

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ISSUES COMMITTEE

As members of the 24th General Council of the WARC, meeting in Accra, Ghana, under the theme of “That All May Have Life in Fullness,” we have shared our stories and experiences as members of Reformed churches spread all around the globe and discovered once again how strongly issues of public concern do challenge and call us for true discernment and faithful action.

While it was not possible to study all matters of concern in all areas of the world, the Public Issues Committee was divided into eight subcommittees. Each subcommittee dealt with an urgent issue that relates to the life and witness of the church in the public sphere.

WAR, PEACE, AND GEOPOLITICS

As Christians our allegiance is first to the reign of God and then to our respective countries. We are called to do the will of God in our private and public lives. In a time of so much violence around the world we are called to a ministry of just peacemaking. Such a ministry rejects the domination of some over others. It builds just relationships for life and institutions that support those relationships. Just peace includes respect for basic human rights, provides means of resolving conflicts without violence, and promotes human security, freedom, and joy.

The world is changing rapidly and globally. These changes are evolving into interconnected global power networks, which include economics, politics, the military, the media, communication systems, financial organizations, and religious communities. These networks further strengthen existing centres of power in the world, for which reason many call them ‘imperial’. The increasing numbers of asylum seekers and economic migrants are signs of the depth of the economic, social and military changes, which are occurring in the world.

Religious institutions are part of this global system and are affected by these dynamics, both in their internal life and in their relationships to their communities. The values promoted by these global networks are profoundly contrary to the values of just peacemaking to which we are called by the gospel.

In these circumstances, the intensification of interaction between peoples also intensifies religious tensions and conflicts. In some areas churches and communities are intimidated or are the objects of violence. This happens when churches are bombed by terrorists and when they are silenced by agents of the state. Furthermore religious language is being used to justify both terror and the “war against terror.”

Globalization has, among many other things, produced increased religious fundamentalism, terrorism and the response to terrorism, and the new US doctrine of full spectrum dominance and preventive war. The continuing unresolved Palestinian/ Israeli conflict fuels terrorism and magnifies the response to it. In light of our call to be just peacemakers and in the face of our present global context, we make the following recommendations to our members.

Recommendations

1. That WARC member churches and their congregations reflect on the tension between just peace and the new geopolitical situation as it shows itself in their particular context.
2. That WARC member churches be active peacemakers who are involved in reconciliation as a healing community, especially across religious and ethnic boundaries.
3. That WARC member churches engage in prophetic witness against injustice and promote lifestyles that are consistent with such witness.
4. That WARC member churches continue to pursue advocacy for
 - a. reductions in military expenditure and for arms control and disarmament agreements,
 - b. strengthening global governance that respects people and creation.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

As our commitment on confessing our faith in the face of economic injustice and ecological destruction, and, knowing that economic and environmental justice are inseparably linked, the 24th General Council of WARC recommends the following plan of action.

WARC CALLS ON ALL MEMBER CHURCHES TO

1. Within our churches

1. Share the cry of people on economic injustice and ecological destruction with the parishes in praying, preaching, teaching, and specific acts of solidarity;
2. Promote lifestyles beyond consumerism that oppose the negative effects of cultural globalization and its effects on lifestyles;
3. Increase the ethical investments of churches to at least 20 percent of their investments within four years and support ecumenical micro-credit programmes;
4. Promote and educate about fair trade as an alternative to unfair trade practices;
5. Commit themselves to eradicating corruption within the churches by implementing a programme for corruption-free churches by implementing existing and new plans (e.g., AACC General Assembly and NCC India);
6. Encourage networking between research institutions of the member churches on economic and environmental issues;
7. Increase environmental action within all member churches, including worship, teaching, sustainable use of natural resources, practical projects, and advocacy;
8. Promote gender equality in all economic and environmental efforts of the churches such as leadership, employment, finances, inheritance.

