies in difficult pregnancies

Resolved, that the presbytery of _____ overtures the 217th General Assembly (2006) to direct its Moderator to create a task force of eight currently-serving commissioners to undertake a two year study of specific ways in which the Church can intervene to encourage the protection of unborn children and their mothers, particularly addressing pregnancies in adverse circumstances, and

That the moderator take particular care to balance the task force to achieve convictions about problem pregnancies and abortion that are consistent with the views expressed in the current church policy document and its background material as “Position A” and “Position B” (1992), and

That the task force make ample use of opportunities to meet by conference phone calls and other electronic means, but that they meet at least twice yearly face-to-face, hosted by Presbyterian Church (USA) churches, both to involve church members in their discussions and to defray the cost of their meetings, and

That the task force report its findings and recommendations to the 218th General Assembly (2008).

Rationale

Current General Assembly policy on abortion expresses the biblical concern for the protection of each human life. It also expresses its own concern about the large numbers of abortions in our country and urges churches to find ways to reduce the numbers. (Problem Pregnancies and Abortion, 1992, E.1.d. and E.1.l., p. 11.

Little work has been done to demonstrate that the Church is serious about its intent to aid women in difficult pregnancies and help them preserve the lives of their unborn children. This is not only a charge of current policy but also a worthy effort by the Christian Church.

While currently there are efforts to preserve legal access to abortion, there ought to be at least as much effort extended by the church to support pregnant women who need help to bring their pregnancies to term and find adequate spiritual, emotional, financial and other tangible support for caring for their children.

Congregations will benefit from being involved in the work of a task force. Not only will the particular churches involved benefit from considering how they might help address this pervasive problem in our society and churches, but also all of our congregations can be expected to benefit from work that includes significant contributions from some of our congregations. Commissioners, as representatives of our presbyteries, are a proper body to draw from for this leadership. The goal ought to be to put the PC(USA) in the forefront of offering the kind of help that makes a significant impact on decreasing the numbers of abortions in our country.