

Social Action Handbook



The Presbyterian
Church in Canada

Print Warning

This document is approximately 315 pages long.

Social Action Handbook
4th Edition, 2004
Revised for the 143rd General Assembly (2017)

Justice Ministries
Life and Mission Agency
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Introduction

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Preface

Welcome to the 2017 edition of the Social Action Handbook (SAH) which includes material from the 143rd (2017) General Assembly. The SAH is included in the CD-ROM version of the Acts and Proceedings. Every congregation may order one free copy of the CD-ROM. The SAH is posted on Justice Ministries' website presbyterian.ca/justice. There are approximately 325 pages.

The first edition was published in 1978 and covered the period from 1960 to 1976. The second edition was issued in 1984 and included reports from the 110th General Assembly (1984). The third edition was published in 1988 and then updated annually. The 2004 edition was a major revision, the first since November 1988. The 2004 edition is updated annually.

In preparing the 2004 edition, Gail Turner, then Program Assistant in Justice Ministries, examined Acts & Proceedings going back fifty years in order to verify references and to identify reports that had been excluded from previous Social Action Handbooks. Gail is to be thanked for the care and commitment she brought to this project. In planning the 2004 revision, Justice Ministries held several consultations on how to make the SAH as user friendly as possible. The previous edition, in a three ringed binder format, had grown to almost 800 pages. The two most frequent suggestions were to shorten the SAH and to highlight decisions made by General Assembly.

The SAH is now much shorter. The reports are summarized. Each report is referenced to the specific Acts & Proceedings. The SAH is an unofficial record of decisions taken by General Assemblies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada on a variety of issues. Readers are invited to refer to the original reports for the official record. Every effort has been made to summarize the original reports as faithfully as possible.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions made by staff and volunteers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who created the Social Action Handbook in 1978, who updated the Social Action Handbook annually and who produced the various revisions. The church owes these individuals a debt of gratitude for their efforts in chronicling the church's engagement on faith and justice issues.

The theological and ethical issues considered and the decisions made by General Assembly serve as a reminder that Christianity is a public faith that reflects the lordship of Jesus Christ over all of creation. It is Justice Ministries' hope that this 2017 edition of the Social Action Handbook faithfully serves The Presbyterian Church in Canada, to the glory of God.

Stephen Allen,
Associate Secretary,
Justice Ministries
July 2017

Evangelical Faith and the Radical Compassion of Love for the World

Arthur Van Seters

Principal Emeritus, Knox College, Toronto

Introduction

Back in the 1960s Sam Butler was on the staff of Knox Church, Toronto, as a lay missionary to the neighbourhood. His remarkable ability of getting to know the young people in the local public school down the street and the kind of challenges they faced became legendary. He could tell you where almost every child in the schoolyard lived and often something about their home life. As he shared their journeys and his own deep faith in Christ, many found a home in the congregation – and later, so did many parents. Gradually Knox became one of the most cosmopolitan congregations in the city. Many may not have used the language of *social action* to describe this evolution but at heart it expressed an evangelical vision for the social reality at the church's very doorstep. Spiritual and social were woven together in mission.

This memory of my personal experience of Sam and the congregation of my childhood and university days reminds me of a statue just off Queen's Park near the Medical Building at the University of Toronto. Robert Raikes, the 18th century founder of the Sunday School, stands with Bible in hand looking at the viewer. Raikes was the editor and publisher of the *Gloucester Journal* through which he urged the improvement of education for poor children since so many of them were ending up in over-crowded jails. Because these children worked in factories, classes were held on Sundays. It was the start of a movement that spread across the UK and on to Europe and North America. Interestingly, the British government supported these schools and this eventually led to its development of public education.¹

Moving beyond conservative-liberal dichotomies

I tell these stories because they are not what one first thinks of in connection with a *Social Action Handbook*. Too often the church, like the larger society, caricatures some as liberal social activists and others as conservatives who focus just on personal faith. Walter Brueggemann reminds us that the priests who gave us the Book of Leviticus, reached beyond such ideological stereotyping. They always connected worship and ethics, priest and prophet, worldliness and sacrament.²

Indeed, the radical societal reforms demanded by the Israelite prophets were profoundly rooted in their *conservative* appeals to Torah teaching. They believed that faithfulness to Yahweh, the God of Israel, demanded not only personal obedience but also systemic social transformation. According to Isaiah 58, true worship called for releasing the yoke of injustice and letting the oppressed go free. It required sharing bread with the hungry and bringing the homeless into one's own house! (vv. 6-7) Because the legal system was corrupt, Amos pleaded, "Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate." (Amos 5:15)

Rooting social action in the Gospel of Jesus, the Crucified

But I have a further reason for sharing these stories; the church's social concern and action is rooted in theology, in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When the followers of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked if he was really God's Anointed One, he gave them a very concrete answer. "Go, tell John what you see and hear: those who are suffering from lameness, blindness, deafness, etc. are healed. Tell him also that those

¹ Emily Chung, "Sundays best for educator," Toronto Star (March 25, 2005).

² *Finally Comes the Poet* (Fortress Press, 1989), 39.

who are poor are hearing *good* news.” In effect, people who were marginal in society were to be treated with respect and compassion; in fact, they were at the very heart of Jesus’ mission.

According to Jesus there is no good news (or Gospel) if the grace of God does not affect the lives of those most in need. In saying this Jesus realized that he was being radical because he added, “Blessed are those who do not take offence (literally, are not scandalized) because of what I have said.” (Matthew 11:2-6)

The theological factor here needs further elaboration. The world of first century Palestine was no different from our 21st century Western society. Back then people believed that everything depended on merit. Those with greater influence also decided who counted and who didn’t. But in God’s perspective, this distorts our having been created after the image of our Creator and vastly underestimates the reality of the Fall. The former reminds us that to God every life is precious; the latter clarifies our loss of identity as God’s creatures and subsequent spiritual alienation.

Few Christians have spoken more boldly about these truths than a Harlem lawyer and lay theologian by the name of William Stringfellow. In 1964 he addressed the Synod of Toronto and Kingston with a sustained analysis of the evil of racial injustice against Black people living in the United States.³ He did so because he saw all around him what he called naiveté about the Fall - “the era in which persons and nations and other creatures exist in profound and poignant and perpetual strife.”⁴ In other words, Stringfellow exposed the root cause of those conditions that compel the church to engage in social action. For him the Scriptures pointed to the brokenness of human systems, the failure of nations, the afflictions suffered by creation and the catastrophic forcefulness of the principalities and the powers.

One only needs to see the reaction of the congregation to Jesus that day in the synagogue in Nazareth when he preached on the implications of the Year of Jubilee. This was the Levitical legislation appealed to by the prophet in Isaiah 61, the text for Jesus’ sermon that day. When Jesus illustrated the call for liberation by pointing to God’s grace to undeserving foreigners (a Phoenician widow and a Syrian general), the powers reacted. The congregation was filled with such rage they tried to murder the preacher! Their understanding of social reality was radically different from that implicit in the message of Jesus. And this brings us to the heart of the Gospel, the cross of Jesus.

This is where Stringfellow finds hope in the midst of suffering and injustice. The cross, he says, is not a religious symbol, nor even just a reference to some past event. Rather, it is “the invincible power of God’s love for the world.” It is “unfazed by any hostility or hatred or violence or assault.” The cross is “not threatened by death” and “perseveres no matter what” even reaching out to one’s enemies.⁵

It is in the very nature of God to be utterly self-giving and to be open to the other. In that deeply intimate prayer of Jesus in John 17, Jesus prays that his followers (and others who would come to believe through them) would be included in the very family of God. The cross is where Jesus makes space for others through the exercise of pure grace.⁶

This grace, flowing from the Crucified, creates the resources for us to reach out to our world in its brokenness. Through the eyes of Jesus we see others neither in social categories nor statistical calculations, nor as people who are exploitable and expendable. With the Apostle Paul we feel the groaning of creation as it awaits redemption and we sense the sighs of the Spirit too deep for words. As a result, we act out of hope because nothing - neither life nor death, neither rulers nor powers - nothing in all creation can separate us

³ *A Plea for Love*, a pamphlet reproduced by Caven Library, Knox College, 1964.

⁴ *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land* (Word, 1973/1976), 19.

⁵ Stringfellow, *A Plea for Love*, 9

⁶ See Miroslav Volf, *A Plea for Love, Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Abingdon, 1996), 125-31.

from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8: 18-39). Here is the evangelical passion that burns boldly at the centre of the church's determination to reach out in myriad of ways.

A connectional church with a global vision

The self-giving generosity of Jesus is the rationale that the Apostle Paul uses to connect the generosity of churches in Macedonia with the plight of the impoverished Christian community in Jerusalem. In the process he invites the congregation in Corinth to become partners in this venture (I Corinthians 8-9). The church is assumed to be connectional. Congregations in this place or that are linked to each other.

Presbyterians understand this interconnectedness. We express it in a variety of ways. Sessions and presbyteries look at the world and see something they believe requires their attention. Overtures are sent to General Assembly for debate and deliberation. The decisions taken are, finally, collected into the *Social Action Handbook*. Neatly arranged under the headings of *life, relationships, community, nation and world*, the sheer scope unfolds in an impressive display of Gospel concern. Significant studies have evolved on such topics as biotechnology, human sexuality, lotteries, television programming, poverty and social policy, ecology, trade and trade agreements, and human rights in various countries. These voices have risen from within the church and are being shared for the greater good of the world as well as the church.

I experienced the global connectedness of the church dramatically in the spring of 2001. I was invited to be part of a small delegation of Canadian church leaders to travel to southern Sudan. The New Sudan Council of Churches cried out for action from the Canadian churches in the midst of their war-ravaged country. I had seen poverty up close in Latin America and Africa, but nothing prepared me for the incredible suffering of southern Sudan. At that time the government in Khartoum was receiving a million dollars a day from oil revenues and had increased its military budget to suppress its own people by the equivalent amount. At the time it all felt so overwhelming. I was doubly discouraged because Talisman Energy of Canada was then one of the participating oil companies. Nevertheless, I came away with awesome respect for the many church people who were working for peace and justice. Their vision and courage was awesome.

That conflict has begun to be resolved but now Darfur (another part of Sudan) cries out in the face of mounting genocide. So the work of the church must reach beyond its own communities to those of another faith, to people whose suffering is an affront to our Creator. Add to this the church's spectacular leadership, notably through International Ministries' mission staff and PWS&D in calling for the compassion and generosity of the church in the struggle to help the millions of people in Africa (and elsewhere) suffering from HIV/AIDS. This call to the church to respond with compassion and generosity reminds us that we live in an interconnected world and face it with a sense of partnership in a global community of churches.

God's alternative order and the agenda of the church

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins by reminding the church that our primary purpose is to glorify God. In worship we not only stand in responsive mode before God and toward God, but also seek to discern and articulate an alternative view of the world. We try to discover and clarify how the world seen in relation to God is different from the world of daily experience. Worship invites the receptive stance that opens us to God's intended way.

This alternative order is imaginatively construed in the parables of Jesus. We may miss the socially subversive nature of these stories if we do not read them in the context of their first century setting.⁷ To single out a Samaritan man as the conveyer of God's mercy, for example, is to use not only an outsider but a

⁷ See, for example, William R. Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Westminster/John Knox, 1994).

despised individual whose religious convictions are as suspect as his ethnic origin. The action of the father who welcomes his prodigal son back home and throws a big party for the whole community seems absurd. For a mere widow to confront a judge over what appears to be a family inheritance issue is surprising, but for her to outwit him is shocking. The idea in the parable of the vineyard that the workers who laboured for only an hour are to be paid the same as those who had worked all day seems patently unfair.⁸ Such stories are sometimes introduced with the phrase “the Kingdom of heaven (or God) is like...” which signals a new order where God’s reign is everywhere evident. The parables, in other words, picture another way of being where the rejected and the unworthy are included, where evil systems are undermined and where generosity reaches beyond merit to grace.

How might the agenda for the church reflect this new order? Back in 1997 the World Alliance of Reformed Churches met in General Council in Debrecen, Hungary. It published a far-reaching Declaration which begins with a theological affirmation:

“We belong – body and soul, in life and death –not to ourselves but to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.”

This is followed by a confession of moral failure and complicity in adding to the world’s burdens and allows for a movement to claim new life that relies on the promises of God to break the chains of injustice. Finally the statement moves to a litany that links the phrase “we are not alone” with a set of affirmations.

We are not alone - we will be stewards of creation.

We are not alone - no human ideology or agenda holds the secret of history.

We are not alone - we are in solidarity with the poor.

We are not alone - human beings are not commodities.

We are not alone - we are called to build a new community with a simple lifestyle.

We are not alone - we do not despair for God reigns.

We are not alone - with all God’s people we welcome and proclaim God’s glory.⁹

When we review the *Social Action Handbook*, this statement captures many of its themes and sets them into the evangelical framework of worldwide Reformed theology. As a result, our social action is subsumed within the framework of the coming of God’s reign – which is to affirm that ultimately the world is transformed by God and not by either ourselves or the church. We are relieved of that burden - but also energized to take action. Out of the compassion of the crucified and risen Christ who has gifted the church with his Spirit, we face injustices, conflicts, hatreds and violence. The promised Paraclete (as Spirit is called in the Gospel of John)¹⁰ enables our discernment, inspires our vision and enables our efforts to live the Gospel in our world.

⁸ In order, these parables can be found in Luke 10:25-32; 15:11-32; 18:1-8; Matthew 20:1-16.

⁹ Herbert Ehes, “The Alliance since 1970”, *Reformed World* 99 (1999), 137-38.

¹⁰ Paraclete is a Greek work meaning a spiritual counselor guiding and encouraging the disciples in a hostile world. See John 15:26 and 16:7-13.

A Few Practical Suggestions

Congregations wishing to engage in social action in a truly serious way might consider setting up a study group from time to time. Elements that could assist in providing depth to their exploration are as follows.

- **Choose one of the topics in the Social Action Handbook.**
The group might set out to choose one from a different section each time they set up a study series.
- **Clarify what they believe as people of faith in relation to the topic chosen.**
They might review and discuss some aspect of the theological orientation provided in this introductory article. They might link the topic to selected passages of Scripture.
- **Discuss the three aspects of the topic (the church speaks, acts and reflects) as outlined in the Handbook** making use of additional material referred to in each article and any further research that they might be able to find.
- **Explore the possibility of taking some action inspired by the study.**
The group might write a letter to a local Member of Parliament. It could contribute to a fund related to some need discovered through the study. It could visit a site (near at hand or further afield) connected to the subject
- **Reflect again on how engaging in social action impacts what they believe.**

The Rev. Dr. Arthur Van Seters
April 2005

The Rev. Dr. Arthur Van Seters wrote this introduction to the Social Action Handbook in 2005. Dr. Van Seters was passionately committed to the church's engagement in the public square. Following a long struggle with cancer, Dr. Van Seters passed away on Saturday, May 21, 2011.

How to Use this Book

Welcome to the Social Action Handbook. In this section we review some of the features of the book, and offer readers some advice on what to look for.

But first a word on what the Social Action Handbook is. It is a summary of the reports and recommendations adopted by the annual General Assemblies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada from 1954 to the present. As such, it represents the mind of the church, as an institution, as of the last time the matter was discussed at General Assembly. It does not necessarily represent the mind of every individual member of the church.

Nor are these statements carved in stone. They do not have the force of legal precedent. No General Assembly is bound to accept the decision of a previous General Assembly. Nevertheless, these documents are as reasonable a guide as any on the position of the church.

It should be noted that not every report is adopted on the same basis. Some represent the church “taking a stand” on a matter of importance. Other reports are adopted with the aim of opening up discussion in the church as a whole. These are commended to presbyteries and congregations for study, not necessarily as the final word on the subject. The reader should refer to the recommendation in the Acts & Proceedings* for the year in which the report was adopted to see what status, if any, was attached to the report.

*Acts & Proceedings (A&P): the official minutes of General Assembly together with reports, overtures, and information on congregations, committees and the roll of ministers and diaconal ministers.

The Books

The Social Action Handbook has been arranged in five thematic books:

- Life
- Relationships
- Community
- Nation
- World

A master table of contents is included in this introduction, and the table of contents for each book is repeated in the introduction to each book.

A master glossary of acronyms used is also in this introduction, and the acronyms necessary for each book are included in its introductory pages.

This section also includes a topical list of reports cited in the Social Action Handbook for quick reference to specific topics.

The Articles

Each book contains several articles. Some articles contain many sub-sections. Each article or sub-section is normally divided into three parts:

- The Church Speaks
- The Church Acts
- The Church Reflects

The Church Speaks

This is a short bulleted list of the positions adopted by General Assembly. Each is referenced to its source in the Acts & Proceedings.

The Church Acts

As a deliberative body, General Assembly “acts” by communicating its position to the church, to government officials and others in positions of leadership, urging, recommending, encouraging, or discouraging a course of action.

The various actions of General Assembly are arranged chronologically and referenced to the Acts & Proceedings.

To set the actions of General Assembly in context, this section contains copious **footnotes** and **information boxes**.

Footnotes are found at the bottom of the page. In the main body of the text a footnote is indicated by one or more asterisks (*). These provide short explanations of persons, places and events named in the text.

Information boxes are used to provide a glimpse of the social context in which the church was making its decisions. They contain more material than can be contained in a footnote.

Note: neither the footnotes nor the information boxes are derived from the Acts & Proceedings. **They are not part of the text of the Social Action Handbook.** They are intended solely to provide additional information which will be helpful in understanding the issue, especially for those readers who may not be aware of the context of the time.

Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in these additional notes.

The Church Reflects

Social context provides the reason social issues come forward at a particular time. But in determining what to say, the church must be ever mindful of its mandate to witness to the gospel.

This section contains excerpts from some of the reports which were chosen for the clarity with which they expressed the theological and biblical basis of the decisions recommended and adopted by General Assembly. Each of these is a direct citation from the reports and statements in the Acts & Proceedings.

As is usual in the case when only segments of a report are quoted, there has been generous use of the ellipse (...) to indicate where words, phrases and sentences have been omitted.

When the ellipse appears at the end of a paragraph, it indicates that one or more paragraphs have been omitted before the next segment quoted from the report.

The reader is encouraged to go to the full report in the relevant Acts & Proceedings to ascertain the context of the excerpts cited.

The Endnotes

Each section ends with a list of the Acts & Proceedings referred to in that section.

Typically, a reference contains three parts:

- a reference to the report.
- a reference to the recommendations in the report.
- a reference to the motion in the minutes where the recommendation and/or report was adopted.

So the following reference means that the report is on page 282, the recommendation is on page 289 and the motion to adopt is on page 101.

A&P 1966, pp. 282, 289, 101

Current Acts & Proceedings always begin the appendices on page 201 to avoid duplicating page numbers occurring in the minutes. Before this practice was adopted, page numbers in the appendices also began on page one, so that page numbers up to about 100 could be found in either the minutes or appendices.

To indicate which pages an endnote is referring to in this situation the abbreviations (app.) “appendices” and (min.) “minutes” have been added to the reference.

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Glossary of Acronyms

A&P	Acts & Proceedings
BCL	Board of Congregational Life
BWM	Board of World Mission
CCC.....	Canadian Council of Churches
CCD	Committee on Church Doctrine
CSRI.....	Committee on Social Responsibility in Investments
ESA	Board of Evangelism and Social Action
FTAA.....	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GA	General Assembly
GATT.....	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GBM.....	General Board of Missions
GOC	Government of Canada
IAC	International Affairs Committee
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund
KCCJ.....	Korean Christian Church in Japan
LMA	Life and Mission Agency
MECC.....	Middle East Council of Churches
NAFTA.....	North America Free Trade Agreement
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
PCN.....	Presbyterian Church in Nigeria
PCT.....	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
PWS&D.....	Presbyterian World Service and Development
WARC.....	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC.....	World Council of Churches
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith
WMS.....	Women's Missionary Society
WTO.....	World Trade Organization

Topical Index of Reports

Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Abortion	1967	Legalized Abortion	ESA	Life (Book 1)
	1976	Abortion: Life and Health of the Mother as the Criterion	BCL	
	1990	Abortion	BCL	
Adoption	1964	The Adoption of Children of One Faith by Parents of Another Faith	ESA	Relationships (Book 2)
	1968	Religion and the Placement of Children on Adoption	ESA	
Africa	1977	Statement on Apartheid	BWM	World (Book 5)
	1984	Statement on Southern Africa	BWM	
	1989	The Kairos Document	CCD	
	1992	Where Peace is Broken	IAC	
	2011	Malawi	IAC	
The Americas	1998	Cuba: An Uncertain Transition	IAC	World (Book 5)
Asia	1976	Our Concern in regard to the People's Republic of China	BWM	World (Book 5)
	1980	Recommendation re: Taiwan	BWM	
	1987	Statement on Taiwan	BWM	
	1989	Korea	IAC	
	1996	Proposed PCC Policy on Taiwan	IAC	
	1998	India: The Weight of Tradition	IAC	
	2011	India: Dalits & adivasis	IAC	
Automation	1965	Automation and its Impact on Persons	ESA	Nation (Book 4)
	1970	Automation	ESA	
	1970	The Doctrinal Implications of Today's Technology	Articles of Faith	
Biotechnology	1974	Biological Engineering and Technology	CCD	Life (Book 1)
	1979	The Value of Human Life	CCD	
	1989	A Statement on Genetic Engineering	BCL	
	2000	Human Cloning and Biotechnology	LMA	
	2013	Genetic Privacy and Direct to Consumer Genetic Tests	LMA	
Canadian Constitution (French-English Relations)	1978	Committee on National Unity	SpCtte	Nation (Book 4)
	1990	Commissioner's Overture on National Unity	Overture	
	1992	Response to the Constitutional Proposals	BCL	
	1992	Statement of National Committee on Francophone Ministries	Standing Ctte.	
Capital Punishment	1957	Special Committee on Capital Punishment	SpCtte	Community (Book 3)
	1974	Study on Capital Punishment	BCL	

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Caring for Creation	1973	Theology of Ecology	ESA	World (Book 5)
	1989	A Statement on Genetic Engineering	BCL	
	1991	Environmental--Global Warming	IAC	
	1992	Signs of Hope	IAC	
	1994	The World Trading System	IAC	
	1995	Structural Adjustment Programs	IAC	
	1997	Food Security: Bread for Life for the Common Good	IAC	
	1999	Rainforest Depletion: Causes and Consequences	IAC	
	2003	Genetics	LMA	
	2003	Environmental Degradation as a Human Security Issue	IAC	
	2005	Water-God's Gift	IAC	
	2007	Building Energy Audits	LMA	
	2010	Caring for God's Creation - Impact of Climate Change on the Global South	IAC	
2011	Whose Land? Who Benefits?	IAC		
Copyright	1982	Christians and Copyright	BCL	Community (Book 3)
Corporate Social Responsibility	1973	Committee on Social Responsibility in Investment	SpCtte	World (Book 5)
	1979	Social Responsibility in Investment Policy	BCL	
	1981	Investment Policy	BCL	
	2012	Land: Resource Extraction and Canadian Mining Companies	IAC	
Criminal Justice: Offenders	1962	The Church and Penal Reform	ESA	Community (Book 3)
Criminal Justice: Victims	1984	Crime Victims and the Church	BCL	Community (Book 3)
Diversity: Disabilities	1980	International Year of the Disabled	BCL	Community (Book 3)
Diversity: Faiths	1990	Christian-Jewish Relations: an Historical Review	History	Community (Book 3)
	2003	Reconciliation and Hope in a Multi-Faith World	IAC	
	2003	Religious observances in public civil services	Ecum. Rel.	
	2007	Interfaith Mandate	Ecum. Rel.	
	2009	Re-affirmation of the Uniqueness and Finality of Jesus Christ and its Relevance for Interfaith Dialogue	CCD	
	2009	Response to a Common Word initiative (from Muslim religious leaders)	Ecum. Relations	
	2011	Statement on our Relationship with the Jewish People	CCD	

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Diversity: Gender & the ministry of women in the church	1963	The Place of Women in the Church	SpCtte	Community (Book 3)
	1964	The Place of Women in the Church	SpCtte	
	1980	Women in Ministry	Bd.Ministry	
	1981	The Ministry of Women in the PCC	Bd.Ministry	
	1982	Task Force on the Liberty of Conscience re: Ordination of Women	SpCtte	Community (Book 3)
Diversity: Race & Ethnicity	1964	Racial and Ethnic Discrimination	ESA	Community (Book 3)
	1981	The Pluralistic Church	BWM	
	1984	Ethnic Ministries	BWM	
	1992	Response to the Constitutional Proposals	BCL	
	2004	Racism & requesting a policy on racial harassment	LMA	
	2008	Policy for Allegations of Racial Harassment	Assembly Council	
	2008	Statement on Diversity at National Level Leadership	Assembly Council	
	2011	Strategy for greater racial and ethnic involvement in leadership	LMA	
Diversity: Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants	1975	Brief on Immigration Policy	BCL	Community (Book 3)
	1977	Immigration	BCL	
	1987	Refugees	IAC	
	1988	Refugees	IAC	
	1996	Renewal of Master Agreement for the Sponsorship of Refugees	Assembly Council	
	1996	The Church and Canada's Refugee & Immigration Policy	IAC	
	2006	Response to Overture 14, 2005 on Sanctuary	LMA	
	2007	Migrants	IAC	
	2009	Immigrants Who Have Professional Credentials	LMA	
	2010	Sponsorship of Iraqi Refugees	PWS&D	
	2015	Global overview of Refugees	IAC	
Ecology, Energy, Environment	1973	A Theology of Ecology	ESA	Nation (Book 4)
	1983	Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy	BCL	
	1984	Acid Rain	BCL	
	1987	The Canadian Family Farm: a rural-urban crisis	BCL	
	1988	The Crisis in Canadian Agriculture	BCL	
	1989	A Statement on Genetic Engineering	BCL	
	1991	Energy Policy Framework	BCL	
	1992	Response to the Constitutional Proposals	BCL	
	2000	Human Cloning and Biotechnology	LMA	
	2010	The Cost of Holding a Carbon Neutral General Assembly	LMA	

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide	1994	Euthanasia: A Matter of Life and Death	LMA	Life (Book 1)
	1995	Euthanasia Update	LMA	
	2017	End of Life Issues and Physician Assisted Suicide.	CCD	
Family Planning	1964	"Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and Related Questions"	ESA	Relationships (Book 2)
Foreign Debt	1989	The International Debt Crisis	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1995	A Reflection on Debt & Poverty	IAC	
	1995	Structural Adjustment Programs	IAC	
Gender Identity	2017	The Church and people who are transgender and intersex	LMA	Relationships (Book 2)
Gambling & Lotteries	1954	Statement on Gambling	ESA	Community (Book 3)
	1976	Lotteries	BCL	
	1990	The Church's Position on Gambling & Lotteries	BCL	
	1999	Gambling	LMA	
	2003	Funds Generated by Gambling	LMA	
Global Economic Justice	1997	The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy	CCD	World (Book 5)
	2006	God's Will for Wholeness	IAC	
	2007	Wisely and Fairly for the Good of All	CCD	
Global Mission	1999	The Signs of the Kingdom	IAC	World (Book 5)
	2000	Proclaiming God's Reign	IAC	
Healing	1966	The Church's Ministry of Healing	ESA	Life (Book 1)
	1998	The Church's Role in Health Care	LMA	
Health Care	1963	A National Health Service	ESA	Nation (Book 4)
	1998	The Canadian Health Care System	LMA	
	2004	Health Care: what are we learning from P3s?	LMA	
	2005	Canada Health Act	LMA	
HIV/AIDS: Global Pandemic	1997	Requesting Partner Churches to Address the Issue of HIV/AIDS and its Prevention	LMA	World (Book 5)
	2004	Toward a World without AIDS	LMA	
	2007	Access to Medicines Regime	IAC	
HIV/AIDS: Pastoral Care	1988	Pastoral Care of Persons with AIDS	BCL	Life (Book 1)
Homosexuality	1969	The Church and Homosexuality	ESA	Relationships (Book 2)
	1985	The Church and Homosexuality	CCD	
	1994	Human Sexuality	CCD	
	2003	Special Committee on Sexual Orientation	SpCtte	
	2015	Human Sexuality	CCD & LMA	
	2016	The Way of God's Reign	CCD	
	2016	Summary of Responses to "Body, Mind and Soul"	LMA	

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Housing	1954	Homes for the Aged	ESA	Nation (Book 4)
	1966	The Effect of Sub-Standard Housing on Family Life	ESA	
	1968	Statement of Concern on Sub-Standard Housing	ESA	
	1976	Message to Cdn. Delegates to UN Conference on Human Settlements	GA	
	1987	The Crisis in Adequate and Affordable Housing	BCL	
	2007	National Social Housing Program	LMA	
	2014	Affordable housing crisis in Canada	LMA	
Human Rights	1993	Indigenous Peoples	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1996	A Theology of Human Rights	IAC	
	1997	Food Security: Bread for Life for the Common Good	IAC	
	1998	Biblical & Theological Reflection (10 Commandments & Human Rights)	IAC	
	2002	Persecuted & Suffering Christians	LMA	
	2015	Religious Persecution	IAC	
	2016	Treatment of Minorities and Indigenous People	IAC	
Human Sexuality	1972	A Statement on Marriage and Divorce	ESA	Relationships (Book 2)
	1987	Human Sexuality	BCL	
	1994	Human Sexuality	CCD	
Indigenous People	1976	Indians of Canada	BWM	Nation (Book 4)
	1976	Statement on northern development	GA	
	1991	Aboriginal Rights	BCL	
	1992	Hydro-electric megaprojects	BCL	
	1992	Response to the Constitutional Proposals	BCL	
	1994	Reconciliation with Aboriginal Peoples	LMA	
	2005	Healing & Reconciliation Program	Assembly Council	
	2007	Kelowna Accord	LMA	
	2007	Funding Local Healing and Reconciliation Initiatives	Assembly Council	
	2013	Conversation Circle re Theological Framework for Aboriginal Spirituality	Conversation Circle	
	2014	Acknowledging traditional First Nations territories in GA Courtesies and Loyal Addresses	LMA	
Labour-Management Relations	1966	The Right to Work	ESA	Nation (Book 4)

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage	1964	Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and Related Questions	ESA	Relationships (Book 2)
	1968	Marriage & Remarriage: a Commentary on Chapter XXIV of the WCF	CCD	
	1970	Remarriage of Divorced Persons	ESA	
	1972	A Statement on Marriage and Divorce	ESA	
	2009	Doing Weddings Better	LMA	
Middle East	1987	Christians in Israel	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1988	Middle East	IAC	
	1990	CCC Position Paper on Middle East	IAC	
	1991	The Middle East	IAC	
	2002	The Middle East--Palestine	IAC	
	2008-2009	The Things that Make for Peace	IAC	
	2011	Response to "Kairos Palestine – a moment of truth"	EIFRC	
	2012	Christian Zionism – Implications for Peace and Justice Between the Jewish and Palestinian Peoples	IAC	
2013	Response to Overture No. 9, 2012 re: Matters Relating to the Occupation of the West Bank	IAC		
Nuclear Weapons & Disarmament	1982	Commitment to Life in a Nuclear Age	BCL	World (Book 5)
	1983	Disarmament and Peace	IAC	
	1985	Nuclear Disarmament and Peacemaking	IAC	
	1995	The World-wide Campaign to ban landmines	IAC	
	1998	An Escalating Nuclear Threat	IAC	
	2004	God is our Refuge: Security in an Insecure World, Part II	IAC	
	2004	Defence and Security	IAC	
Obscenity and Pornography	1964	Obscene and Pornographic Literature	ESA	Community (Book 3)
	1987	Pornographic Materials	BCL	
	2007	Child Pornography	LMA	
Organ Transplants	1969	Transplants of Bodily Organs	ESA	Life (Book 1)
Overseas Development Assistance	1985	Politics of Food	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1992	How Peace is Broken--Obstacles to Peace	IAC	
	1993	Supplementary Report	IAC	
	2014	Report on Canada's ODA	IAC	
Parish Nursing	1998	The Church's Role in Health Care	LMA	Life (Book 1)

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Peacemaking	1988	Theological Reflection on Peacemaking	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1991	Biblical Reflection/Peacemaking	IAC	
	1992	Theology of Peacemaking	IAC	
	1993	Nationalism & Self-Determination	IAC	
	1994	Theology of Peacemaking	IAC	
	2001	Seeking Shalom in a time of transition	IAC	
	2003	God is our refuge: security in an insecure world	IAC	
	2008	Responsibility to Protect (R2P)	IAC	
	2013	Arms Trade Treaty	IAC	
Poverty & Social Policy	1961	The Board and Inter-Church Relations	ESA	Nation (Book 4)
	1967	Christian Responsibility and Poverty	ESA	
	1968	The War on Poverty	ESA	
	1970	The Church and Poverty	ESA	
	1973	Poverty and Development	ESA	
	1992	Response to the Constitutional Proposals	BCL	
	2007	The Growing Gap in Canada	LMA	
	2015	Payday loan industry in Canada	LMA	
Protest, Violence & Civil Strife	1969	The Right and Duty of Protest	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1974	The Theology of Violence	CCD	
	1980	The Church and Social Violence	IAC	
	1985	Central America	IAC	
	1988	Nicaragua	IAC	
	1990	Northern Ireland	IAC	
	1991	Central and Eastern Europe	IAC	
	1995	Structural Adjustment Programs (Rwanda)	IAC	
Protecting the Vulnerable: Domestic Violence	1979	Violence in the Home	BCL	Relationships (Book 2)
Protecting the Vulnerable: Mental Health Issues	2011	Guidelines for Dealing with Mental Health Issues	LMA	Relationship (Book2)
Protecting the Vulnerable: Sexual Abuse & Harassment	1993	Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and/or Harassment	LMA	Relationships (Book 2)
Protecting the Vulnerable: Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults	2005	Leading with Care: A Policy for ensuring a climate of safety for children, youth and vulnerable adults in The Presbyterian Church in Canada	LMA	Relationships (Book 2)
Public Prayer	2015	Public Prayer	SpCtte	Community (Book 3)

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Topic	Year	Report Title	Committee	Book
Senior Citizens	1961	The Church and the Aged	ESA	Nation (Book 4)
	1965	The Church and Older People	ESA	
Social and Economic Issues	1995	Serving the Common Good	LMA	Nation (Book 4)
	1996	What Does the Lord Require of Us?	LMA	
	1996	Christian Faith and Economic Claims	CCD	
	1997	The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy	CCD	
Substance Abuse: Alcohol	1948	The Church and Alcohol	ESA	Community (Book 3)
	1976	The Use of Alcohol	CCD	
Substance Abuse: Drugs	1971	Drugs and Theology	CCD	Community (Book 3)
	1974	The Non-medical Use of Drugs	BCL	
	1974	Task Force on the Majority Report of the LeDain Commission	SpCtte	
Suicide	1968	Suicide--One of Canada's Most Neglected Public Health Problems	ESA	Life (Book 1)
Taxation	1987	An Interim Report on the Canadian Tax System	BCL	Nation (Book 4)
	1989	Canadian Tax System	BCL	
	1996	What Does the Lord Require of Us?	LMA	
Television	1974	Children's Television	Communications	Community (Book 3)
	1999	Voicing Concern to the CBC re: deletion of religious programming	SpCtte	
The Lord's Day	1950	Lord's Day Observance	ESA	Community (Book 3)
	1959	The Lord's Day and Modern Society	ESA	
	1968	The Doctrine of the Lord's Day	Articles of Faith	
	1986	Sunday Observance	BCL	
	2002	Opening of Shopping Malls on Sunday	LMA	
Trade & Trade Agreements	1985	Canada - United States Relations	IAC	World (Book 5)
	1987	Canada - U.S. Relations	IAC	
	1988	Canada - US Relations	IAC	
	1994	The World Trading System	IAC	
	2004	What does God Require of us? A Declaration for Just Trade in the Service of Life	IAC	
	2007	Human Impacts Assessment of Trade Agreements	IAC	
Unemployment	1954	Unemployment	ESA	Nation (Book 4)

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Glossary of Acronyms

A&P	Acts & Proceedings
BCL	Board of Congregational Life
CCD	Committee on Church Doctrine
ESA	Board of Evangelism and Social Action
GA	General Assembly
GOC	Government of Canada
LMA	Life and Mission Agency

Abortion

The Church Speaks

- The unborn child has a right to life such that only a danger to the mother's life or the likelihood of permanent or prolonged mental or physical impairment to the mother should be regarded as grounds for abortion.⁵
- There is no point in time that the fetus does not qualify as human life.⁴
- The church is opposed to abortions "on demand" or as a means of population control.²
- Therapeutic abortion is permissible when the continuance of a pregnancy endangers the mother's life or is likely to have a serious impact on her physical or mental health.¹
- The conscience of health care workers on the question of abortion should be respected and there should be legal protection from demotion, suspension or discharge for those who refuse to participate in abortions.³

The Church Acts

1967: The 93rd GA, while noting that "abortion involves a decision fraught with serious moral and spiritual implications" and re-iterating its opposition to the potential use of abortion to limit population growth, agreed that the Criminal Code should be amended to "make therapeutic abortion lawful, when the continuance of a pregnancy endangers the mother's life or is likely to seriously impair her physical or mental health, when authorized by a panel of qualified medical authorities."^{1*}

Until 1969 the Criminal Code of Canada deemed abortion to be a criminal offence. Although the Code tolerated an abortion in order to preserve the "life of the mother of a child that has not become a human being" there was no test for deciding when such a situation existed. A doctor who performed an abortion, even when convinced it was necessary to save the mother's life, was liable to prosecution.

Doctors contended that a prior approval process for abortion would facilitate legal and medically safe abortions.

1972: The 98th GA expressed deep concern over the sharp increase in the number of legal abortions performed each year and called on provincial governments to maintain a close supervision of therapeutic abortion committees "to assure adequate consultation with the mother and, if possible, with the father and family physician before permission for abortion is granted, and that such permission be granted only for the reasons of danger to the mother's life or serious impairment of physical or mental health."

GA asked that all concerned minister actively to those facing the question of abortion, pointing to alternatives and "supporting and counseling them both before and after abortion or birth". GA expressed disapproval of advertisements such as "Abortion on Demand" or "Undesirable Pregnancy?—Safe Abortion" and urged ministers, sessions and presbyteries to engage young people, parents and health professionals in forthright study and discussion of these resolutions.²

1975: The 101st GA urged the GOC and provincial governments to take the necessary steps to ensure the laws of the land respecting abortion were not abused, and asked that a law be enacted to protect health care workers who refused to take part in abortions, on grounds of conscience, from discharge, demotion or discrimination.³

1976: The 102nd GA approved the BCL statement, "Abortion: the Life and Health of the Mother as the Criterion." This document called for a strict interpretation of the terms "life" and "health" in assessing an application for abortion.⁴

* Amendments to the Criminal Code in 1969 permitted therapeutic abortions in hospitals when a request to terminate a pregnancy was approved by a committee appointed by the hospital.

The Morgentaler Case

After 1969 many were alarmed by the rising number of legal abortions. Others pressed to eliminate all legal restrictions on abortion. The latter had a champion and symbol in Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who opened up a free-standing abortion clinic in Montreal in 1969. Tried in both 1972 and 1973 for providing illegal abortions, he was acquitted by the jury in both cases. In 1973 the Quebec Court of Appeals overturned the jury verdict. A second trial also resulted in acquittal and the Government of Quebec announced it would no longer enforce the laws governing abortion.