2. Towards the governments

1. Urge governments of strong economies, in their trade negotiations, to respect the need of people of vulnerable economies for protection of their agricultural markets as well of emerging industries, and to urge governments of weaker economies to defend the interests of their people;
2. Support governments to achieve fair and sufficient taxes in order to guarantee basic needs and a life of dignity for the population, to reach the UN Millennium Development Goals and to fulfil the obligation of providing social welfare;
3. Urge governments to increase efforts for the reduction or cancellation of external and internal debts;
4. Call on governments to fulfil international and national environmental obligations such as the Kyoto protocol against global warming and the Cartagena protocol for biosafety; to set new global warming targets to reduce greenhouse gases by 60% by 2050; and to promote new international agreements on conservation of water, soil, and forests;
5. Urge governments to ratify international commitments with regard to economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the 1966 UN Covenant, and to implement their obligations through national provisions and international relations;
6. Enforce present, and create new, laws against all forms of criminal economic activity such as illegal trade of human organs, weapons, drugs, plants and timber, tax evasion, money laundering and illegal employment, which deny the rights of the poor;
7. Support efforts to increase access of the population to land, food, water, health, and education and to stop privatization of these sectors where it does not serve the poor;
8. Ask governments, where appropriate, to support church-related development programmes.

3. Towards the private sector

1. Promote implementation and recognition of human rights, especially workers' rights, including migrant workers' rights, according to ILO standards;
2. Call upon national and trans-national corporations to orient their activities towards economic and environmental justice.

4. Towards international organizations

1. Work for the resolution of systemic indebtedness and promote a fair procedure for debt cancellation (insolvency right);
2. Call on IMF, governments and private sector to develop more just mechanisms to stabilize financial markets and limit speculation, in order to decrease the number of victims of financial crises;

3. Support all efforts for more democracy, accountability and transparency in the international financial institutions (e.g., IMF/World Bank), and for assistance for a better participation of weak countries in the WTO;
4. Strive for multilateral and bilateral disarmament and peace in order to reach economic justice without violence.

5. Towards other faith-based and secular organizations

1. Cooperate and network with other national, regional, and global ecumenical organizations, communities of other faiths, and social movements to covenant for economic and environmental justice.

GENDER JUSTICE

Faced with the threats to life against humanity, particularly women and children, we affirm the right to live a whole life, to have healthy and affirmative relationships in society as well as the challenge to create and maintain healthy relationships within the family and the wider community.

Recommendations

1. That WARC member churches advocate for education accessible to women beyond primary level, as well as to men.
2. That the member churches of WARC support theological education for women and sensitize both men and women who are training for leadership in the churches to gender issues.
3. That this Council communicate to member churches its belief that those interpretations of scripture, which lead to the conclusion that women should be ordained, represent the soundest theological reflection on scripture. We further encourage member churches to facilitate the placement of women as pastors, and to support them in post.
4. That the gender manual *Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership*, currently available in English, should be translated into the other three working languages of WARC.
5. That WARC member churches be urged to do more advocacy work in intervening in social injustices against women. In particular, we highlight the issues of dowries in the Indian context, house helps in Africa and beyond, domestic violence, and trafficking in women and children all around the world. Rape and sexual violence against women and children are also prevalent, particularly as a weapon of war and for ethnic cleansing. We draw the special attention of WARC to the "house-help" system in some parts of the world, particularly Africa.
6. That WARC strongly condemn the giving of young and underaged girls in marriage without their consent.
7. That WARC support a woman's right to take responsibility for her own body and to decide upon contraceptive use and declares that the use of contraceptives is not a sin.
8. That WARC urge member churches to put in place and use structures against sexual misconduct to ensure and enable the safety of both women and men in churches.
9. That this Council invite member churches, in addressing issues of justice for women, to encourage the development of male identities which are empowering of women and men, actively non-patriarchal, non-violent, and non-oppressive, reflecting God in Christ.
10. That this Council endorse the final statement of the Women's Pre-Council Meeting, and commend its recommendations to member churches.

HIV and AIDS

HIV and AIDS are problems worldwide, constituting a grave threat to life. Two thousand children are born with HIV, and 10,000 people die from AIDS everyday. This chronic disease is irrespective of age, race, gender, sexuality, faith traditions and socio-economic status. HIV and AIDS can no longer be ignored; there are human faces in the numbing statistics¹. A theological framework is fundamental to the ministry with persons infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

We affirm: a) the image of God in each person of all races: female/male, girl/boy, young/old, rich/poor; b) a life in fullness as a right for all of God's children; c) the importance for the church to create communities of healing, dignity, reconciliation, restoration, and mutual respect; d) the need and right of the dying to be

¹ Omega Bula: (Accra, July 30 to 12 August 2004) Strategic Response – A framework for discussion. Paper submitted to the WARC Public Issues Committee.

accompanied on their journey; and e) that sexuality is a gift from God who created us female and male. WARC is urged to take immediate action in addressing HIV and AIDS as a life and death issue.