In 1983, Dr. Morgentaler opened clinics in Toronto and Winnipeg. In an Ontario court, he was acquitted by the jury, whose verdict was overturned by the Ontario Court of Appeal. A new trial went to the Supreme Court of Canada, which had to consider the Charter of Rights and Freedoms adopted in 1982. On January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court ruled the Criminal Code provisions on abortion violated a woman's right to "life, liberty and security of person" under the Charter.

Court decision (the Morgentaler case) by re-affirming the church's basic principles on the question of abortion and mandating the BCL to study the implications of whatever legislation might emerge dealing with the subject and to take appropriate action consistent with the church's stated position.⁷

1990: The 116th GA communicated its opposition to the new federal legislation on abortion to the house leaders of the Senate and the special committee of the Senate who were currently studying the Bill.⁸ (See "The Church Reflects" below)

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "Legalized Abortion", ESA report, 1967¹

The issue before the church is whether, within the context of the sanctity of human life, there are circumstances where abortion is permissible. If such exist, the law must be clear in safeguarding those who are involved in the decision and the action.

[†] The GOC commissioned a survey on the Operation of the Abortion Law in 1976. The survey team was chaired by Justice Badgely and its report was released in 1977.

*Excerpt from “Abortion: Life and Health of the Mother as the Criterion”, BCL report, 1976*⁴

“An abortion involves a decision fraught with serious moral and spiritual implications”. Among these implications must be affirmed the fundamental right to live. This principle must be seen to obtain also for the unborn. There is no point in time when it can be asserted that the fetus does not qualify as human life. It is unseen, unconscious, dependent and perhaps unwanted, but these are not grounds for its termination. In view of this fundamental right, it is proper to conclude that the interpretations of “life” and “health” must be strict.

*Excerpt from “Abortion”, BCL report, 1990*⁸

Bill C-43 is a Criminal Code measure stating that abortions are legal when one doctor determines that the pregnant woman’s physical, mental or psychological health is at risk. In other words, it is a medical decision. Also, the bill does not guarantee access to medical services for women who, after serious consideration, decide to obtain an abortion. Protection for those who refuse to participate in abortion on grounds of conscience are not sufficiently protected.

Therefore, those who are ‘pro-choice’, those who are ‘pro-life’ and those who seek to ensure a balance of rights cannot support the proposed legislation.

¹ A&P 1967, pp. 332, 340, 63, 81

² A&P 1972, pp. 303, 66

³ A&P 1975, pp. 343, 344, 40

⁴ A&P 1976, pp. 343-344

⁵ A&P 1977, pp. 279-280

⁶ A&P 1985, pp. 55-56

⁷ A&P 1988, pp. 347, 30, 54

⁸ A&P 1990, pp. 368-369, 51

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Biotechnology – Human Application

Note: see Nation/Ecology, Energy, Environment about non-human applications of biotechnology. For concerns on the impact of biotechnology on overseas development, see World/Caring for the Planet.

The Church Speaks

- Organ transplants, including heart transplants, should be accepted as a normal part of surgical practice.¹
- Research using embryonic tissue should proceed only under strict government guidelines.⁴
- Such guidelines should not allow indiscriminate use of fertilized embryos, but encourage development of cell culture lines from fetal material that will accomplish the same purpose.⁴
- Genetic screening must not be forced on any person without his or her consent.⁴
- In-vitro fertilization and amniocentesis must never be used as methods of sex selection.⁴
- Equality as a principle must prevail in the use of gene therapies. No one hereditary trait can take preference over another. Gene therapy must not occur to benefit one segment of humankind over another.⁴
- The reproductive cloning of human beings should be banned by law.⁵
- Humans are created in the image of God. We are more than our genes. Genetic determinism reduces humans to their genes and ignores environmental and social factors, such as our diet, how much or how little exercise we do, or whether we are rich or poor.^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}
- The federal government should be encouraged to develop specific and meaningful legal safeguards to protect genetic privacy.⁶

The Church Acts

1969: The 95th GA adopted a statement on transplants of bodily organs prepared by the ESA.¹

1974: The report of the CCD to the 100th GA highlighted the need for evaluation and ethical guidance in regard to the uses of biological engineering, as raised by the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod in an overture to the 97th GA.²

1979: The 105th GA accepted an introductory study on genetic engineering and the meaning of human life prepared by the CCD and mandated the BCL to set up a task force to monitor developments in the field.³

1989: The 115th GA adopted a statement on genetic engineering and called on the GOC to monitor developments in genetic engineering research and develop strict guidelines on embryonic research into correction of human genetic disorders. The World Council of Churches was requested to develop a special human rights code with respect to genetic engineering. The BCL was mandated to establish a technically competent group of volunteers to monitor developments in genetic engineering, research and application.⁴

Three events stimulated discussion on various aspects of biological technology in the field of medicine:

- *the first successful transplant of a human heart in 1968,*
- *the birth of a child conceived by in-vitro fertilization in 1978, and*
- *the successful cloning of a mammal (Dolly, the sheep) in 1997.*

2000: The 126th GA adopted a study on human cloning and biotechnology and recommended it to presbyteries and congregations for study in consultation with persons of experience and expertise in the church and in their community. GA called on the GOC to introduce legislation banning reproductive human cloning as recommended by the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies.⁵

2013: The Moderator of the 139th GA wrote to the Minister of Health requesting information on details of current federal oversight of Canadian labs which provide direct to consumer genetic tests.* The Moderator of the 139th GA wrote to the Ministers of Justice and Health inquiring how Canada's laws ensure the genetic privacy[†] of Canadians and whether additional legal safeguards are being considered.⁶

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from "Transplants of Bodily Organs", ESA report, 1969*¹

When new methods are discovered for restoring otherwise dying patients to a measure of health and useful life, it is timely and fitting to compliment the highly specialized scientific disciplines that have made this possible. It is important for Christians to acquaint themselves with medical advances so that the symbolism so closely associated with the "heart" may allow emotions to gradually accept this operation as a normal part of surgical practice.

*Excerpt from "Biological Engineering and Technology" CCD report 1974 citing correspondence from Prof. G.W. Hodgson, Director of the Environmental Services Centre (Kananaskis) University of Calgary.*²

"The medical/engineering profession is now making ad hoc decisions in a vacuum of legal, moral, social and philosophical guidance. It realizes this is the case, but it must make decisions because no one else is making them! ... Good or bad, the technology for such accomplishments is rushing in upon us, and we are not ready."

*Excerpts from "The Value of Human Life" CCD report, 1979*³

The underlying assumption of genetic medicine is that physical reality can be understood and that its aberrations can be minimized or eliminated. A primary issue in genetic science is that of remaking humanity and creating life ... a prospect which is so clearly evident in the case of "cloning", i.e. reproduction from one parent only, using a body cell instead of combining a sperm and ovum. The present biological revolution therefore represents a quantum leap in human change. It is filled with live possibilities and far-reaching implications for what it means to be human. Indeed, it places us in a unique situation of responsibility, a situation of responsibility which involves the entire community. ... Present biomedical breakthroughs place before us the necessity of responsible questioning.

...

What image of human existence serves as an adequate framework for determining our response to the reality of genetic disease or defect? The question has several implications. It is important, first of all, because it raises the issue of what constitutes acceptable human normality, a matter

* Direct to consumer genetic testing gives private citizens access to genetic tests conducted by labs in the United States for as little as \$300 and will test for a patient's genetic predisposition for a number of diseases. It is unknown how many Canadian labs offer these tests. Direct to consumer testing bypasses medical professionals who are trained to care for and assist patients with interpreting and understanding the results of genetic tests. The results and predictive value of direct to consumer genetic tests should be viewed with caution.

† There are legitimate research benefits which could, according to scientists, kick start the development of genetically guided therapies for major diseases. Making genetic information public raises questions, however, about the potential for such information to be used in a discriminating or unethical manner.

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crucial for social responsibility. Behind the horror at genetic defectiveness there often stands a kind of prototype of human perfection which tends to narrow the range of acceptable normality.

Our image of man is important, for to adopt a prototype of human perfection is to posit a monistic image of humanity. But behind society's at least verbal commitment to civil rights, to justice for all, notes Daniel Callahan, "lies a rejection of images of individual perfection and uniformity" (*Ethical Issues*, D. Callahan, p.87). Humanity is pluriform. ... The recognition that humanity is pluriform has issued in recognition of those who have actual inequalities of individual assets and liabilities in society, a sense of shared responsibility for those having lesser genetic endowments. Such recognition represents a triumph, a triumph which, in the words of Callahan, "would be all for nothing if we accept the idea that defectives and their parents have no right to burden the rest of us with their troubles, or that it would be naive to find a social solution for a problem which can be done away with by a scientific solution." (ibid. p.88).

...

We are tempted to embrace many scientific and technological innovations because we suppose these things to be our salvation. To believe that our salvation shall come from the biological revolution betrays a superficial reading of man's predicament. ... For example, the abuse of corporate power is rooted in the moral and spiritual defects of the strong, and we have no guarantee that the "new man" envisioned by many protagonists of biological engineering will have sharper moral sensitivities. Is the failure to will and to do what is morally right rooted in genetic defects?

...

[T]he new biomedicine with its advocacy of "cloning" impinges upon human sexuality at a crucial point. To have "babies without sex" would spell a serious division between human sexuality and procreative love. ... Bernard Raring's remarks are equally pertinent: "By abolishing the normal biological relationships, the irreversible commitment of specific adults to specific children would be massively endangered". (*Ethic of Manipulation*, pp. 204-205).

...

To raise the question of cost is to ask who shall benefit from the new medicine. In view of its cost, shall its benefits be confined to an elite who can afford it? For example, shall in-vitro fertilization be a benefit available to only the wealthy? Finally, shall the benefits be confined to the richer nations who can afford the new medicine?

...

From a biblical and theological perspective there is no a priori reason for ruling out genetic research, and intervention in the genetic flow per se has a certain legitimacy. Both may be viewed as an expression of carrying out the creation mandates. To the Christian some of the undreamed of possibilities - actual or potential - which are being explored today by medical research may be regarded as an opportunity for us to fulfil, in a new and more intelligent way, the divine command to "fill the earth and subdue it".

...

Finally, our response to genetic engineering should be a Christian realism, a realism which will enable us to steer between outright denial of the legitimacy of genetic research and uncritical acceptance. James B. Nelson indicates the stance of such realism, and captures, we believe, the intent of this paper:

A hopeful Christian realism about human life can go far in counteracting the extremes of technological utopias and nightmarish doomsdays which now creep into the genetic discussions. A hopeful Christian vision of what makes human life truly human will encourage those genetic efforts which are even now relieving much suffering and contributing to human wholeness. On the other hand, a wise Christian realism will challenge the biological engineers who are not

content with mankind but are ambitiously intent upon improving the race. Without any ingratitude for the brilliance of their genetic achievements, some of us believe that salvation lies beyond any human revolution (even the scientific one) and that any human movement which claims ultimacy for its own vision breeds tragedy. Such is the posture of hopeful realism (*Human Medicine: Ethical Perspectives on New Medical Issues*, James B. Nelson, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973; p.122).

Excerpts from “A Statement on Genetic Engineering” BCL report, 1989 ⁴

1. Gene Selection

Science is researching ways to isolate genes that produce genetic disorders that are passed on from generation to generation. Once a gene has been identified, parents who know that a genetic disorder has surfaced in their family can be screened to discover the likelihood of their transmitting the disease. In a great many cases the passing on of genetic disease from generation to generation can be avoided. The church must be aware of these advances made in genetic engineering if it is to meet the needs pastorally of those parents who may be considering gene counselling in order to determine if they themselves are potentially the parents of a child with a genetic disorder. Moreover, it needs to also offer pastoral counselling for those parents who have conceived and learned that the fetus has a genetic disorder. They are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to terminate the pregnancy.

Carried to an extreme, however, gene selection can infringe upon basic human rights. Genetic screening or counselling for the purpose of gene selection must be totally voluntary. Genetic screening must not be forced on any person without his or her consent. Mandatory screening might be used inappropriately and unethically to deny access to jobs or to force a sterilization policy for those deemed less desirable. In no way must mass genetic screening occur on any particular race, including those that have a particular racial genetic disorder.

The church also has a responsibility to speak against any attempt on the part of science to use gene selection for purposes other than the screening of genetic disorders. In no way should gene selection be used for the purpose of eugenics or the creation of a “better human being”. Gene selection in humans has the possibility of selecting certain genetic traits and ensuring that they are passed on to children. This raising of the spectre of ‘positive’ eugenics, i.e., the introduction of traits viewed as desirable and the elimination of traits thought to be less desirable, leads to complex ethical questions: Who defines what is desirable? What happens if there is decreased diversity in the human gene pool?

2. Sex (Gender) Selection

It is possible to determine the sex of a child before it is born. Sex selection can occur in in-vitro fertilization, and with amniocentesis one can determine the sex of a child. The church emphatically declares that all humankind is equal, male and female. Sex selection can lead and sometimes does lead to a preference of one sex over the other. In no way, therefore, does the church lend any support to sex selection being used by any country in order to produce a nation with one dominant sex for any purpose, for example a male-only labour force. The church must also condemn any current use of sex/gender selection as a means of reproductive control.

3. Reproductive Technology

Since 1978, in-vitro fertilization has become a household word. In Canada, some couples who were unable to have children, now have families. In the 1979 published report on in-vitro fertilization, The Presbyterian Church in Canada cautioned that in-vitro fertilization must never

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be used as a method of sex selection. It also argued that in-vitro fertilization is not a desired replacement for adoption. Instead, it encourages the work of those who are helping infertile couples. However, recent empirical study has shown that the chance of an infertile couple walking out the door with a baby in their arms ranges from zero to thirty percent.

A recent Canadian development is the use of 'selective reduction'. This is the abortion of one or more fetuses in women who have a multiple pregnancy (commonly a result of in-vitro fertilization) but who cannot continue with it, or in some cases choose not to. Since the federal abortion law was struck down last year (1988), selective reduction is not being submitted for review to hospital ethics committees.

Ectogenesis is the fertilization and growth of a life form outside of a womb. This technology is, of course, not being applied to human life; however, it is necessary for the church now to state that it cautions against the potential use of ectogenesis on humans. While, in rare cases, ectogenesis could be used where a woman is unable to support a fetus, human life forms could be created and nurtured totally devoid of parental bonding. The church warns against such a procedure.

4. Gene Therapy

Science is now experimenting with ways ... to correct genetic disorders in humans. It must be stressed that at this point, this therapy remains only theory. ... The work of scientists in this area should be encouraged; equality as a principle must prevail. No one hereditary trait can take preference over another. Gene therapy must not occur in order to benefit one segment of humankind over another.

5. Embryo Research

In the area of human genetics, no one area of concern is more debated than research being performed on human embryos. ... While advising caution in this area, many researchers do not consider a total ban on all embryo research desirable. The fourteen day limit* lacks a philosophical basis and does not provide a significant point of biological discontinuity in embryonic development. It may accord with a pragmatic sense of ethical acceptability in society and it coincides with the legal distinction between contraception and abortion which depends on the implantation of the embryo in the uterus of the mother.

Genetic Engineering and Christian Faith

Is one human life intrinsically worth more than any other? All human life is holy in God's sight. We are called to protect the rights and freedoms of the other. The church cannot find more worth in one race over another or one gender over another. All genetic engineering discoveries should be shared globally. Gene selection should not be used to give one life more value in the eyes of society than another. Gene therapy should not be used to benefit one segment of society over another. People of God cannot contend that a person with a certain genetic disorder is worth less than a person without that disorder. Gene splicing should not be used to create a life form for the advantage of only a few. A less responsible use of genetic engineering would dishonour God's creation. The failure of the church to reflect on ethical issues of genetic engineering leaves the church voiceless in the face of new technology.

*Excerpts from "Human Cloning and Biotechnology", LMA report, 2000*⁵

* Fourteen days is the Canadian legal limit for the use of human embryos in research.

Dr. Donald Bruce, Director of the Church of Scotland's Society, Religion and Technology Project raises these issues concerning human cloning:

- Replicating any human technologically goes against the basic dignity of the uniqueness of each human being in God's sight in that we are predetermining the complete genome of another person.
- The biblical picture of humanity implies that we are more than our genes or genes and environmental influences. Central is our spiritual dimension, made in God's image.
- The relational implications of this technology must be considered alongside the ontological.
- The element of human control provides an ethical case against human cloning.
- Replicating a human being technologically is an instrumental act towards two unique individuals: the one from whom the clone is taken and the cloned human.
- What is the actual relationship of the cloned child to the mother or father?

...

For each particular application of biotechnology, we need to ask its purpose. Does it address a legitimate need? Under what conditions, if any, is it permissible to manipulate human life or that of other species? What are the acceptable limits? ... In making genetic alterations to humans, how do we decide what needs improving? What traits are considered normal? What are the risks of discrimination against persons with "undesirable" traits?

...

Further Issues and Questions:

- Who determines which genes are defective?
- What are the risks that, in eliminating defective genes, we will contribute to depleting the genetic pool? We do not know the unintended consequences. For example, this therapy is seeking to correct the defective gene that causes sickle cell anemia. However, the gene that produces sickle cell anemia also offers some protection against malaria.
- In determining defective genes, how does society ensure that cultural or social prejudices do not figure in these decisions?
- How will information from genetic screening be used?
- Who will have access to this information?
- Will this technology gain widespread use in high-risk occupations?
- Will people be denied insurance coverage based on their genetic risk?

¹ A&P 1969, pp. 324-325, 109

² A&P 1974, pp. 392-393, 51

³ A&P 1979, pp. 225-232, 63

⁴ A&P 1989, pp. 341-348, 67-68

⁵ A&P 2000, pp. 333-342

⁶ A&P 2013, pp. 374-5, 19

BOOK ONE — LIFE

Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide

The Church Speaks¹

- The weight of Scripture endorses a standard of death with dignity.
- The value and dignity of human life precludes any support of euthanasia or assisted suicide.
- We support life but do not seek to prolong the process of death.

The Church Acts

The issue of euthanasia and assisted suicide became headline news in 1993 through two widely-publicized cases.

On October 24, 1993, 12-year old Tracy Latimer, severely disabled by cerebral palsy, was murdered by her father Robert Latimer as an “act of mercy”.

Sue Rodriguez, suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), sought legal changes through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which would permit a physician to assist her in committing suicide at a time of her choosing, since her deterioration from ALS would prevent her from acting on her own.

Robert Latimer was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment with no eligibility for parole for ten years. In February 1993, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled against permitting assisted suicide. A Senate Committee was appointed to investigate the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide in February 1994.

1994: The 120th GA approved the statement “Euthanasia: A Matter of Life and Death” as study document for presbyteries and for use in pastoral care.¹

1995: The 121st GA urged sessions and congregations to contact and speak with their Members of Parliament should legislation on the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide be introduced in the House of Commons. Justice Ministries staff prepared a brief for the Special Senate Committee on Euthanasia* and joined a new coalition, Care in Dying, to work with others lobbying the government on proposed legislative changes.²

2015: The 141st GA approved the recommendations of a Special Committee, responding to Overture No. 34 re prepare a statement re end of life issues, that the CCD undertake a study of the issues of physician assisted death. The 141st GA approved a summary of church historical statements and positions on euthanasia and physician assisted death and recommended that the Moderator write a letter of pastoral concern regarding the complexity of end of life issues and that the summary and letter be circulated to sessions and congregations as a resource for conversations on this complex and sensitive matter.³

* It was announced, during Assembly, that the Senate committee report on euthanasia had just been made public and the majority report (4-3) was in line with the statement approved by the 120th GA in 1994.

2017: The 143rd GA approved the report “Physician Assisted Suicide,” for use by agencies, colleges, congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods, committees and groups within The Presbyterian Church in Canada, inviting comments to be sent to the CCD by January 31, 2018.⁴

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “Euthanasia: A Matter of Life and Death”, LMA report, 1994¹

Life in its physical, social, emotional, rational and spiritual dimensions has been entrusted to our care by God. As good stewards of this gift of life, we relate faithfully to our Creator and to each other. We have been created for community and have a responsibility for the life of the neighbour. Community is possible only in interdependence and we are all, at one time or another, dependent on the neighbour for our life, as the neighbour is dependent, at times, on us. Life is lived in relationship. To honour this life, no matter how diminished, means to support, protect and nurture all possibilities of relationship.

...

We know that our life is not our own to do with as we please. In life and in death, we are the Lord’s, (Rom. 14:8) and subject to God’s sovereignty. Our times, therefore, are not in our hands and we must trust with our life the author of life, who both gives and takes away. In God is our ultimate security, the one to whom praise and thanksgiving are due, whatever the circumstances of our life. (1 Cor. 15:57, 1 Thess. 5:18)

For the Christian, the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide are faith issues, to be reflected on and responded to, both in the reverence for God and in the freedom of a child of God. (Prov. 9:10, Gal. 5:1) In such circumstances different people will, in faith, arrive at different conclusions. While such differences are to be respected and mutual support given, as together we journey through “the valley of the shadow”, the weight of Scripture endorses a standard of death with dignity.

Further, while individual situations may be compelling and tragic, they cannot justify disregard of basic values that are critical to the maintenance of a just and humane society. The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds that the value given human life by God and by human relationships precludes any support of assisted suicide. Euthanasia or assisted suicide are not private matters of individual morality. They have profound implications for society because the way we treat the dying affects the way we treat the living.

...

Death with Dignity

Federal Legislation on Medical Assistance in Dying and “The Carter Decision”

The “Carter Decision” refers to a case decided by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2015. The judgment of the court was that the criminal code provisions outlawing assisted suicide and euthanasia are unconstitutional – to the extent that they prevent suffering persons from accessing medical services by which their lives may be ended. The court decided unanimously that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right of Canadians to physician assisted suicide. The Government of Canada was instructed to enact legislation according to this decision. Bill C-14 did this, outlining the legal basis for physician assisted death suicide. It received Royal Assent on June 17, 2016. You do not need to have a fatal or terminal condition to be eligible for medical assistance in dying.

The church has not changed its position of rejecting physician assisted suicide. A report on the church’s response to this change in Canadian laws and policy is found in the A&P 2017 beginning on p. 241.

BOOK ONE — LIFE

Patients need to know that their illness is taken seriously and that they will receive the treatment necessary to alleviate at least physical pain and/or other unpleasant physical symptoms, if a cure for their illness proves impossible. This is especially the case when pain is chronic and unrelenting, and the patient can no longer cope. They also need to know that everything will be done to promote and to sustain their life and that they will not simply be allowed to die. On the other hand, most patients do not wish to be sustained indefinitely in a vegetative state in which they cannot function, cannot contribute to their own life or that of others, and have become to others a financial, emotional or physical burden.

Quality of life is an issue for patients. An open, forthright relationship between patient and care-givers is required. The patient must be given the freedom to ask questions relating to his or her program of treatment, the benefits and risks of various procedures, and about medical prognosis and possible outcomes of different courses of action. Care-givers, on the other hand, need the freedom and have the responsibility to ask of the patient why certain treatment procedures, either verbally or non-verbally, are being requested or are being refused. The patient is encouraged to share with care givers his or her goals and values so that treatment might reflect these. Where certain goals are unrealistic, this is discussed. Again, the health care provider has the responsibility of ensuring that the patient has as much information about his or her medical situation as possible, and that he or she understands this information.

Reinforcing the patient's ability to understand and experience meaning and value in his or her life, even in the midst of distressing circumstances, encourages the person to live victoriously in the present, and to grow in relationship with the One to whose future he or she is being called.

...

Ministry with the Terminally Ill

Fundamental to the care-giver's ability to be comfortable in relating to the terminally ill is the care-giver's vision of ultimate reality, vision which he or she can share when it is appropriate to do so. Involved in such a view of ultimate reality is an understanding of the nature and role of death. Such an understanding has been set forth in our previous study and is outlined above. Death represents a necessary limit on our human existence. It is the revelation of the sovereignty of a creator God, who has overcome the power of death. Therefore death is not the end of existence but the continuation of an existence that has no end. Death is a part of life, the dimensions of which are beyond our understanding or knowledge. (1 Cor. 2:9)

Ministry with the terminally ill thus involves a sensitivity to knowing when "to let go". There are times when a person has completed living here and is prepared to enter upon the next stage of existence. He or she has reached the stage of acceptance. In such a situation, it is incumbent upon care givers to listen to the patient, to support this acceptance and strengthen the patient's hope. This is difficult when care-givers themselves have not worked through the stages of the grief process. At such times, the needs of the care givers can become confused with those of the patient.

...

Conclusion

We believe that our relationship with our Creator cannot be broken. However death is understood and experienced, we cannot die alone. Both in life and in death we are subject to the sovereignty of God who claims us. (1 Sam. 2:6, Ps. 9:3, Rom. 8:35ff) The reality of death is subordinate to the reality of the sovereign love of God made manifest in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. (Rom. 6:4ff) "In death we commit our future confidently to God." (Living Faith, 10.4)

When death is untimely it can be viewed as tragic. It constitutes robbery of life, a cutting short of the realization of the possibilities inherent in the gift of life. The right to our time is given to us by our Creator who wills the full flowering of our humanity. Death attacks our dignity as a child of the creator God, fashioned in God's image. The power of death in all its aspects is, therefore, to be resisted. Yet there can be a point beyond which the attempt to delay the death of a physical organism is unwarranted because of the effects this attempt has on a person, and because it constitutes an indignity to him or to her. We support life but do not seek to prolong the process of death.

The Christian stewardship of life requires us to preserve and care for that life. Suffering does not destroy the meaning of life nor does it necessarily obliterate hope. Even in the most difficult circumstances, witness can be made to this meaning and hope, both by the dying and by those who attend them. However, to suggest that there is a time "under heaven" both to live and to die means that while saying no to euthanasia (the direct termination of life) we can say yes to dying with dignity.

Excerpt from "Euthanasia Update", LMA report, 1995²

What is death with dignity? It is the exercise of a faithful stewardship of life. For the Christian, it means struggling to live in creative tension with the different perspectives of pain, suffering and death. ... It means to live as fully as possible until death. For the faith community it involves a willingness to participate in what Paul Lehman* calls "the politics of God," which means acting on behalf of the terminally ill to ensure that everything possible is done to make and to keep human life human. And it means that the faithful will surround the terminally ill with love and support at the time of dying. To die with dignity is to accept our creaturely limitations. To acknowledge the sovereignty of God and the lordship of the Son in life and death is to affirm that there is a greater good than simple survival and to give up what has been called "biological idolatry". It also means to accept "limits to one's ability to see and nurture redemptive possibilities."

¹ A&P 1994, pp. 352-358, 29

² A&P 1995, pp. 304-306, 31

³ A&P 2015, pp. 47-49

⁴ A&P 2017, pp. 25, 242-273

* Author of *Ethics in a Christian Context*

BOOK ONE — LIFE

Ministry of Healing

See also Book 2, Protecting the Vulnerable.

The Church Speaks

- The church is commissioned to exercise a ministry of healing.¹
- We approve healthful recreation, participation in sports and programs of physical fitness.²
- Pastoral care committees are to exercise a compassionate ministry to persons with AIDS and other affected people.³

The Church Acts

1966: The 92nd GA received the report of the ESA on the ministry of healing for use as a study paper. It approved a recommendation that congregations form groups for intercessory prayer for the sick, and underwrite the expenses of ministers and elders to take clinical training in counselling.¹

1976: The 102nd GA noted the upsurge in interest in physical fitness and asked for government* and church encouragement to promote and facilitate the development of recreational sports and physical fitness including programs for those who have physical or emotional difficulties.²

1988: The 114th GA encouraged ministers and lay members to become accurately informed concerning the medical, social, and economic facts about AIDS and its transmission and to encourage public education about AIDS. Pastoral care committees were urged to exercise a compassionate ministry to persons with AIDS.³

1998-2000: The report of the LMA to the 124th GA drew attention to parish nursing, “an exciting new initiative for retrieving a significant role in health care by congregations.”⁴ In 1999, the LMA made resources on parish nursing available to interested congregations⁵ and noted in 2000 that a growing number of congregations were becoming involved in parish nursing programs.⁶

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from “The Church’s Ministry of Healing” ESA report, 1966*¹

[E]ven a cursory glance thro’ Scripture seems to show that in that central doctrine of the Christian faith, the atonement of Christ, there is a foundation laid for faith in bodily healing; there is a connection between sin and sickness, salvation and health. ... The word ‘*sozo*’ generally translated ‘to save’ is used also, and perhaps primarily, in the sense of healing: literally it means ‘to make whole’. Similarly ‘*Soter*’, applied to Christ, means both ‘Saviour’ and ‘Healer’.

...

To still further dwell on this connection between salvation and healing, and to the wholeness which is the result of God’s work for man, we may point to passages like Matt. 8:17, “He healed all that were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, ‘Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses’ ” taken within the context of Christ’s redemptive work. Such verses are profound, even unsearchable as to the full meaning, but one thing stands out clearly: Christ is portrayed as the sickness-bearer as well as the sin-bearer of his people.

...

We have seen no reason for limiting [the ministry of healing] to Christ himself, or to his apostles. His power is still active in his kingdom. He regarded sickness as not a ‘necessity’ in life but as

* In the early 1970s Health Canada introduced the popular ParticipAction program promoting a physically active life-style. This program remained in effect until January 12, 2001.

MINISTRY OF HEALING

part of the kingdom of evil which he had come to subjugate; something over against God's kingdom. ... It is in this setting that we see these works of healing. Christian healing is the normal working in the life of the Kingdom of God called into action by faith in God—the simple faith in the living Christ active in the world today through his body, the Church.

...

The testimony of the New Testament records that neither Christ nor the apostles made any effort to call out faith as a prior necessity for healing. Many “faith healers” err here in demanding faith, for it cannot be manufactured, but rather springs from an already established relationship. In conformity with the idea of the wholeness of man, it would seem that we can no more manufacture faith for healing of the body than for salvation of the soul. ... Why should faith for salvation of the soul be given by God and that for the body be self-generated? It is good if faith already exists, for this is the ideal condition for healing, but it is not essential.

...

As to methods of healing, it must be said at once that Scripture does not disapprove of means—medicines, surgery, etc. ... Actually, ... [the] interdependence of medicine and faith has always been recognized. In the past two centuries the Church has been very aware of its task of evangelization and has stretched out to all the world. A major part of its effort has been medical missionaries. ... But to go further back—Christians have cared for the sick from the very early days of the Church. ... [A] positive conception of the Church's ministry of healing will link pastors, physicians, nurses and all others concerned about health into co-operation and mutual assistance.

Excerpts from “Pastoral Care of Persons with AIDS” BCL report, 1988*³

All illness, physical and spiritual, is the product of living in a fallen world, a world in which people have become alienated from God and from each other. As Christians, therefore, we are agents of reconciliation in the midst of alienation, including that alienation which is a product of illness. As Christians, we are called to care for all people who are sick, whether in body, in mind or in spirit, and to bring them within the community where we ourselves have found healing before God.

Some irresponsible statements have been made which interpret the AIDS crisis as a sign of God's wrath or judgment. Such assertions seriously misrepresent the character of our loving God, and discredit the Christian gospel of wholeness and reconciliation. In the face of the AIDS epidemic, as disciples of Christ, we must imitate the behaviour of Jesus Christ the healer. If we fail in this responsibility, the good news we proclaim is empty.

...

No congregation can escape the consequences, direct or indirect, of the AIDS crisis. There are members of our congregations who have died from AIDS already. Other members are HIV-positive, and must live with the knowledge that they will probably develop AIDS in the future. There are partners, families and friends of these people who also need the caring support of the Christian community to help them deal with their grief and their fears. Health care givers need special support in their ministry of healing as they face the unavoidable risks of treating people with AIDS in hospitals.

...

Too many people, including Christians, have responded to AIDS out of ignorance. Such ignorance can only be overcome through education about the disease. Others have responded out of prejudice. Prejudice can only be overcome by putting a human face on the suffering which the disease causes. Others have responded to AIDS out of fear. As Christians, we need to affirm

* An updated revision of this report with an extensive bibliography was published in 1992 as “Pastoral Care Concerns and Justice Issues Involving People Living with AIDS and their Associates”.

BOOK ONE — LIFE

through our actions that “perfect love casts out fear” and in love to proclaim the gospel of hope and reconciliation in a fractured world.

*Excerpts from “The Church’s Role in Health Care”, LMA report, 1998*⁴

Much of Jesus’ ministry was devoted to healing and from apostolic days into early modern times the church continued to be a centre of healing ministries. Many great hospitals around the world trace their origin to Christian missions. More recently, as hospital and medical services have been provided by governments, the church’s role in health has been reduced to chaplaincy and visiting programs. At the same time the secularization of medicine has reduced the attention paid to the spiritual aspects of health.

An exciting new initiative for retrieving a significant role in health care by congregations is the parish nurse program. Conceived by Dr. Granger E. Westburg, the basic principle of this program is to help churches “reclaim their apostolic mandate to preach, teach and HEAL.”* Ideally, the parish nurse functions as part of the church staff team. The role of the nurse is to assist the congregation in becoming a healing community. ... Through a parish nurse program a congregation identifies, interprets, discovers and lays claim to its historic role in the area of health and well-being.

Of course, congregations should continue to support hospital chaplains and visit the sick and shut-in whether in institutions or at home. New ministries are needed for care-givers, both professionals and those who have heavy responsibilities for members of the family. Congregations can also play an important role in influencing policy at all levels of government by encouraging community dialogue on social issues and promoting Christian social values.

¹ A&P 1966, pp. 282, 289, 101

² A&P 1976, pp. 345, 38

³ A&P 1988, pp. 344-347, 30

⁴ A&P 1998, pp. 411-412

⁵ A&P 1999, p. 325

⁶ A&P 2000, p. 333

* Cited in “Parish Nursing”, a brochure of Inter-Church Health Ministries, Durham Region, Ontario

Suicide¹

The Church Speaks

- Suicide should not be considered a criminal offence.
- Suicide prevention centres should be set up on a regional basis by the federal government.
- Ministers should acquaint themselves with the warning signs of suicide.

The Church Acts

The 94th GA called on the GOC to follow the example of the UK and several American states in removing section 213 from the Criminal Code.* It also commended the work of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center and recommended the establishment of similar centres in Canada.

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Suicide—One of Canada’s Most Neglected Public Health Programs”, ESA report, 1968

Suicide cannot be excused or justified, since to take a life is a matter for God only and not for man himself. However, Karl Barth says that we must go on at once to say that even suicide in the sense of self-murder “is not as such an unforgiveable sin”. Whatever our views on this may be, since authorities tell us that more than half of suicides could have been prevented if timely aid and qualified advice had been forthcoming, it becomes imperative that the Church address itself to this social and moral problem and “provide the kind of help and assistance which is necessary for the prevention of this distressing wastage of human life”.

¹ A&P 1968, pp. 268-269, 97

* “Everyone who attempts to commit suicide is guilty of an offence punishable upon summary conviction.”

Book Two: Relationships

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Glossary of Acronyms

A&P.....	Acts & Proceedings
BCL	Board of Congregational Life
CCD	Committee on Church Doctrine
ESA	Board of Evangelism and Social Action
GA	General Assembly
GOC	Government of Canada
LMA	Life and Mission Agency
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith

Adoption

The Church Speaks²

- The religious faith of couples applying to adopt children, or the lack of professed faith, or the fact that the husband and wife are of different faiths, should not in itself be a barrier to the approval of their applications.
- A parent giving up a child for adoption should be permitted to state she has no preference as to the religion in which the child is to be raised. If she does state a preference, this preference should expire after a reasonable time* if no home has been found for the child.
- If possible, children, especially older children whose religious training has begun, should be placed in homes of the same religion as their natural parents.
- Where an agency is unable to find a home of the preferred religion in a reasonable time, the child should be placed in any suitable home.
- Christian families are encouraged to adopt children or provide foster care and to make proper provision for their children in case of their own deaths by common disaster, including the naming of guardians.

The Church Acts

This concern was raised because adoption agencies were applying to adoptions the same criteria concerning children which the Roman Catholic Church of the time required in a mixed marriage; namely that the non-Catholic partner make a formal agreement that children of the marriage be baptized and raised in the Roman Catholic faith. Adoption agencies required a similar contract or refused to consider applications from couples who were not of the same faith as the child's birth parents.

1964: The 90th GA urged governments to amend adoption laws to permit couples who qualify in every other respect to “adopt a child and bring it up in their own faith regardless of the religious faith of the natural parents”.¹

1968: The 94th GA recommended that provinces which restricted the adoption of children on grounds of religious faith amend their laws, and that placement agencies in all provinces review their policies on placement across religious lines. It also encouraged Christian families to adopt children needing care, and to make suitable arrangements for the care of their own children should they be orphaned.²

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “The Adoption of Children of One Faith by Parents of Another Faith”, ESA report, 1964*¹

We should ... insist that it is better for a child to be reared in the home of separated brethren than in an orphanage, even if this be an ecclesiastical institution. ... We believe it is God's will that every individual be reared within a family context. We believe that the grace of adoption exhibited toward us in Jesus Christ involves all Christians in a similar adoptive spirit towards their neighbours. Christian families should be “open”, welcoming needy orphans into their midst, even as God has accepted us because of our Elder Brother.

*Excerpt from “Religion and Placement of Children on Adoption”, ESA report, 1968*²

* The Board suggested four months as a reasonable time.

Religious faith is a vitally important matter in the life of any person and family and it is right that careful attention should be given to placing children in the homes of the same religion. This is especially so with older children whose religious training has begun. ... It would appear, however, that delay and hardship may occur when adoptive parents of the same religion as the child cannot readily be found.

¹ A&P 1964, pp. 352-353, 357, 95

² A&P 1968, pp. 264-265, 54

Family Planning¹

The Church Speaks

- Parents have the responsibility and right to determine the number and frequency of pregnancies.
- The law should not restrict the sale of contraceptives or the provision of information on the use of contraceptives.

The Church Acts

Until 1969 the Criminal Code included a section making it illegal to sell or advertise any means of contraception or to provide any information about contraception. It was illegal for ministers, doctors, counsellors or pharmacists to offer information on preventing conception even to married couples.

1964: The 90th GA called on the GOC to revise Section 150, sub-section 2 (c) of the Criminal Code re: conception control.

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and Related Questions”, ESA report, 1964

We call to the attention of the Church that in the WCF, Chapter XXIV “mutual help” comes before “the increase of mankind” in the purpose of marriage. This order indicates to the committee an important bearing on the consideration of the sale and use of contraceptives. Often the health and well-being of the children and mother are vital factors in procreation. Parents have the responsibility and right, together in prayer and trust, to determine the number and frequency of pregnancies.

¹ A&P 1964, pp. 351, 357, 74

Gender Identity

The Church Acts

2017: That congregations, ministers, chaplains, elders and youth leaders be encouraged to study “The Church and People who are Transgender or Intersex.”¹

Definitions of transgender and intersex

Justice Ministries was directed by the 2016 GA to prepare a report regarding people who are transgender and intersex. A narrative report, which included information from confidential interviews with trans members of the church and members of their families, was prepared and adopted by the 2017 GA. A&P 2017, 374-9

A transgender person is born with male or female anatomy but feels she or he has been born into the wrong body. Transgender, or trans, is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identities and gender expression or behaviour do not conform to that typically associated with his or her natal gender. Gender identity refers to a person’s internal sense of being male or female. Gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity through behaviour, clothing, hairstyle, voice or body characteristics, etc. A transgender person may decide to have sex reassignment surgery, or not.

Intersex is an umbrella term for a variety of situations in which a person is born with the reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not appear to fit with the typical definitions of female or male.⁵ It may include a broad range of variations in chromosomes that can (but may not) affect the expression of anatomy. Deciding who is intersex (that is, which medical conditions constitute intersex, which do not) is diverse. There is no definitive list of conditions or differences in sexual anatomy that define intersex. The Intersex Society of North America list several medical conditions that are (though are not always) associated with intersex. These can be found online at sna.org/faq/conditions.

¹ A&P 2017 36, 374-379

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

The Church Speaks

On Marriage⁵

- The first purpose of marriage is the mutual love, encouragement, support and help which husband and wife provide each in their development as persons. ... The other purposes of marriage are the procreation of children within the context of love and the joy of family, and the well-being of society which draws strength from the families that constitute it.
- Marriage is to be a monogamous and heterosexual⁸ union of one man and one woman.
- Marriage is not solely a private matter between the man and the woman, but an act of making a covenant with God and assuming the obligations of a family in human society.

On Weddings¹⁰

- A Christian wedding is a worship service. There are three central aspects of a Christian wedding: the worship and prayer to the Triune God, the reading of the Word of God and the dual audience of the vows: God and the gathered community.

On Divorce⁵

- Divorce violates God's intention. Marital failure is a paradigm for sin, i.e. a broken relationship or covenant. ... But where the Bible speaks of sin, it also speaks of forgiveness.
- When a marriage is terminated, there is to be careful provision for the just needs of those involved, especially the children of the union.

On Remarriage⁵

- Those who have divorced should remarry only when they have come to the place where they realize they have been forgiven by God. ... Bitterness and a sense of guilt, which are contrary to God's will for us in any situation, are dangerous threats to any future marriage.

On the Responsibilities and Rights of Ministers¹

- Ministers should counsel all those who apply for marriage, teaching them the meaning of the Christian marriage and vows, showing them the importance and blessing of Christian living and vows, and helping them to develop a mature relationship.
- Ministers may refuse to officiate at a marriage if they consider there is good and sufficient reason.

On Civil Marriage⁷

- Civil marriage should be readily available for those who desire it as an alternative to Christian marriage.

The Church Acts

Divorce

1963-72: The 89th GA appealed to the federal government for a royal commission to consider wider grounds for divorce than currently existed.² At the 90th GA a commentary on the WCF Chapter XXIV (*Marriage and Remarriage*) was circulated to commissioners. At the request of the 91st GA a more succinct statement was drafted and adopted by the 98th GA.⁵

Prior to 1968, Canadian law provided for divorce only in the case where a spouse had committed adultery. The WCF also permits divorce in cases of "willful and irremediable desertion."

Counseling

1964-1976: The 90th,³ 91st,⁴ 98th,⁵ and 102nd⁶ GAs responded to urgent appeals for training in marital and pre-marital counseling. The ESA held a number of training seminars for ministers. Presbyteries were encouraged to set up Christian marriage committees to guide and support ministers in difficult cases. Sessions were encouraged to provide for courses in Christian marriage and for counseling, and colleges were encouraged to include training in counseling as part of their curriculum.

Guidelines on marriage and civil marriage

1976-77: In order to respect the conscience of ministers and to maintain flexibility to respond on a case by case basis on such questions as re-marrying divorced persons, or marrying non-Christians who sought the services of the minister and the church facilities for a wedding ceremony without any intention of commitment to the Christian faith, the 102nd GA referred back to presbyteries the responsibility to establish such guidelines as they wished within their bounds.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

The BCL prepared a list of suggested “ingredients”^{*} for marriage ceremony guidelines.⁶ The 103rd GA encouraged presbyteries to contact provincial governments urging that appropriate steps be taken to make civil marriages more readily available.⁷

2002-2005: The 128th GA affirmed and communicated to the federal and provincial governments the doctrinal position of The PCC that marriage is between one man and one woman.⁸ The 131st GA re-affirmed, on the basis of its subordinate standards^{**}, that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, and instructed that the GOC be informed of this position. It also advised presbyteries responding to requests from ministers and congregations for guidance in the conduct of marriages to be guided by the confessional position of The PCC.⁹

2009: Sessions were urged to develop or enhance practices aimed at building connections between congregations and couples married in their building(s) and by their minister(s) and ensure all couples whose marriages they approve receive marriage education. Sessions were encouraged to explore what initiatives might be undertaken to strengthen marriages within the congregation and wider community. Courts of the church were urged to study the document “Doing Weddings Better.”¹⁰

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and Related Questions”, ESA report, 1964³

While as a church we recognize God’s intention of the one-flesh relationship in marriage to be for a life time, we must accept the unhappy fact that because we are sinful creatures we can destroy God’s intention. When a marriage dies because of the death of mutual concern between the partners, it must be recognized by the federal government providing wider grounds for divorce than at present exists. We believe the failure to do so is simply creating greater personal hardship, increased immorality and deliberate dishonesty^{**} in order to gain a divorce under existing laws.

Excerpt from “Marriage and Remarriage: A Commentary on Chapter XXIV of the Westminster Confession of Faith”, 2nd edition, 1968¹¹

Mutual help in Christian marriage is community. It brings together self-giving and self-fulfillment. It is therefore creative. It is obviously pro-creative, whereby a couple is given to share in God’s creating activity. But there is creativity also within the holy community of husband and wife. ...[Marriage] is the closest of human relationships in which the partners are not only able to express their individuality in new and mature ways, ... but are also able to express their creative oneness, a oneness that has been achieved because each has received what the other has offered. Thus when we say “marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife” we thereby acknowledge that God has seen fit to manifest His creative self-giving nature in an earthly relationship. He has made this relationship analogous to the union which exists between him and his Church.

* These “ingredients” included a) freedom of conscience for ministers invited to participate in inter-faith marriages, b) conferring with a minister who had declined to perform a marriage to determine whether there was a valid reason not to perform the ceremony, c) session involvement in problem cases and session support for pre-marital counseling and marital education, and d) diligence in forwarding names of newly-married couples moving to another community to the minister in their new area of residence

** “Christian marriage is a union in Christ whereby a man and a woman become one in the sight of God.” *Living Faith* 8.2.3

** This apparently refers to the practice of fabricating evidence of adultery, or of one partner agreeing to commit adultery, in order to obtain grounds for divorce.

Excerpt from “Remarriage of Divorced Persons”, ESA report, 1970¹²

Those involved in broken marriages are as much in need of Christ's redeeming grace as persons involved in other kinds of failure, brokenness and sin - and His grace is just as available to all of them as it is to anyone else. If our gospel is addressed to all people with its call to repentance and faith, it is for the divorced person too. Where repentance and faith exist, where the divorced person has realized Christ's forgiveness and healing in his life, and where he has come to a place of spiritual and emotional readiness, it is difficult to see that the church would be justified in insisting on a lengthy waiting period before a person could remarry.

Excerpts from “A Statement on Marriage and Divorce”, ESA report, 1972⁵

The first purpose of marriage is, therefore, that husband and wife should provide for each other, and receive from each other, love, encouragement, support and mutual help in their development as persons. ... The other purposes of marriage are the procreation of children within the context of love and the joy of family, and the well-being of society which draws strength from the families that constitute it.

...

In this new unity there are still two persons, each with their own personalities. The personalities will be shaped and modified during the course of the marriage, but one personality must not be destroyed or submerged by the other. Marriage is at its best when each personality is acknowledged, accepted and enriched by the other.

...

It is the case ... that monogamy was the rule in the New Testament period, and that Christians have generally seen that God impressed on His people the conviction that the one-flesh relationship can only be realized adequately in a monogamous marriage.

...

Society recognizes that a marriage contract has been made when the vows are made in the presence of witnesses. The public contract acknowledges that the marriage is not solely a private matter between the man and the woman, but that they are making a covenant with God and assuming their obligations as a family in human society. ... The word ‘covenant’ is an appropriate word to use when Christians marry as it conveys the sense of a solemn agreement in which God is a partner.

...

Because of the sinful nature of man which results in alienation and destructiveness, God's intention for marriage is never fully realized, and sometimes it is utterly frustrated. The commitment a husband and wife ought to give to each other and the steady development that this commitment ought to enjoy, are thwarted by a self-centredness that is present to some degree at least in every marriage. ... Divorce violates God's intention for mankind. ... Marital failure is a paradigm for the malignant relationship the Bible names sin. In the Bible, sin is a broken relationship or covenant. ... But if the Bible speaks of sin, it also speaks of forgiveness. Thus an act of infidelity is a marital offence, but so are many subtler but equally deadly offences. They need not result in divorce, and will not, if forgiveness and reconciliation take place. [Those who are divorced] ... should remarry only when they have come to the place where they realize they have been forgiven by God. ... Bitterness and a sense of guilt which are contrary to God's will for us in any situation, are dangerous threats to any future marriage.

¹ A&P 1973, pp. 268-270, 281, 38

² A&P 1963, pp. 318, 78

³ A&P 1964, pp. 350-351, 357, 74

⁴ A&P 1965, pp. 339-340, 351, 98

⁵ A&P 1972, pp. 293-296, 302, 65

⁶ A&P 1976, pp. 342-343, 38

⁷ A&P 1977, pp. 280-281, 32

⁸ A&P 2002, pp. 237, 21

⁹ A&P 2005, pp. 40-44

¹⁰ A&P 2009, pp. 243-254

¹¹ *Marriage and Remarriage: A Commentary on Chapter XXIV of the WCF*, 2nd edition, 1968. This Commentary was originally circulated to commissioners at the 90th General Assembly, 1964, and approved as a study. It is available in the Archives.

¹² A&P 1970, pp. 311-312, 314, 101

See also:

A&P 1961, p. 413

A&P 1972, p. 464

WCF Chapter XXIV, Of Marriage and Divorce

Protecting the Vulnerable

The Church Speaks

- The marriage relationship needs to be fundamentally understood as a relationship where violence is totally unacceptable.¹
- The church recognizes that violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world, undermining the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims yet, often, remains shrouded in a culture of silence; and that prevention and treatment of gender-based violence (GBV) requires that root causes of violence against women be acknowledged and countered.⁹
- Intervention in cases of child abuse is essential.¹
- In accordance with civil law, any allegation of sexual abuse of a child will be reported to the Children's Aid Society immediately.³
- Sexual abuse or harassment of any kind by any church leader, staff or volunteer will not be tolerated.¹⁵
- All allegations of sexual abuse or harassment will be taken seriously. Every allegation will be received, investigated and acted upon in accordance with the terms of church policy.³
- The leadership of any group using church premises for their activities is subject to the church policy on sexual abuse and/or harassment.³
- The protection of all children, youth and vulnerable adults is a spiritual, ethical and legal imperative.⁷
- The gospel mandate to love one another has clear implications for the church whenever one of its people is experiencing mental health issues. We are to provide appropriate care for all who are involved – the individual, the individual's family, the individual's congregation – while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the church's witness to the wider community.⁸

The Church Acts

1979: The 105th GA approved a paper on violence in the home for study and appropriate action.¹

1992-94: The 118th GA approved a draft set of guidelines on sexual ethics for clergy and other professional church leaders which outlined a process for dealing with complaints of sexual abuse and harassment by clergy.² A revised policy was adopted by the 119th GA.³ Work on implementation, education and training was commenced and underway by 1994.⁴ The Statement on Human Sexuality, adopted the same year, included sections on sexual violence and on church leaders and sexual responsibility.

1995-2004: The 121st to 127th GA approved a number of revisions and clarifications of *The Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse/Harassment** and continued to encourage education and training of church leaders. The 130th GA encouraged presbyteries to equip themselves to handle complaints under the Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse/Harassment by holding workshops on this policy periodically and encouraging ruling elders, particularly those serving as members of presbytery, to attend.⁵

2004-2005: A draft policy “Leading with Care: a Policy for Ensuring a Climate of safety in The Presbyterian Church in Canada” was circulated to congregations. The intent of the policy is to 1. engage in equipping teachers and leaders in our church for their ministry with children, youth and vulnerable adults and 2. work actively to ensure a safe environment for that ministry.⁶ The 131st GA adopted the completed policy** and instructed congregations to expedite the implementation of the policy by July 1, 2006. Presbyteries were mandated to oversee the implementation of the policy for all congregations and ministries within their bounds.⁷

2011: The 137th GA adopted “Guidelines for Dealing with Mental Health Issues”. The guidelines discuss guiding principles and measures to promote good mental health, outlines procedures for church responses when a person asks for help with mental health issues he or she is experiencing or when the observable behavior of the person indicates possible mental health issues. The guidelines suggest ways forward in cases where a person refuses the pastoral intervention of the appropriate church court.⁸

2017: The GA recommended that the Moderator write to PCC partners in Afghanistan, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti expressing appreciation for their work to prevent violence against girls and women and to promote gender equality. The GA recommended that congregations be encouraged to pray for girls and women who experience violence, and for men and women who are peacefully challenging gender-based violence; noting that prayers might be offered on a Sunday on or near November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.⁹

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “Violence in the Home” BCL study paper, 1979.¹⁰

The family is under a great deal of pressure in today’s world. At times the effect of this pressure is violence—physical, emotional and spiritual. The frequency of such acts of violence is greater than is generally admitted in society. ... The Church needs to acknowledge two things: 1) that violence exists in the home, including the homes of church people, and 2) that the church has a role in improving family life which can help decrease the incidence of such violence.

Wife battering

One of the greatest problems facing the beaten woman is society’s tacit acceptance of these acts of violence. ... More often than not, a woman who has been the subject of abuse is encouraged to “try it again” for the sake of the family. Now this approach is being challenged.

...

* *The Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse/Harrassment* is available on the church web site at: <http://presbyterian.ca/policies/>

** *Leading with Care: a Policy for ensuring a climate of safety for children, youth and vulnerable adults in The Presbyterian Church in Canada* is available on the church web site at: <http://presbyterian.ca/policies/>

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

A short but painful comment needs to be made. Of all the categories of helping agencies and people, ... the clergy were considered the least helpful (by far) by battered women.

...

The marriage relationship needs to be fundamentally understood as a relationship where violence is totally unacceptable. There are expectations which, for example, keep personal violence out of the places of work and away from recreational facilities. The same sort of expectations and norms are needed within the family. Violence needs to be seen by spouses as intolerable.

...

Sessions must come to terms with the fact that wife battering may well be happening in their churches. Pastors should be prepared to give adequate counsel or referral to both husband or wife. ... It should be remembered that if a woman (or a child) has been beaten once, there are overwhelming odds that she will be beaten again. Swift decisive pastoral action is called for.

...

Child Abuse

Child batterers, even though they come from different walks of life, different religious backgrounds and different classes, almost all appear to hold a hard core belief in authoritarianism. That is, a dominant belief that authority within the home must never be challenged.*

...

Intervention in cases of child abuse is essential. Battery does not occur in single isolated instances, but as a pattern of continuing assaults of increasing severity, sometimes resulting in the death of a child.

...

There is a basic need for family life education and other programs designed to help people learn to parent. ... Christians are urged to become familiar with the phenomena of child abuse. ... Also Christians should keep up with the latest work in child development and family life. Parenting and family life courses can be encouraged at the congregational level. ... Churches can also be encouraged to study the rights of the child in society and in the faith community. The child has a right, by virtue of his baptism, to be a valued member of the congregation. Congregations should ask themselves whether this right is really being manifested in their situation.

Excerpts from “Policy of The PCC for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and/or Harassment”, LMA report, 1993³

Our sexuality as a dimension of our whole selves is to be offered to God. In the expression of sexual desires we are called to holiness. God values sexuality as good, blessed and purposeful, both as an expression of love and for the procreation of children. Sexuality is a gift to be celebrated. We are called to be responsible in the use of our sexuality and to respect each other as children, women and men made in God’s image. From this belief in the sacredness of our physical beings we understand and declare that every person has the right to sexual and bodily integrity.

All those who serve the church, especially clergy, church leaders, staff and volunteers, are expected to adhere to Christian ethical principles in their sexual conduct and in their exercise of authority and power. The church and its extended ministries is to be seen as a safe place in the community; a place where it is known that sexual abuse is not to be tolerated. This is part of our Christian witness to the community. Therefore, the leadership of any group using church premises for their activities is subject to this policy.

...

* citation from Maria Van Stolk, *The Battered Child in Canada*, McLelland and Stewart, 1972 pp. 36, 37

In order not to be abusive, any sexual act must be done by mutual consent of the parties involved. Mutual consent presumes that the parties are on an equal footing with each other, so that one person is not pressured by any consideration of the stature or position of the other person.

Clergy and all other church leaders are in a position of authority and trust which makes the achievement of mutual consent difficult and increases the potential for harm and abuse of those whom they serve. The pastoral counselling function creates a particular relationship of trust. Exploitation of the trust developed in the counselling relationship through sexual activity is considered to be abuse.

...

Sexual contact is not invariably defined as sexual abuse. The church acknowledges that its leaders and members date, fall in love and marry. The church is the natural environment in which Christians can develop healthy relationships. ... Within the bounds of private relationships the church leader is called to the highest standards of Christian ethics.

Excerpts from “Leading with Care: A Policy for ensuring a climate of safety for children, youth and vulnerable adults in The Presbyterian Church in Canada” LMA report, 2005⁷

It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada that all persons, and in particular all children, youth and vulnerable adults, who participate in the denomination’s programs/ministries and/or use the denomination’s facilities will be cared for with Christian compassion and will be safe.

...

The following action statements describe both the reasons for this policy and The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s active commitment to it:

We will **prevent** abuse of children/youth/vulnerable adults. Prevention includes having good processes in place in order to prevent opportunities for abuse, neglect and harm from arising.

We will **protect** the vulnerable in our midst. The Presbyterian Church in Canada affirms that the protection of all children, youth and vulnerable adults is a spiritual, ethical and legal imperative.

We will **report** incidents of abuse, neglect and harm. Such incidents, wherever and whenever they are encountered, will be reported immediately to the minister, the police and the appropriate agencies in accordance with civil law requirements and the policies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We will **train and support** our teachers and leaders. Many congregations already have in place a process for recruiting, training, supervising and supporting teachers and congregational leaders. One of the reasons for this policy is to provide ways for congregations to begin, continue and/or improve on this process so that teachers and leaders are well trained and equipped for their ministry task.

...

We are called to provide a protective environment and care for the young and vulnerable because we believe this is what Jesus would have us do. As Christians we imitate the example of Christ and aim to stay rooted in his love in all our relationships. The gospels contain many stories of times when Jesus met and healed children (Matthew 9:18-19, 23-25) and portrayed them as examples for others (Matthew 19:10-14; Mark 9:33-37). The gospels have many stories, too, of Jesus’ care for vulnerable adults. In Mark’s gospel we read about Jesus healing a man possessed by evil spirits (Mark 1:21-26), a man with leprosy (Mark 1:40-42), a crippled man (Mark 2:1-12), a dying girl and a sick woman (Mark 5:22-43), sick people in Gennesaret (Mark 6:53-56), and a deaf man (Mark 7:31-35). We read about Jesus feeding the hungry (Mark 8:1-9), healing a blind man (Mark 8:22-26), and commending a poor woman’s generosity (Mark 12:41-44). In his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-11), Jesus exhorts us to care for and love strangers, prisoners, and the naked, hungry, thirsty and sick of the world; these words of Christ himself

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

constitute, as declared in *Living Faith*, “a call to help people in need and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God.” (*Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984, section 9.1.3)

¹ A&P 1979, pp. 294, 70

² A&P 1992, pp. 384-389, 63

³ A&P 1993, pp. 314-326, 51

⁴ A&P 1994, pp. 384-386

⁵ A&P 2004, p. 40

⁶ A&P, 2004, pp. 346-349, 16

⁷ A&P 2005, pp. 332-369, 18, 22

⁸ A&P 2011, p. 403-8, 42

⁹ A&P 2017, p. 20, 301-3

¹⁰ “*Violence in the Home*” BCL study paper, 1979. This document is available in the Archives. See also A&P 1995-2001 (Ministry and Church Vocations)

Human Sexuality

The Church Speaks

- Sexuality is an integral part of our humanity; sexual intercourse is an outward and visible expression of love and respect that provides a sense of mutual acceptance and support in the various experiences of life.³
- The church has a responsibility to preach and teach Christian belief and practice in sexual as well as in other matters, with honesty and humility, candour and compassion, showing a pastoral concern for all those who struggle with these issues in their daily lives.⁵
- Marriage is the proper context for sexual relationships. Sexual relationship in marriage is grounded in creation and affirmed by Jesus.⁵
- The values of mutuality and equality, inherent in marriage, require faithful monogamy.⁵
- Single people are called to abstinence from sexual intercourse.⁵
- In some circumstances, long term cohabitation may be regarded as a de facto marriage.⁵
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour on the part of any church leader is a failure of Christian discipleship; it is also an abuse of power that accompanies leadership and a betrayal of trust accorded to those leaders.⁵
- Masturbation is not an intrinsically evil or sinful practice. It is not condemned by the Bible and in itself does no harm.⁵

The Church Acts

1964: At the 90th GA a commentary on the WCF Chapter XXIV¹ was circulated to commissioners, which included a comment on unmarried persons and sexual relations.

1983-1987: The BCL reported to 109th GA on a consultation on human sexuality held in November, 1982. A six-part study for congregational use was prepared, using an open-ended experiential approach to encourage responsible and holistic attitudes to the subject.² The 113th GA adopted a statement on human sexuality prepared by the BCL and commended it to sessions and congregations for study.³

1990-1995: The CCD continued work on a position statement on human sexuality, presenting a draft statement to the 118th GA in 1992.⁴ The 120th GA adopted a revised report to be discussed by sessions, synods and presbyteries with their input to be included in the continuing report of the CCD.⁵ The 121st GA approved sending a copy of the 1994 report to the federal, provincial and territorial governments.⁶

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “A Statement on Marriage and Divorce”, ESA report, 1972⁷

Like anyone else, the unmarried are offered the freedom and love of Christ. Their relationships with others ought to be free from shame, pretense and anxiety and characterized by acceptance and joy. They also live under the obligations which they derive from the realities of their situation: they are not their own, but God's; they are to understand that sexual intercourse is part of a whole picture which involves life-long commitment and a one-flesh relationship, and these can be realized only within marriage. ... Christians—and society as whole—have frequently defended chastity and fidelity on wrong grounds, attempting to strike terror in young hearts and persuade them that sex is dangerous or evil. This has obscured for us the positive witness in scripture to the strong, full, ordered and joyous relationships that God intended to be found within marriage and family life.

Excerpts from “Human Sexuality”, BCL report, 1987³

It is most important to remember that our sexuality does not begin with the fall, but with creation (in the image of God). To deny or repress our sexuality is to deny or repress our humanity. Therefore sexuality is an integral part of our humanity – a humanity which is created, fallen, justified and sanctified.

...

Human sexuality has emotional, physical, cognitive, value-laden, spiritual, personal and social dimensions. Our sexuality permeates every aspect of our being. It is central to who we are as persons. Its reality is far wider and deeper than physical contact. Sexual intercourse, for example, is an outward and visible expression of love and respect that provides a sense of mutual acceptance and support in the various experiences of life.

Excerpts from “Human Sexuality”, CCD report, 1994⁵

Church communities should support families in helping young people learn what kinds of physical and emotional contact are appropriate and satisfying as their relational skills mature. Church-sponsored youth activities can support youth in the struggle to resist peer pressure and to practice sexual abstinence as they mature. By encouraging young women and men to develop self-esteem as people created in the image of God, and by exploring what mutual respect means for relationships between men and women, the church can be a place where young Christians learn to communicate well about their feelings and ideas, and to form sound relationships. The church can also be a source of accurate information and open discussion about sexuality and responsibility.

...

An individual’s longing for intimacy and mutuality can be met not only in sexual relationships. Such longings can find fulfillment in the personal affection of friends and the more public affirmation of peers and community. In affirming sexuality as a dimension of God’s creation in humanity, the church ought to be deeply concerned and pastorally responsive to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of all; whether young or old, whether male or female, whether married, cohabiting or single, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

...

Marriage

The church must insist that there can be no question of superior or subordinate partners. While the roles of husband and wife may differ and evolve over time, the sharing and responsibility should be mutual and remain constant. This includes the area of sexuality. A marriage certificate does not make forced sexual intercourse legitimate. This is still rape. It is not the case that one partner has conjugal rights, while the other has only conjugal duties. The principles of mutuality and consent apply. Similarly, “sexual favours” should not be used as weapons, given or withheld in order to gain favours in other areas of marriage. In a marriage of equality and mutuality, deepening sexual pleasure join with love to make a satisfying relationship.

...

For Christians, marriage is union in Christ. Marriage finds its ultimate meaning and joy in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We are called “to marry in the Lord” and to live by the biblical teachings concerning how we are to express our sexual natures in marriage—not as legal codes of conduct, but as the expression of our life in Christ. We are called to deal compassionately with those who struggle and fail and hold out forgiveness and renewal which alone comes through our Lord.

...

Singleness

Often the church has overlooked the difficulties faced by single people; for instance, those who have never married, or find themselves single again after divorce or death of a spouse. In calling single people to abstinence from sexual intercourse, the church community needs to provide pastoral support for single people in times of loneliness, yearning for relationship, and when they

experience rejection. Recognizing both the needs and gifts of single people, the church must promote and express in its programs and fellowship, patterns of relationship that are inclusive of singles.

...

Cohabitation

In some cases, in long term cohabitation, the church would regard such a relationship as a de facto marriage, where it is so regarded by the couple. The task of the church is to affirm the central values we believe are at the heart of marriage: love, commitment and fidelity. Those central values are what the church needs to support and encourage. ... Those who come seeking to formalize their commitment testify to their need to be joined together in ... a covenantal relationship, and to them the church can offer pastoral counselling and a marriage liturgy that proclaims the grace of God.

...

Masturbation

Masturbation among children and adolescents appears to contribute to growing awareness of the body and the self as a sexual being. ... While excessive indulgence in the practice of masturbation is undoubtedly unhealthy ... the practice does not harm the body, damage another person or risk the transmission of disease. Indeed, masturbation can be viewed positively. It can be understood as transitional sexual activity until a person is mature enough to accept adult sexual responsibilities. It can also be acceptable in those situations where a married couple cannot be to each other the source of comfort and pleasure they would want to be.

HIV Infection and Sexually-Transmitted Diseases

As a church which is called to minister to the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed and the sick (Luke 4:18) we must speak to those with these diseases with Christian conviction and compassion. ... In the face of the HIV infection, the church has a responsibility to speak with honesty and clarity as it seeks to be faithful and pastoral in its ministry to persons with HIV infection, regardless of how they became infected. The Christian community must play a direct role in ministering to those who suffer from HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, and to their families in the name of Jesus Christ. Christian compassion demands that we take steps to help meet the physical, social and spiritual needs of people with HIV infection and their loved ones.

¹ *Marriage and Remarriage*, op cit.

² A&P 1983, p. 329

³ A&P 1987, pp. 328-331

⁴ A&P 1992, pp. 253-271, 36, 49-51, 72

⁵ A&P 1994, pp. 251-274, 56

⁶ A&P 1995, pp. 231, 38

⁷ A&P 1972, pp. 293-296,302, 65

Homosexuality

The Church Speaks

General

- Homosexual orientation is not a sin. The weight of scientific evidence suggests that sexual orientation is innate, established early in life, and not a matter of choice.⁷
- Scripture treats homosexual practice as a departure from God's created order.⁴
- Homosexual acts between consenting adults are a private matter and should not be criminalized.¹
- The church does not limit the roles of its members on the basis of their sexual orientation. These roles include church school teachers, musicians, youth leaders, ruling elders, teaching elders and members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries.⁷

Homophobia

- We must oppose the form of hatred known as homophobia as vigorously as any other.³ Anger, hatred, and acts of denigration towards gay and lesbian people should not be tolerated within a congregation or the greater community.⁷
- The church as a whole must repent of its homophobia and hypocrisy. The church is called to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving and supporting community, a true church family, where all are welcomed, nurtured, loved and supported.⁴
- Sessions should provide support groups if needed and/or requested for those who are struggling with sexual issues, to support parents whose children are gay or lesbian, individuals facing sexual discrimination, and victims of sexual abuse. Presbyteries should also provide similar pastoral care of their ministers.⁷
- Studies have not revealed any scriptural, scientific or pastoral basis or justification for programs to change a person's sexual orientation.⁷

Ordination and same-sex relationships

- Neither scripture nor church prohibits ordination on the basis of the direction of one's sexual attraction to others, whether homosexual or heterosexual.⁶
- Both scripture and church do concern themselves with the proper and acceptable expression of sexual attraction in sexual activity.⁶
- A celibate homosexual may be ordained/designated as a minister or member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries under the present laws and practices of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.⁸
- The Presbyterian Church in Canada is not prepared to ordain self-avowed, practicing homosexuals or to allow public worship services blessing same-sex relationships.⁸

The Church Acts

1969: The 95th GA communicated approval of the GOC's proposed legislation to remove homosexual acts between consenting adults in private from the Criminal Code and adopted a statement prepared by the ESA.¹

1982: The 108th GA agreed to continue support of PLURA upon re-assurance that a grant made by a local committee to a homosexual group to make a study of their relationships to society had been investigated by the national council, recognized as an error in judgment, and steps taken to ensure that a similar grant would not be issued in the future.²

1985 & 1994: The 111th GA adopted a statement on homosexual practice prepared by the CCD³ and the 120th GA adopted for study a statement on human sexuality prepared by the CCD, which included a section on homosexuality.⁴

1997-2003: The 123rd GA appointed a committee to clarify the roles of homosexual and lesbian persons in the church.⁵ This committee's work was expanded to include clarification of the term 'sexual orientation' by the 124th GA.⁶ Interim reports were presented every year from 1998-2002. A study guide for congregations was prepared and distributed in the fall of 2002.* The final report was received and adopted by the 129th GA in 2003.⁷ Not all of the recommendations in the report were approved. (See footnote below)

2015: The LMA and the CCD received overtures regarding human sexuality. 23 overtures were received by the 141st GA. Commissioners of the 141st GA participated in facilitated, small group discussions.⁸ Reading resources were recommended to Commissioners to prepare for this discussion. The CCD published an annotated bibliography as part of its report.⁹

St. Andrew's, Lachine

1995-1998 A controversy on the role of homosexuals in the ministry was precipitated by the action of St. Andrew's, Lachine, in the Presbytery of Montreal, when it issued a call to a licentiate (person who has fulfilled all the requirements for ordination and is licensed to preach while seeking a call) who had declared to them his commitment to an active same-sex relationship. When the presbytery sustained the call, dissenting members appealed to the 121st GA, which appointed a special committee to look into the matter.¹¹

By 1998, three special committees had reported on various aspects of the situation and the conclusion of the matter was that:

- *the call was nullified.*
- *the presbytery's action in sustaining the call was declared ultra vires because "it is contrary to our current consideration and declaration of the teaching of scripture, our subordinate standards, and all GA statements on homosexuality, and contrary to the procedures of this church."¹²*
- *the candidate's licence to preach was revoked.*
- *the congregation was offered the option of accepting the directives of presbytery and GA or terminating its connection with The Presbyterian Church in Canada. St. Andrew's chose the latter option.*
- *This incident was a catalyst in mandating the Special Committee on Sexual Orientation whose final report was issued in 2003.¹³*

The LMA and CCD jointly designed a framework under which the overtures could be considered. The 141st GA passed recommendations that: 1) Commissioners participate in a facilitated process to discuss the issues addressed in the overtures and the church's response to them; 2) that notes from the process be submitted to the LMA (Justice Ministries) and CCD as they prepare responses to the overtures; 3) that the LMA (Justice Ministries) and the CCD confer with each other as responses are prepared; 4) that that the church (congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods and denominational committees) be encouraged to engage in a year of prayerful conversation, discernment and bible study on the topics of human sexuality, sexual orientation and other related matters raised in the overtures; 5) that the CCD and LMA (Justice Ministries) prepare a joint study guide on the topics of human sexuality, sexual orientation, and other related matters raised in the overture to be posted on the church's website by the end of October 2015

* This study guide is on the church web site at:

<http://www.presbyterian.ca/files/webfm/ourfaith/officialdocuments/officialstatements/listening.pdf>

A recommendation to encourage the use of this study by congregations was defeated by the 129th GA (2003).

and that congregations, sessions, presbyteries and synods be invited to share the result of their conversations with both the CCD and the LMA (Justice Ministries) prior to March 31, 2016. Responses to the overtures will be forthcoming at the 142nd GA (2016).¹⁰

The 141st GA recommended that the Moderator write a pastoral letter to all congregations, presbyteries and synods of The PCC inviting them to: 1) maintain unity in the bond of peace while debating and studying the full inclusion of LGBT** people within The PCC; 2) treat one another with profound and mutual respect and integrity despite differences in biblical interpretation and perspective; and 3) be particularly sensitive and gracious to all who are vulnerable and might despair as a result of such deliberations.¹⁰

2016: The 2015 GA tasked the CCD and the LMA (Justice Ministries) to prepare a joint study guide on the topics of human sexuality, sexual orientation and other related matters. A guide called “Body, Mind and Soul” was prepared and available to the church by October 31, 2016. The 142nd GA (2016) adopted a report from the LMA (Justice Ministries) summarizing responses to “Body, Mind and Soul”.^{**11}

GA adopted an interim report from the CCD recommending The PCC seek the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in light of the Reign of God, and that all courts of the church be required to deal with all people with tender pastoral care.¹²

GA recommended that the CCD in consultation with the LMA: 1) continue to reflect on the nature of Christian marriage in relation to LGBTQ and intersex people; and 2) reflect theologically on the spiritual needs of transgender and intersex people.¹²

GA recommended that the LMA in consultation with the CCD include in their respective responses to a number of overtures, consideration of Romans 14:1-13 as permission to recommend a dual or two pronged approach in the interest of avoiding a rupture of the denomination as an option to their overtures. The CCD and the LMA (Justice Ministries) will respond to these overtures at the 143rd GA (2017).¹³

GA received several overtures requesting a process for congregations to leave The PCC and retain church property and assets. GA adopted the report of the Clerks of Assembly declining to create this process because it would be contrary to both federal and provincial civil legislation. The current provisions of the church for members and ministers to leave if they feel constrained by conscience to do so, is available, though church property remains with The Presbyterian Church in Canada.¹⁴

2017: Responses to overtures on sexuality were considered by two groups: the Committee on Church Doctrine, and the Life and Mission Agency – Justice Ministries because overtures on sexuality were referred to both groups. The CCD and the LMA-JM jointly prepared a report with

** LGTB is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgendered people. Variations of the acronym emphasize the spectrum that exists with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity.

** 463 responses were received as of April 21, 2016. The majority of responses indicated no consensus or did not declare a position on same-sex marriage or blessing and ordaining a ministry in a same-sex relationship. There were responses from 1 synod, 16 presbyteries, 115 sessions, 72 congregations or congregational study groups, 91 responses from individuals who participated in group discussions, 124 responses indicated they did not participate in group discussion, 1 youth group. There were no responses from theological colleges. 157 responses affirmed the current position of the church; 56 of these were from sessions, congregations or congregational study groups. 85 responses affirmed that gay and lesbian people in same-sex relationships be allowed to serve as ministries and affirmed recognition of same-sex marriages by the church; 31 of these were sessions, congregations or study groups in congregations. (A&P 2016, pp. XXX)

recommendations. Each group also prepared separate, individual reports. The joint report covers three topics: 1. How the overtures were referred by the GA since 2015; 2. The history of the consultation between the CCD and the LMA; 3. Repentance of Homophobia, recognizing that the church failed to fulfill the 1994 resolution “to listen to and share the very real pain of homosexuals and their families” that was adopted by the PCC in 1994 (see page 267 of the 1994 Acts and Proceedings) and failed in its call “to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving and supportive community” (6:23, A&P 1994, 267).

The 2017 GA adopted a recommendation that declined an overture asking to table amendments on same sex marriage for ten years (A&P 2017 14, 540).

GA adopted recommendations: that (from the CCD report) The PCC and its agencies, colleges, congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods, committees and groups “seek the peace and unity of Christ among [our] people and throughout the Holy Catholic Church” under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as it discerns the mind of Christ in the matter of sexuality before the church (A&P 2017, 14, 479); and (from the LMA report) That The PCC and its agencies, colleges, congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods, committees and groups seek the unity of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as it discerns the mind of Christ in the matter of sexuality before the church.

GA adopted recommendations from the CCD’s report: that the documents “The Historic Argument Concerning Human Sexuality” (A&P 2017, 480-504) and “What the Bible teaches on Covenanted Monogamous Same-sex Relationships” (A&P 2017, 505-536) and “Where from Here?” (A&P 2017, 536-539) be commended to the agencies, colleges, congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods, committees and groups of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for study and response to the Committee on Church Doctrine through the General Assembly Office by January 31, 2018 (A&P 2017, 28). GA adopted an additional motion from the LMA (Justice Ministries)’s report that the biblical reflection concerning the responses to the various overtures on human sexuality be sent to sessions, presbyteries, synods and colleges for study, reflection and report by January 31, 2018 (A&P 2017, 38, 542-549). GA agreed that “The Historic Argument Concerning Human Sexuality,” “What the Bible teaches on Covenanted Monogamous Same-sex Relationships,” and “Biblical Reflection” from the LMA (Justice Ministries) report be translated into Korean and were to be ready for distribution to the Clerks of Eastern and Western Han-Ca Presbyteries by August 31, 2017.

GA adopted a recommendation from the CCD/LMA joint report That The PCC repent of homophobia, as defined above (see A&P 2017 XXX), and hypocrisy by establishing a special committee to: 1) create a safe and respectful environment in which LGBTQ people can tell stories of harm done to them, of God’s grace experienced by them, and of Christian ministry performed by them, even in the midst of the challenges that they have faced; 2) listen to the stories told by LGBTQ people; 3) draft an appropriate response regarding homophobia within the denomination; 4) name concrete actions that the General Assembly consider implementing; and 5) report to a future General Assembly within the next 3 years. The terms of reference for the special committee were formulated in consultation with the conveners of the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency Committee (A&P 2017, 28). A Special Committee on Terms of Reference the Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada re Sexuality Overtures was formed at and reported to the GA. GA adopted these Terms of Reference for the Special Committee:

1. The Special Committee shall create a safe and respectful environment in which confidentiality is assured, in order to encourage LGBTQI people:
 - a. to tell their stories of harm done to them within and by the church; and
 - b. to share their stories of God’s grace experienced by them and Christian ministry performed by them, even in the midst of the challenges they have faced.

2. The Special Committee shall invite LGBTQI people to submit their stories orally or in writing. Stories will be included in the committee's report to a future General Assembly with permission of those who have shared.
3. The Special Committee shall make use of relevant documents of the church, including but not limited to:
 - a. the 1994 Human Sexuality Report;
 - b. Body, Mind and Soul study document and the individual responses received by the Life and Mission Agency and the Committee on Church Doctrine to it; and
 - c. any other such documents as the committee may deem relevant.
4. The Special Committee shall provide an appropriate response to the issue of homophobia within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
5. The Special Committee shall recommend concrete actions addressing homophobia to the General Assembly for implementation within the church.
6. The Special Committee shall report its progress at each upcoming General Assembly, with a final report by or before the 2020 General Assembly.
7. The Special Committee shall be made up of seven members drawn from across the church. The Special Committee shall be reflective of the ethnic diversity of the denomination and shall include at least two members of the LGBTQI community.
8. The Assembly Council shall be instructed to support the Special Committee with an appropriate budget and appropriate document support.