Recommendations

We call on the member churches:

1. To address both locally and globally the systemic causes of poverty to alleviate the struggles of HIV and AIDS;
2. To encourage approaches inclusive of women, youth, children and vulnerable groups, including prevention, treatment, and advocacy;
3. To become aware of the work already done by global ecumenical agencies and consider appropriate partnering at local levels;
4. To work against systemic and cultural racism, discrimination, and stigma in all their forms;
5. To encourage member churches to contextualize these strategic recommendations into action at local levels.

HUMAN RIGHTS: WARC renews its commitment to respect and protect life. The implementation and protection of human rights by governments is one of the highest priorities for member churches, particularly where the most vulnerable in our societies are deprived of religious freedom, political and civil rights, and other basic human rights. Affirming the diversity of regional cultures, languages, and values, in collaboration with ecumenical and interfaith partners, associations, and instruments, WARC is encouraged to support practices of reporting and monitoring human rights abuses against affected minorities and to assist in mediation where appropriate and helpful. WARC raises the following specific concerns:

RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, NATIONALISM: Cruel oppression of minority groups based on ideologies of fear and hatred in many forms continues to deprive people of life in fullness. Discriminatory policies and practices deny human dignity and human rights.

Recommendation

1. WARC member churches, committed to democratic transformation and the healing of memories, are urged to become pro-active in eliminating and overcoming institutional and interpersonal racism, xenophobia, nationalism and homophobia within and beyond the church.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Member churches are experiencing persecution, oppression, and discrimination throughout the world. In many places our members live as minorities and in some places, regrettably an increasing number, they are subject to intimidation and discrimination, such as in existing and former communist countries as testified to by the Reformed Churches in Romania and other churches.

Recommendation

2. Member churches are urged to identify affected churches, establishing a system for reporting, monitoring and documenting human and minority rights abuses in order to challenge government policies and provide effective means for intervention.

POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS: Human rights defenders attempting to expose human rights abuses are subject to intimidation, torture and death, as testified to by churches of Papua-Indonesia. Truth and Reconciliation commissions need to be created to address crimes of existing and former totalitarian regimes and of democracies that deprive their citizens of fair elections.

Recommendation

3. Member churches are urged to establish and support structures designed to address political and civil rights abuses experienced by victims and to seek political and economic remedies.

ASYLUM SEEKERS: Governments throughout the world are raising new barriers against asylum seekers and accommodating persons in harsh and substandard conditions.

Recommendation

4. Member churches, remembering biblical traditions of hospitality to strangers, are urged to challenge government policies which fail to provide dignified treatment for asylum seekers according to international standards.

ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY: Moving beyond the statements that denounce the death penalty as conflicting with the inherent worth of human life and the Christian gospel of grace and forgiveness (WARC, Seoul, 1989), WARC member churches are developing regional relationships to share resources and collaborative activities which support a worldwide moratorium on capital punishment.

Recommendation

5. WARC reaffirms its call for the abolition of the death penalty, calling on all nations to immediately establish a moratorium, and asks its member churches to step up their campaigns to include establishing a moratorium, working in collaboration with NGOs to support and assist the broad based abolition movement; and that the General Council encourages all member churches to adopt a clear position in opposition to capital punishment and engage in a dialogue that promotes a restorative justice that heals.

INTERFAITH ISSUES

In the pursuit of the mission of and advocacy for the fullness of life for all, it should be readily appreciated that life is to be lived out in a context of the diversity that we are called to honour and celebrate. Probably one of the most powerful elements in that diversity is religious pluralism.

The human experience is that diversity can be conflictual. Yet, conflicts in every situation need to be carefully analyzed since they rarely have one cause. What may be superficially perceived (and even promoted) as religiously motivated, may have its roots in economic injustice, ethnic intolerance and/or political oppression. Such conditions – themselves threats to life – may be manipulated by religious extremism with dire consequences for all, particularly in the context of a growing sense of globalization.