GA approved the creation of a Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada and named these members: M. Jean Morris (opening convener), Timothy F. Archibald, Joseph Bae, Kay S. Diviney, Robert N. Faris, Jane Johnson and Basma Younan. The Special Committee was given power to issue should any of the nominees not be able to serve or continue to serve.

The GA adopted an additional motion that Moderator prepare a letter of repentance addressed to the LGBTQ community during his moderatorial year.

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "The Church and Homosexuality", ESA statement, 1969¹

It is not practical to insist that civil law should coincide at every point with canon law or to contend that every sin ought to be the object of criminal prosecution. The effect of the proposed amendment is simply to recognize in law what is presently the case in fact, namely that legal action is not being taken against homosexual practices when committed in private between two consenting adults.

Excerpts from "The Church and Homosexuality" CCD report, 1985³

[T]he questions of the origin of [homosexual] orientation and the ethical estimation of homosexual acts are not the same. It may be true that the orientation arises either from genetic causes or from experiences so early in childhood that the person cannot be held responsible for that orientation. ... In short, homosexual orientation may well not be culpable but the practice that can spring from that orientation may be so.

We are also dealing with currents in the social atmosphere in our day. ... First, we must take note of the widespread existence of "homophobia", the irrational fear and loathing of homosexuals, in our society. Interviews with homosexuals show the real pain and discrimination this attitude causes. Certainly, we must oppose this form of hatred as vigorously as any other. On the other

hand, we must beware of those who label as homophobic anyone who hesitates to accept homosexuality. ... The issue is too serious for name-calling, sloganeering, or labelling, by either side.

The Witness of Scripture

Lev. 18:22. This verse and the very similar Lev. 20:13 are quite clear as to their meaning. A translation such as “No man is to have sexual relations with another man” (TEV) is entirely accurate. The real problem here is, in fact, not exegetical but hermeneutical. To what degree are these passages authoritative for US? ... [W]e may neither automatically accept nor reject as authoritative any particular commandment in Leviticus. We must always consider them in their wider canonical context. Does the law in question accord the key themes in the rest of Scripture? Is it contradicted or declared invalid at some other point in Scripture? Does it accord with the work and witness of Jesus Christ?

The Old Testament does not merely or even mainly condemn sexuality. It has a consistent viewpoint with respect to human sexuality which may be summed up simply as, “Committed heterosexuality is a good and joyful gift of God.” This basic insight is affirmed in the two creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2, in the entire Song of Songs and underlies many accounts of male/female relationships throughout the length of the Old Testament. Heterosexuality is considered to be a basic and fundamental part of human nature as God created it.

There is no point in the Old Testament at which it can be said that homosexual acts are viewed with any favour at all. The basic understanding of Genesis that humans are created to be heterosexual is accepted by the Jesus of the gospels, Mt. 19.3.12 Mk.10.2-12. The regulations of Lev. 18 and 20 are fully in accord with this key biblical line of understanding. They are part of a trajectory which simply cannot be justifiably removed from the Bible.

The New Testament texts ... confirm this basic understanding. Romans 1:26-27 presupposes the creation stories of Genesis. For Paul the “natural” is not merely what may be observed all around us; it is always rooted in the will of God disclosed in Scripture. The natural is not simply what is “there” but that which properly reflects the will of the creator. In this passage, therefore, Paul is not simply using a natural law argument; this passage is an extension of the trajectory we have already identified in the Old Testament. Homosexual relations are part of the general brokenness of a humanity infected by sin. This understanding is by no means laughable, nor has it been rendered untenable by modern psychiatry.

It must be noted that those who engage in homosexual acts are not here separated from the rest of humanity; this passage is part of a section of the epistle which aims to show that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”. Homosexuals and heterosexuals alike need the grace of God appropriated in faith.

Excerpts from “Human Sexuality”, CCD report, 1994⁴

The question before us is not so much the general issue of the nature of homosexuality. Scripture does not deal with homosexuality in any theoretical sense. Nor are we debating the merits of homosexual relationships in either the form of promiscuity or pederasty. What we wish to explore is this: Is a faithful, committed, homosexual relationship ever a Christian option?

The following outlines a few of the options that have been put forward within the Christian community that deserve a respectful hearing in ongoing discussions in the church:

a) that we welcome homosexuality and its sexual expression as an appropriate lifestyle, though not that of the majority of the population. Scripture, for such advocates, is so ‘culture-bound’ that on this topic it can be set aside. (e.g. Norman Pittenger)

b) that we welcome homosexual relationships as valuable in certain contexts, that is, when those of homosexual orientation commit themselves to a church-blessed homosexual ‘marriage’ covenant, marked by love and faithfulness. (e.g. Mollenkott and Scanzoni)

c) that we see homosexuality as one among many signs of disorder in God’s creation, but that we allow homosexual relationships as pastoral accommodation to human weakness, just as we do for example, with accepting divorce, which in Scripture is clearly not God’s intention for marriage. (e.g. H. Thielicke, L. Smedes and the report of the House of Bishops of the Church of England)

d) that we see homosexuality as one among many signs of disorder in God’s creation, and encourage church-blessed homosexual unions that allow for companionship, physical intimacy, but not genital intercourse. (e.g. Chris Barrigar)

e) that we see homosexuality as one among many signs of disorder in God’s creation creating a painful tragedy for those of homosexual orientation, who should be asked by the church to uphold chastity, while supported by different and same-sex friendships within the wider family of God. (e.g. John Stott and J. White)

f) that we view homosexuality as an abomination from which those who are caught in it need to be rescued. (e.g. Leanne Payne)

Some scholars negate the relevance of these texts* for today. One argument considers them part of a now outmoded system of taboos belonging to the early church. Others contend that Christ brought the end of the law and released Christians from an obligation to keep it. ... The question arises to what extent the prohibition texts of the Holiness Code still apply. On the one hand the New Testament continues to speak against homosexual relationships; but on the other hand, the New Testament does not mention the prohibition in the Holiness Code of intercourse during menstruation. The use of the Holiness Code in Christian ethics requires further exploration.

In his letter to Romans, ... Paul condemns homosexual practice as the exchange of “natural” relations between men and women for relations that are “contrary to nature”. ... It appears that Paul’s appeal to ‘nature’ in Romans 1 is to appeal to the order of creation.

...

Some, however ... argue that what Paul considered unnatural was the perversity of heterosexuals exchanging what was natural to them personally (i.e. intercourse with the opposite sex), for what was unnatural to them (i.e. intercourse with the same sex). That is to say, they were acting contrary to their own individual nature. However, Paul’s use of the words ‘male’ and ‘female’ (Gen. 1:26-27), in distinction from the words ‘man’ and ‘woman’, would seem to point to sexual intercourse proper to the physical nature of each. Furthermore, the phrases ‘natural’ (kata phusin) and ‘contrary to nature’ (para phusin), are not original to Paul, but are frequently found in the writings of Hellenistic moral philosophers, with, at times, specific reference to heterosexual and homosexual behaviour respectively. This use and application is taken over by Hellenistic Jewish writers like Josephus and Philo, who vehemently attack homosexual behaviour as ‘contrary to nature.’ Paul’s thought and vocabulary in this passage stand within this milieu.

...

* Genesis 1:26-31; 2:24; 19; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; and Judges 19:22-25

In the light of the biblical norm of the one flesh union of male and female, the Bible consistently rejects homosexual practice. At this point however the question is raised: what homosexual practices are in view which scripture so consistently rejects? ... Scholars such as Robin Scroggs** argue that Paul rejects, not homosexuality in principle, but the exploitive, promiscuous and frequently pederastic homosexuality of the Hellenistic culture of Paul's day. ... In Romans 1, there is no textual evidence that Paul is confining his strictures against homosexuality to pederastic or exploitive relationships. From what we currently know of homosexual practice in the Graeco-Roman world prior to the first century A.D., homosexual relationships of all types were common, both exploitive and loving, both casual and committed.

...

There is great debate with respect to the cause or causes of homosexuality. ... Although the research has not solved the "nature versus nurture" debate, it does seem clear that while some may choose to participate in homosexual activity, many people—whether for reasons of genetics or upbringing—feel themselves attracted to members of their own sex. The question becomes, how much weight do we give to this? Are we, because of our predisposition, excused from moral accountability?

All persons are born somewhere along a continuum of sexual identity, from an exclusive heterosexuality at one extreme to an exclusive homosexuality at the other. Surely no one is excused from moral accountability for the choices we make, sexual or otherwise, to which our biological constitution may have disposed us.

The church is concerned with what we are by nature and what we are called to become by grace. Whatever our interpretation of the fall in Genesis 3, the church recognizes that we are all part of a distorted creation, where the power of sin has marred the image of God in humans, and dislocated all relationships, whether with God, with our neighbour or with ourselves. Sexual identity and desire are not exempt. Scripture sees evidence of sexual distortion to God's creation pattern in adultery, rape, incest, promiscuity and homosexual relationships. ... In the sexual dimension of our lives as well as in all dimensions, all stand in need of the law's direction. All persons are in need of the redemptive grace that Jesus Christ offers.

...

Is homosexual practice a Christian option? Our brief exegetical review of biblical texts set within a broader biblical perspective on our vocation as sexual beings leads us to say 'No'. Committed heterosexual union is so connected with creation in both its unitive and procreative dimensions that we must consider this as central to God's intention for human sexuality. Accordingly, Scripture treats all other contexts for sexual intercourse as departures from God's created order.

...

Is 'No' the only word that the church has for those who struggle with homosexuality? To be merely negative is lacking in pastoral sensitivity. The church must listen to and share the very real pain of homosexuals and their families. ... God has so created us that we humans need one another. Social intercourse is necessary for all. Sexual intercourse, however, is not. Life can be full and abundant for the single, both homosexual and heterosexual, without sexual intercourse, despite the dictates of current society. ... The alternative is not between the intimacy of homosexual intercourse on one hand and the pain of isolation and repression on the other. The church is called to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving and supporting community, a true church family, where all are welcomed, nurtured, loved and supported. Sadly, the Christian Church has frequently shunned homosexuals and failed to minister to them and with them. The church as a whole must repent of its homophobia and hypocrisy. All Christians, whether our sins are of the spirit or of the flesh, whether heterosexual or homosexual, need God's forgiveness and mutual

** Author of *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 1983

forgiveness as we pursue together the path of holy living. Grace abounds, and in our weakness God's strength is made known.

*Excerpts from the report of the Special Committee on Sexual Orientation, 2003*⁷

The 1994 "Statement on Human Sexuality" re-affirmed the biblical and traditional view that "committed heterosexual union is ... central to God's intention for human sexuality." ... In light of this stance, and in recent precedence, The Presbyterian Church in Canada is not prepared to ordain unrepentant practising homosexuals or to allow public worship services blessing same-sex relationships.

...

Several texts in the New Testament refer to 'false prophets'. We are taught that false prophets can be identified by their works. Similarly, we read about the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, etc. in Galatians (5:22-23), the good things that come when one is filled with the Holy Spirit. In both cases, the results are considered in the evaluation. Is there any value in considering the results we often see from our present attitudes about homosexuality? Could it be suggested, for instance, that the high rate of suicide among homosexual teens is partially related to experiences of rejection, low self-esteem, and other problems resulting from lack of acceptance? Is it valid to consider the many marriages that come to a painful end when a gay person can no longer 'play the straight game'?

People in the Reformed tradition believe in the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit active in the lives of Christ's followers. Over the years, the understanding of scripture has developed and changed through the guidance of the Spirit on such matters as slavery and the place of women in the church. Could we consider that the Holy Spirit might be trying to lead us today into a different understanding of the traditional texts relating to homosexuality? Or are the texts sufficiently clear and definite that it is wrong to compare them to other changing social positions?

As a Reformed church, we appreciate the overall message of God's word. A clear theme, especially in the New Testament, is the emphasis on love. "Love one another because love comes from God." "I give you a new commandment, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." "The greatest of these is love." "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." Love is clearly what God wants for creation and what Christ taught as the best way to live. Is a committed, monogamous relationship between two people of the same sex when expressed physically, always contrary to the will of God? Is it possible that there could be exceptions to the rule? What makes some forms of sexual behaviour holy and others unholy?

...

Some questions and concerns that have been raised in our deliberations include the following:

- What makes some forms of sexual behaviour holy, others unholy, and what has this to do with God's own holiness?
- Why does the church continue to regard sexual sins as more serious than other sins? What is its justification for doing so?
- Can we uphold the bond of marriage in male-female relationships as paramount and the ideal; yet also maintain that God calls some people into gay and lesbian monogamous relationships?
- Does the affirmation of faithful, loving and constant same-sex unions challenge the essential value of the male-female relationship any more than the affirmation of celibacy does?
- While some people fear homosexual orientation as a "threat to family values" we know that domestic violence, infidelity, child abuse, poverty, children having children, unsupportive parents, stressed relationships, lack of time together and substance abuse are

some factors that contribute to the destruction of families. How effectively are we in the church providing support and pastoral care in these situations? What can we improve upon?

- Discrimination in the form of active or passive prejudice against lesbians and gays is a reality in our society. Anger, hatred, and acts of denigration towards gay and lesbian people should not be tolerated within a congregation or the greater community. Physical violence (including assaults and murder) needs to be named, addressed, stopped and prevented. What is holding us back in pursuing justice on these issues?
- At times pastors and leaders in the church are called to confront and challenge practices and acts of injustice that are hurting the body of Christ while also being involved in a ministry of reconciliation. What do we need to learn from the Spirit in order to be a discerning and compassionate community that cares for our neighbour?
- There is a saying, “When children come out of the closet, the parents go in.” Talking about sexual issues is difficult for many, including we who are in the church. Helping families to talk about their feelings and their situations can help reduce isolation and fear. How can we provide pastoral care to parents and relatives whose family members are gay or lesbian? How might we in the church provide a safe environment for all people to seek support and pastoral care?
- A variety of sources suggests that lesbian and gay teens commit suicide at a higher rate than heterosexual teens. Often they end up on the streets and as a result of discrimination are disproportionately represented in the street youth population, experiencing a higher rate of alcohol and drug problems. Are we willing to examine how our prejudices may be hurting our children and youth?

Presbyterians need to learn and understand more about sexual orientation in order to live with this diversity in our congregations.

In our liturgy there should be prayers for those who are suffering from sexual issues as well as prayers asking for God’s help in freeing us from sexual bigotry and prejudice.

The church should involve people wherever they find themselves in the “continuum of sexual identity” in the loving family of God. They should not be excluded from the privileges and responsibilities of church membership.

...

The weight of scientific evidence* presented to the committee points to the conclusion that sexual orientation is innate, established early in life, and not a matter of choice. We were left with little doubt that it is caused and influenced by numerous factors beyond the choice of the individual. ... We have come to understand that it is never appropriate to refer to sexual orientation as a “lifestyle choice”. ... The lifestyles voluntarily adopted by people of either orientation are not a matter of innate sexuality but of social expression. It is only this superficial outward expression that can be a matter of choice.

...

We understand that many people do have faith in the ability of conversion programs to change sexual orientation, and this topic has been examined carefully in our discussions with the specialists. Yet, our studies have not revealed any scriptural, scientific or pastoral basis or justification for such programs. We have learned that, where counselling of any kind is sought by

* While the earlier statements on homosexuality primarily dealt with the theological issues, the Special Committee was mandated to explore thoroughly the scientific evidence on homosexual orientation. Much of this report is devoted to the scientific and psychological conclusions about homosexuality.

a homosexual person, the greatest of care must be taken to ensure that it is provided by a properly qualified person, and that it is appropriate to the specific case.

Our studies have indicated no scriptural, scientific, legal or pastoral justification for imposing conversion or any other kind of treatment on homosexual people. We have found that such actions, whether for therapeutic or punitive purposes, have been increasingly rejected by the scientific and legal communities since the middle of the last century.

The higher than normal risk of suicide among homosexual people, and especially among the younger ones, is well documented and must be understood by those who counsel them.

...

Is the homosexual person entitled to the same rights, privileges and pastoral care as any other church member? We believe this to be so. The right to acceptance and to privacy surely belongs to the homosexual person as much as to any other, and none should ever feel that there is a risk of exposure of their private lives in the church or elsewhere. While this is easily stated, the committee believes that the church should take steps to ensure that full pastoral care is extended to all people, regardless of sexual orientation, and that all congregations and courts of the church anticipate the pastoral needs of homosexual people among their fellowship.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has never limited the roles of its members on the basis of their sexual orientation. These roles include church school teachers, musicians, youth leaders, ruling elders, teaching elders and members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries. No legislation has ever existed for this purpose and, following six years of study, the Special Committee on Sexual Orientation finds that none is needed.

See also: A&P 2000, pp. 482-492, 39, 48-49

Excerpt from “The Way of God’s Reign” CDC report, 142nd GA, 2016¹²

Given that we do not have agreement on many issues, the question becomes how can we have unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Our answer is, “within the Kingdom of God”. ...The conversation we should be having first is about the nature of the church and then about human sexuality. Our argument proceeds in three parts. First, we trace how the coming Reign of God is conveyed in the larger themes of scripture. Second, we point to an ethic for us as servants within the Kingdom that finds its centre at the Lord’s Table. This ethic includes a posture of humility before each other and God as we work together towards a common Kingdom – diverse but unified. Third, we explore how faithful unity in diversity might begin to be lived out within The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the light of the characteristics of God’s reign.

...

As we trace the Reign of God theme in scripture we recognize the Kingdom as:

A Metaphor Appropriate to Describe God’s Intentions for Creation. The Bible regularly resorts to parable, a way of telling something slant, and poetic imagery to stake the contours of the Kingdom. For example, in Isaiah’s prophetic vision of redemption, people “are inscribed on the palms of God’s hands” while ruins are rebuilt (Isaiah 49:16–17); in Matthew’s account the Kingdom is said to be like a mustard seed which grows into an impossible tree (Matthew 13:31–32).² Following scripture, our speech about the Reign of God must be humble. To speak of the thing itself as if we know it entirely is to fall into idolatry. Humility does not imply apophaticism or appeals to the “ineffable mystery” of God. Rather, it is to suggest that God in God’s action in the world disturbs our normal discursive ways of encountering God so that we must rely on God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ for our knowledge.

Centred on Jesus Christ, Servant King. Scripture proclaims the Reign as coming near in the presence of Jesus (Matthew 4:17). While King, Jesus reigns like no other. Christ reverses worldly conceptions of power by means of a righteous grace, a holy love and, ultimately, a powerful self-giving on the cross. With Christ's ascension to the right hand of God the Father, the Kingdom of God continues until that final day when every knee shall bow in submission and worship before the throne. The Reformed tradition recognizes this as an integral part of the offices of Christ by naming him King. The Reign of God is therefore personal (found in relationship to a person not a concept) and when we encounter Jesus Christ, we encounter God.

Upheld by Jesus Christ, Lord of Time. Because Jesus Christ was and is and ever shall be, the Kingdom of God is found within the witness of all scripture, within our everyday lived experience, and within time as yet to come. Christ's presence is made known through God's Holy Spirit, even as all creation exists through that providential accompanying, sustaining, and creating Spirit. To privilege either protology or eschatology (theology of creation and of end-times, respectively), or to dwell on matters of chronology is to deny the reality of the Reign of God.

Proclaimed by the Son of Mary, Son of God. God sent Jesus as a human man, a Jew, a student and interpreter of the law, teaching and ministering in a particular time and place. Christians are bound to follow this Jew, this Galilean of a different faith than our own. The Kingdom is not Docetic, a purely 'spiritual' reality. Thus, the Kingdom of God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth looks to the redemption of all our ordinary moments, the transfiguration of us as creatures in all our particularities and differences, and not in the abolition of those particularities and differences.

The Law Fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it in his person. Like all kingdoms, God's Reign has a law but a different one from the normal human legal systems. Following Deuteronomy and Leviticus, Jesus Christ sided with those interpreters who defined the heart and essence of the law as the love of God and neighbour (Matthew 22:37–40). Consistently and thoroughly, Jesus challenged and reinterpreted any understandings of God's covenant with humanity which strayed from justice, love and holiness. The Law of the Kingdom is Jesus Christ. For instance, Jesus reminds listeners that Sabbath is a time of mercy (Matthew 12:7) rather than a time for prideful neglect of the needs of others. In the Reign of God, the law will be/is written upon human hearts rather than carved in stone (Jeremiah 31:31–34).

A Prophetic Call to Faithfulness. Jesus as Prophet calls all of humanity to lives that are consonant with his reign as Servant King. Earlier prophets, such as Isaiah, called God's people to covenantal faithfulness all the while pointing to an eschatological vision of God's Kingdom that encompasses all of creation (Isaiah 62:6–12; 65:17–25). When Jesus uses Isaiah to declare the Reign coming, he declares that the Kingdom is at work right now as the world becomes a place of abundance, freedom, healing and justice for the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed (Luke 4:16–22).

Inviting and Requiring Obedience. Through Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of God's covenantal faithfulness with and for humanity, God reveals how we should act as citizens of the Reign of God. Our duty is not onerous or based on a set of laws or principles. Rather, we submit to Jesus Christ through the way of the cross. This obedience will result in a unity of action and belief. God's reign is lived out by seeking mercy and justice through humility before God (Micah 6:8; Matthew 6:33). Christians are those who call on Jesus as Lord and seek to do God's will as God's Kingdom comes.

Creating a Community. No king reigns without citizens. We should not conflate "church" and "Kingdom", for some once considered unclean or excluded find a place in the eschatological

vision of the reign of God (e.g. eunuchs, foreigners, the blind, the lame; see Isaiah 56:1–8, Matthew 11:5, 20:1–16 for examples) and in the end God chooses who stands within God’s Reign. One of the hallmarks of a Kingdom community is a concern for those who are “lost” (Luke 15:3–10). The Kingdom belongs to those such as children, although some, such as the rich, may find obedience too high a price to pay (Mark 10:13–16, 23).

Restoring Creation through Reconciliation. The power of sin that leads to death has been abolished by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On the cross, Jesus is called King and he demonstrates his lordship over all by conquering death. In the empty tomb found in a garden, God reveals God’s saving action to restore the natural world and heal fractured relationships (Isaiah 11:6–9; Matthew 13:31–32), leading creation to the full reconciliation of all things (Colossians 1:20).

A Concrete Reality. Contrary to popular conceptions of “heaven”, the Kingdom is not ephemeral or some sort of parallel universe. Rather, both in the here-and-now and in the time-to-come, the Kingdom is tangibly manifest. Jesus Christ was both fully human and fully divine, and as the fulfilment of the Kingdom, demonstrates that both flesh and spirit are constitutive parts of being a creature. The Reign of God includes a new temple (Priest), new Jerusalem (King), and a new earth (Prophet) (Ezekial 40:1–47; Revelation 21:1–4).

A Feast whose Promise is Embodied in the Lord’s Supper. On the night of his arrest, condemned in part by the political charge of treason, Jesus gave a banquet for his disciples. Contrary to images of grandeur and opulence, Jesus gathered his friends (including those who betrayed, abandoned and denied him) around a table to inaugurate a new community. As often as we, faithful servants and sinners, eat the bread and drink the wine we do so with Christ the King presiding. Each communion is a proleptic revelation, an anticipation of the final feast hosted by God (Isaiah 25:6–10a; Luke 14:15–24).

¹ A&P 1969, pp. 316-17

² A&P 1982, pp. 201-202, 39

³ A&P 1985, pp. 238-241, 31

⁴ A&P 1994, pp. 251-274, 56

⁵ A&P 1997, pp. 503, 19, 58

⁶ A&P 1998, pp. 474, 48

⁷ A&P 2003, pp. 526-547, 26, 34, 37-41, 43-45

⁸ A&P 2015, pp 20,30,35

⁹ A&P 2015, pp. 268-274

¹⁰ A&P 2015, pp. 539-541, 43-44, 46-47

¹¹ A&P 2016, pp.436-439

¹² A&P 2016, pp. 260-265, 26, 28

¹³ A&P 2016, p. 39

¹⁴ A&P 2016, pp. 281-283,23

Book Three: Community

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Glossary of Acronyms

A&P.....	Acts & Proceedings
BCL	Board of Congregational Life
BWM	Board of World Mission
CCD	Committee on Church Doctrine
ESA	Board of Evangelism and Social Action
GA	General Assembly
GOC	Government of Canada
IAC	International Affairs Committee
LMA	Life and Mission Agency
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
PWS&D.....	Presbyterian World Service and Development

Crime and Restorative Justice

The Church Speaks

General

- Our ultimate goal after a crime must be the reconciliation of those caught in the conflict as well as reconciliation within the community as a whole.⁶
- Victims, offenders and people that work in the system all have needs that the church should address.⁶

Care for those affected by criminal activity

- The state should provide adequate compensation to victims of violent crime or their survivors.⁴
- A supportive program of treatment for drug addicts is preferable to punishment.³
- Presbyterian congregations should encourage acceptance of ex-prisoners through support marked by realism and warmth, compassion and practical help.²
- The church encourages non-discriminatory personnel practices in regard to employing former prisoners.²

Gun Control

- The sale of firearms should be strictly regulated.⁴ Owners of firearms should be licensed* and should be obliged to take training in the safe use of firearms before a license is granted.⁷

Capital Punishment

- The church supports the abolition of capital punishment.¹⁰

The Church Acts

Care for those affected by criminal activity

1952: The 78th GA informed the GOC of its willingness to recommend ministers to be appointed as prison chaplains.¹

1962: The 88th GA encouraged acceptance of ex-prisoners through the support of prisoners' aid societies, non-discriminatory personnel practices and an outreach policy marked by both realism and warmth.²

1964: The 90th GA urged the GOC to assure that proposed facilities for the preventive detention of drug addicts ensure a supportive process of treatment with emphasis on rehabilitation rather than punishment.³

1973: The 99th GA approved several reforms* which the GOC introduced to the penal code. It also asked that victims of crime be provided adequate compensation by the state and expressed concern for public safety in cases of temporary release, day parole, and parole.⁴

* These reforms abolished the use of corporal punishment, instituted legal aid services, improved after care services and provided for better re-integration of offenders into the community through temporary absence programs and half-way houses. Censorship of prisoner's mail to the Solicitor General was abolished and changes in regulations on clothing and visiting were instituted. Persons on bail were now permitted to continue their employment and records of ex-offenders were sealed after 5 years without a further conviction.

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

1978: The 104th GA re-affirmed support for the work of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections.^{5*}

1984: The 110th GA approved bringing concern for ministry to the victims of crime to the attention of the whole church and encouraged congregations to become involved in this ministry in every way possible including support systems, prayer, and pastoral services. The BCL was asked to develop resources on the criminal justice system to sensitize congregations to the need of those involved at all levels in the system, but particularly the victims, so as to restore their spiritual wholeness.⁶

Gun Control

1973-76: The 99th GA called on the GOC for much more strict regulations and control of firearms.⁴ The 102nd GA supported the GOC's proposed gun control bill and asked as well for obligatory training in the safe use of firearms before a licence was granted.^{7†}

Capital Punishment

1954: The 80th General Assembly adopted a statement on capital punishment proposed by the ESA affirming the right of the state to impose the death penalty. This statement was prepared in response to the study of the Criminal Code which was currently underway by a joint parliamentary committee.⁸

The abolition of capital punishment in Canada

1954: The federal government begins review of the Criminal Code.

1961: The crime of murder is re-classified to limit the death penalty to planned or deliberate murder, murder committed in the course of other violent crime, or murder of a police officer or prison guard.

1962: Last use of capital punishment in Canada.

1967: Parliament placed a moratorium on capital punishment except for the murder of a police officer or prison guard. This moratorium was renewed in 1972.

1976: Capital punishment is abolished except for certain offenses under the National Defence Act. The bill was adopted by a free vote and passed with a margin of 6 votes.

1987: A bill to re-institute the death penalty is defeated in a free vote in the House of Commons by a margin of 148-127.

1998: The National Defence Act is amended to remove the death penalty.

The Supreme Court of Canada has held that prior to extraditing an individual for a capital crime, Canada must seek assurances the death penalty will not be applied.

<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/rht-drt/08-eng.shtml>

1956-1967: Four different overtures came to GA asking for reconsideration of the 1954 statement and favoring the abolition of capital punishment. A special committee appointed in 1956 presented "initial reflections and viewpoints" the following year, asking leave to continue its study.⁹ But the matter was then given to the ESA until 1966 when a second special committee

* The Church Council of Justice and Corrections is an ecumenical organization that promotes restorative justice and healing for both victim and offender. It receives support from *Presbyterians Sharing...* via Justice Ministries.

†† A 1976 overture calling for the registration of firearms was denied in light of the GOC's assertion that "The registration of all guns in Canada appears neither feasible nor likely to be effective." (Highlights of the Peace and Security Program, as cited in ESA report, p. 470). Bill C-51, passed in 1978, required owners of firearms to be licensed. Mandatory safety training was instituted in 1994. The 1998 legislation requiring the registration of all firearms was not discussed by GA, and no position has been taken on it.

CRIME & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

was appointed. The 93rd GA rejected its recommendation that no change be made in the statement on capital punishment and adopted an amendment “that in light of the various overtures to the Assembly and of considerable discussion within the church since 1954, and without prejudice to the statement of 1954, this Assembly favour[s] the abolition of capital punishment.”¹⁰

1974-1975: The 100th GA referred a study document on capital punishment prepared by the BCL to presbyteries and congregations.¹¹ Responses to this document permitted the church to present a position to the GOC when it conducted its next review of capital punishment. A letter reaffirming the 1967 position was sent to the solicitor general by the BCL in 1975.¹²

1981-1987: The 107th GA approved a statement from the BCL to be distributed to the courts of the church encouraging education about capital punishment¹³ and the 111th GA again encouraged congregations to study the question of capital punishment using resources available from the BCL.¹⁴ The 113th GA declared itself opposed to the re-institution of capital punishment and communicated this declaration to every Member of Parliament.¹⁵

2011: The 137th GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Minister of Justice and the Attorney-General of Canada raising concerns that directing public funds to the building of more federal prisons, may not adequately address challenges in the Canadian justice and correctional system, such as:

- the need for more resources to treat mental illness (affecting 13% male inmates and 29% of female inmates) and substance abuse;
- there are a disproportionate number of inmates in our prisons are poor and marginalized;
- there is inadequate funding for training programs that support the development of vocational and life skills. This results in fewer opportunities for inmates who have completed their sentences and have returned to the community.

The GOC has the responsibility to protect the public and to ensure that funds allocated to public safety are wisely spent. The GA affirmed that individuals who commit offenses do so against the victims and the community, and should face appropriate consequences.¹⁶

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “The Church and Penal Reform”, ESA report, 1962²

“One condition is vital to the successful rehabilitation in society of an offender who has served a prison sentence. That condition is the acceptance of the offender by the community to which he returns. ... So many of our business firms, large and small, in Canada have adopted almost as a matter of policy, the practice of refusing to employ any person who has served a prison sentence. ... Our hopes of re-establishing [the offender] in the community as a law-abiding citizen can have very little chance of fulfillment if, from the beginning, we refuse him any chance of earning his daily bread and of providing shelter for himself and his dependents.” (citation from Minister of Justice, Hon. Davie Fulton)

Excerpt from “Crime Victims and the Church”, BCL report, 1984⁶

Clergy and their congregations can be a vital source of understanding and renewal for individual victims. Often no other sector of society can provide this support. Unfortunately, suffering is a reality of our life that we are often unwilling to confront. The religious community has a unique role to help victims live with hope through such pain. Churches can also speak on behalf of the ‘voiceless’ victims of crime, so often forgotten by the criminal justice system and abandoned by the social service system.

Excerpts from the report of the Special Committee on Capital Punishment, 1957⁹

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

When public thinking re: capital punishment favours its retention, the principle of the *talion** is usually present. Is this principle acceptable to Christians? Surely not! Therefore the church has a clarifying ministry in this regard, to give a Christian basis to the social conscience.

Some Christians will undoubtedly wish to share the views of Sir Walter Moberly who has asserted that capital punishment must be viewed in the light of Christ's redemptive purpose. The characteristic Christian attitude to all people, however ill they have behaved, is redemptive. Moberly states that the wrongdoer must be regarded not as a public enemy but as an erring son. In this view, capital punishment is unchristian since its object is to end, not to mend, the criminal.

*Excerpts from the BCL study on Capital Punishment, 1974*¹¹

The Divine Law

Those who would urge the state to employ capital punishment look at once to the Old Testament in support of their view. ... There the simple and straightforward terms of the decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill" state the Hebraic position against murder. ... The Covenant Code and Holiness Code called for blood revenge. ... God's covenant with Noah likewise makes explicit the sentence of death against destroyers of human life.

That this is not the only and final word against the murderer is, however, conveyed in the gracious protection accorded to the capital offender, Cain. There are other notable exceptions in scripture to the rule of the *talion*. [David, the King; Paul, the apostle] ... The superceding of the ... Torah in defining and enforcing both moral and ceremonial law is, of course, a major theme of the New Testament. ... [I]n his confrontation with the legalists, Jesus made clear that the law is for man and not the reverse. The divine justice may be satisfied by divine grace, and this extends to dealing with the most grievous of human sins.

Human Law

But whereas it is of the essence of God that his justice should be perfect, it is the essence of creaturehood that our justice is fallible and, therefore, our justice must be limited. ... Karl Barth views the irrevocable step of capital punishment as an arrogation by man of an absolute authority which is, in fact, blasphemous.

Divine Forgiveness and Reformation

From the standpoint of the Christian faith there should be no equivocation about the possibility of the renewal of human nature from the most depraved levels. While unjustly enduring capital punishment, our Lord prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers and bestowed the promise of eternal life upon the fellow sufferer who acknowledged his moral turpitude. His concern was not that men should receive their just desserts, but that they should receive wholeness: he came not to condemn but to save.

How good is the Good News we proclaim if there are sins which are beyond atonement? If it is insisted that payment for guilt is ... required...was the price paid by Jesus not adequate? Surely the key test governing our judgment about capital punishment must be the apostle Paul's assertion to the Corinthians, "I determine to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Then at the heart of our understanding will appear the theme of redemption and not retribution, and whatever form our justice takes it will point to the Divine forgiveness. ... This

* The principle that justice should be based on equal retribution: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. (Exodus 21:23-25, Leviticus 24: 17-20)

means that our punishments must be provisional, relative, limited, open to the possibility of correction, of improvement that would reflect our creatureliness and the divine mercy.

¹ A&P 1952, pp. 186-187(app.), pp. 16, 92(min)

² A&P 1962, pp. 299-300, 302, 36

³ A&P 1964, pp. 354-355, 358, 96

⁴ A&P 1973, pp. 278-279, 283, 40

⁵ A&P 1978, pp. 207, 52

⁶ A&P 1984, pp. 367-368, 46

⁷ A&P 1976, pp. 436, 470, 60

⁸ A&P 1954, pp. 263, 39

⁹ A&P 1957, pp. 222-225, 97

¹⁰ A&P 1967, pp. 324, 71, 81-82

¹¹ A&P 1974, pp. 355-356, 77

¹² A&P 1975, p. 375

¹³ A&P 1981, pp. 307-308, 79

¹⁴ A&P 1985, pp. 327, 20

¹⁵ A&P 1987, pp. 36, 66

¹⁶ A&P 2011, pp. 49-7

See also:

BCL study on Capital Punishment, 1974.

“The 25 Year Sentence Minimum for Murder,” A Submission to the Minister of Justice from The Committee on Studies and Statements of The Board of Congregational Life, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, February 1981.

These documents are available in the Archives.

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

Diversity and Equity

People with Disabilities

The Church Speaks

- The Church of Jesus Christ includes both the able and the disabled and is open to all God's children.²
- All new church structures and all major renovations to church structures must comply with accessibility guidelines.³

The Church Acts

1960: The 86th GA commended the GOC for its immigration policy toward families of which one member suffered a physical disability and urged that all necessary steps be taken to admit “a greatly increased number” of such families to Canada.¹

1980: The 106th GA called on all congregations to make specific plans for the local observance of the International Year of the Disabled, and charged the BCL with the responsibility of developing a comprehensive strategy to assist congregations in planning a ministry to the disabled.²

1981-1986: The 107th GA adopted a set of accessibility guidelines* to be implemented by various courts and agencies of the church. Sessions, presbyteries, synods were to see to building renovations, including camps and conference centres; the Administrative Council was given responsibility for national office renovations and the church architecture committee for new church buildings. All of these, with the assistance of the BCL and in consultation with people with physical and mental disabilities and parents of disabled children were urged to assess physical, worship, transportation and attitudinal barriers and take appropriate action to eliminate them. GA also directed that consideration of accessible meeting spaces and residences be a factor in assessing venues for future GAs.³ The accessibility guidelines were updated by the 112th GA.⁴

2002: The 128th GA approved a recommendation to take steps to assure that assembly arrangements included attention to the needs of commissioners with hearing difficulties.⁵

2017: The GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana to affirm its ministry with people with disabilities, and ask what blessings and challenges the church foresees for Ghana as it strives to set Sustainable Development Goals plans that address the needs of people with disabilities.⁶

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “International Year of the Disabled”, BCL report, 1980.*²

Whereas we believe that Jesus Christ came for all persons and He is open to men, women and children of every place and every sort of ability and disability, and

Whereas the Church of Jesus Christ includes both the able and the disabled and is open to all God's children, and

Whereas the disabled are often excluded by the lack of facilities or program, and

Whereas, when the disabled are left out of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Body of Christ is broken, ...

* Accessibility Guidelines are available from the Committee on Church Architecture.

Therefore we ... affirm the fullness of the Body of Christ and our calling to bear witness to all God's children, whether disabled or not. We call upon congregations ... to take seriously their ministry to all persons, including the disabled.

¹ A&P 1960, pp. 307, 64

² A&P 1980, pp. 285, 107

³ A&P 1981, pp. 300-302, 49

⁴ A&P 1986, pp. 247-250, 36

⁵ A&P 2002, pp. 212-213, 19

⁶ A&P 2017, 20, 304-6

People of Other Faiths

The Church Speaks

- The church reaffirms that there is one covenant of grace embracing Jews and Gentiles and therefore, not “two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations” (Westminster Confession of Faith VII, 6).¹¹
- The church acknowledges with shame and penitence the church's long complicity in the persecution, exclusion and expulsions of the Jews through the “teaching of contempt”, beginning in the first centuries of the Christian era, gathering strength during the Crusades and culminating in the Shoah or Holocaust.¹¹ We repent of the indifference and callousness which Christians have shown to the sufferings of the Jewish people and for the degree to which the church's silence in the period of Nazi persecution makes it complicit in the denial of asylum to Jewish refugees by the GOC of that time.² We are thankful for Christians, of all traditions throughout the ages, who have stood in solidarity with Jews. We affirm the uniqueness, finality and unsurpassability of Jesus Christ the sole mediator of the one covenant of grace and acknowledge our commission to bear witness to our Lord to all peoples.¹¹
- Congregations are encouraged to learn about Islam and to engage in dialogue with Muslims in their communities.³
- Where appropriate, religious observances should be part of significant public civil services in recognition of the spiritual beliefs and practices of a large number of Canadian citizens.⁴
- In our relationship with people of other faiths we are called to bear witness to this faith that found us, but we are called to do so in humility, sacrifice and with great hospitality to those who do not agree with us and might not reach the same insights as we do. There always remains a tension between our certainty and joy that we wish to share in Christian witness and the gospel demand to bear witness in a relationship of hospitality, openness and humility. Because of our human limitation and our imperfect grasp of our sure faith, we are open to God's gift of faith and God's gift of salvation in Christ that may, by the Holy Spirit, work in ways we do not understand and fathom.⁷
- If reconciliation between Christians and Muslims is not be mere rhetoric but a living reality, then the fears, suspicions, and age-old resentments that exist on all sides must be faced, discussed and resolved. Reconciliation will involve Christians examining themselves and acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Christians must rid themselves of the bigotry and animosity that is often directed to and felt by Muslims and cultivate a greater understanding of Muslim beliefs and religious practices – and urge their fellow citizens to do the same.⁸

The Church Acts

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

1960: The 86th GA exhorted members of the church to repentance for any attitudes and actions of distrust, envy, hostility and intolerance towards the Jewish people of Canada and called on its members to denounce and oppose in every possible way all forms of anti-semitism.¹

1990: The 116th GA commended for study an historical review of Christian-Jewish relations, with emphasis on the history of Christian anti-semitism and adopted a resolution of repentance concerning the indifference shown in regard to the suffering of the Jewish people.²

2003: The 129th GA encouraged congregations to study the IAC report “Reconciliation and Hope in a Multi-Faith World” on Christian-Islamic relations and initiate or continue activities to engage in dialogue with Muslims in their communities.³ Letters were sent to the Prime Minister, the Heritage Minister and the Provincial Premiers encouraging the practice of developing and including appropriate religious observances at significant public civil services.^{4*}

2004: The 130th GA approved changing the name of the Ecumenical Relations Committee to Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee with a mandate to include work on interfaith relations.⁵

2007: The 133rd GA approved a change in the wording of the mandate for the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee to complement the inclusion of “interfaith relations” in the title. The mandate now reads: “it is our interfaith mandate to encourage Presbyterians to acknowledge, understand and appreciate other faith traditions, and to help Presbyterians to live in good relationship with persons who belong to other religions.”⁶

2009: The 135th GA, while recognizing that the crucifixion imagery employed by Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center** in their “Contemporary Way of the Cross” and other writings is considered anti-Jewish by large portions of representative North American Jewish groups, understands the use of such imagery, arising as it does from a context of suffering and identification with Christ, is not anti-Jewish in intent. See also Book 5, Middle East.

The 135th GA adopted the report “A Re-affirmation of the Uniqueness and Finality of Jesus Christ, and its Relevance for Interfaith Dialogue.”⁷

The 135th GA approved a statement prepared by the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and the Committee on Church Doctrine in response to the content of A Common Word Between Us and You. This document was prepared by a large and representative group of Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals gathered at the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan for Christians and Muslims to come together in search for meaningful peace on the basis of what they hold in common: love of God and love of neighbour. The statement prepared by the EIFRC and the CCD is to be forwarded to the Institute, with copies to the World Council of

Global Interfaith Initiatives

There are a number of organizations involved in interfaith dialogue including: the Parliament of World Religions; World Council of Churches; Canadian Council of Churches which provided leadership in organizing the World Religious Summit that took place prior to the G8 and G 20 meetings in June 2010.

* The public memorial service held on Parliament Hill September 2001 for the victims of the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 had included no prayer or religious observance of any kind, a lack which many Canadians found lamentable.

** Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem was established by Palestinian Christians working for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sabeel is a partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Its website is www.sabeel.org.

Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.⁸

2010: The 136th GA encouraged congregations to draw on the resources recommended by the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and to be involved in community based interfaith activities.⁹

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee began an initiative to document inter-faith activities Presbyterians are involved in and to provide resources to assist Presbyterians become involved in such initiatives.⁹

2011: The 137th GA commends as a study document “One Covenant of Grace: A Contemporary Theology of Engagement with the Jewish People.”¹⁰

The 137th GA adopted “The Statement of The Presbyterian Church in Canada on our Relationship with the Jewish People.” The statement:

- expresses The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s commitment to the Jewish people’s right to live in peace, both in the Middle East and throughout the world;
- asks its membership to pray for the peace of Jerusalem so all the children of Abraham may freely worship and live in a place they call holy;
- calls upon members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to eschew the use of language and innuendo which may disparage, slander and harm Jews;
- encourages congregations and members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to reach out in friendship and hospitality to neighbouring synagogues and Jewish people to promote better mutual understanding.¹¹

The 137th GA recommended that congregations, presbyteries and other groups in The Presbyterian Church in Canada continue to be encouraged to submit stories of experiences in interfaith initiatives and activities to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee for use on the website and in other media.¹² The 137th GA recommended that Presbyterians be encouraged to participate in interfaith events with local Members of Parliament organized by the Interfaith Leaders’ Summit in support of the Millennium Development Goals.¹³

The 137th GA commended the use of the information brochure “Celebrating Our Relationship, The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The Christian Reformed Church in North America.”¹⁴

2013: In response to a Commissioner’s Overture at the 139th GA, the Moderator wrote to Mr. Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, expressing the alarm of The Presbyterian Church in Canada about rising anti-Semitism in Europe noting that The Presbyterian Church in Canada acknowledges the courage of the World Jewish Congress for its decision to meet in Hungary in order to draw world attention to anti-Semitism in Europe.¹⁵

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from “Christian-Jewish Relations: an Historical Overview”, Committee on History report, 1990*²

[A]s early as the New Testament era a bitter struggle had developed between Jews and Christians, and this deep hostility left its mark on the literature of the period. Scholars recognize this, for example, in the Gospel of John (e.g. 8:44, 8:40) and in certain letters of Paul.

...

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

With the fourth century recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire ... Church laws became the edicts of the empire. At this point in history, anti-semitism, properly understood as a heresy of the Christian faith, came to full fruition.

...

The Industrial Revolution offered previously forbidden opportunities for Jewish economic growth. At the same time, a Jewry which spread over political borders was perceived as not fitting easily into a narrowing sense of nationhood. ... The emphasis changed from persecution on specifically religious grounds ... to a conflict on racial or nationalistic grounds. The Jews were distrusted because they were seen as not being truly French or truly German.

...

It is significant to point out that no other mention of the persecution of the Jews in Europe, with the above two exceptions* is mentioned in the records of the church's highest court or in its official periodical [The Presbyterian Record] in this 1945 period. While The PCC did not remain entirely silent on the subject of the Holocaust and the "final solution", it is concluded that individual voices who stood up and were counted did not receive widespread and visible support of the official church bodies, and there is little indication that the church attempted or was prepared to take action in this regard.

...

In the post World War II era, Presbyterians have been active in the support of local, regional and national organizations of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, seeking to educate Canadians pertaining to issues concerning Christians and Jews while promoting a medium for common action. ... Today Canada prides itself on its Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the protection guaranteed religious and racial minorities. ... Unfortunately, overt and covert anti-semitism continues to be a reality which cannot be denied.

*Excerpts from "Reconciliation and Hope in a Multi-Faith World", IAC report, 2003*³

Islam, Christianity and Judaism are theological cousins, since we are all descendants of the faith of Abraham, a fact which the Qur'an generously and repeatedly acknowledges.

...

Muhammad's passionate insistence on the worship of God alone brought him into sharp conflict with the people of Mecca. ... Muhammad's stark monotheism led him to part company with the Christians. He rejected outright the idea that God needed to have a son. God need only say "Be" and it was. ... Nevertheless he revered Jesus as a prophet, one of the succession of biblical heroes that began with Adam, and the Qur'an speaks frequently and reverently of Jesus.

...

Many of the most serious religiously motivated conflicts, and mass crimes against humanity in the past century have, tragically, taken place between Christians and Muslims, including conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Kosovo, Macedonia, the Philippines, Sudan and Turkey. This is a reflection of the fact that Islamic culture and civilization is the only one with which the territorial, religious, economic and cultural boundaries of western Christianity have fluctuated for the past fourteen centuries. This relationship has been continuous, frequently intimate, marked by protracted and violent confrontations, as well as fruitful, though often forgotten, collaboration and mutual regard.

...

For Christians, one fruitful way of working with Muslims is in reaction to the excesses of our own culture. Much of modern Western culture is as profoundly offensive to Christians as to Muslims. We are increasingly aware that ours is a 'post-Christian' society whose values and

* An 1943 overture "On Behalf of the Jewish Race" deploring the persecution and calling for the GOC to admit Jewish refugees "as opportunity presents itself" was approved by the 69th GA. An ecumenical statement to the same effect was signed by the Moderator in 1944.

aspirations and self-understanding we live with but do not share and may find quite appalling. In many spheres where Christians find themselves at odds with a consumer-driven materialistic and witheringly secular society, they will find Muslims who share their concerns. ... Christians and Muslims can support each other in calling attention to the need for personal moral integrity in both private and public life, in promoting social attitudes and practices of compassion and justice, and in protesting the exclusion of spirituality and the expression of faith from the public square.

...

Islam and Christianity, along with Judaism, are Abrahamic faiths. In spite of significant distinguishing theological differences, their adherents draw on a shared history and similar perspective on many issues. Muslims and Christians share many beliefs and values, not least the commitment to creating a just, peaceful and secure social order in which the worship of God can be conducted openly and freely. Overcoming a long history of conflict and misunderstanding is not easy. It is worth the effort.

*Excerpt from “Religious observances in public civil services”, Ecumenical Relations Committee report, 2003*⁴

Both the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) issued statements regarding the absence of prayer from the memorial services on Parliament Hill in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. ... Both of these organizations felt that the absence of prayer and/or any other religious observance was lamentable absence, not only because of the consolation and strength that comes from prayer, but also since the vast majority of Canadians would identify themselves with some particular religious tradition. The public memorial service on Parliament Hill in September 2001, therefore, was not a representative expression of the feelings and beliefs of the citizens of our country. Similar concerns were raised in relation to the prayer services following the Swissair tragedy, in which members of the Christian clergy may have been discouraged from public prayer in the name of Christ.

Having been informed that the government was unsure of how to deal with the issue of prayer in an interfaith setting, even though this issue has been dealt with for years in military and prison chaplaincy situations, the Canadian Council of Churches subsequently distributed a document entitled “Guidelines for Religious Ceremonies involving more than one faith tradition”. The text of that document, which was prepared in consultation with Jewish and Muslim representatives, suggests the following:

Prayer involving members of more than one religious tradition is appropriate on public occasions when the wider community comes together to celebrate or to mourn following tragedy. As members of diverse communities in consultation with one another, we have made the following recommendations to our constituencies.

Such religious ceremonies grow out of, and reflect, respect for all traditions present. This respect needs to be present in the planning as well as in the actual event. Faith communities should take the initiative to work collaboratively in planning such events.

They are free to name their own leadership to participate in the actual prayer

- Introductory bidding prayers should be inclusive, in the form of an invocation that opens the community to the divine presence. Sensitivity toward all participants ought to guide all activities.
- Each participating leader should be free to pray from within his or her own tradition, and to read from texts that are considered sacred in his or her own tradition.

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- Leaders may speak positively about their own tradition, not negatively about other faith traditions.
- It is appropriate to pray individually and collectively for the good and well-being of the whole community gathered. It is inappropriate in this context to offer prayers which imply the incompleteness of another faith tradition.

The aim of such religious ceremonies is to foster that respectful presence which enables members of a community to support and affirm each other. These guidelines give all participants the freedom to speak from their own traditions faithfully, and the responsibility to respect other traditions fully.

Excerpts from “A Re-affirmation of the Uniqueness and Finality of Jesus Christ, and its Relevance for Interfaith Dialogue,” CCD report, 2009.⁷

Our theology of the Trinity affirms and intensifies the uniqueness of Christ and his work. What Jesus Christ has done is unique but not in isolation from the work of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of Christ is efficacious because it draws its meaning from the Tri-une relation of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit...In the mystery of Tri-unity we discover the uniqueness of Christ offering a possible avenue to establish a dialogue with those of other religions. This element of uniqueness encourages us in a willingness to explore other unique claims as well as an openness to have our own faith scrutinized by others.

In our relationship with people of other faiths we are called to bear witness to this faith that found us, but we are called to do so in humility, sacrifice and with great hospitality to those who do not agree with us and might not reach the same insights as we do. There always remains a tension between our certainty and joy that we wish to share in Christian witness and the gospel demand to bear witness in a relationship of hospitality, openness and humility. Over the last three decades we as The Presbyterian Church in Canada together with our ecumenical partners have dialogued about this tension together and reached a consensus in the statement issued by the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches at San Antonio, Texas in 1989. This statement reads as follows:

We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot put any limit to God’s saving power. There is a tension between these affirmations which we acknowledge and cannot resolve. (www.oikoumene.org)

The implications of the tension between our discovery of Christ’s gift of salvation and our joy in this discovery, and the fact that this is an unearned gift that we but understand in a limited way, have profound implications for our present relationship with people of other faiths in Canada. It means that we always joyfully bear witness to Christ and what he has done for us. We should always be ready to give account of the faith that is given us by the grace of God. Yet, as we do this, we do not do so in arrogance or in a spirit that claims to know the purposes of God exhaustively. Our confession, if it is to be a true Christian confession, is to be in bold humility. Because of our human limitation and our imperfect grasp of our sure faith, we are open to God’s gift of faith and God’s gift of salvation in Christ that may, by the Holy Spirit, work in ways we do not understand and fathom.

Excerpt from “Response to A Common Word,” EIFRC report, 2009⁸

We give thanks for this initiative “A Common Word Between Us and You” and heartily welcome the call from Muslim religious leaders to Christian religious leaders to unite in a common pursuit of peace and justice on foundational principles of our two faiths: the love of God and love of neighbour...

PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

In a broken divided and violent world, this appeal from Muslim leaders has a terrible urgency to it. Therefore, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and as The Presbyterian Church in Canada and as a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches, we respond with enthusiasm and without hesitation to this timely call. We pledge ourselves not only to find ways to co-operate and to co-exist peacefully with other faiths but to pursue ways to promote reconciliation between Christians and Muslims – and with Jews who are also people of the Book and who, we believe, ought to be a vital part of our common pursuit of peace and justice.

We recognize that both Christianity and Islam are global faiths....Most of the world's population now live in religiously pluralistic societies.

We recognize that Canada itself is an increasingly diverse country whose population reflects the cultures and religious practices of its Indigenous peoples as well as the many immigrant groups who have made it home over more than four hundred years.....As Christians in our Canadian and global contexts, we believe that we must use every avenue available to promote peace, justice and reconciliation.....We celebrate that there have been formal and informal interfaith dialogues and initiatives in Canada for many decades.

....The true source of peace in its varied forms of tranquility, harmony, prosperity, wholeness and material well-being is God, the God of peace (Leviticus 26:6; Psalm 29:11). Yet peace is never without its moral conditions. It is associated with truth and with faithfulness to God (Esther 9:30; Zechariah 8:16). Above all, it is closely conjoined with righteousness or justice.....

....Christians must rid themselves of the bigotry and animosity that is often directed to and felt by Muslims and cultivate a greater understanding of Muslim beliefs and religious practices – and urge their fellow citizens to do the same.

Similarly, reconciliation will involve on the part of Muslims a willingness to cultivate a greater understanding of Christian beliefs and religious practices. Reconciliation mandates we must all work to end acts of violence against members of all religions and their places of worship. Mutual respect for each other's faith, commitment to religious freedom, including the freedom of the individual to convert to another faith, freedom of public worship, and religious toleration are essential.

....As an Abrahamic faith, we as Christians look forward to our continuing involvement in dialogue with Muslims and Jews where our mutual love of God and neighbour can be expressed and deepened..... “The God of peace be with you all. Amen” (Romans 15:33).

Excerpt from “The Statement of The Presbyterian Church in Canada on our Relationship with the Jewish People,” CCD report¹¹

[W]e affirm that the Jewish people have a unique role in God's economy of salvation and healing for our world. Jesus himself taught that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22) and the Apostle Paul stated: “to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, God who is over all be blessed forever. Amen” (Romans 9:4-5).

...

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We affirm that God has graciously included Gentile Christians...by engrafting them into the one people of God established by God's covenant with Abraham. This means that Jews have not been supplanted and replaced by Christians in the one covenant.

...

We believe that the Triune God who is revealed in Jesus Christ is the same God who chose and made himself known to the people of Israel. We believe that both Christians and Jews worship and serve the One Living God.

¹ A&P 1960, pp. 307, 63

² A&P 1990, pp. 378-384, 55-56

³ A&P 2003, pp. 309-320, 15

⁴ A&P 2003, pp. 292-293, 36

⁵ A&P 2004, pp. 299, 12, 38

⁶ A&P 2007, pp. 269-270

⁷ A&P 2009, pp. 254-259

⁸ A&P 2009, pp. 276-279

⁹ A&P 2010, pp. 377-8, 22

¹⁰ A&P 2011, pp. 241-2, 23

¹¹ A&P 2011, pp. 242-4, 42-4

¹² A&P 2011, pp. 268, 24

¹³ A&P 2011, pp. 277, 24

¹⁴ A&P 2011, pp. 279-80, 24

¹⁵ A&P 2013, p. 17

People of Diverse Races and Ethnic Origins

Note: For statements on Canada's francophone and aboriginal peoples see Book 4 Nation. For statements on apartheid see Book 5 World.

The Church Speaks

Racism

- Any form of segregation based on race, colour or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel.¹
- It is not enough for churches and groups to condemn the sin of racial arrogance and oppression.¹
- Racism practiced by the white-skinned against their darker-skinned brothers is one of the world's basic problems, and a blatant denial of the Christian faith.¹
- All forms of racism and apartheid are contrary to the mind and will of Christ.¹
- Racial harassment shall not be tolerated and all allegations shall be dealt with seriously and fairly.¹⁸

A Pluralistic Church

- We are a church of people from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.⁶
- All traditions within the church, from whatever background, are part of the "mainstream" of our church whether they worship in English or any other language of their choice.⁶
- We affirm the value and importance of congregations of distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds for meeting the spiritual, social and cultural needs of their people.⁶
- We recognize the need for congregations to reflect the increasingly pluralistic nature of their communities.⁶
- We will do everything possible to make people of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds welcome in our midst, not only as part of the worshipping community, but as part of the leadership of groups and boards of the congregation.⁶
- The church should continue its efforts, with urgency, to enable all its members, existing and future, rural and urban, to feel a strong sense of belonging and having their identity

DIVERSE RACES & ETHNIC ORIGINS

- rooted in a church that takes seriously what Christ has already accomplished for us: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).²⁰
- Presbyteries and synods making nominations to committees should use their utmost efforts to see that 15% of such nominations come from groups not usually represented (e.g. youth, minorities, disabled persons).¹⁰
 - Our pluralism must be creative and reciprocal with the majority as well as minority groups valuing what they can learn from others and indicating willingness to change assumptions and practices.⁹
 - The PCC believes that being intentional regarding diversity expresses a genuine care and respect for all those who call The Presbyterian Church in Canada their home. The PCC believes more diversity on committees and on [national] staff brings new voices and new perspectives.¹⁸

The 1960s civil rights movement in the US encouraged Canadians to examine their own attitudes as well.

Key events(US):

1960: Demonstrations against racist hiring practices in Birmingham, Alabama are met with police brutality. Martin Luther King Jr. publishes “Letter from Birmingham Jail”.

1963: March on Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. gives his “I Have a Dream” address.

1964: Passage of Civil Rights Act.

1965: Freedom March (for voter registration) Selma to Montgomery.

1968: Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Key Events: (Canada)

1960: Parliament passes the Canadian Bill of Rights.

1971: GOC adopts a Multiculturalism Policy

1982: The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is made part of the Constitution.

1988: Canadian Multiculturalism Act is passed. (Annual reports are available online from Citizenship and Immigration Canada:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/multi-report2008/index.asp>

The Church Acts

1960 – 1966: The 86th GA called on provincial governments to disallow discrimination in rental units based on race, colour, creed, religion, national origin or place of birth. It also asked the GOC to include “no discrimination” provisions in National Housing Act transactions and Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation loan agreements.² The 90th GA approved a statement calling on the church to study the matter of racial and ethnic discrimination in the church. It also commended the GOC for the recent passage of the Bill of Rights, as well as provinces which had enacted Human Rights Codes.³ The 91st GA recommended the church seek the general acceptance of interracial marriage and the 92nd GA affirmed that “as far as theological grounds are concerned, interracial marriages are entitled to the full blessing of the church.”⁴

1972-1979: The 98th GA adopted several statements on racism previously adopted by the WCC (in 1954, 1966 & 1968) and 183rd GA of United Presbyterian Church, USA, 1971.¹ The 105th GA urged presbyteries to “take measures to see that ethnic congregations are encouraged and enabled to participate fully in the main life of the presbytery and the church and to guard against the isolation of these congregations.” In presbytery visitation, ethnic congregations were to be “treated as far as possible as all other congregations would ideally be treated rather than singled out as special cases.”⁵

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1981: The 107th GA affirmed the value and importance of distinct linguistic, ethnic and cultural ministries in the church, called on presbyteries and congregations to encourage friendship and joint programs with ethnically diverse people and congregations, and directed presbyteries to receive ethnic pastors qualified for ordination in the Presbyterian/ Reformed church of their homeland on the understanding that they would upgrade those qualifications to meet the standards of The PCC after acceptance, in their own language, if necessary.⁶ In light of a recruitment drive by the Ku Klux Klan in Canada, it also endorsed renewed opposition to racism in all its forms.⁷

1983: The 109th GA encouraged a recognition of the diversity of natural heritages in The PCC when planning future assemblies.⁸

1984: The 110th GA recommended to presbyteries several policies on ethnic ministries focusing on the need for both mainstream and ethnic congregations to be a bridge between minority and majority cultures.⁹ It also urged presbyteries and synods sending nominations for committees to use their utmost efforts to see that at least 15% of their submitted nominations be from groups not usually represented, i.e. youth, minorities, the disabled.¹⁰

1985-1986: The 111th GA mandated the Administrative Council to provide guidance to local congregations in complying with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and provincial human rights codes in their capacity as employers.¹¹ The 112th GA adopted the council's recommendation that presbyteries and congregations identify persons in their bounds familiar with both Human Rights and Employment Standards regulations for their province and that presbyteries arrange seminars to assist these persons in their task of advising congregations of their responsibilities as employers.¹² It also reminded all courts of the church of the importance of dealing fairly with any person brought before them on any charge, including observing scrupulously the law of the church as set out in the Book of Forms, and urged familiarity with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹³

1992: The 118th GA endorsed a "Response to the Constitutional Proposals"* which included a section on minority rights.¹⁴

2004-2005: The 130th GA adopted working definitions of racism and racial harassment. Assembly Council, in consultation with the LMA, was mandated to develop policies that would address allegations of racial harassment and diversity policies in the hiring of national staff. GA also requested diversity policies in the appointments of volunteers to standing committees of General Assembly. The Presbyterian Record was encouraged to include by-lines and articles on issues facing congregations whose membership are visible minorities and to continue to promote the Record among Presbyterians from visible minority groups.¹⁵ Assembly Council reported to the 131st GA that it had established a committee to draw up recommendations on policies in regard to diversity and allegations of racial harassment.¹⁶ The LMA reported on a survey concerning how the church was meeting the needs of those persons who speak minority languages or official languages in a minority situation. Some resources are produced regularly in Korean and French as well as English. Small runs of material in additional languages are produced on request. Congregations which have produced their own resources are encouraged to share them with the LMA for distribution to other congregations using the same language.¹⁷

2008: The 134th GA approved a policy to deal with allegations of racial harassment. The document is entitled "Growing in Christ: Seeing the Image of God in Our Neighbour." The 134th GA also approved "A Statement of Commitment Toward Racial and Ethnic Diversity in

* This was a response to the proposals of the Charlottetown Accord, defeated in the national referendum of 1992.

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Leadership at the National Level of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.” Justice Ministries hosted a forum for racial and ethnic minority Presbyterians 4-6 April 2008 at Crieff Hills Community. 49 participants from 11 presbyteries and 2 colleges attended.¹⁸

2010: The Korean translation of “Living Faith” was approved and commended for use within the church by the 136th GA.¹⁹

The Committee to Nominate Standing Committees became a full standing committee of General Assembly. The Committee will, under its terms of reference, maintain data on the racial and ethnic diversity of standing committees of General Assembly and make this data available to the church as appropriate.¹⁹

2011: The 137th GA recommended that the following eleven initiatives be commended to the church:

1. That the church adopt as part of its vision the guiding principle of working towards making The Presbyterian Church in Canada more racially and ethnically inclusive in ways that will bring about transformation and better utilize the gifts of its racially and ethnically diverse membership.
2. That the church takes into account this guiding principle of greater racial and ethnic inclusion in any and all of its future work.
3. That the church continues to account for progress in its racial and ethnic inclusion strategies and initiatives by reporting to General Assembly.
4. The Assembly Council is encouraged to integrate ethnic and racial diversity training into their regular meetings.
5. Each ministry has an advisory committee. Associate Secretaries will work with the General Secretary in developing strategies designed to expand representation by ethnic and racial minorities on their advisory committees.
6. Justice Ministries will continue to co-host Crossing Cultures Together forums with Knox College and welcomes opportunities to collaborate with Presbyterian College and St. Andrew’s Hall.
7. The Life and Mission Agency Committee is encouraged to integrate ethnic and racial diversity training into their regular meetings.
8. Synods are encouraged to provide opportunities for regional staff to take training workshops in ethnic and racial diversity. The workshops are intended to assist regional staff in working with presbyteries, presbyterials, sessions, PYPS and other youth groups to strengthen leadership of ethnic and racial minorities. Justice Ministries will assist synods in identifying trainers and guest speakers on ethnic and racial diversity.
9. The General Assembly Office is encouraged to integrate ethnic and racial diversity training into the biennial clerks’ meetings.
10. The camps are encouraged to enable young people from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds to attend the camps.
11. That the church, at all its levels, strive to identify:
 - a) the skills and spiritual gifts of the racial and ethnic minorities among us
 - b) the wider church’s shortcomings in need of these skills and gifts and
 - c) ways we can use all our gifts and skills to serve side by side, as brothers and sisters, in the cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁰

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Racial and Ethnic Discrimination”, ESA report, 1964³

In the sight of God, therefore, there is no such thing as a super race or ethnic group whose right it is to rule or lord it over other races and ethnic groups. He who gave to “all life and breath and all

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

things” has made “of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth” and all are equally valuable to Him. ... The sequel to God’s love for all people is, namely, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” Love for neighbour spells doom to both racial and ethnic discrimination because “love worketh no ill to his neighbor.”

*Excerpt from “The Pluralistic Church”, BWM report, 1981*⁶

The PCC is an ethnically and culturally pluralistic church. ... We thank God for this growing pluralistic community of faith, and for the sharing and new life and growth which it occasions.

A pluralistic church also brings some challenges. One is to provide ordained ministers for congregations of minority language and cultural groups. Regulations and facilities designed to strengthen ministry to white English-speaking Presbyterians can have the reverse effect on ministry for Presbyterians of minority groups. ... A related challenge is for congregations, presbyteries, and national boards and committees to seek out leadership from minority group Presbyterians. If we are a pluralistic church, we must be seen to be a pluralistic church. Representatives of minority groups ... must be given opportunity to use their gifts on sessions, boards, church school staff, leadership of presbytery committees and national staff.

A third challenge of prime importance is racism. There are sometimes overt and blatant expressions, both in the church and the community, which must be challenged directly and publicly by members of the majority group. ... Perhaps the larger challenge is in the subtler forms of racism, because while members of minority groups may be sensitive or even super-sensitive, to these expressions, the members of the majority group are often oblivious, cavalier or even unintentional participants.

*Excerpt from “Ethnic Ministries”, BWM report, 1984*⁹

We believe that integration is not the sole responsibility of the minority groups. The majority must recognize the value of learning about other ways of life, even to modifying their own assumptions and practices. Our pluralism must be creative and reciprocal.

*Excerpts from “Response to the Constitutional Proposals” BCL report, 1992.*¹⁴

See also Book 4: Nation for excerpts from this document dealing with French-English Relations, First Nations and Ecology, Energy and Environment

The Christian faith, as proclaimed in scripture and taught in the creeds and confessions of the church, places on majority groups in society the responsibility of honouring the linguistic, cultural and religious rights of minorities in their midst. Indeed, the bias in the New Testament is specifically toward those who make up the disadvantaged of whatever nature. Therefore, concerning the matter of minority rights, Christians must reject any doctrine that denies the fundamental unity of the human family under God.

The gospel of reconciliation calls us to deal justly with all other humans, so that people of different races, cultures, languages and religions may fulfil themselves by living together in mutual respect, care and openness. Such a relationship is ideally no more nor less than Christ’s call for the same exercise of justice towards the rights of others that we as Christians ask for ourselves. The Canadian experiment of confederation, whatever its defects or imperfections, remains fundamentally a movement towards community through its own attempt at reconciling diverse interests.

DIVERSE RACES & ETHNIC ORIGINS

The Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation* asserts that the state “has the duty of establishing public peace and providing protection, and guarding impartially the rights of every citizen”. Therefore, we urge all majority groups in all parts of our nation so to conduct their affairs that due recognition be given the rights of minorities within their bounds, to the end that all minority groups may exercise fully the rights and privileges of citizenship, within the inevitable limitations of their situation.

Excerpts from “Racism and requesting a policy on racial harassment” LMA report, 2004¹⁵

Paul articulates his understanding of unity in this way: “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” (Ephesians 2:14) Unity in the church, as Paul understood it, was achieved by breaking down the dividing wall. In Paul’s time, the dividing wall was a cultural, racial and religious boundary that separated the Jews and the Gentiles. This separation created hostility between them. This hostility divided the church and destroyed the unity.

...

The Jewish Christians did not consciously try to exclude the Gentile Christians. It was not their intention to make them feel that they did not belong to the Body of Christ. They just continued to be faithful to their own cultural and religious tradition, not realizing that they were imposing their way of life on the Gentile Christians, making them feel that they did not belong to the Body, an unfortunate consequence. This is what happens whenever new ethno-racial groups come into a church which has been shaped and formed by a particular culture. As the dominant group institutionalizes particular forms and insists on keeping them, they unconsciously exclude others and make them feel they do not belong to the Body.

The early church had to deal with racial diversity within its own body. The Jews, who were the majority at that time, had to accommodate the Gentiles by challenging their own traditions and historical assumptions instead of imposing their own culture on the other. They had to identify the dividing wall within their own traditions and assumptions to bring unity and peace. In order to be faithful to the movement of the Spirit who wanted to start a new tradition, they had to make the effort to see where their customary traditions were impeding that movement. The Holy Spirit continuously challenges the church to reshape and reform its traditions lest they become the dividing wall. The Holy Spirit continuously creates new life by challenging the church to find new ways of understanding God and doing ministry and thereby building the Body of Christ. Racism is experienced when that challenge is ignored or resisted because the voice that calls for it does not come from the majority group or is not seen as a credible leader on the basis of his/her race.

Excerpts from “Growing in Christ: Seeing the Image of God in Our Neighbour” Policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for Dealing with Allegations of Racial Harassment, Assembly Council report, 2008¹⁸

PREAMBLE

God calls us to bear witness to God’s love in Christ. Part of bearing that witness is learning to see the image of God in our neighbour. Unfortunately, our vision is often blurred or distorted, and we end up judging one another. When that judgment is based on the prejudice of race we become unfaithful to the gospel we proclaim.

Racism exists in our communities, including the church. Yet we know that the kingdom of God includes all nationalities and all races. In its calling to be a signpost to the kingdom of God, it is

* The Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation was adopted as a subordinate standard in 1954 to express The PCC’s understanding of the relationship between the church and nation in a secular democracy.

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imperative that the church oppose racism and intentionally work toward acceptance and inclusion of all people. In a desire to challenge racism and in an attempt to provide a way to handle racial harassment when it occurs, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has prepared the following policy. In doing so, The Presbyterian Church in Canada states that racial harassment shall not be tolerated and all allegations shall be dealt with seriously and fairly.

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF INCLUSION

In his letter to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul offers this prayer for the congregation: "... that your love may grow ever richer in knowledge and insight of every kind, enabling you to learn by experience what things really matter" (Philippians 1:9-10a [REB]). Paul's prayer is a reminder that no person or congregation arrives at living out the fullness of the gospel. There is always the need to be open to growth and the change growth creates.

The gospel is not something we possess. It is always bigger than we are. The church is called to proclaim the gospel in the world. This confession, however, is translated into the culture in which we live. This act of translation entails risk since something is usually lost in the translation. "Cultures try to bring the gospel under their control, attempting to fit the person and work of Christ into their patterns of accepted religious practices."

Even the early church encountered this challenge of translation. In a God-given dream, Peter is confronted by the very gospel he proclaimed and realizes, for the first time, that Gentiles are to be welcomed into the grace of Christ (Acts 10). In a different account, Philemon is challenged by the return of his runaway slave, Onesimus, who has become a Christian and who now returns as more than a slave; he is a brother in Christ (Philemon). These stories illustrate the radical challenges faced by the early followers of Christ as, by the Holy Spirit, they learned to give new answers to the old question, "Who is my neighbour?"

In John's gospel we read that God loves the world God has created (John 3:16). This includes everyone without exception. All are made in the image of God. As the wisdom writer states, our relationship with others is to be determined by the reality that God is their creator: "Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honour him" (Proverbs 14:31). The dignity of all human beings is not something that is achieved or earned; it is God who gives it (Isaiah 42:5).

Racism, therefore, is a violation, a trespass against God's purposes. Racism defines the comparative worth of a person as a human being by characteristics of race, over against a person's value as one made in the image of God. It assumes, explicitly or implicitly, that one human group is superior to another and lives out that belief in ways that harms or even exploits others regarded as inferior. Racism is often a combination of prejudice and power.

Seeing others in a new way is central to the gospel. Our reconciliation with God is meant to lead us to reconciliation with one another. Thus Paul writes, "For he (Christ) is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:14). In Paul's time, the dividing wall was a cultural, racial and religious boundary that separated the Jews and the Gentiles. This separation created hostility between them, divided the church and destroyed the unity. The New Testament reminds us that in Christ we enter a new covenant whereby, through God's grace, we are made 'sons and daughters' of the living God. In Christ we are also brought into a new community, the body of Christ, whereby we are made 'sisters and brothers'.

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Racism divides the church and slanders Christ by stating that we are not all equally treasured in God's covenant or that we are not all one in Christ's love. Paul vigorously contends that, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). This does not mean that these differences ceased to exist in Paul's time. But it does mean that these distinctions are no longer barriers to God's grace in Christ – a gift which removes human barriers and human boasting. Instead of being divided by race, culture and gender, the church is to be understood as a household:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Here the image of household is not the traditional understanding of the nuclear family. Rather, it is the understanding of a larger extended family. Each family has its own traditions and personalities. They may not even enjoy each other's company but what brings them together is the fact that they are called into this family. What is important in the household of God is not the fact that we have come from different racial and cultural backgrounds but the fact that we have become one, the Body of Christ, sharing a common calling. The gospel, therefore, does not eliminate differences but rather transcends them. We can recognize and enjoy our differences knowing that we are one in Christ.

Racism is experienced when respect of others is ignored or resisted. Racism happens when the only voice that is heard comes from the majority group. Racism happens when someone is not seen as a credible leader on the basis of his/her race. The challenge for the church, therefore, is to show an open love and respect for all, refusing to let the cultural traditions of any one group become a dividing wall for the full inclusion and participation by another.

¹ A&P 1972, pp. 269-270, 59

² A&P 1960, pp. 304, 50

³ A&P 1964, pp. 353-354, 357, 95-96

⁴ A&P 1965, pp. 341, 351, 75; A&P 1966 pp. 283, 289-290, 101-102

⁵ A&P 1979, pp. 414, 85

⁶ A&P 1981, pp. 423-425, 92

⁷ A&P 1981, pp. 309-310, 97

⁸ A&P 1983, pp. 27, 81

⁹ A&P 1984, pp. 478-479, 23

¹⁰ A&P 1984, p. 49

¹¹ A&P 1985, pp. 44, 55

¹² A&P 1986, pp. 216-217, 27

¹³ A&P 1986, pp. 287-288, 37

¹⁴ A&P 1992, pp. 303-308, 45

¹⁵ A&P 2004, pp. 382-389, 17

¹⁶ A&P 2005, p. 233

¹⁷ A&P 2005, pp. 311-312, 16

¹⁸ A&P 2008, pp. 220-229; A&P 2008 pp. 429-430

¹⁹ A&P 2010, pp. 219, 27

²⁰ A&P 2011, pp. 373-6, 32

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

Gender Equity and the Ministry of Women in the Church

The Church Speaks

- Women and men have an equal right to serve in any and all courts of the church.⁹
- Women and men have an equal right to enter and share in the ministry of word and sacraments.⁹
- All publications of The PCC are to use language inclusive of both sexes.¹⁶
- Presbyteries have a responsibility to ensure that all candidates, regardless of age, sex, race, theological position or geographical location, are considered fairly¹
- By virtue of their ordination vows, ministers and elders are obliged to exercise full ministry including active participation in the ordination of women.¹⁹
- Presbyteries are encouraged, when sending in nominations to committees, to send in an equal number of names of men and women.²⁴

The Church Acts

Elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament

1953-1966: The 79th GA appointed a special committee to study the question of the place of women in the church.² The special committee reported to GA in 1956³, 1957⁴, 1959⁵, & 1960⁶ on both its studies and its surveys of congregations, presbyteries and presbyterials. In 1963, the special committee published a study document, “Putting Woman in her Place” urging the church to “expose herself humbly and seriously to what God would say to us through the scriptures.”⁷ The 91st GA remitted to the presbyteries recommendations to affirm the right of women to enter and share in the ministry of word and sacraments and to grant to women the right to serve in any and all courts of the church.⁸ Upon the approval of the remit, the 92nd GA passed the enabling legislation admitting women to all offices and courts of the church.⁹

Deaconesses & the Diaconal Order

1971: The 96th GA approved a motion to bring the stipend of deaconesses in line with that of catechists.¹⁰

1983-1984: By 1983 Ewart College* counted several male graduates doing work similar to that of deaconesses, but not eligible by reason of their gender to be members of the Order of Deaconesses. Nor was there a suitable title for these male graduates engaged in diaconal work. A proposal to establish an Order of Diaconal Ministries to which both male and female graduates of Ewart College could belong, was remitted to the presbyteries by the 109th GA¹¹ and, with their support, approved by the 110th GA¹²

Liberty of Conscience and the Ordination of Women

1979: The senate of The Presbyterian College in Montreal reported to the 105th GA that although one-quarter to one-third of their graduating classes were now women, much needed to be done in developing acceptance of women in the ministry. “There are presbyteries which contravene the action of the 1966 General Assembly by not permitting women to minister within their bounds. There are congregations which will not consider applications from ministers who are women. There are some congregations applying to the Board of World Mission for appointments which specify that they do not wish to have a woman appointed as their minister.” GA agreed to set up

* Ewart College was originally founded as the Ewart Missionary Training Home (in honour of Mrs. Thomas Ewart, president of the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society) in 1897, primarily to train women for foreign missions. Its mandate was enlarged in 1908 to include the training of deaconesses and its name changed to the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home. The name Ewart College adopted in 1961 and male students were enrolled in its Christian education and social work programs. In 1991 Ewart College was amalgamated with Knox College.

a task force under the Board of Ministry to a) eliminate discrimination against women in the appointment and the call procedure where they may exist in our church, and b) educate presbyteries, sessions and congregations regarding the partnership of men and women in ministry.”¹³ A memorial on the same matter was also referred to the task force.¹⁴ The memorial also asked for an examination of church documents such as the Book of Forms and the Book of Praise with regard to language that excludes women.