In the context of religious pluralism it is incumbent on people of faith to engage constructively with peoples of other faiths for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. This is a constructive and cooperative engagement for life. The difficulty of the task must not be minimized. Faith communities may have reasons to make exclusive claims concerning truth and to seek conversion to that exclusivity as an understanding of faithful witness. But the call to fullness of life for all demands an honest, sensitive, respectful and persevering effort at constructive engagement. The notions of “witness” and “conversion” must not be dismissed. The former is in the dialogue. In relation to the latter, it must be recognized that it is not within our power, but in that of the Holy Spirit.

The overarching principle must be the creation of relationships among peoples of different faiths. The methods, modalities and style of the engagement are best determined by the conditions peculiar to the context in which engagement takes place. What works in Indonesia, for example, may not work in Pakistan or Germany or Nigeria, India, countries in the Middle East or the United States of America. The principle of good neighbourliness may well demand of dialogue partners a knowledge of that which is most important to them – their faith. This will engender trust, facilitate the interfaith and intra-faith processes, minimize distortions and assist the closure of the gap.

Recommendations

1. That WARC encourage member churches to promote and participate actively in dialogue with people of other faiths, while maintaining the uniqueness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that WARC make available guidelines for interfaith dialogue.
2. That WARC, given the current global situation, consciously encourage member churches to actively participate in inter-religious dialogue worldwide, believing dialogue reduces fanaticism and extremism on both sides.
3. That WARC continue to search for missiological models, paradigms and strategies in religiously plural societies in order for churches to continue their witness amidst current realities.
4. That WARC commend the work of the Interfaith Task Force in Indonesia, and recommends similar strategies to member churches in situations of conflict, as a means of ensuring that conflicts emanating from whatever source are dealt with in a non-violent manner.

5. That WARC, in close cooperation with other ecumenical bodies, facilitate the education of member churches on the diverse faiths and life of peoples, including indigenous peoples, in order to enable them to constructively relate with them in mutual cooperation.
6. That WARC, in close cooperation with other ecumenical bodies, facilitate the sharing of information/stories about interfaith peaceful coexistence and make public statements on interfaith issues, which relate to the life of member churches.

COUNTRY CONCERNS

It is a goal of WARC to strengthen solidarity among member churches in challenging contexts. In this light, we have noted that many of the concerns raised with us are covered by the themes of this General Council: Healing (e.g., in war-torn countries - Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Sudan, India, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Senegal, Iraq, Palestine, Angola); HIV/AIDS and its consequences; the increase in the politics of fear in many places; problems with the implementation of peace accords in several Latin American countries; internal conflicts and guerrilla warfare); Honouring Diversity (e.g., increasing racism and xenophobia in Europe and North America, interreligious conflict and religious freedom in Asia, forced conversion to Islam in Pakistan); Inclusiveness and Participation (e.g., the effects of European integration on neighbouring countries, illiteracy in Pakistan, asylum seekers in Europe and the Pacific, erosion of civil liberties in the USA); Peace (e.g. Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Indonesia, India, Taiwan, new militarism in Japan, terrorism, USA defense strategy that includes pre-emptive strikes, growth of violence in Brazil and many other places); Gender Justice (e.g., violence against women, the dowry system in India); Creation (e.g., the impact of toxic waste in Africa and the Pacific where human lives are subjected to malformation and abnormalities due to nuclear and toxic waste dumping in the Pacific Ocean, illegal logging in Indonesia and the Solomon Islands, landslides due to overdevelopment in Taiwan, the effect of rising sea levels on Pacific island communities, pollution in North America, the privatization of natural resources like water in many places); and Economic Justice (e.g., the brain drain in Africa, some parts of Asia and the Caribbean, migrant workers in Indonesia, Korea, Japan and the Philippines, impact of globalization on farm workers, the economic crisis in Argentina, the breakdown of the rule of law in Colombia, the growth of organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean). We therefore expect to see these concerns taken up in a number of other reports and their accompanying recommendations. However, it is clear to us that these are pressing issues for our members, and *so all member churches should explore ways in which they can support, sustain and encourage one another locally, regionally, and globally as they seek to follow Jesus, witnessing to and working for life in all its fullness.*