1980: The 106th GA dealt with the appeal of a candidate for ministry who was refused a licence to preach on the grounds that he would not commit himself to participating in the ordination of women. The matter was given to a special committee which returned three recommendations:

- to affirm that the church’s position on the ordination of women required elders and ministers to participate in their ordination,
- to extend a period of grace of 10 years to those already in the ministry provided that during this period “they co-operate fully with all ministers and elders of the church and abstain from prejudicing their people against the election of women to the ruling and teaching eldership”, and
- to extend a special exemption to the candidate who had appealed to GA on the same terms.¹⁵

The 106th GA also adopted the report and recommendations of the Committee on Memorial #1, 1979, including urging presbyteries to plan an ongoing educational process to assist congregations and ministers to be supportive of women elected to the eldership, and a mandate that all revisions made by The PCC to its documents and in its publications use language inclusive of both sexes.¹⁶

1981: The 107th GA set up a special committee to review no less than 45 overtures, memorials and petitions on the action of the 106th GA and adopted its three recommendations:

- that the question of liberty of conscience be referred to a task force charged with presenting the basis for a declaratory act or other legislation to the 108th GA;
- that until such legislation was enacted, the ten-year limitation on the exemption from participation in the ordination of women for 1980 ordinands and those already ordained be declared inoperative; and,
- that this GA pass a declaratory act* that all those entering the ministry of The PCC after 1980 be required to participate in the ordination of women.¹⁷

The 107th GA also approved measures to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the ordination of women in The PCC.¹⁸

1982: On receiving the report of The Task Force on the Liberty of Conscience as it pertained to the ordination of women, the 108th GA adopted a second declaratory act requiring those already ordained and inducted to participate in the ordination of women.¹⁹

1988-1989: The 114th GA adopted a motion discouraging presbyteries from appointing as interim Moderators, those who expressed discriminatory attitudes toward women when proceeding with a call.²⁰ On the recommendation of the Clerks of Assembly, the 115th GA rescinded the declaratory acts of 1981 and 1982 and replaced them with a single declaratory act.²¹

* Through a declaratory act, GA affirms what it understands to be the current law of the church regarding any matter. An action contemplating a change in the law of the church must be dealt with according to the provisions of the Barrier Act. (Section 293 of the Book of Forms)

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

The Declaratory Acts on Liberty of Conscience and the Ordination of Women

1981: This 107th GA hereby passes a declaratory act that until new legislation is enacted, all persons entering the ministry of The PCC after 1980 be required to participate in the ordination of women to the eldership and the ministry of word and sacrament.

1982: (added to the 1981 declaratory act) Ministers and elders already ordained and inducted within The PCC have freedom of belief on the question of the ordination of women, but not freedom of action. By virtue of their ordination vows all are obliged to exercise full ministry including active participation in the ordination of women.

Although presbyteries have no authority to grant permission to disobey church law and doctrine on the question of the ordination of women, yet they are enjoined to deal with cases of conscience on the question with pastoral care and understanding for the parties involved with concern and sensitivity for the peace and unity of the whole church.

1989: (replacing the declaratory acts of 1981 and 1982) By virtue of their ordination vows, all ministers and elders are obliged to exercise full ministry, including, among other things, active participation in the ordination of candidates to the eldership and to the ministry of word and sacrament. Though presbyteries have no authority to grant permission to disobey church law and doctrine, yet they are enjoined to deal with cases of conscience on any question with pastoral care and understanding for the parties involved, with concern and sensitivity for the peace and unity of the whole church.

Other actions

1988/1992: The 114th GA encouraged sessions to participate through study, prayer and action in the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998) sponsored by the World Council of Churches.²² This encouragement was re-iterated by the 118th GA.²³

1993: The 119th GA encouraged presbyteries sending in nominations for GA committees* to assist in improving the gender balance on such committees by sending in the names of men and women in equal numbers.²⁴

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from the report of the Committee on the Place of Women in the Church, 1963⁷

The basic and determining truth which has impressed itself upon us is that, in the biblical understanding of man, male and female form a partnership each completing the other to form together the full expression of a human being. ... This we believe to be the basic biblical truth which must govern all man-woman relationships if these are to be in harmony with the revealed will of God.

In light of this, the first and obvious fact is that women have a full place in the church, which is humanity restored to God's intention for it. Men and women alike are the objects and servants of the purpose of God which the church has been created to express and fulfill. Any belief and practice which denies this truth is a distortion of the church's true nature.

* e.g. Committee on Church Doctrine, Ecumenical Relations Committee, International Affairs Committee, etc.

Excerpt from the Report of the Committee on the Place of Women in the Church, 1964 ²⁵

Within the life and work of the church ... there can be no distinction in status accorded to men and women as members of the body of Christ. As partners in the mutual and unified relationship which constitutes the nature of man, both are created, redeemed, called, commissioned and empowered to express and serve the purpose of God for the world through the life, witness and work of the church.

...

With respect to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, we believe that women should not be barred as women from taking their place in the pulpits of the church. ... As far as the ruling eldership is concerned, we believe that women in whom the church discerns the necessary gifts and calls to exercise them should be free to take their place in all the courts of the church. In the light ... of God's call to women to serve Him and the world through the life and work of the church, we believe this must come to pass as a necessary reformation if we are to act in obedience to Jesus Christ.

Excerpt from "Women in Ministry", report of the Board of Ministry, 1980 ²⁶

We have to do here with the declared conviction of our church that the call of God to ministry is open to those who are women. To stand in the way of such a call is to attempt to prevent those whom God may be calling from receiving his call on the basis of sex, contrary to our declared understanding of scripture and the Reformed tradition. To tolerate such discrimination is to tolerate sexism, which is ethically as unacceptable as racism, classism or any other dehumanizing process that treats people according to categories rather than as persons. Our church cannot make the ordination of women the law of the church and then tolerate a leadership in the order of ministry that opposes such an ordination or one that will not participate in the act of licencing and ordaining women simply because they are women.

Excerpt from "The Ministry of Women in The PCC", report of the Board of Ministry, 1981 ²⁷

...the Board of Ministry rejects as invalid any concept of a freedom of conscience on the part of individuals and courts that denies freedom to women to exercise a full ministry equal in all respects to that of men. We submit that by granting such a freedom to some members of the church we are denying not only freedom of conscience but freedom of action to many more members. The sanction of any such concept of freedom of conscience would, in effect, create two classes of ministry in the church—one class (composed of men) that is recognized as valid by the whole church and a second class (composed of women) which is not recognized as valid by the whole church.

We further reject as a basis for "liberty of conscience" the claim that the ordination of women is unscriptural. By its action in 1966, the 92nd General Assembly declared otherwise on the very ground of "obedience to scripture and under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Excerpts from the Report of the Task Force on Liberty of Conscience as it pertains to the ordination of women, 1982. ¹⁹

Ordination is a corporate act of the church and the individuals who are present at an ordination represent not just themselves but the whole church. It is Christ who ordains by the Spirit through his body, the Church. ... [G]iven our church's corporate doctrine of ministry, the bodily absence of a minister at an ordination does not remove him/her from participating in the ministerial and spiritual reality of the ordination.

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Theologically and spiritually speaking, there are not male and female ministers and elders, there are only ministers and elders. The church, spiritually, does not ordain a female or a male, it ordains elders and ministers!

The majority of [the task force] rejected the idea of exemption for the following seven reasons:

- It would involve a change of the 1966 legislation that could only be interpreted as a retreat from it.
- It would cast doubt upon the validity of women as ministers and elders.
- It poses the danger of sanctioning an un-Presbyterian approach to church law.
- It may well have the effect of producing more divisiveness in the church.
- It will tend to negate women's rights to be elected to the eldership in a congregation where the minister is permitted to exempt himself from her ordination.
- It is unnecessary since the means for liberating one's conscience is already available through recording dissent.

¹ A&P 1982, pp. 393, 98

² A&P 1953, pp. 393, 96

³ A&P 1956, pp. 312-314, 74-75, 85

⁴ A&P 1957, pp. 259-261, 77

⁵ A&P 1959, pp. 273-275, 99

⁶ A&P 1960, pp. 296-298, 39-40, 54, 71, 103

⁷ A&P 1963, p. 306-307, 74

⁸ A&P 1965, pp. 384-385, 52, 108

⁹ A&P 1966, pp. 456, 46-47, 52, 77-78

¹⁰ A&P 1971, pp. 474-475, 79

¹¹ A&P 1983, pp. 394-397, 25

¹² A&P 1984, pp. 453-454, 44

¹³ A&P 1979, pp. 271-273, 46

¹⁴ A&P 1979, pp. 466-67, 90

¹⁵ A&P 1980, pp. 452-454, 463, 466-67 25-26, 28, 43, 61-63, 80-81, 83, 92-95, 104, 112, 116-117

¹⁶ A&P 1980, pp. 393-398, 63-64, 65-66

¹⁷ A&P 1981, pp. 84-90, 112-113

¹⁸ A&P 1981, pp. 108-109

¹⁹ A&P 1982, pp. 501-515, 43-44, 53, 59, 60-61, 72-74

²⁰ A&P 1988, pp. 391, 21

²¹ A&P 1989, pp. 514-515, 271,65

²² A&P 1988, pp. 353-354, 33

²³ A&P 1992, pp. 319-320, 47

²⁴ A&P 1993, p. 45

²⁵ A&P 1964, pp. 386-388, 43,103

²⁶ A&P 1980, pp. 355-358, 82

²⁷ A&P 1981, pp. 384, 103

See also:

Report of the Committee re: the Place of Women in the Church, 1955

Putting Woman in Her Place, 1963

(both available in Archives)

REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS & MIGRANTS

Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants

The Church Speaks

Refugees

- Every person coming to Canada, seeking protection of life and limb, should be allowed to make a refugee claim.¹⁰
- Every person physically present in Canada who claims refugee status should receive a fair hearing.¹⁰
- Every person denied refugee status should have the right to appeal the decision.¹⁰
- Visas should not be required in cases where people applying for them must place themselves at serious personal risk.¹⁰
- Congregations are encouraged to sponsor refugees under the sponsorship agreement of The PCC and the GOC.⁴
- Should a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada desiring in obedience to God's word and its own conscience, offer sanctuary to an asylum seeker whose claim for refugee status has been rejected and who faces a risk of persecution if returned to his/her country of origin, it may consider the following as appropriate steps to follow: 1) have an independent review of the evidence provided by the asylum seeker (or the lawyer acting on behalf of the asylum seeker) that confirms the risk; 2) have exhausted all of the legal and political recourses as outlined in this statement; 3) have followed the decision-making procedures of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.²³
- Refugees are resettled on the basis of risk to their safety and well-being and only when no other durable solution is deemed viable.²⁷
- Non-discrimination is a foundational principle of the refugee policy in Canada and an integral part of the PWS&D mission statement.²⁷

Immigration

- A multicultural and multi-racial nation offers an interesting and desirable environment for personal and societal growth.²
- Immigration policy should not be centred around restrictive economic and racial factors, but rather on a responsible endeavour to share our resources and develop creatively our potential for a society rich in social, cultural, moral and spiritual values.²
- All human beings are valuable persons and any attempt to measure the value of human life in economic or educational terms provides an opportunity for a display of injustice, prejudice, arrogance and racism.²
- Government immigration policy should establish and uphold moral principles that lead the Canadian people into a growing awareness of social and moral responsibility.²

Migrants

- Migrants are a part of Canadian and global communities and should be treated with respect and dignity irrespective of their legal status in a country.²⁵
- Migrant workers and their families are vulnerable to exploitation and human rights violations and are in need of greater protection in host and transit countries.²⁵

The Church Acts

1965: The 91st GA expressed concern that “immigration policy is too highly selective” and urged the GOC to review its immigration policy with a view to permitting “less skilled persons of all races and ethnic groups to enter Canada as immigrants.”¹

1975-77: The 101st GA (1975) encouraged presbyteries and congregations to study the Green Paper on Immigration Policy released in January 1975 by the GOC, consider the issues from a

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theological and ethical standpoint, and make their views known to the GOC. GA also endorsed a brief to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Immigration Policy prepared by the executive committees of the BWM and the BCL.^{2*} The 103rd GA (1977) was informed of the communications of the BCL with the Minister of Immigration commending many features of the new Immigration Bill, but expressing disappointment and concern over some matters raised in their earlier brief, which the new legislation did not address.³

1979: The 105th GA was informed by the Administrative Council that an agreement on refugee sponsorship had been reached with the GOC and encouraged congregations to consider sponsoring refugees to settle in Canada and to cover the expenses of housing, food and clothing.⁴

Immigrants, Illegal Immigrants, Refugee Claimants, Refugees and Migrants

Immigrants or refugees? It is a matter of choice.

An immigrant voluntarily leaves his/her country of birth to take up residence in a new country. Some come to take up economic or professional opportunities; others to join family already in Canada.

A refugee flees his/her country because of political, religious or ethnic oppression and is unable to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution.

Illegal immigrants have entered the country without going through the normal immigration process and have made no claim to be refugees. Illegal immigrants are subject to deportation, though from time to time the government has offered an amnesty.

A refugee claimant has made a claim to be a refugee, and is waiting for the claim to be investigated. Refugee claimants have the right, under Canadian and international law, to remain in the country until the claim has been reviewed and either accepted or rejected. Under current Canadian refugee procedure, a person arriving in Canada seeking refuge may be returned to a “safe third country” and required to stay there until a date has been set for a hearing on their claim. Some refugees have been subjected to detention and deportation by the immigration authorities in the “safe” country to which they have been returned.

A migrant is someone who lives outside his or her country of birth for more than one year. Many people migrate in search of employment opportunities in foreign countries when opportunities at home are limited. Migrants differ from refugees because they do not flee from their countries in fear of persecution.

1980-81: The 106th GA encouraged congregations sponsoring refugee families to take a particular interest in handicapped refugees, and called on the GOC to extend its maximum one-year assistance to such a period of time that will assist the handicapped refugee to reach his/her maximum level of functioning.⁵ The 107th GA, in recognition of the difficulty refugees faced in paying transportation costs of about \$700 per person, called on congregations to exert influence on the GOC to “give relief to those refugees who are finding the repayment of their transportation costs a heavy burden.”⁶

* The brief had been submitted earlier to meet the deadline set by the parliamentary committee.

REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS & MIGRANTS

1984-85: The 110th GA commended the work of PWS&D and encouraged congregations to seek ways of showing solidarity to refugees. It adopted the report of the IAC which noted the current extent of refugee problems in Africa, the Middle East, Central America and South-East Asia and commended the work of the Inter-Church Committee on Refugees.⁷ GA also appointed a special committee to discuss with the GOC a broader and more humane application of the criteria under which illegal immigrants could access an amnesty currently offered by the government.* The 111th GA asked that the GOC declare a period of amnesty for all those residing illegally in Canada who were not a security risk.⁸

The PCC and Immigration

In 1974, Canada received over 200,000 immigrants of which 43% came from the Third World rather than traditional European sources. The PCC worked with the National Interfaith Immigration Committee (NIFIC) and a network of regional and local committees to extend a welcome to new immigrants and to facilitate adjustment to life in Canada.

NIFIC's Supportive Assistance Program provided assistance to refugees, notably Asians expelled from Uganda by dictator Idi Amin and Chileans fleeing the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet after the 1973 coup which ousted President Salvador Allende.

(from BWM report, 1975 p. 225)

1987-1988: The 113th GA called on the GOC to uphold the human rights of refugees entering Canada. (see box on previous page) It also called on presbyteries and congregations to work with refugees through the refugee co-ordinator of The PCC.¹⁰ The 114th GA commended to congregations the continuing need for ministry to refugees through sponsorship and asked congregations and sessions to engage in study and action on the root causes of refugees and to explore the connections between racism and resistance to refugees in Canada.^{11**} It also called on the GOC to give asylum to refugees from Central America.¹²

1986: The 112th GA recommended that resources be provided to members explaining the need for new immigrants in Canada and dealing with the twin “myths” that immigrants create unemployment and that Canada stands in jeopardy of being overrun with immigrants. A vote of thanks was recorded in appreciation of the Hon. Walter F. McLean, Minister of State for Immigration, for “his sincerity and determination in dealing with the refugee backlog” and a prayer that he would continue his fight for a just and equitable program for all genuine refugees.⁹

The Boat People

When US forces withdrew from Vietnam in 1973 and the communist government was extended throughout the country, thousands of Vietnamese chose to flee the new regime, often taking to sea in over-crowded boats. The plight of these “boat people” stimulated a generous and compassionate response from Canadians. Sponsorship agreements signed by many denominations with the GOC facilitated their immigration into Canada. Within 18 months, 250 families were sponsored by PCC congregations and a total of 10,000 refugees were settled in Canada. (from BWM report 1980, p. 207)

* Many of those affected were from Guyana and members of the Presbyterian Church. One limitation was that the illegal immigrant must not have had contact with the Department of Immigration within the last five years. This excluded even those who had sought to regularize their status within that time period.

** The GOC was conducting hearings on Bill C-55, a proposed revision of the Immigration Act which included several measures opposed by those working with refugees. Bill C-55 was passed in 1988.

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

1989: The 115th GA endorsed the Canadian Council of Churches' challenge of the new regulations governing refugees under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.^{13*}

1991: The BWM reported to the 117th GA that protestations were made to the GOC regarding the discontinuing of loans to refugees, contrary to the master agreement the church had signed. The GOC returned to its former policy. A refugee retreat for congregations involved in refugee ministry was held in Montreal.¹⁴

1992-1996: The 118th GA asked the GOC and the province of Quebec to relax immigration laws for Yugoslav refugees stranded in camps in Hungary due to the current war in Yugoslavia.¹⁵ The LMA (Canada Ministries) reported to the 119th GA that negotiations were proceeding for a new master agreement on sponsorship, but that the GOC was asking that the churches take on more of the administrative tasks relative to congregations which “will lead to more bureaucratic paper work and diversion of monies from sponsoring of refugees.”¹⁶ After 18 months of negotiations a new master agreement was signed.¹⁷ The 122nd GA also urged the GOC to end the imposition of landing fees[†] on refugee claimants, and to add a meaningful appeal process to the Immigration Act based on the merits of the case. Several departments of the LMA (Canada Ministries, International Ministries, Justice Ministries and PWS&D) were asked to set up a task force to continue discussion on these issues and develop a statement on The Church and Immigration.¹⁸

*Why the CCC challenged the immigration amendments*¹³

The primary factor in the decision of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) to test the amendments to the Immigration Bill (Bills C-55 and C-84) is its claim that “provisions of the Immigration Act 1976, as amended, endanger the life, liberty and security of person of refugees ...”

The focus of concern is the initial screening process... [which]:

- 1. calls for automatic exclusion on objective grounds that do not allow for any consideration of the merits of the individual case,*
- 2. does not permit any appeal except to the Federal Court of Appeals, which can deal only with legal and procedural questions,*
- 3. is held as swiftly as possible after entry, and places great pressure on the claimant to find a lawyer and on the lawyer to prepare the case within a very limited time frame,*
- 4. places the burden for proving there is a “credible basis” for the claim on the claimant.*

The CCC is as anxious as any that a procedure should be developed that will effectively screen bogus applicants, especially since they are a major threat to credible claims. But it believes that efficiency and fairness are not incompatible. It also knows that any set of procedures will involve some risk of refoulement. Such a risk is acceptable after a full and fair hearing and a meaningful appeal. Both of these factors are absent in the present law.*

**refoulement: refusal of entry and return to country of origin or to a safe third country.*

* Recommendations to help fund the CCC challenge and to hire a fulltime Refugee co-ordinator were referred to the Administrative Council. The CCC indicated it did not require funds from the churches. Both the BWM & PWSD indicated that they had considered renewing a position for Refugee co-ordinator but had other priorities for their funds, for which the Administrative Council advised respect.

† As of February 1995, the GOC required a landing fee of \$975 for every adult refugee applying for permanent residence in Canada. This policy continued in force until February 28, 2000.

REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS & MIGRANTS

1997-2003: The LMA report to the 123rd GA noted that 1997 was the UN Year of Uprooted Peoples, and expressed hope that congregations would accept the challenge to be the church in solidarity with uprooted peoples through sponsorship of refugee families.¹⁹ Responsibility for refugee issues was transferred from Canada Ministries to PWS&D in 1998 except for the financial support to the Montreal based refugee service, Action Réfugiés.²⁰ The 127th GA urged the GOC to significantly increase the number of refugees sponsored from Sudan in light of the gross human rights violations being perpetrated on the peoples of that country, and urged congregations to consider the private sponsorship of Sudanese refugees.²¹ In 2003 a new sponsorship agreement was signed with the GOC. PWS&D noted in its report that since 1992 over 50 PCC congregations had entered 505 refugee sponsorships involving 741 people. The new sponsorship agreement runs indefinitely with either party able to withdraw given due notice.²²

2006: The 132nd GA adopted a report on providing sanctuary to a refugee whose claim has been denied and who is in danger of persecution if he/she is returned to his/her country of origin and suggested guidelines to be considered by a congregation should it decide to offer sanctuary.²³ It also expressed its dismay over the lack of a merit based appeal process for refugee claimants as set out in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and called on the government to live up to the commitments of the Act.²⁴

2007: The 133rd GA adopted a report reflecting on the vulnerabilities of migrants. The GA urged the GOC to sign the International Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and to participate in the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Congregations were urged to learn about migrants in their communities, provide support where possible and remember in prayer 18 December, International Migrants' Day. Congregations were encouraged to use fair trade products as one tangible response to an unjust global order that forces many people to migrate.²⁵

2009: The Moderator of the 135th GA wrote to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration regarding the progress being made in implementing the preferred occupations[‡] list which is intended to ensure that prospective immigrants with training in one of these occupations are able to find employment in their chosen field. The Moderator wrote to the Ministers of Citizenship and Immigration of the Governments of Canada and Ontario acknowledging recent collaborative initiatives addressing the settlement needs of immigrants in Ontario with professional credentials, stating the church's continued concern for the economic, emotional, social and physical well-being of immigrants and urging that the barriers that prevent immigrants from using their professional credentials be removed. Congregations were encouraged to learn about the challenges facing immigrants in their communities and in Canada, and about global migration.²⁶

2010: The 136th GA approved the recommendation from PWS&D to not grant the prayer of Overture No. 14, 2009 (A&P, p. 525, 21) re Iraqi refugees. PWS&D welcomed the intent of Overture No. 14, but concluded that the overture challenged many of the practices and procedures of The PCC. The challenges included 1) a removal of the ministry of refugee sponsorship from individual congregations 2) an exclusive focus on Iraqi Christians and 3) a lack of human and financial resources. These challenges could not be reconciled.²⁷

The Moderator of the 136th GA communicated to the GOC the church's concern about human trafficking in Canada, and urged the government to develop and implement a national strategy to combat human trafficking (specifically in the sex trade).²⁸

[‡] See A&P 2009, p. 348

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2013: The 139th GA affirmed the desire of PWS&D to send a positive message about refugees in the face of the negative discourse and increasing government restrictions. The Canadian Council for Refugees' campaign "Proud to Protect Refugees" was endorsed by the PWS&D Committee and this decision was affirmed by the GA.²⁹

2015: The 141st GA that the Moderator and members of the church be encouraged to write to the GOC urging that the number of Government-sponsored refugees be increased to, at a minimum,

World Refugee Situation in 2015

For the first time since World War II the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people has exceeded 50 million people (UNHCR, "World Refugee Day"). Of that number, some 16.7 million are refugees. A majority of the world's refugees are women and children. The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) has identified a number of barriers that have made private sponsorship more challenging in recent years. They include:

- *New restrictive rules limiting which refugees can be sponsored, from where and how many.*
- *More burdensome paperwork: forms are extremely complicated and sponsors no longer have access to government officials locally to guide them.*
- *Very slow processing by Canadian Immigration officials especially in some regions of the world.*
- *Shortcomings in communication and consultation with sponsors by the Canadian government.*

A&P 2015, 302-4

match the number of privately sponsored refugees; and 2) that the Moderator write to the GOC urging that Canada increase its annual contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.³⁰

The 141st GA recommended that congregations and presbyteries be encouraged to reflect, pray and act on the needs of refugees and internally displaced people affected by conflict everywhere, including South Sudan, Gaza, Syria and Iraq, and that congregations be encouraged to reflect why we may be more generous in times of natural disasters but less so in times of humanitarian disasters related to conflict.³¹

2016: The 142nd GA recommended the Moderator write to the GOC commending it for its response to refugees worldwide, including Syrian refugees through humanitarian support to refugees overseas and through resettlement in Canada. GA further recommended the Moderator urge the government to continue its response, including government-assisted refugees in line with the government's international obligations and privately sponsored and blended visas office-referred refugees in line with the desire of Canadians to welcome the stranger.³²

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from the Brief to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Immigration Policy, BCL report, 1975²

God became involved with migrant people very early in human history. In fact, he called Abraham, the settler in Haran, to become the wandering Aramaean who "left home without knowing where he was to go." (Hebrews 11:9) God became a migrant's God.

A key question for a discussion of any Canadian [immigration] policy is not just what kind of Canada do we want, but on what values do we base our vision of Canada. What role does and might Canada play in a global society? What are and might be key criteria for the formulation of immigration policy?

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...

We must encourage and challenge Canadians to see that immigration is a moral and spiritual issue. Canadians should be presented with a realistic vision of the creative and responsible role we can play in making our society relevant and contributory to the ever-developing globally interdependent world community. We affirm our view that immigration policy should not be centred around restrictive economic and racial factors, but rather on a responsible endeavour to share our resources and develop creatively our potential for a society rich in social, cultural, moral and spiritual values.

Another important criterion for establishing immigration policy is the consideration of humankind's need to live without fear of starvation, injustice and oppression. Canada has great resources which, with imagination and responsible development, enable it to share in fulfilling that need.

The very name "Department of Manpower and Immigration" suggests Canada views immigrants primarily in relation to their utilization in the country's labour force. This overemphasis on the economic value of persons is a dehumanizing point of view and tends to present an image of Canada selfishly keeping an eye on her own economic well-being rather than seeing the whole area of immigration policy as a humane response to human needs and problems, acknowledging that some of these needs are economic. Our policy and its administration should reflect a concern for immigrants as persons with a very real contribution to make socially, culturally, politically, and spiritually, as well as economically.

Summary of Recommendations:

- separate Manpower and Immigration into two departments,
- do not weight the criteria for acceptance as a landed immigrant in favour of those with higher education,
- neither race nor country of origin should be a restrictive factor in granting landed immigrant status,
- establish a refugee or asylum status, with decision to grant political refugee status made on humanitarian grounds,
- increase the number of immigration offices and officers in Third World countries, and support any present work or future plans for an international agency to co-ordinate global migration,
- provide overseas immigration officers with knowledge and understanding of the culture and country where they will be working to help them communicate a sensitive understanding of the aspirations of applicants and to help them provide a realistic picture of life and opportunities in Canada,
- provide orientation to immigration officers in Canada about cultural differences to help them be sensitive to the state of mind and feelings of new arrivals,
- provide temporary entry permits to persons whose status on arrival requires clarification,
- provide incentives to prospective immigrants and current residents to settle in less populated areas where consultative planning has established need and opportunities,
- provide more adequate services for orientation and adjustment to all immigrants, including those not in the labour force,
- give more financial and consultative support to community organizations involved in immigrant services,
- encourage and support financially the creation of a national co-ordinating body for services to immigrants,
- encourage departments of education and other public institutions to provide more educational material and programs to promote cross-cultural understanding,

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- encourage and provide financial support to community organizations interested in or already involved in providing intercultural education,
- create a special category or status for overseas students studying in Canada,
- adequate legislation providing guidelines relating to the rights and responsibilities of both employers of migrant labour and their workers, and a study of migrant workers from a humanitarian perspective, and,
- enact adequate legislation providing guidelines relating to the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers and their employers.

*Excerpt from “Immigration”, BCL report, 1977*³

The board agreed to commend the Minister of Manpower and Immigration for bringing forth this bill, but recorded its regret that the government had not considered humanitarian values to a greater extent and regretted the over-emphasis of the bill on economic and demographic considerations in the formulation of immigration policy. The board also ... urged an increase in the number of immigration offices and officers in Third World countries; that immigration officers serving abroad be trained to understand the culture and country where they will be working, and to present a realistic picture of life and opportunities in Canada; and that immigration officers in Canada receive orientation about cultural differences so that they can be sensitive to the state of mind and feelings of new arrivals to this country.

*Excerpt from “Refugees” IAC report, 1987*¹⁰

1987, the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, as designated by the United Nations, must strike many concerned Canadian Christians with a sense of irony. Canada, in 1986, had won the United Nations award* for its generous reception of refugee peoples, yet on February 20, 1987, this justly honoured nation recanted of its largesse and closed its doors to those refugees of 18 designated nations which, for a variety of reasons, mistreat their citizens.

*Excerpts from “Refugees”, IAC report, 1988*¹¹

Canada has accepted refugees also---some 500,000 since World War II ... the largest group has been the Vietnamese—over 72,000 since 1975, and since 1980 the government has selected a total of 130,000 refugees for resettlement.

Such resettlement has not gone unnoticed by the public. ... In December 1986 and the first two months of 1987, when 10,000 people arrived in Canada claiming to be refugees, the radio talk-shows were overwhelmed with protests. Most Canadians think of Canada as a white, middle-class society and they do not want to lose that perception, thus giving rise to a perceived expression of racism.

...

It is here that the church must show leadership. The church has a unique capability of demonstrating how multicultural and multiracial societies can live, work and worship together. The ancient words of the book of Leviticus challenge us anew: “Do not mistreat foreigners who are living in your land. Treat them as you would a fellow Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves.” (Lev. 19:33-34 TEV)

*Excerpt from “Renewal of Master Agreement for the Sponsorship of Refugees” Assembly Council report, 1996*³³

[In negotiations with the GOC over a new master sponsorship agreement] , the church and ethnic community representatives were most concerned that the new agreement explicitly state that the private sponsorship of refugees was in addition to other programs that the government

* This was the Nansen Medal, which was awarded to the citizens of Canada.

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undertakes. Another concern was that the provision of settlement services, such as health care and second language training, continue to be available to privately sponsored refugees. Because the government is involved in a long term process of settlement renewal, there was a fear that privately sponsored refugees might be victims of cost-cutting measures.

*Excerpts from “The Church and Canada’s Refugee and Immigration Policy”, IAC report, 1996*¹⁸

Previous reports from the IAC have dealt with many of the forces that have uprooted peoples from their homes: war, discrimination or persecution, economic hardship, or environmental degradation. Through arms sales and economic policies or practices that increase poverty and harm the environment, First World countries are deeply implicated in these forces that are increasing the number of migrants. Yet these same governments have imposed increasing restrictions against both immigrants and refugees. Moreover, migrants often become scapegoats for tensions in their host countries and face racism, prejudice, discrimination or hostility.

...

We must work harder at addressing the root causes of increasing world migration: war, oppression, poverty and environmental degradation. In things like cheap coffee and tea, jobs and investment income linked to military exports, access to minerals and tropical woods without environmental damage at our back door, we benefit from the forces that force people from their homes. Any system that profits from oppression, while at the same time building barriers against those trying to escape, is sinful.

*Excerpts from the response to Overture 14, 2005 on preparing a statement and guidelines for churches offering sanctuary for those facing deportation, LMA report, 2006*³⁴

Sanctuary is derived from the Latin word *sanctus* or holy. Sanctuary means a consecrated place, a house consecrated to the worship of God, a sacred and inviolable asylum, a place of refuge and protection, a place of resort for those who seek relief.

Sanctuary is a concept dating back to the Old Testament. In ancient Israel and in medieval Europe, the provision of sanctuary was provided for and governed by the law.

...

At various times in history, Christians have engaged in providing refuge in defiance of the law. During periods of persecution under Roman emperors, Christians harboured and hid each other from those who sought them. ... even before sanctuary was given legal status, bishops and monks in the post-Constantine epoch often provided sanctuary to fugitives from unjust authorities.

In 19th century United States, abolitionists offered places of refuge to runaway slaves. Sometimes, such protection took the form of hiding the fugitive. In other cases, it took the form of moving them outside the jurisdiction of the nation or government which posed the threat, as in the case of the underground railway, which brought many former slaves into Canada.

Throughout the 1980s, thousands of citizens from Central America, mostly from El Salvador and Guatemala, fled their countries because of repression and conflict. The US Administration supported governments in Central America which carried out horrendous acts against their citizens and for this reason, the US Administration did not recognize many of these asylum seekers as genuine refugees. Consequently, refugees from Central America crossed into the United States illegally. The modern sanctuary movement in the US was born during this period. Thousands of Central Americans were granted sanctuary in churches and assisted by Christians through the modern underground railroad to Canada.

...

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The one remaining option, [when other recourses fail] and it is a difficult decision, is to consider sanctuary. Sanctuary is an act of civil disobedience and carries penalties. ... The individual(s) seeking sanctuary and the individual or organization providing sanctuary are violating the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and the Criminal Code. It is illegal to knowingly induce, aid, abet or counsel anyone to contravene the provisions in the IRPA and the Criminal Code. The penalty if convicted of aiding, abetting, or counseling an individual(s) to refuse to comply with a removal order is up to two years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$50,000 or both. ... There are apparently, no effective defenses of sanctuary in case law or legal precedent. The present state of the law does not preclude legal challenges in defense of sanctuary, but offers little likelihood of success.

...

It is not lightly that a church would choose civil disobedience, and the need to do so must be prayerfully considered. ... Sections 4 and 9 of the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation do not unequivocally allow for civil disobedience. These sections remind us that our ultimate loyalty is to Christ the Head of the Church and that a Christian is called to “work for the remedy of any unjust statute, or iniquitous assessment, or violation of conscience”.

Withholding the establishment of a refugee appeal division as provided for in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act could arguably be considered as “a breach of trust” on the part of the government. As noted earlier, appealing a decision on the merits of the decision is a fundamental right, yet it is denied to refugee claimants despite being provided for in the relevant legislation.

Offering sanctuary to an asylum seeker who would be at risk of persecution if returned to his/her country of origin is an act of conscience and this may be a circumstance under the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation in which civil disobedience is warranted.

Offering sanctuary can be a way of protecting the rights of the refugee claimant and striving to remedy an unjust custom and practice as called for in section 8 of Living Faith. Failing to protect a vulnerable person from probable persecution is a violation of conscience. Neither the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation nor Living Faith specifically provide for civil disobedience. Both the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation and Living Faith call on the Christian to protect the vulnerable and to uphold human dignity.

Excerpts from “Nowhere to Lay his Head,” IAC report, 2007³⁵

The biblical story of upheaval and migration reveals two truths: that migration is not unusual for people of faith*, and that God shows a deep concern for the outsider and the stranger and, therefore, we are to show the same concern.

Welcoming the stranger is not an option for the people of God. It is a justice issue. The situation of migrants in the world compels us to ask, “Who is my neighbour?”** In ancient Israel, the people were commanded by God to love the neighbour or fellow-Israelite as oneself (Lev. 19:18), and to “love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” (Lev. 19:34) The question “Who is my neighbour?” is answered in Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37) in a way that breaks through the normal cozy definitions of neighbour. The neighbour—represented in the story by both the man beaten by robbers and the Samaritan who comes to his assistance—is the one in need, the victim, the stranger, the outsider. How we treat our neighbour, and how we are the neighbour, are near to God’s heart.

* Stanley Hauerwas, William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*, Abingdon Press, 1989.

** World Council of Churches Central Committee – remarks by General Secretary, 2006 on migration.

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Jesus teaches us to show hospitality to our neighbour. This is an integral part of the church and its mission...Hospitality is more than a smile and handshake. It is helping where there is need, and protecting where there is vulnerability.

*Excerpts from response to Overture No. 14, 2008 (A&P 2008, p. 535, 21) Re: Issues faced by immigrants to Canada who are professionals, Justice Ministries report, 2009*²⁶

The people of God have a long tradition of giving hospitality to the stranger or “alien”. God instructed Moses that as the Israelites were “aliens” in Egypt they too must care for the alien (Exodus 22:21, 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34). Indeed, God places the alien or stranger in the same category of need as orphans and widows (Deuteronomy 6:17-19). God also expects that love for the stranger will include providing just working conditions and sharing one’s harvest: the “resident alien” is entitled to the Sabbath day of rest (Exodus 20:10, 23:12) and some of the harvest is left in the field for the “poor and alien” (Leviticus 19:9-10). Ruth, the Moab, benefits from this latter custom when she gleaned food in Bethlehem (Ruth 2).

Biblical stories recounting the plight of strangers reveal God’s continuing presence with them. The story of Joseph illustrates both the stranger’s potential to contribute economically (Genesis 41:46-57) and the stranger’s vulnerability to oppression as a foreigner (Exodus 1:8-11). In the gospels, Jesus emphasizes God’s unwavering, unconditional love for the stranger regardless of economic or social status, and makes such love central to discipleship (e.g. Luke 10, the Good Samaritan; John 4, the Samaritan woman).

Jesus too was a stranger – descended from Ruth (Matthew 1:5), born in a stable far from home (Luke 2:7), a refugee in Egypt (Matthew 2:13), repatriated but still the outsider (John 1:11). Jesus identified with the poor including the homeless, the refugee and the stranger: “I was a stranger and you did not welcome me...” (Matthew 25:31). By doing so, Jesus made synonymous the actions of following and serving him with welcoming and caring for the stranger – actions that are, therefore, fundamental to living our faith.

*Excerpt from “Response to Overture No. 14, 2009 (A&P 200, p. 525-6, 21) Re: Sponsorship of Iraqi Refugees,” PWS&D report, 2010*²⁷

Jesus once took a child into his arms - a person of no status and voice in the culture of the day – and shocked his followers by teaching them that whenever they receive one such child in his name, they were welcoming him (Mark 9:36). It was a lesson on the radical nature of Christian hospitality, that Christ identifies himself with the least powerful and most vulnerable in the world. Refugee sponsorship also provides a powerful means by which the church can be in deeper relationship with God. When a congregation becomes involved with refugee sponsorship it offers that congregation a means to walk with and to be in relationship with one who has suffered and experienced displacement. It is through this personal encounter that the presence of Christ can be experienced and the transformational power of the gospel may be lived out in the community of faith.

¹ A&P 1965, pp. 351, 75

² A&P 1975, pp. 469-475, 40

³ A&P 1977, p. 281

⁴ A&P 1979, pp. 214, 65

⁵ A&P 1980, pp. 207, 45

⁶ A&P 1981, pp. 214, 65

⁷ A&P 1984, pp. 388-389, 38

⁸ A&P 1985, pp. 38-39

⁹ A&P 1986, pp. 370-373, 56

¹⁰ A&P 1987, pp. 340, 59-60

¹¹ A&P 1988, pp. 368, 51; 450, 34

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- ¹² A&P 1988, pp. 365, 35
¹³ A&P 1989, pp. 360-361, 27; 382-384, 64
¹⁴ A&P 1991, p. 490
¹⁵ A&P 1992, pp. 41-42
¹⁶ A&P 1993, p. 259
¹⁷ A&P 1996, p. 311
¹⁸ A&P 1996, pp. 294-301, 49
¹⁹ A&P 1997, p. 321
²⁰ A&P 1998, p. 313
²¹ A&P 2001, p. 20
²² A&P 2003, p. 230
²³ A&P 2006, pp. 330, 39-40
²⁴ A&P 2006, p. 41
²⁵ A&P 2007, p. 278-280
²⁶ A&P 2009, pp. 345-351
²⁷ A&P 2010, pp. 504-6, 27
²⁸ A&P 2010, p. 606, 26
²⁹ A&P 2013, pp. 448-9, 21
³⁰ A&P 2015, pp. 302-4, 27
³¹ A&P 2015, pp. 451-3,17
³² A&P 2016, p. 39
³³ A&P 1996, pp. 215-216
³⁴ A&P 2006, pp. 317-332
³⁵ A&P 2007, pp. 274-284

Gambling and Lotteries

The Church Speaks

- The church is opposed to gambling, including the use of lotteries, whether it is carried on under governmental, religious or other auspices.¹
- All Presbyterians are urged to resist the temptation to participate in government lotteries and, indeed, in all other forms of gambling.⁵
- When refusing to purchase a raffle or lottery ticket on behalf of a charity, churches and individuals should consider giving a direct donation to the cause equal to the value of the ticket.⁵
- Congregations and all courts of the church are instructed to resist vigorously participation in gambling through applying for funds from foundations whose principal source of funds are revenues from gambling.⁷

The Church Acts

1954: The 80th GA approved a short statement on gambling for inclusion in a brief to the joint parliamentary committee studying possible revisions to the Criminal Code, including the section on lotteries.¹

1967: The 93rd GA called for a study of the phenomenon of “bonanza merchandizing”^{*} with a view to seeking legislation to curtail it in every province.²

1976: The 102nd GA approved a statement on lotteries for study with special attention to government-sponsored lotteries.³

^{*}Bonanza merchandizing refers to the practice of attracting customers with give-aways, such as entries in a draw, or rewards for accumulated stamps or points tied to the value of goods purchased.

1980: The 106th GA recommended that since the federal government had discontinued its direct support of lotteries, with sponsorship now a provincial matter, that synods, presbyteries and congregations make known their views to their respective provincial governments using the statement approved by the 102nd GA as a guiding basis.⁴

1990: The 116th GA approved an updated statement on gambling and lotteries which reviewed the theological and social basis for refusing to participate in lotteries.⁵

1999: The 125th GA received the report of the LMA (Justice Ministries) on its efforts to resist the expansion of gambling. In concert with other denominations, the LMA had presented the church's policies on gambling to the Ontario government, supported community groups resisting the establishment of permanent charity casinos in their municipalities and called on the federal government to establish a task force to review the impact of state-sponsored gambling. GA encouraged presbyteries to correspond with provincial governments concerning the church's opposition to the proposed introduction of dice games and betting on cruise ships, and to the installation of video lottery terminals and other forms of electronic gambling. GA also called for a federal task force to assess the social, ethical, legal and economic impacts of the expansion of gambling.⁶

2003: The 129th GA instructed congregations and all courts of the church to resist vigorously participation in gambling through applying for and receiving funds from government foundation or agencies* whose primary source of funds are revenue from gambling.⁷

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "Statement on Gambling", ESA report, 1954¹

[G]ambling discourages thrift and encourages materialism. It exploits philanthropy and debases charity. It tends to replace trust in Providence by dependence on chance.

Excerpt from "Lotteries", BCL report, 1976³

Even with careful regulations and administration, there are several reasons why the church's traditional opposition to lotteries should stand. Governments which derive part of their revenue from lotteries thereby evade a responsibility, a responsibility shared by the people they govern, to budget for their proposed expenditures in a proper manner. Instead of telling the public that a

Expansion of Gambling

1954: the federal government initiated a review of the Criminal Code provisions on gambling.

1969: changes to the Criminal Code permitted the government to sponsor lotteries, such as Loto-Canada and the Western Canada Lottery.

1979: the federal government ceded exclusive rights to sponsor lotteries to the provinces in return for a share of the revenues.

1990: Video-lottery terminals (VLTs) were introduced.

Early 1990s: Quebec was the first province to establish permanent casinos with three in operation by 1996.

1999: further changes in the Criminal Code permit games of chance on cruise ships.

* Although most of the profits generated through gambling go into general provincial revenue, some provinces have also established agencies (e.g. Trillium Foundation in Ontario, Wild Rose Foundation in Alberta) that distribute funds to charities and/or community projects.

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worthwhile program will cost so many dollars with the cost of it to be shared by equitable taxation, the government decides that this will be supported at the whim of people who buy lottery tickets. The proportion of the revenue that actually goes to the desired program is not very high. It is an uncertain method of raising revenue.

It is often argued today that law must be responsive to the desires of the public. In this case, if the public wants lotteries, lotteries they must have. ... The Bible regarded the law as the expression of God's will for His people (Matthew 5:17-20; 22:34-40). ... Government ... has the responsibility to legislate in such a way as to give positive direction to its people. An editorial in the "Christian Century" of December 11, 1974 said, "Governments are commissioned to enhance the public well-being, not to exploit its weaknesses."

*Excerpts from "The Church's Position on Gambling and Lotteries", BCL report, 1990*⁵

Theological factors

- At the worst, lotteries deny the concept of the will of God, and at the least, subordinate it to a principle unacceptable to the Christian faith, namely chance.
- Lotteries/gambling, and particularly, lottery advertising stimulate covetousness.
- Christ calls us to love our neighbours. Lotteries/gambling by their very nature mean that one gains at the loss of another, a loss which in many cases generates suffering (i.e. in the case of low-income ticket buyers).
- Lotteries/gambling for charitable causes encourage us to give only when we have a chance of getting some material reward.

Social factors

- [L]otteries can be regarded as regressive [taxes]. ... [L]ower income families spend a higher percentage of their total income on lotteries than do families at high-income levels.
- Many of the gamblers/lottery ticket buyers do not benefit from the "good uses" to which the proceeds are put. The cultural and sports activities which receive financial assistance through government lottery corporations tend to benefit people with higher incomes more than people with lower incomes.
- Government lotteries are inefficient ways of supporting charitable organizations or community projects. ... Time, talent and energy could, in most cases, be used more effectively for service to others.
- Government lotteries are an irresponsible way of raising government funds. ... If we need these projects ... then why are we not willing to pay for them up front from taxes or through charitable donations, to the amount required?

...

However, to be realistic, if, for example, hospitals vitally supported by lottery proceeds were to be deprived of these, would the churches make up the deficit? ... Even as individuals, the response in refusing to participate in low-profile raffles, etc. should surely be accompanied by the direct donation to the worthy cause at least equal to the value of a ticket.

*Excerpt from "Gambling", LMA report, 1999*⁶

State-sponsored gambling is expanding across Canada. In some provinces, it is well entrenched. ... Provincial revenues from gambling are growing, as is provincial dependence on these revenues. As this dependence grows, governments are less likely to heed public calls not to expand gambling.

¹ A&P 1954, pp. 262, 41

² A&P 1967, pp. 333-334, 340, 98

³ A&P 1976, pp. 345-347, 60

⁴ A&P 1980, pp. 289, 107

⁵ A&P 1990, pp. 249-250, 57

⁶ A&P 1999, pp. 325-326, 18

⁷ A&P 2003, pp. 367-368, 42-43

Substance Abuse

The Church Speaks

Alcoholic Beverages

- The Christian is free to use alcoholic beverages temperately.²
- The freedom to use alcohol is restricted by the necessity of exercising responsibility.²
- The church supports:
 - education in the public schools on the nature and function of alcohol.³
 - strong legislation to curb the use of alcohol while driving.⁴
 - a ban on the advertising of alcoholic beverages.⁶
 - public health warnings on containers of alcoholic beverages after the pattern of similar warnings on tobacco products.⁶

Narcotics, Cannabis, LSD and other drugs

- The church commends the efforts of those who minister to drug addicted and drug hurt persons.¹⁰
- Legislative control of the sale, use and possession of LSD is desirable.⁹
- The legalization of proscribed drugs, including cannabis, is not in the public interest.¹²
- Penalties for simple possession of cannabis should not be overly severe.¹²

Tobacco

- The church favours a campaign of public information on the health hazards of smoking.¹⁴
- Ministers and elders are urged to give serious consideration to the example they set in regard to smoking.¹⁵

The Church Acts

Alcoholic Beverages

1947-50: The 73rd GA adopts the resolution that “We are opposed, irrevocably, to the sin of intemperance.”¹ The 74th GA approved a statement, “The Church and Alcohol” prepared by the ESA, which was distributed to congregations for study and report.² This statement was adopted as a scriptural statement of the position of the church by the 76th GA.³

1960-65: The 86th GA⁴ urged the federal and provincial governments to make chemical (i.e. breathalyzer) tests compulsory for the detection of alcohol in cases of suspected impaired or drunk driving and to admit the test results as evidence in a court of law. The 91st GA called for a repeal of the section of the Criminal Code which permitted drivers to refuse to provide a sample of blood, urine, breath or any other bodily substance for chemical analysis, as this was detrimental to the effective regulation and control of drinking and driving.⁵

1973-76: The 99th GA⁶ called on the federal department of health and welfare to enact legislation to prohibit the advertising of alcoholic beverages and to require warning labels on containers of alcoholic beverages similar to those mandated for cigarette packages. The 101st GA

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recommended that the GOC and the governments of the various provinces which had not already done so, prohibit all advertising of alcoholic beverages and that individual members of the church be encouraged to write to their local members of parliament and/or provincial legislature urging such legislation.⁷ The 102nd GA re-affirmed the position taken in 1950 and commended the provinces of Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Manitoba for banning the advertising of alcoholic beverages.⁸

Narcotics, LSD and other drugs

1967-1974: The 93rd GA called for legislation that covered all aspects of LSD use, distribution, sale and possession.⁹ The 96th GA commended those ministering to those harmed by drug use and addiction and requested that the CAF present a theological analysis of the phenomenon of the widespread use of illegal drugs and the misuse of legal drugs in our society.¹⁰ The 97th GA accepted the CAF/CCD paper, “Drugs and Theology” for study.¹¹ Although continuing to oppose the legalization of cannabis, it asked for separate legislation regarding possession, rather than expose young offenders to the harsh penalties of the Narcotics Control Act.¹² The 100th GA recommended the BCL study paper, “The Cannabis Report” and the LeDain* final report to congregations. It also authorized a task force chaired by one of the Young Adult Observers to prepare a second study on the LeDain report to be sent to congregations with the BCL study.¹³

In 1923, legislation to control narcotics was enacted, and cannabis (marijuana) was also included. This meant that penalties for the use, possession or trafficking in cannabis were identical to those for narcotics such as opium and heroin.

For trafficking this could result in a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. For possession the maximum sentence could range from a fine of \$1,000 to seven year's imprisonment.

Tobacco

1963-64: The 89th GA recommended a national campaign of public information on the health hazards of smoking.¹⁴ The 90th GA exhorted ministers and elders to give serious consideration to their example in regard to smoking.¹⁵

In 1961, the Canadian Medical Association issued a report “Smoking and Health” which implicated cigarette smoking as the principal causative factor in the increased incidence of lung cancer.

The Church Reflects

Alcohol

Excerpts from “The Church and Alcohol”, ESA report, 1948²

To many Christians it seems clear that the Word of God bestows liberty to drink that which is alcoholic in content. ...Nowhere does the gospel deprive the children of God of the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free in order to “play it safe”. For Reformed churchmen who know they are justified by faith only, there has been only one answer to those who are afraid this liberty means “the continuance in sin.” This answer consists in the forthright denial that Christian liberty gives any ground for license: God forbid!

...

* The LeDain Commission on the Non-Medical Use of Drugs was established by the federal government to investigate the increasing use of marijuana, LSD and other drugs and recommend on the question of legalizing and regulating their use. The interim report was submitted to the GOC in 1971 and the final report followed in 1974.

Must not Christian liberty express itself in that love wherein a father or mother will think of food and clothing for their children before their much-needed money is spent upon themselves in drink? May it not be that Jesus Christ will make a man free not to drink if he is about to drive a car, or not to drive a car if he is going to drink?

Excerpt from “The Use of Alcohol”, CCD report, 1976⁸

The CCD is of the opinion that the principles laid down in the statement [“The Church and Alcohol”] have a continuing validity and should be re-affirmed. In brief the three basic scriptural truths around which the statement is built are:

- *Liberty*: the Christian is free to receive alcoholic beverages as a good gift of God to be used temperately and with thanksgiving.
- *Licence*: the Christian is not free to be immoderate or drunken in the use of alcoholic beverages.
- *Love*: the Christian must recognize that he is required to love himself and his neighbour as himself and therefore his freedom to use alcohol is restricted by the necessity of exercising responsibility to enhance as much as possible his own life and the life of his neighbour.

Drugs

Excerpts from “Drugs & Theology”, CCD report, 1971¹¹

Why do people use drugs? Our main source of information has been the LeDain “Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs”. Although there were a multitude of expressions as to the causes or reasons behind the taking of drugs, we have tried to summarize these into the following four categories:

1. Those related to an individual’s sense of personal worth. ... Drugs were seen as an aid to increasing “self-confidence and the feeling of creativity...”
2. Those related to man’s need for support and a sense of community. Some have seen drugs performing a “sacramental function” in promoting a sense of “spiritual community among users”.
3. Those related to the desire for escape or release from stress. ... Drugs were seen as helpful in providing “liberation from psychological burdens, from hang-ups,” ...
4. Those related to the desire for meaningful living. This was reflected in such reasons as dissatisfaction with the goals of today’s society....

In light of the foregoing causes or reasons behind the taking of drugs, we feel one of the most important emphases necessary is to help individuals experience the personal freedom which we feel the Gospel gives us.

Excerpts from “The Non-medical Use of Drugs”, BCL report, 1974¹³

At the risk of simplifying what is a complex subject, it seems to us what our concern as Christians should be is to view the basic principle in drug use of any kind. Without getting bogged down into discussion over what is a “soft” and what is a “hard” drug, our question should be “to what extent does this modify one’s mood or alter our state of mind?” ... This brings to the fore our attitude to other drugs such as caffeine and nicotine and alcohol.

...

We support the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs in its recommendations with the exception of their recommendations on the possession and cultivation of cannabis ... at which points we support the minority report of Mr. Ian Campbell.

Taking note of the commission’s statements regarding the influence of family and church and therapeutic communities and the value of one-to-one relationships, our people should be

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encouraged to so surround their families, congregations and communities with that sense of understanding, love and Christian fellowship and security, particularly towards the young and the searching, that the use of drugs will be made less attractive and even discouraged.

*Excerpt from the “Report of the Task Force on the Majority Report of the LeDain Commission”, to the BCL, 1974*¹⁶

It is clear that a major revision of the law is necessary both from a practical and moral point of view. The severity of the present laws cannot be sustained by any facts available and thus must be altered. Whether that is to take the form of complete elimination of the present laws with regard to simple possession, as proposed by the majority, is academic. On one point, all members of the commission agreed. If laws remain on the books prohibiting the possession of cannabis, then there should be an elimination of any liability for imprisonment.

¹ A&P 1947, p. 45 (min)

² A&P 1948, pp. 351-356, 89 (app), 57 (min)

³ A&P 1950, pp. 75-76 (app) 42 (min)

⁴ A&P 1960, pp. 307-308, 88

⁵ A&P 1965, pp. 342-343, 351, 98

⁶ A&P 1973, pp. 475, 282, 40

⁷ A&P 1975, pp. 345, 41

⁸ A&P 1976, pp. 344-345, 394, 396,47

⁹ A&P 1967, pp. 334, 340, 98

¹⁰ A&P 1970, pp. 101-102

¹¹ A&P 1971, pp. 278-281, 284, 64

¹² A&P 1971, pp. 305, 89

¹³ A&P 1974, pp. 354-356, 43-44, 76

¹⁴ A&P 1963, pp. 461, 113

¹⁵ A&P 1964, pp. 498-99, 98-99

¹⁶ Report of the Task Force on the Majority Report of the LeDain Commission (The Task Force was set up by the 100th GA [1974] with a mandate to report to the next meeting of the BCL. The BCL was mandated to distribute both its own study and the study of the Task Force. [A&P 1974, p. 76] Both reports are available in the Archives.)

The Lord's Day

The Church Speaks

- As a general rule all persons are entitled to a day of rest for the worship of God and for spiritual and physical renewal.⁸
- Employers should do all within their power to keep the Lord's Day free from unnecessary work.⁸
- The church recognizes that certain industries must carry on continuous operation by their very nature, and that there are essential public services that must be maintained on a continuous basis. In such cases, persons employed by these industries and services should be prepared to accept their share of Sunday work.⁸
- When a firm initiates a policy of continuous operation, every consideration should be given to the convictions of employees regarding the observance of the Lord's Day so they may, if possible, be freed from responsibility for Sunday shift work.⁸
- We support the concept of a common pause day, not as a privilege for Christians, but as a human right and a human good for all citizens.¹⁰
- On the basis of traditional practices in Canadian society, the church supports the concept of Sunday as the day most commonly accepted as a "common pause day."¹⁰
- While supporting the concept of a common pause day, we acknowledge that some other faith communities utilize a different day for rest, renewal and for the observance of religious practices, and accept that commercial operations should in some instances be permitted, if another day of the week is observed as the day of rest.¹⁰

The Church Acts

1950-53: The 76th GA (1950) called on Presbyterians "to do everything possible to preserve Sunday as a day of worship, relaxation and rest," and lodged a protest against the movement by commercialized sports interests to secure an open Sunday, noting that "With the Lord's Day Act as presently constituted there is every provision made for healthful activities. It is commercialized sport that finds the day closed."¹ The 77th GA (1951) urged that there be no relaxation in efforts to withstand the intrusion of commercialized sports and reminded members to preserve Sunday as a day of worship, relaxation and rest.² The 79th GA (1953) noted the numerous local plebiscites held to determine the will of the public in regard to legalizing commercial sports events on Sunday, and urged presbyteries and ministers to study the practical and legal implications of the observance of the Lord's Day in their localities with a view to withstanding the propaganda and pressures of those seeking to secularize the Lord's Day.³

1959-1973: The 85th GA (1959) referred a paper on "The Lord's Day and Modern Society" to presbyteries and congregations for study and comment.⁴ Four additional papers taking different positions were likewise referred by the 90th GA⁵ (1964) and a majority and minority statement were again referred by the 92nd GA (1966).⁶ A consensus statement, based on responses to these study papers was adopted by the 94th GA (1968).⁷ Meanwhile, the 93rd GA (1967) adopted a statement on employment on Sunday.⁸ The 99th GA (1973) recommended that the Canadian Football League arrange for the Grey Cup Game to be played on a day other than Sunday. The grounds for this request were that, when

*On April 24, 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada revoked The Lord's Day Act, but left the door open for non-religious provincially based legislation to regulate the days and hours of operation of commercial retail outlets. In most provinces, the decision on Sunday shopping was delegated by the provinces to the municipalities. As of 2002 the province of Nova Scotia still maintained a province-wide ban on commercial retail operations on Sunday and a policy that the question was not to be re-opened before 2005.
(A&P 2002 p. 332)*

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played in the east, the time of the game conflicted with the hours of public worship in the west, and that the provision of essential services in relation to the game (police, transportation, restaurants, etc.) deprived those so employed of the opportunity to attend public worship.⁹

1986-2002: The 112th GA (1986) supported an appeal to provincial governments to enact legislation which would prohibit retail stores from opening on Sunday.¹⁰ The BCL reported to the 114th GA (1988) that it had referred many enquirers to this statement as the movement to open retail outlets on Sunday gained momentum.¹¹

The 128th GA (2002) encouraged presbyteries and congregations to provide leadership in communities where new initiatives were being taken to introduce seven-day-a-week commercial activities.¹²

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “Lord’s Day Observance”, ESA report, 1950*¹

The [Lord’s Day] Act was never meant to curb a person’s personal liberty, but to prevent those commercial interests who would exploit human labour from doing so.

*Excerpt from “The Lord’s Day and Modern Society”, ESA report, 1959*⁴

Our difficulties are largely the consequences of the admitted complexities of modern society. It was one thing to interpret the fourth commandment for a more or less homogeneous community with strong Christian traditions, living under relatively simple and uncomplicated conditions and with few obvious ways of desecrating the sabbath by comparison with our own day. It is quite another to set forth the practical aspects of Sunday observances within an increasingly heterogeneous society, jealous of its democratic liberties, of widely diversified traditions, and where the very pattern of life is so largely controlled by such things as mobility, entertainment, newspapers, radio and TV. And what is the church to do? Shall it say, “These things are far removed from the worship of God; and therefore on Sunday, thou shalt not have excursions, watch a ball game, play golf, read a newspaper or watch TV.”?

...

Possibly the church has erred in limiting herself to negative pronouncements, acting out the role of a watchdog or policeman, and placing embargoes upon this or that other activity on Sundays. After all, if a man chooses not to observe Sunday in a Christian way, it scarcely seems to matter in what particular way he desecrates it.

We must never forget that Sunday observance, however desirable, is not an end in itself. Its importance resides only in the purpose which it is intended to serve and in the great spiritual truths to which it testifies. It is a witness to the essential dignity of man as a spiritual being. It emphasizes the paramount significance of the spiritual as over against the material, of the eternal as over against the temporal. It calls men to the remembrance of God and to the serious business of “the making of the soul”. And as the perpetual memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it tells of the life-giving, creative, and redemptive activity of the God of all grace. Which is what Christ meant when he said, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.”

*Excerpts from The Doctrine of the Lord’s Day, report of the Committee on the Articles of Faith, 1968*⁷

Believers in Christ begin each new week by putting themselves and their time in the hands of God because they know that their time really belongs to God, and that they themselves are stewards who have God’s authority to manage it. They seek to prevent it from being spent on a weary routine of endless work and play, or wasted in a dull and irksome idleness, or taken out of their hands by the demands of religious rules. Under God they have freedom in the use of their time;

and their freedom is renewed on the first day of every week as they assert that this is the Lord's Day.

There are great benefits available in an intelligent and reverent use of the Lord's Day—personal and family enrichment through corporate and private worship, shared experiences with families separated through the week, time to leave the ordinary problems and pressures of the week to dwell on the extraordinary love and joy and strength which are ours in Christ. To Christian people the Lord's Day can be a time for gaining familiarity with the scriptures, for visiting the sick and elderly, and for doing works of mercy and love that do not get done through the week.

Every activity of the Lord's Day, including recreation, is comprehended within the discipline of Christian stewardship, in which giving the first of our time to the praise of God, and submitting the whole of our time to the direction of God, we become free under God to enjoy the time at our disposal. We recognize that incessant recreation on the Lord's Day, as well as the complete prohibition of recreation on the Lord's Day, would be incompatible with the Christian stewardship of time, and would be destructive of the rest provided for in the Fourth Commandment. The fact that it is performed on the Lord's Day does not make recreation or any other activity unlawful for Christians, but it may render it unhelpful. In his love to the brethren the Christian will always seek to observe the Lord's Day in such a way as will cause no hurt or inconvenience to his fellows or hindrance to their observance of the Lord's Day in ways that seem appropriate to them.

Excerpts from "Sunday Observance", BCL report, 1986 ¹⁰

[U]nlike the Christians of 17th century Europe, we do not live in a society in which Christianity is normative for the expression of religious faith. Rather, it is a society which is religiously pluralistic and in which the state is not formally supportive of a particular religious body or expression of religious faith. Consequently, we cannot impose our faith stance on the society of which we form a part. As the Halifax-Dartmouth Council of Churches put it, "a particular religious tradition or law cannot be held binding on all citizens of Canada, even if it is the will of the majority". How, then, do we apply our interpretation of scripture, our faith stance and the tradition of our church, to the changed historical context in which we find ourselves, with specific reference to the observance of the Lord's Day?

We suggest that we can respond to this issue in terms of certain principles which we hold to be valid whatever the historical context. The first is that of freedom. We have affirmed that scripture witnesses to the freedom which God in Christ wills for his people. God wills us to be free from all forces which would rob us of our humanity. Among these are all forms of economic exploitation, and the curse of work without the possibility of rest and renewal. Positively, it means the freedom to give expression to religious belief in acts of corporate worship and individual acts of charity. This freedom is also affirmed in scripture and we should press for its maintenance.

A second principle is that of justice as understood as the social expression of love. Justice to others requires that they be given the opportunity to develop all aspects of their personalities in order to reflect the image of God in which they were created. Such development is hindered when one is forced to work inordinately long hours for an insufficient wage, if one has little or no time or opportunity to interact socially with others, or if one has no time or limited opportunity for personal spiritual renewal.

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It has been observed that the first holy object in the history of the world was time (Gen. 2:3). Justice requires that people be given the time that is their due, the time created for their welfare and that the sanctity of this time be safeguarded.

We can affirm these principles and support them in a pluralistic historical context. We can do this, first, as members of Christ's body, through our own observance of the Lord's Day. This means, among other things, involving ourselves in acts of worship, private and public, and in activities of rest, recreation and leisure that are, as far as possible, non-commercial. We can also support these principles by joining with others who, while not sharing our faith perspective or a specifically Christian understanding of the Lord's Day, seek to protect the human good and the human rights of all members of our society.

There are many in our society who would be adversely affected should commercial enterprises be free to function without restriction as to hours of operation. In many families, both parents must work in order to sustain an adequate economic basis. Without a common time for interaction, the family unit would suffer greatly. This is especially true of the children, who are robbed in such situations of the presence, attention, and involvement of their parents.

Where business hours are extended indefinitely, workers often feel threatened because, in many instances, wages are lowered and benefits are reduced. The people who own or operate small businesses are also at risk because they are pressured by larger commercial interests to remain open almost continuously, when they do not possess the resources to do this. This pressure takes a considerable toll on their health and their lives, as well as on that of their employees.

...
The prohibition of retail stores opening on Sunday would have the effect of making Sunday a common pause day. On the basis of the principles of justice and freedom we support the concept of one pause day in seven. On the basis of traditional practice we can support the concept of Sunday as the day most commonly accepted by our society as a pause day. We also hold that the loss of Sunday as a common pause day would, for the reasons previously stated, be a serious loss for the whole of our society, adversely affecting the Christian and the non-Christian alike. We therefore feel that it should be retained and that provincial legislation should be enacted to ensure this retention. We adopt this position not to argue for a privilege for Christians, but to argue for a human right and a human good.

This being stated, the principle of justice requires us to acknowledge that some other faith communities utilize a different day for rest, renewal and for the observance of religious practices. Therefore, while supporting the concept of a common pause day, we must also accept that commercial operations should in some instances be permitted, if another day of the week is observed as the day of rest.

*Excerpt from "Opening of Shopping Malls on Sunday", LMA report, 2002*¹²

The PCC recognizes the importance of regular sabbath rest as intended for the good of both the individual and of society. In 1968 the church affirmed the principle of one day a week to be granted to every person for worship and for spiritual and physical renewal, while recognizing that in some industries and services, this may not necessarily fall on a Sunday. ... The issue is not simply one of providing each individual with one day in seven free from work obligations, but in providing opportunities for individuals to spend common time with family, community and in corporate worship with fellow believers.

¹ A&P 1950, p. 77 (app), p. 65 (min)

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- ² A&P 1951, p. 71 (app) 45 (min)
³ A&P 1953, pp. 322, 67
⁴ A&P 1959, pp. 287-294, 56
⁵ A&P 1964, pp. 336-344, 34
⁶ A&P 1966, pp. 268-270, 94
⁷ A&P 1968, pp. 238-239, 242, 91
⁸ A&P 1967, pp. 340, 98
⁹ A&P 1973, pp. 282, 40
¹⁰ A&P 1986, pp. 347-350, 34
¹¹ A&P 1988, p. 347
¹² A&P 2002, pp. 332-334, 25

Other Topics

*Credit*¹

The Church Speaks

- The responsible use of credit serves a useful purpose for the average family.
- Christians should shop carefully for the best interest rates and rely on credit for the shortest possible period of time.
- The church supports a Consumer Bill of Rights to protect consumers from high-pressure and deceitful sales tactics.

The Church Acts

1966: The 92nd GA commended the provisions of the Consumer Bill of Rights introduced into the Ontario Legislature and urged synods and presbyteries to study the final report of the Select Committee of the Ontario Legislature on Consumer Credit with a view to having similar legislation introduced into all provinces.

¹ A&P 1966, pp. 279, 289, 75

Copyright

The Church Speaks

- Copyright of published materials is to be respected and churches are to seek permission before making copies of such material.¹
- It is our responsibility as members of Christ's body, to honour the God-given gifts of authors, composers and creators of works of art, by respecting copyright laws.²

The Church Acts

1982: The 108th GA approved a statement on copyright to be disseminated to courts of the church for information and guidance.

1998: The 124th GA adopted an updated statement on copyright prepared by the LMA.²

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "Christians and Copyright", BCL report, 1982.¹

In our country, copyright is automatic. ... There is a registration procedure operated by the federal government which recognizes and formalizes this inherent right. It is not, however, the registration which confers the copyright. It is inherent in the author's work. The copyright

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

belongs to the author and only the author may copy his or her work or permit someone else to do so. Poems, songs (both lyrics and music), a particular performance, record, tape, picture or any creative work belongs to its author or authors. In many cases the work or performance represents the author's means of livelihood.

Unfortunately, many, including church people, don't seem to recognize this fact. ... They continue to photocopy or reproduce copyrighted material without getting the author's permission to do so, which basically, of course, is stealing. ... Christian charity must certainly begin with us, particularly in the example we set. That example includes writing to the publisher or producer of the material you wish to copy, seeking permission.

¹ A&P 1982, pp. 317-318, 77

² A&P 1998, pp. 320-321, 26

Obscenity and Pornography

The Church Speaks

- Sexual difference is part of creation and declared 'good' by God; hence Christians should encourage development of a responsible and healthy attitude toward sex.²
- The church commends laws which forbid publication, distribution and circulation of obscene material and encourages enforcement of such laws.²
- Members of the church should refuse to purchase obscene material and support booksellers who desire to eliminate such material from their shelves.²
- The church recognizes the difficulty of defining obscenity and does not desire to unduly restrict the reading of responsible adults.²
- Presbyteries and sessions are encouraged to establish media monitoring groups and to convey appreciation and criticism to appropriate people in the radio and television industry and to their sponsors.⁵

The Church Acts

1950: The 76th GA urged synods to seek representation on provincial Boards of Motion Picture Censorship.¹

1964: The 90th GA urged more rigid enforcement of laws against the publication, distribution and circulation of obscene material, especially in regard to pictures on the covers of books, and members to refuse to purchase such material, to support booksellers who desired to eliminate it from their shelves, and to take seriously its responsibility to promote the truth of God's Word with regard to sex in order to assure a healthy attitude to it.²

1971-1973: The 97th GA re-affirmed the position of the 90th GA and extended it to motion pictures. It also requested a study by the Vanier Institute on the social consequences of the exploitation of sex and violence in the mass media, encouraged careful choice of movies and theatrical entertainments by church members, and expressed concern to the government about public funds* being used in the production of films exploiting violence, immorality and sex.³ The ESA reported to the 98th GA that the Vanier Institute had not been able to do the requested study, but had directed attention to material available from other sources. The 98th GA encouraged sessions and members to communicate with program producers and sponsors and with all levels

* from the Canadian Film Development Corporation

OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY

of government to commend good programs, protest undue exploitation of sex and violence in the mass media and to refrain from supporting such entertainment.⁴ The 99th GA asked the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the federal minister of communications to halt growing trends to use profanity on radio and TV and to exploit (often as a subject of humour) sex, promiscuity, adultery and homosexuality. It suggested presbyteries and sessions establish media monitoring groups and convey appropriate appreciations and criticisms to those in the industry, and asked for supportive efforts by the Canadian Council of Churches and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.⁵

1987: The 113th GA recommended a definition of pornography (see below) to the GOC, re-affirmed its opposition to the publication and distribution of such material and encouraged congregations and courts of the church to work for the elimination of pornographic material in their locality.⁶

2007: The 133rd GA wrote to the GOC conveying the church's support for continuing vigorous enforcement of legislation concerning the production, distribution and possession of pornographic pictures and images of children.⁷

R vs Sharpe

*In 1999 the British Columbia Supreme Court acquitted Mr. John Robin Sharpe of two counts of possession of child pornography (163.1 (4) of the criminal code) when Mr. Sharpe challenged the constitutionality of the law. It was argued that this law violated one's fundamental right of thought and expression. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the constitutionality of the law, with the following note: "child pornography possession legislation should be read as though it contained an exception for: 1) any written material or visual representation created by the accused alone, and held by the accused alone, exclusively for his or her own personal use; and 2) any visual recording, created by or depicting the accused, provided it does not depict unlawful sexual activity and is held by the accused exclusively for private use" (Section 129, R. v Sharpe). These exceptions are meant to address concerns that the legal definition of child pornography, and its possession, was broad. The Supreme Court cited these exceptions because it felt that the Criminal Code was found to unduly infringe on constitutional rights because it borders on prohibiting freedom of thought. Producing, distributing and possessing pornographic pictures of children is an offense under the criminal code.*⁷

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "Obscene and Pornographic Literature", ESA report, 1964²

"Sex is not inherently sordid or nasty, any more than sunlight is sordid or nasty. This fact comes out clearly in the biblical account of creation, where sexual distinction is part of the goodness of creation: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ... And God saw everything He had made, and behold it was very good' (Genesis 1:27, 31) . 'And behold it was very good' needs to be set against any attempt to suggest that from a religious point of view there is something not quite 'nice' about sex. ... it is wrong to joke about sex for the same reason it is wrong to joke about holy communion—not because either subject is nasty, but because both are sacred, and to joke about such things is profanity. So the

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

Christian avoids being ‘crude’ about sex, not because sex is bad, but precisely because it is good.”*

*Excerpts from “Pornographic Materials”, BCL report, 1987*⁶

Definition (non-legal) of pornography:

“Pornography is material that represents or describes degrading, abusive, and/or violent behaviour for sexual gratification so as to endorse and/or recommend the behaviours as depicted.”

. . .

The Christian tradition asserts that the human person, both male and female, is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Human sexuality is a gracious gift of God. . . . It is unacceptable to treat another human being as an object. Pornography also degrades men by reducing them to portraying a stereotype of male aggression. Pornography, because it reduces persons to the status of an object, because it promotes inequality, oppression, power of one over another is a human rights issue. There is a fundamental equality and mutuality of male and female (Galatians 3:28). Anything that blocks or warps or reduces or denies this equality and mutuality must be rejected by the Christian community.

¹ A&P 1950, pp. 76-77app, 65 min

² A&P 1964, pp. 353, 357, 95

³ A&P 1971, pp. 303-304, 307-308, 89

⁴ A&P 1972, pp. 303-304, 67

⁵ A&P 1973, pp. 282, 40

⁶ A&P 1987, pp. 321-322, 21-22

⁷ A&P 2007, pp.411-413

* Cited with permission from *The Bible Speaks to You* by Robert MacAfee Brown

Public Education

The Church Speaks¹

- The church has a responsibility to address itself to the public life of the nation and of society at every level and in all their functions, including education—to support, encourage and criticize.
- The church should not seek for itself any privileged position, control, authority or right of sanction, but act in the role of servant.
- The church must reject a common morality as a substitute for acquaintance with our religious inheritance in a pluralistic society.
- The whole of education ... must be examined seriously. The church has not dealt with the question of its relation to public education when it has addressed itself only to the subject of religious education in the school.
- The church and its members must acknowledge and support the right of minorities and must pay attention to what they are saying.
- The church must be ready to engage in a positive evaluation of the fact and the process of secularization in our time.

The Church Acts

1965-1967: The 91st GA (1965) called on synods, in co-operation with the Board of Christian Education, to study the church's relation to and involvement in public education, to involve presbyteries and sessions in the study and the responsible involvement of their people in public education and to report their findings to the Board of Christian Education to bring them before General Assembly. The Board of Christian Education submitted a progress report on research and discussions in synods and presbyteries to the 93rd GA (1967).²

1972: The report of the Board of Christian Education to the 98th GA included reference to its participation in the Ecumenical Study Commission on Religious Education in the Public Schools*, and commented positively on the Ontario Ministry of Education's creation of a world religions course that could be taught for credit in secondary schools.³ Through the Ecumenical Study Commission it was seeking a more adequate role for religion in provincial curricula, helping to develop standards and courses for preparing teachers to teach religion. GA also mandated the board and the ESA to participate in any initiative on this issue which might be set up under the auspices of the CCC and urged continued study by the courts and congregations of the church.⁴

1977-1979: The 103rd GA (1977) approved a statement from the BCL (issued jointly with the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada) sent to the leaders of Ontario political parties on the importance of moral values in sex education. The statement was also circulated to congregations and the BCL asked to give the matter further study.⁵ The 104th GA (1978) responded favorably to an overture raising concern about the level of functional illiteracy in Canada.** GA commended the work of the Movement for Canadian Literacy, called on the secretary of state and provincial ministries of education to implement programs for literacy, recommended that congregations encourage local literacy programs, and referred the matter to the BCL for ongoing study.⁶ The 105th GA (1979) endorsed the principle of a co-ordinated national core curriculum for all levels of education in Canada below the university level and encouraged

* The Ecumenical Study Commission was founded in 1968 to support multi-faith education about religion in the public schools of Ontario. The PCC delegate is appointed by the Ontario synods.

** From 1 to 5 million Canadians were considered to be functionally illiterate depending on whether the criterion used was a Grade 5 or a Grade 8 education.

BOOK THREE — COMMUNITY

the work of ministers of education, the Canadian Education Association and the Canadian School Trustees Association which were consulting on the issue.⁷

¹ A&P 1965, pp. 58-60

² A&P 1967, p. 350

³ A&P 1972, p. 386

⁴ A&P 1972, pp. 304, 67

⁵ A&P 1977, p. 75

⁶ A&P 1978, pp. 478, 59-60

⁷ A&P 1979, pp. 444, 297, 70

Public Prayer

The Church Acts

2015: A Commissioner's Overture at the 141st GA asked the EIFRC, in consultation with the LMA (Justice Ministries) to look into the effects of a Supreme Court decision* that banned public prayer at official meetings of the city council in Saguenay QC, as it impacts city councils and governments at all levels and public prayers, and to enter into conversation with religious leaders of other religious traditions who share the belief that public prayer adds to civil society and the well being of communities.¹

2016: The 142nd GA adopted a statement from the EIFRC concluding that the Supreme Court of Canada decision that banned public prayer at official meetings of the Saguenay city council (QC) has no implications or effect on prayers in public worship in The PCC.²

¹ A&P 2015, p. 23

² A&P 2016, pp.292-297, 41.

* Supreme Court of Canada, *Mouvement laïque québécois v. Saguenay (City)*, April 15, 2015.

*Television Programming*¹

The Church Speaks

- Television programming for children should be of good quality and present social values that encourage a sensitive, constructive approach to life and respect for people.
- The CBC should maintain a balance of programming, including religious programming, on its main channel as well as providing religious programming on specialty channels.²

The Church Acts

1974: The 100th GA expressed its concern that so much television programming for children was of poor quality and urged the Canadian Radio and Television Commission to provide constructive television entertainment for children. It authorized the Communications Services Committee to continue its participation in Religious Television Associates, Inter-Church Broadcasting and other co-operative groups to further these objectives.

1999: The 125th GA expressed its concern over the lack of religious programming on the CBC, and encouraged sessions to do likewise.²

2004: The 130th GA adopted a report on media violence and sexual exploitation which provided information, suggestions and resources on helping children and youth develop healthy viewing habits in regards to TV/internet/movies/computer games, as well as alternative activities.³

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “Children’s Television”, report of the Communications Services Committee, 1974*¹

...television programming does not have to be a cacophony of violence to provide interesting entertainment for children. All of us who have taken the time to watch what goes on ... when programming seems to be directed particularly toward children, must be appalled at the parade of violence and inanity that is offered. Studies indicate that such a TV diet does obvious harm to many and subtle damage to the attitudes and values of most children.