The story of the death of Rev. Susianti Tinulele, Christian Church in Central Sulawesi, during a worship service in Indonesia and the news of the bombing of churches in Iraq are examples of incidents which give rise to a common concern about the growing threat and danger of interreligious conflict, which is directly affecting member churches around the world. We note that all too frequently what appears as interreligious conflict is in fact the result of government, military and/or commercial interests manipulating religious difference to their own ends. *The General Council deplores this cynical destructive interference in the life and witness of faith communities and urges its member churches to support and encourage one another as moderating and reconciling forces in such situations of conflict.*

In particular, the General Council notes the situation of our members in:

- **Indonesia**, who since 1999 have been caught up in a form of civil war in the Molucca Islands, Halmahera, Kalimantan and Central Sulawesi, and *pledges its support for them as they seek to be a moderating influence in the tension and conflict between communities stirred up by the power struggles which have afflicted Indonesia since 1998 and the fall of Suharto.*
- **Sudan**, which has long been plagued by the tension and conflict between its Arab and African peoples, noting that the government sponsorship of Arab militias continues to destabilize this country despite hoped-for breakthroughs in peace negotiations. *We affirm the conflict resolution work being undertaken by the Sudan Council of Churches and the New Sudan Council of Churches and offer our prayerful support to the Presbyterian Church of the Sudan and the peoples of this country.*
- **Middle East**, the birthplace of three monotheistic religions and today the home of ever-increasing cycles of violence, especially in Iraq and Israel/Palestine. Amidst 150 million people following other faiths, 15 million Christians seek to maintain their presence and life-affirming witness. *We call upon all churches of the world to express both interest in and solidarity with their sisters and brothers in Middle Eastern lands so that they may continue to be agents of reconciliation within their societies. We urge all member churches to take up this challenge and stand in solidarity with them.*

- **Colombia.** *The General Council expresses its solidarity with the churches and civil society in Colombia in their struggle for human rights which are being violated in their country, taking as pretext the anti-terrorists and anti-drug campaign.*

We noted the concerns of our members in respect of forthcoming government elections in their countries and the role churches might play locally and globally in supporting free and fair elections without internal or external interference. In particular we urge support for the churches in:

- **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where there will be elections in 2005 and whose churches are calling for international assistance in ensuring that the elections are independent, free and fair.
- **Cameroon**, where there will be elections in October 2004, but with a growing fear that if the ruling party loses that they will use force to hold on to power and where the churches are now actively campaigning for an election process free of interference.
- **Venezuela**, where a referendum will be held on 15 August 2004 to canvass support for the government. *Venezuela's churches plead that the General Council and the member churches of WARC pray for God's blessing on the referendum, that it may bring peace with justice to their land.*

The right of self-determination is enshrined in many international declarations, yet for some of our members this is still an elusive hope. In particular we note the concerns of our members in:

- **Papua**, whose people have been treated inhumanely during military operations over the last 40 years and who wish to exercise their right of self-determination in respect of their place within Indonesia. *The General Council urges our Indonesian members to support their sisters and brothers in Papua and call upon all members to affirm their solidarity with the indigenous people in Papua by asking their respective governments to monitor the human rights situation in Papua and to support measures that will ensure the protection of the basic rights of the indigenous people of Papua, and to call upon the government of Indonesia to fully implement the Special Autonomy for Papua.*
- **Taiwan**, where we reaffirm previous WARC statements in support of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the aspirations of the Taiwanese people.
- **Serbia-Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia and the Ukraine.** *The General Council calls upon the governments of Serbia-Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia and the Ukraine to implement and protect human and minority rights. We also call on majority sister churches in the region to work in partnership with Reformed churches to safeguard the rights, identity and mission of the people of Reformed communities.*

As this demonstrates, churches are not immune from the political forces at work in their societies and the world. Always damaging, this can sometimes leave particularly deep scars. **South Africa** is one such place where at the Debrecen General Council WARC committed itself "to critically accompany" the Dutch Reformed Church into a process of reconciliation and unification. It is with sadness that we have learned that the unification process has not satisfactorily proceeded and that the Belhar Confession has still to become part of the common confession of the two churches (the Dutch Reformed Church, and the Uniting Reformed Church). *We call upon the new Executive Committee to continue to accompany this process and to facilitate the resolution of the outstanding issues as part of the ongoing process of reconciliation in South Africa as a matter of urgency.*

Lastly as a common theme, we note the prominence of issues around migration affecting all regions, but in particular WARC *pledges its support for **European, Australian and North American** churches as they seek to resist the growing racism and xenophobia in their societies and honour the Biblical imperative to offer hospitality to strangers and the new neighbours in their midst.*

LIFE ETHICS AND EMERGING ISSUES

Human Genetics

"You created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps. 139.13-14). Within the past generation, humans have gained much new knowledge of how we and all life forms are knit together, and the potential powers to make alterations at that level, for good or ill. The psalmist's words tell us that God's sovereignty over all creation reaches even these most minute elements of life.

Some call the mapped human genome "the book of Life". It may give us better understandings of our bodies, of disease, and of our genetic heritage. However, we must guard against this knowledge of genes and

functions becoming the true reading of what a human being is, or conceiving some perfect genetic blueprint against which we are either “normal” or “defective”. The biblical witness is that human beings are created by God “in the image of God” (Gen. 1.26-27). Fullness of life is found in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. In Christ, each of us is precious in God’s sight, regardless of our functional imperfections. We stand against any trend to regard people as defective because of their genes, still worse to deny their future right to existence.

Patenting

The widespread patenting of genetic sequences and living organisms has drawn severe criticism from the churches in Europe, North America and increasingly in the South. Patent rights give an inventor a time-limited protection from others who might market the invention under their own name. Patents might apply to some inventions, but genes, cells, animals and plants are parts of God’s creation which have not been invented, and for which no one should therefore be granted monopoly rights. Wide patent monopolies granted to academic and commercial sectors narrow power unaccountably into the hands of the few, and sometimes hinder rather than help medical research.

Cloning and Stem Cells

God’s choice of joining male and female as the means for human reproduction is contradicted by the notion of reproductive cloning. Churches have opposed any attempt at such cloning, not only because of overwhelming risks to a cloned baby, but because it would entail the creation of new human individuals who, instead of having their own unique genes, are predestined by a third party to be given the genes of an existing person. Many churches have supported proposals for a UN ban on human reproductive cloning.

Stem cells extracted from human embryos have dramatic potential to treat many degenerative human diseases like diabetes, but the use of embryos is a controversial issue among our churches. Many Christians consider it unacceptable to use a human embryo in this way because it is already a human life; others disagree and would allow limited embryo research, using ‘surplus’ embryos from medically assisted procreation. Both recognize the potential of stem cells found in the tissues of adults and placental cord blood, but it is much too soon in research to say whether these or indeed embryo stem cells can be transformed effectively enough into other cell types to offer the anticipated clinical treatments.

Genetically Modified (GM) Crops and Food

Crops are genetically modified if genes from another plant, animal, or micro-organism have been added to the crop. This should not be confused with selective breeding within the crop species, or the use of hybrid seeds or of chemical fertilizers. GM crops have produced divided views among the churches and raise different issues in different contexts. Many theological values can help us to assess these – a theology of creation and human co-creativity in creation, of risk, of human aspirations and weakness, of equity, justice, respect, sharing, of accountability across the generations, of a bias to the poor, and a critique of the systems of the powerful. Thus for some Christians GM represents a natural extension of God-given human agricultural creativity, while for others it violates boundaries in God’s created order. They would advocate traditional or organic forms of agriculture instead. Many are concerned about uncertainties in health and environmental impacts, such as loss of biodiversity, gene flow to closely related species, and pests developing resistance. Others think these risks can be managed with strict controls and monitoring. This poses a question for the churches about what level of precaution is appropriate in their local context. For many Christians, the most crucial question is whether it is possible to separate the technology from dominance by corporate ambitions which miss more pressing needs of the South.

Recommendations

1. We encourage churches to engage in discernment and action related to developments in biotechnology in medicine and agriculture, and to draw upon work being done in some of our churches.
2. We encourage WARC to place emerging issues in biotechnology on the agenda of its future work.
3. We urge churches to oppose the reproductive cloning of human beings, both because of the risks involved and serious ethical objections, and call upon the United Nations to enact an international ban.
4. We urge member churches to address the issues of basic human rights of health care and education as emerging issues to the report.

CONCLUSION

The Public Issues Committee asks the General Council to adopt these recommendations, and asks the next Executive Committee to develop a plan of implementation and to urge member churches to give serious

attention to WARC's historic commitment to human rights and take action on all these issues and contribute financial and human resources as part of their continuing witness to fullness of life.