*Excerpts from “Voicing concern to the CBC on deletion of religious programming”, report of Special Committee, 1999*²

The committee recognizes the importance of balanced television programming. The face of television has changed dramatically over the years, particularly with the introduction of speciality channels. Religious channels available to the Canadian public include VisionTV and Crossroads Television Systems.

CBC Newsworld offers Moral Divide, a weekly window on the religious, spiritual and ethical issues and conflicts that lie behind the daily stories on CBC Newsworld... While these channels are available to Canadian viewers, it is nonetheless the responsibility of the CBC’s main channel, CBC TV to ensure balanced programming.

The committee recognizes that the CBC has deleted a number of programs, not simply religious programs, and we assume that budget cuts are the main motivator in these deletions. The committee does not believe a desire to limit religious programming or offer unbalanced programming is a motivator in evidence with these programs being moved to specialty channels.

By voicing concern over the lack of religious programming on the CBC, the director of programming will be reminded of the need for the CBC to recognize the validity and importance of religious programming while respecting the religious makeup of the country.

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¹ A&P 1974, pp. 329, 48-49

² A&P 1999, pp. 55-56

³ A&P 2004, pp. 341-345, 16

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Glossary of Acronyms

A&P.....	Acts & Proceedings
BCL	Board of Congregational Life
BWM	Board of World Mission
CCD	Committee on Church Doctrine
ESA	Board of Evangelism and Social Action
GA	General Assembly
GBM.....	General Board of Missions
GOC	Government of Canada
LMA	Life and Mission Agency
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
PWS&D.....	Presbyterian World Service and Development
WMS.....	Women’s Missionary Society

††† This section was previously named “Aboriginal People.” It was changed to be consistent with international terminology. The term “Aboriginal people” is still used in Canadian legal, and other, settings to refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. It is, for example, the language used in the church’s 1994 Confession.

BOOK FOUR — NATION

Canada and its Peoples

Canadian Constitution

The Church Speaks

- Because every human being bears the image of God, the most important role for the constitution lies in the possibilities created or denied for people to live in communities sustained by mutual responsibility.¹
- The constitution should remind the country of those principles which are at the root of its life, and which guide, influence and renew its political decision making.¹

The Church Acts

1992: The 118th GA endorsed a “Response to the Constitutional Proposals”^{*} and forwarded it to the federal and provincial committees working on the constitution.¹

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from “Response to the Constitutional Proposals”, BCL report, 1992*¹
(see also **French-English Relations; Aboriginal People; Ecology, Energy and Environment; and Social and Economic Issues for more excerpts from this document.**)

Introduction

The church’s experience teaches the importance of justice, peace, and sustainability as important ethical values. We believe that people of diverse backgrounds can build a community where justice underlies our relationships with each other, where peace building is a concrete expression of our concern for health and wholeness, where our stewardship ensures a sustainable environment both now and in the future.

...

The current proposals are wide ranging. As a denomination we cannot comment on all of them. Indeed, we urge that the present round of constitutional negotiations be focused on the most urgent concerns:

- the recognition of the distinctiveness of Quebec
- the recognition of the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples to self-government with an adequate land and economic base; and
- the protection of the social, economic and political rights of all people living in Canada.

Our Identity

In Galatians 3:28, Paul writes of the essential unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ even though there is significant diversity in cultural traditions between the two. In the new creation of Christ common humanity is to be affirmed and cultural distinction celebrated. We are called to develop our God given uniqueness as individuals and as nations, while at the same time rejoicing in our unity with others in the new humanity.

The unity of slave and free in Christ implies that in the new creation of Christ there is neither oppressed nor oppressor. Extreme individualism and the exploitation of one segment of society by another are incompatible with the biblical emphasis on community and mutual service. We are called to work for justice and freedom for all peoples.

^{*} These proposals were based on the Charlottetown Accord, the second attempt to revise the constitution after the Meech Lake Accord failed. They were submitted to a national referendum in October 1992 where it was rejected by 54% of the electorate. This triggered the Quebec referendum of 1995. (See French-English Relations)

The unity of male and female in Christ implies that in the new creation there is to be no domination of male over female. The unity of Jew and Greek implies that there is no domination of one ethnic group over another, of nation over nation. Neither authoritarianism nor passivity is an appropriate role in individual or corporate relations. We are created as partners with other human beings to care for one another and to exercise stewardship over God's creation.

Our Calling

Ephesians 2:14 can help us discover our calling: "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing, that is, the hostility between us." We are Christ's body in the world and our calling is to carry on the ministry of breaking down walls between people and groups of people. By our attitudes, opinions and behaviour we contribute either to wall building or to the breaking down of walls. As Christians, we do not have any choice about what our responsibility is. How do we respond to situations in our society and the world? Do our responses create or maintain barriers, or are they attempts to remove barriers?

...

As we seek to fulfil our calling, we affirm that our primary allegiance is to Jesus Christ and not to any individual group or institution. The "Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation" states:

The one holy Triune God, sovereign Creator and Redeemer, has declared and established His Kingdom over all powers in heaven and earth. By the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, all things have been made subject to Him, so that even age-long evil is overruled for good.

In all of the issues that confront us, then, in our national and international relationships, we are to be aware of our primary identity as Christ's people and our calling to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation.

The Role of the Constitution

We believe that God created humankind in the image of God. "The mystery of human existence is that we belong to God and have been made in the divine image. In God we live and move and have our being." (*Living Faith**) Our vision for Canada is based upon and shaped by this fundamental assertion. Because every human being bears the image of God, the most important role for the constitution lies in the possibilities created or denied for people to live in communities sustained by mutual responsibility.

The second most important role for the constitution is closely related to the first. The constitution must embody our collective aspirations as a country in order to call us back to our primary purpose in the day to day struggles of political life. Every institution, if it is to endure, must have a point of reference to which to return for correction, renewal and regeneration. This point of reference is the institution's animating principle.

From our own history we can sadly state that institutions can lose their way or become caught up in selfishness, to the detriment of those we should serve. However, when the Christian community has returned to its scriptures with open eyes and ears, it has been recalled to that which is of primary importance to the life of faith. The scriptures thereby continue to renew the

* A statement of faith approved by the 109th GA (1984) and adopted as a subordinate standard of faith by the 124th GA (1998).

BOOK FOUR — NATION

church. The constitution should remind the country of those principles which are at the root of its life, and which guide, influence and renew its political decision making.

¹ A&P 1992, pp. 303-308, 45

French-English Relations

The Church Speaks

- We neither affirm nor deny the right of self-determination for the province of Quebec or any other part of Canada. We do affirm that any decision on new political arrangements must be determined through democratic processes in a climate where debate and public decision is marked by fairness, justice and mutual respect.⁸
- If one cohesive segment [of Canada] decisively, conclusively and democratically decides on an independent existence, the Christian response is to continue an active presence and witness in every jurisdiction, and to shun the use of force of arms—or any other means of coercion.⁸
- Majority groups in society are responsible for honoring the linguistic, cultural and religious rights of the minorities in their midst. Majority groups in all parts of the nation should conduct their affairs consistently with the due recognition of the rights of minorities within their bounds, to the end that all minority groups may exercise fully the rights and privileges of citizenship.⁸
- In the church, francophones should be making the decisions which affect their own life, work and witness.¹⁵

The Church Acts

1964-1968: The 90th GA (1964) mandated the ESA to study the problem of French-English relationships.¹ The 91st GA (1965) called on the entire membership of the church to give serious consideration to the issues of bilingualism and biculturalism using an outline for congregational study and a suggested reading list prepared by the ESA and the interim report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.² In 1968, the ESA held a conference on “French and English in Canada – the Christian Ministry of Reconciliation”. Tape recordings of the conference were made available to synods. The 94th General Assembly (1968) commended the final report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism for study and urged ministers and congregations in bilingual situations to create working groups to develop an understanding of relationships between French and English in Canada, and our Christian responsibility toward them.³

1969: The General Board of Missions (GBM), the Life and Mission Projects (LAMP) report and the ESA all submitted comments and recommendations to the 95th GA on improving French-English relations within the church and in society generally. The GBM reported that it had approved suggestions received from a special committee appointed to survey its French work and would be aiming to recruit more French Canadians, to encourage presbyteries to offer instruction in conversational French, and to increase publicity on French work. It also endorsed the principle that French-speaking Protestants should have access to public education in French.^{4*}

* At the time the public school system both in Quebec and Ontario as well as in some other provinces, was divided along religious lines (Catholic/non-Catholic). Since the majority of French-speaking Canadians were affiliated with the Catholic Church, most schools offering instruction in French were part of the Catholic system. There was virtually no French language education in non-Catholic schools.

The LAMP report echoed that of the GBM in calling for support for developing proficiency in the French language for professional church workers. GA also adopted a motion from the floor that “future reports and recommendations ... relating to French work and French-English relations be printed in both languages in the A&P and that translation service be provided to commissioners.”⁵

The ESA report congratulated the Canadian Council of Churches for making French-English relations the theme of its first assembly (held November 1969), welcomed the Official Languages Bill and supported all efforts to provide legal safeguards and educational encouragement for the

The Quiet Revolution

With the death of Premier Maurice Duplessis in 1959, the 1960s saw the emergence of a new generation of political leadership in the province of Quebec, promoting the slogan “Maîtres Chez Nous” (Masters in our own House). This slogan reflected the high level of dissatisfaction with fact that the economy of Quebec was dominated by an English-speaking minority. Although most of the population was French-speaking, the language of commerce and business, and often of the workplace, was English. The changes in Quebec society over the next decade were known collectively as La Révolution Tranquille (The Quiet Revolution).

Among the new currents of thought gaining widespread acceptance was the belief that Quebec should separate from Canada and become an independent nation. The response of the federal government was to establish a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which presented an interim report in 1964 and a final report with recommendations in 1965. Many of these recommendations were incorporated into the Official Languages Act of 1969.

effective development and protection of bilingualism in both societies.⁶

1977-1982: The 103rd GA (1977) named a Special Committee on National Unity⁷. The 104th GA, (1978) adopted the committee’s statement (see excerpts below) and mandated improvement in the support of French language work and the capacity of the national offices to handle communications in French.⁸ A small committee was appointed to monitor progress in these matters. This committee reported to the 105th GA (1979) that the 1978 statement on national unity had been published in both French and English in pamphlet form; that the BWM was looking at appropriate strategies for the support of French language work with the Synod of Quebec & Eastern Ontario and the presbyteries of Montreal and Quebec; and that French language communications capacity was being studied ecumenically through the Canadian Council of Churches.⁹ The 106th GA (1980) adopted two motions calling for a spirit of reconciliation as constitutional changes were considered.¹⁰ The 107th GA (1981) approved setting aside the Sunday nearest July 1 as a time for special prayers of thanksgiving and intercession for peace and harmony among the people of Canada and asked the BCL to prepare suitable resources.¹¹ The 108th GA (1982) took note of the founding of a non-partisan organization in Quebec (Alliance Quebec) to protect the rights of the English minority in Quebec, and called on the church, through the Consultation on Church and Society, to be alert to the issue while recognizing the rights of francophones in provinces other than Quebec and in the Territories.¹²

Accords and Referenda

In 1976 the Parti Quebecois won the Quebec provincial election and announced plans to hold a referendum on separating the province from Canada. The referendum, held in 1980, asked for a mandate to negotiate “sovereignty-association” with Canada. It was defeated 59.6% to 40.4%, with the French-speaking population of the province split down the middle. In 1982, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau realized his dream of patriating the Canadian constitution, giving Canada, rather than the British parliament, the right to amend it. However, the province of Quebec refused to sign the new constitutional agreement. Two attempts were made to reach an agreement which Quebec could support. The Meech Lake Accord required ratification by parliament and all the provincial legislatures. Ratification failed in Manitoba and as a consequence legislation to ratify was never introduced in Newfoundland. The Charlottetown Accord of 1992 was defeated in a national referendum. True to a promise made during the Charlottetown negotiations, the premier of Quebec called for another referendum to negotiate sovereignty for Quebec. Held in 1995, this referendum was very narrowly defeated 50.6% to 49.4% with an astounding 93.52% of Quebecers turning out to vote on the future of the province..*

**Although all parties in the Manitoba legislature had previously agreed to waive the need for public hearings in order to pass the ratification legislation by the agreed deadline, the unanimous consent of all members of the legislature was refused by aboriginal member Elijah Harper. One consequence was the involvement of First Nations in the Charlottetown negotiations.*

1987: The 113th GA commended the federal and provincial governments for the initiatives undertaken to develop a constitutional accord*, while noting their concern that some issues had not yet been addressed, asked for public hearings with a possibility of amendments prior to ratification and mandated the BCL to prepare a brief for use at such hearings.¹³

1988: The 114th GA affirmed the need for a francophone mission strategy that is “Reformed, evangelical and ecumenical” and recognizes the need for self-direction and creativity. The BWM was mandated to develop such a strategy.¹⁴

1990-1994: The BWM report to the 116th GA (1990) reviewed the history of the church’s involvement in French-language work in Canada and announced its intention to establish a national committee on francophone ministry.^{15**} A commissioner’s overture on the current constitutional crisis was also adopted with all its recommendations.¹⁶ The 117th GA (1991) endorsed the initiative of the Moderator of the 116th GA in suggesting that congregations write directly to congregations and parishes in the province of Quebec assuring the people of Quebec of love and concern for them and our country in the difficult days of national crises and commended this action to congregations. It also directed the BCL, the BWM and the Ecumenical Relations Committee to consider the question: “As Canada moves in the direction of new constitutional arrangements, what will be the relationship of The PCC to Christians, particularly Presbyterians, living in the province of Quebec?”¹⁷ The 118th GA (1992) endorsed the BCL’s “Response to the Constitutional Proposals” and directed that it be forwarded to appropriate federal and provincial committees working on the constitution.¹⁸ The 119th GA (1993) affirmed its integral unity with, and moral and financial support for, its congregations and institutions in Quebec, and its intention

* The Meech Lake Accord

** The National Committee for Francophone Ministries was disbanded in 1996 with the francophone work assigned to the supervision of the presbyteries concerned. As of 2003, Canada Ministries continued to support L’Eglise St. Luc in Montreal, St. Paul’s Mission in Sherbrooke, and a francophone outreach in Ottawa. The French language publication, *La Vie Chrétienne*, is supported through a grant from the Robert Fund.

to maintain those ties regardless of future political alignments that represent the will of the people of Quebec.¹⁹ The 120th GA (1994) urged all congregations to engage in special prayers “that the Spirit of God be upon us and move among us, so that God’s will be done as discussions and elections take place between now and the next GA.”²⁰

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from the report of the Special Committee on National Unity, 1978*⁸

I. *Creation*: God has created the peoples of the earth in great variety, but has also made them to be members of one universal family. God delights in the variety of humankind; and differences are not to be barriers between people, but to enhance true human community. The doctrine of creation points us to the positive aspects of the multicultural experience in Canada, and more particularly the French-English relationship. Rather than being a cause of division, our differences of language and culture are deeply enriching to our mutual experience and to the country.

Human sinfulness takes the differences of race, colour, culture, language, and creates barriers between people. Narrow "tribalism", and the suspicion of anything seemingly foreign or alien, is the sinful failure to see that God has created differences in order to broaden and enrich the experience of the human community. In our sinfulness, we Canadians, of both major linguistic groups, have failed to see the enhancing character of the dual nature of our country. All too often we have allowed our racial and linguistic allegiances to foster suspicion of the other, rather than allowing our attitudes to be informed and broadened by Christian faith.

II. *Reconciliation*: In Jesus Christ, God has acted decisively to reconcile the members of the human family to himself and to one another. Christ calls his Church to a ministry of reconciliation. ... As a denomination, we have not always been mindful of the meaning of the doctrine of reconciliation for French-English relations. French Canadians are not to become English Canadians; nor are English Canadians to become French Canadians: both are called by God to recognize each other's rights to full cultural, linguistic and economic identity.

III. *Separatism*: [A]ll constitutions are basically human inventions. Nevertheless, in its divinely appointed mission as the conscience of the state, the church has the responsibility to speak out on behalf of the principle of unity in difference. This principle is implicit in the Christian understanding of human relationships and should be inevitably and dynamically involved in every consideration or discussion of Canada's political and constitutional development.

We are glad that Canada has two official languages. We find in our diversity a strength. The assimilation of French-Canadian culture into English Canada would be a tragedy for our country and for ourselves as individuals. We hope that adequate steps will be taken to preserve that culture within the North American context.

*Commissioner's Overture, 1990*¹⁶

Whereas the discussion concerning the Meech Lake Accord and our national unity are bringing into stark focus the difficulties in maintaining Canada as one country, and

Whereas Canada is experiencing an increasing number of incidents of intolerance and bigotry in both Quebec and the rest of Canada, and

Whereas the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord of itself will not remove the feelings of alienation and mistrust presently being experienced throughout Canada, and

Whereas we are deeply concerned for the unity of our country and believe in the words of our late Governor-General, Georges Vanier, that "...no lesson is more badly needed [in the world] than

BOOK FOUR — NATION

the one our unity can send, the lesson that diversity need not be a cause for conflict, but, on the contrary, may lead to richer and nobler living ...” and

Whereas we believe the church is called to a ministry of reconciliation to all people through our Lord Jesus Christ in personal, community, national and international relations,

Therefore, we humbly overture the 116th GA of The PCC to:

1. call upon the first ministers of this land to continue their efforts in resolving our ongoing constitutional problems in a manner that will engender a spirit of goodwill among all our communities, assuring them of our support and prayers;
2. encourage our French Canadian sisters and brothers in their desire to preserve their cultural heritage and assure them that we greatly value their partnership in Canada;
3. appeal to all members and adherents of The PCC to counter acts of bigotry and misunderstanding with greater tolerance, appreciation and acts of courage, as recently displayed by the action of Rev. Dr. Allan Duncan who, in response to an act of bigotry in his community, led a delegation to Montreal to express regret to and appreciation for the people of Quebec;
4. assure all of our Presbyterian brothers and sisters in Quebec of our solidarity, support and prayers for them during this difficult period in our history;
5. assure all our brothers and sisters in Quebec of our solidarity, support and prayers at this time,* or do otherwise as the GA may in its wisdom deem best.

Excerpts from “Response to the Constitutional Proposals”, BCL report, 1992 ¹⁸

(see also Aboriginal People; Ecology, Energy and Environment; and Social Policy for excerpts from this document dealing with those elements of the constitutional proposals.)

The first section of the government proposals (“Shared Citizenship and Diversity”) outlines a complex pattern of relationships and responsibilities. Our vision is that human differences, including all those expressed in language and culture, will be experienced as enriching rather than threatening. Therefore, unity, interdependence and mutual accommodation between people, and between majorities and minorities, are values we want to see realized in political life in Canada.

...

We applaud section 1.3 of the proposal which recognizes the historical distinctiveness of Quebec as a linguistic, cultural and political community. God has created the peoples of our earth in great variety, but has also made them to be members of one universal family. God delights in the variety of humankind and differences are not to be barriers among people, but enhancements of true human community.

...

The PCC neither affirms nor denies the right of self-determination for the Province of Quebec, or any other part of Canada. The church does affirm that the division of a nation, and the resulting new political arrangements, are political decisions. Canada, and any of its parts, must determine through democratic processes what actions, if any, are to be taken. Any decisions must be made in a climate where debate and public discussion is marked by fairness, justice and mutual respect.

It is clear, however, that if one cohesive segment decisively, conclusively and democratically decides on an independent existence, the Christian response is to continue an active presence and witness in every jurisdiction, and to shun the use of force of arms or any other means of coercion.

Statement from the National Committee of Francophone Ministries, 1992 ²¹

As the francophone component of the church, it is important for us to express ourselves about our lifelong participation in this church as well as about the Canadian constitutional reform from a

*5th clause added by 116th GA.

perspective of Christian reflection and awareness. ...Having made the choice of a Canadian church, we favour a national option that aims for unity among diversity. ... As Franco-Protestants, we have been here more than 400 years since the beginning of French colonization and have been even more significant since the missionary movement at the beginning of the last century. Being a minority we are familiar with the problems which exist between minorities and with the social and cultural aspirations of minority groups. We live as double minorities: as Protestants in Quebec and as francophones in Canada.

We identify with the document “Vivre en voisins, bâtir ensemble l’avenir du Canada” presented recently by the CCC and wish to affirm it in what follows:

- The current constitutional negotiations should recognize the character and history of Quebec as a distinct linguistic, cultural and political community.
- That it be recognized that the native people have an inherent right to autonomy founded on territorial and economic bases flowing from their native status.
- That the social, economic and political laws protect all inhabitants of Canada, in particular, those of underprivileged and poor regions, to permit a just distribution with the most underprivileged.

¹ A&P 1964, p. 99

² A&P 1965, pp. 343-4, 351, 98

³ A&P 1968, pp. 268, 76

⁴ A&P 1969, p. 208

⁵ A&P 1969, pp. 390, 58

⁶ A&P 1969, p. 317

⁷ A&P 1977, pp. 60-61

⁸ A&P 1978, pp. 367-372, 43

⁹ A&P 1979, pp. 391, 47

¹⁰ A&P 1980, pp. 58, 64, 92

¹¹ A&P 1981, p. 109

¹² A&P 1982, pp. 86, 99

¹³ A&P 1987, p. 55

¹⁴ A&P 1988, pp. 466-468, 31

¹⁵ A&P 1990, pp. 545-552, 38

¹⁶ A&P 1990, pp. 23, 33, 53, 55

¹⁷ A&P 1991, p. 51

¹⁸ A&P 1992, pp. 303-308, 45

¹⁹ A&P 1993, p. 62

²⁰ A&P 1994, p. 71

²¹ A&P 1992, pp. 351-352

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Indigenous People

The Church Speaks

- The First Nations of Canada should have a constitutional guarantee to the right to self-government and to an adequate land and economic base arising from Aboriginal title, Aboriginal rights and treaty rights.¹³
- Recognized regional and national groupings of native people have a special right to be heard by federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments and the various courts of the church.⁹
- Resource development should not take place on unsurrendered land until either there is a claims agreement in place or until terms are negotiated satisfactorily with the native people concerned.¹³
- We acknowledge that the stated policy of the GOC was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into the dominant culture and that The PCC co-operated in this policy. ... We confess that, with the encouragement and assistance of the GOC, The PCC agreed to take the children of Aboriginal peoples from their own homes and place them in residential schools, [and that] the effect of all this, for Aboriginal peoples, was the loss of cultural identity and the loss of a secure sense of self.¹⁶
- For our church, we ask forgiveness from God and for forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples.¹⁶
- The church, in the context of our 1994 Confession, acknowledges the devoted service of teachers and caregivers who worked for the Women's Missionary Society and The PCC in residential schools and who are on their own healing journeys and in need of our love and support; and thanks these people who gave of their best, in a flawed system, for their service to the Church and young people in their care.¹
- Being present in Aboriginal communities at events held by Aboriginal organizations to commemorate and honour students who attended residential schools is a part of the ministry of reconciliation.³⁷
- It is appropriate for our church to acknowledge and honour our place on territories once under the sole care and stewardship of the First Nations.³⁸

The Church Acts

The relationship between Presbyterians and First Nations goes back over a century to the ministry of James Nesbit. Over the years, Native Ministry has included work on reserves, in residential schools and in urban ministries. Many reports mentioned the poverty and poor living conditions faced by Native people, but the first explicit commitment to social action appears in the 1960s.

1966-1969: The 92nd GA (1966) recommended that all levels of the church “do all within their power to insure that Canada’s Indians are treated without discrimination and urge the appropriate levels of government to take immediate steps to insure that their housing and their education and employment opportunities more closely approximate the conditions obtaining for the people of Canada as a whole.”² The 95th GA (1969) took note of the increasing frustration of native people, their lack of a right to vote, or to control their own financial affairs, and their difficulty in getting a hearing for their just demands, and informed the GOC of its support for the “just demands of the Indians of Canada for full participation in the affairs that concern them, and their desires for self-realization within the social and economic structures of Canadian life.”³

In 1969, the GOC issued a white paper on Indian Affairs, proposing far reaching changes in the Indian Act and the relationship of native Canadians to the federal government. It drew swift and thorough condemnation from native leaders as a recipe for the complete assimilation of native people into the Canadian mainstream.

A measure of the cultural gap between native people and the church at the time, is the ESA report to the 96th GA that expressed approval of the policy of the white paper with no mention of native responses. A commissioner's motion from the floor drew attention to native dissatisfaction with the white paper.

The white paper and the 1973 legislation based on it galvanized native resistance, and the legislation was withdrawn due to the strength of native opposition to it.

1970: The 96th GA recommended that congregations familiarize themselves with the GOC's Statement on Indian Policy, and with the "red paper" (a response written by the Indian Association of Alberta). It called on Presbyterians to familiarize themselves with Indian culture, history and contributions to Canadian life, asked the GBM to evaluate its work and recommend improvements in its approach to work with Canadian Indians, and encouraged congregations to use resources and engage in conversations with Aboriginal peoples, as well as for an Aboriginal leader to be invited

to attend the next GA. It also approved a motion that drew attention to the strong dissatisfaction in Native communities with the white paper and called on the GOC to make arrangements for further consultation with all interested parties, Indian or otherwise.⁴

1975: The 101st GA mandated giving priority to Native ministries and issues for five years as part of The PCC Centennial celebrations. It adopted recommendations of the BWM including that a first step in this process should be to sensitize non-native people to the concerns of native people, and that native congregations be encouraged "to explore ways of Christian worship and ministry that are meaningful to them."⁵

1976: The 102nd GA approved a statement and recommendations to be sent to the Berger commission,⁶ re-affirmed the five-year emphasis on native peoples, mandated the BWM to produce a study paper on the culture, values and spirituality of native peoples, and asked the Committee on Church Worship to study Christian native worship.⁷

The Berger Report

In 1975, the GOC mandated Justice Thomas Berger to conduct an inquiry into northern development that affected native people. In connection with this inquiry, the churches founded the Inter-Church Project on Northern Development (Project North) to co-ordinate their research and advocacy work. Justice Berger's final report recommended a ten-year moratorium on northern development to provide time to settle the land claims of native peoples in the north and their involvement in northern development.*

**Project North was replaced by the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) in 1988 and became part of KAIROS in 2001.*

1978: The 104th GA adopted a statement on northern development calling on the GOC to assure "an orderly, carefully studied and controlled process" when assurances could be given that "it will not present serious hazards and threats to the delicate northern environment" and only with the full involvement of native peoples including the recognition of their legitimate rights and claims.⁸

1980-84: The 106th GA (1980) granted the request of the BWM that appointments to native ministry be on the same basis as appointments overseas with equivalent terms, orientation,

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language study, adequate work funds and furlough with accompanying benefits. It also mandated the BWM to inform members of the church of the concerns of Canada's native people. A motion to teach native spirituality to candidates for ministry was referred to the colleges.”⁹ The 110th GA (1984) removed a section from the BWM’s “Principles, Policy and Practice” which contained statements denigrating to native people.¹⁰

1987: The 113th GA, in a message to the federal and provincial governments on the proposed Meech Lake Accord, noted its concern that “such issues as Aboriginal rights and development prospects of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories had not been specifically addressed.”¹¹

1990: The BWM informed the 116th GA that it had established a National Committee of Native Peoples* charged with the responsibility of “keeping the needs and agendas of the native peoples before the church.”¹²

The Oka Crisis

The Oka crisis lasted from March to September 1990. It was triggered by a town council decision to build a golf course on land claimed by the nearby Mohawk community of Kahnésatake. When their claim was rejected by the courts, the Mohawk Warriors set up blockades to prevent the town from proceeding with the golf course. In July, a police officer on duty at the blockade was killed. Police presence was increased to 1,000 while Mohawk and other First Nations people rallied to assist the people of Kahnésatake. In August 1990, the provincial police were replaced by 1,400 Canadian Army troops. The Mohawk Warriors surrendered peacefully on September 26, 1990. Thirty-four were charged for their actions, and acquitted in 1992. In the wake of the Oka crisis, the GOC established the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

1991: The BCL informed the 117th GA that as instructed by the 115th GA (1989) it had joined the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC)** and found its participation in ARC very helpful in formulating a church response to the crisis of 1990. (see box “The Oka Crisis”) In addition, the 117th GA requested synods, presbyteries and congregations to set up information sessions to listen to native leaders in their region and to support the Aboriginal people based on the decisions of previous assemblies. Federal and provincial governments were requested to place a high priority on developing a comprehensive process for a just settlement of outstanding native land claims and governance issues, and establish an Aboriginal Rights Commission. GA urged that resource development should not take place on unsurrendered land without settling land claims or negotiating acceptable terms. The GOC was requested to resume constitutional talks including representatives of First Nations as full participants and to include on the agenda of the next First Ministers’ Conference a commitment to entrench Aboriginal rights*** in the Canadian constitution.¹³

1992: The 118th GA endorsed a “Response to the Constitutional Proposals” which included a section on Aboriginal rights.¹⁴ It also called on the church to commit itself to listen to the issues as named and described by Aboriginal peoples and to listen to what Aboriginal peoples decide is useful and appropriate in response; to support healing processes that arise from Aboriginal

* Currently called the National Native Ministries Committee, which meets semi-annually in Winnipeg.

** Formerly Project North, now a part of KAIROS.

*** Specifically: 1) the enforceable right of Aboriginal peoples to self-government, 2) an adequate land and economic base arising from Aboriginal title, Aboriginal rights and treaty rights; and 3) the requirement of consultation with Aboriginal peoples on all future constitutional amendments affecting such rights.

peoples themselves; and to commit itself to working with Aboriginal peoples in calling the GOC to acknowledge that its policies were harmful to Aboriginal peoples.¹⁵

1993-1994: The 120th GA adopted “Our Confession to Aboriginal Peoples”^{*} and mandated the LMA to explore ways to bring our confession to Aboriginal peoples and further the process of reconciliation. The LMA was also instructed to provide study materials for use in the church to enable synods, presbyteries and congregations to understand better the issues leading to this confession, and to enter into the process of reconciliation. Assembly Council was mandated to “commit resources to a concerted engagement in the healing/reconciliation processes presently in progress.” The Moderator was asked to take the opportunity of his visit to Shoal Lake to express publicly to the Aboriginal people gathered there the confession adopted by the Assembly.^{16,17**}

1996: The LMA and Assembly Council reported to the 122nd GA on Presbyterian participation in the Spiritual Assembly, and follow-up conversations with the Canadian Council of Churches. Initial steps were taken to set up a healing fund to distribute to First Nations engaged in healing processes related to residential schools. It was agreed with other churches that the Aboriginal Rights Coalition would take the lead on educational activity to assist church members in understanding the issues facing First Nations and in keeping before the government and the churches their responsibilities concerning residential schools.¹⁸

1997: The 123rd GA instructed the LMA to re-examine the priorities developed and reported to the 117th GA (1991), especially with respect to Native Ministries.¹⁹ PWS&D was encouraged to initiate and fund development projects^{***} involving native Canadians, with special consideration being given to native Canadians living on reserves that are inaccessible by summer roads.²⁰

2003-2004: The 129th GA affirmed its commitment to live the church’s 1994 Confession.²¹ The 130th GA recommended that the Sunday before June 21^{st****} each year be designated as Aboriginal Day within our congregations.²²

2005: The 131st GA adopted the report of the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team (established by the Assembly Council), which provided learnings, guidance and resources for congregational activity directed to healing and reconciliation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.²³ GA also affirmed that funding for our ongoing Native Ministry is a high priority and encouraged the Assembly Council, the LMA and Canada Ministries to review the financial support provided by *Presbyterians Sharing...* and to increase this support in light of our commitment to healing and reconciliation.²⁴

2006: The 132nd adopted the report of the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team on the program “Walking Together...” including creating a one year contract for an animator of the program.²⁵ GA recognized the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (May 26) by designating the Sunday preceding May 26 as Healing and Reconciliation Sunday.²⁶ GA agreed that funds remaining from those set aside in 2003 for Healing and Reconciliation should give priority to support and/or funding for local initiatives²⁷ and that any funds saved through the

* The name was changed to “The 1994 Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada regarding injustices suffered by Canada’s First Nations Peoples.” (A&P 1994, p. 87)

** A public ceremony was held in Winnipeg and the Confession presented to the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

*** e.g. agriculture, education, employment, housing, recreation, etc.

**** June 21 is designated National Aboriginal Day by the Government of Canada; a number of Native groups refer to it as Solidarity Day.

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overall settlement agreement regarding residential schools between the church and the Aboriginal peoples be used only for healing and reconciliation.²⁸

2007: The Healing and Reconciliation program animator began September 2006. An advisory committee and criteria for project proposals for seed funding of healing and reconciliation initiatives were set up. Resources were developed. The animator visited congregations and church groups to educate and raise awareness. Discussions were initiated with ecumenical colleagues to reflect on the role churches might play in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is a component of the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The PCC commemorated the 20th anniversary of “A New Covenant: towards the Constitutional Recognition and Protection of Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada” by reaffirming its commitment to the 1987 pastoral statement at an ecumenical gathering on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2007. The Moderator of the 132nd GA wrote to the GOC urging support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, asking the GOC to make a formal apology for residential schools, and asking for the restoration of funding for Aboriginal languages*. The Moderator of the 133rd GA wrote to the GOC urging the government to implement the financial commitments outlined in the Kelowna Accord.^{29, 30}

The Kelowna Accord

In November 2005, leaders of the federal and provincial governments, and of the national Aboriginal organizations, committed to, the Kelowna Accord, a 10 year plan to close the well documented gap in living standards between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. The accord outlined investments totaling more than \$5 billion in areas identified by the governments and Aboriginal leaders as key to improving Aboriginal standards of living. These included investments in education, health related initiatives, improvements in housing and infrastructure and support for economic development and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal people.

In January 2006 Canadians elected a new government which stated support for the principles and targets of the accord but challenged the absence of a signed document. No funds were given as the new government did not believe the Kelowna Accord was binding.

2008: The Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly participated in the Aboriginal and Church Leaders’ Tour (Remembering the Children) to help prepare for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.³¹

2009: Members and courts of The PCC were encouraged to follow the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and where possible, participate in TRC events, and to seek opportunities to work with members of the Aboriginal community and other groups to host TRC events in their communities. Commissioners of the 135th GA marked the first anniversary of the Government of Canada’s Statement of Apology – to former students of Indian Residential Schools and the 15th anniversary of The 1994 Confession.³²

2010: Presbyteries and sessions were encouraged to discuss opportunities for building contacts with Aboriginal people in their communities and consult with the Healing and Reconciliation Animator regarding seed funding for local relationship building (between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people) initiatives.³³

2011: The 137th GA recommended that synods, presbyteries and sessions discuss and take part in the “It Matters to Me” campaign in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.³⁴

Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement of 2005 responds to the legacy of residential schools as it affects all former students, as well as to the claims of abuse. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a party to the agreement, along with the Anglican Church of Canada, The United Church of Canada, and Roman Catholic Church entities which administered residential schools, the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, and the plaintiffs in the related court cases. The agreement is an important step in the process of healing and reconciliation that our church committed to in The 1994 Confession. The Agreement came into force September 19, 2007.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada set aside \$2.1 million as obligated under the initial Settlement Agreement of February 2003. This amount was reduced to \$1.32 million as a result of the Overall Agreement. \$780,000 plus \$4,000 interest was available for re-designation. The 2006 General Assembly stipulated that any monies saved as a result of the overall settlement agreement be designated to healing and reconciliation work (A&P 2006, p. 35). The Assembly Council allocated the saved funds primarily to The PCC participation in the TRC, Healing and Reconciliation and Native ministries. The PCC has paid a total of \$1.476 million on approximately 110 claims involving physical and or sexual abuse. Since this exceeds the ‘cap’ of \$1.32 million under the overall settlement agreement, the government has refunded approximately \$158,000 to the church. The PCC, while no longer contributing to financial settlements, will still attend hearings when invited by claimants. The 2006 General Assembly stipulated that any monies saved as a result of the overall settlement agreement be designated to healing and reconciliation work (A&P 2006, p. 35). The Assembly Council allocated the saved funds in the amount of \$784,000 as follows:

- 1. \$200,000 towards The Presbyterian Church in Canada participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.*
- 2. \$400,000 transferred into our Healing and Reconciliation Program of Justice Ministries, earmarked for Canadian Presbyterian established mission agencies.*
- 3. \$100,000 transferred into the Healing and Reconciliation Program of Justice Ministries.*
- 4. \$84,000 to be set aside within Justice Ministries for events linked to the Aboriginal and Church Leaders’ Tour and General Assembly events. (A&P 2008, pp. 211-2)*

The PCC will further support the implementation of the agreement by active participation in commemorative events and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process. Components of the Agreement include a Common Experience Payment (financial compensation paid to all residential school survivors), an Independent Assessment Process for survivors to pursue physical or sexual abuse claims above the Common Experience Payment, Commemorative Events; and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (a 5-year voluntary process to provide for sharing of stories about the Indian residential school experience in a safe and culturally-appropriate environment).

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The Government of Canada Apologizes to Aboriginal People for the Indian Residential Schools System

On June 11, 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologised in the House of Commons on behalf of Canadians to Aboriginal people for the Indian Residential Schools system. A Presbyterian delegation, including survivors of schools run by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Moderator of the 134th GA, the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, and the Healing and Reconciliation Program Animator, went to Ottawa for the reading of the apology, and attended memorial events.

From the Prime Minister's apology:

“For more than a century, Indian Residential Schools separated over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities. In the 1870’s, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, “to kill the Indian in the child”. Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country....on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada’s role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry...The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.”

The full text is online at <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2149>

2013: The 139th GA invited members, groups and courts of the church to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 1994 Confession in 2014 and to identify one action that members, groups and churches can take to commemorate the Confession. Time will be set aside at the 140th GA (2014) to commemorate the anniversary of the Confession.³⁵

Overture No. 19 (2011) requested a theological framework for Aboriginal spirituality. An additional motion directed Overture No. 19 to a conversation circle to include representation from the National Native Ministries Council, the Committee on Church Doctrine, and staff from Canadian Ministries and Justice Ministries. The diversity of voices in the Conversation Circle are reflected in the response to the Overture. The response includes reflections on Aboriginal spiritual traditions, North American experiences in Aboriginal spirituality including ceremonies and the use of smudging and drumming. The response identifies theological themes that inform choices

regarding worship practices. The Presbyterian Church in Canada's role in residential schools is acknowledged and sections of the 1994 Confession are cited.

The report emphasizes the need for humility, recognition and celebration of the different gifts and wisdom that inform worship practices that all praise and glorify God. Presbyteries have the responsibility to ensure that matters related to worship within their bounds are rightly and properly conducted. The response was adopted by the 139th GA.³⁶

2014: The 140th GA recommended that members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada be encouraged to attend local commemorative events hosted by Aboriginal organizations to honour those who attended residential schools. Congregations, presbyteries, synods and other groups were invited to initiate one activity or event or gesture in the next 12 months that is consistent with "seek[ing] opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people," and to share information about these initiatives with Justice Ministries. Synods were encouraged to set aside one hour to do the Blanket Exercise (a resource available from Justice Ministries) at their 2014 or 2015 meeting.³⁷

The GA approved the response to Overture No. 9, 2013, recommending that the First Nation on whose traditional territory General Assembly is meeting be named during the first sederunt by the Moderator and included in the Committee on Courtesies and Loyal Addresses' report. After the General Assembly, a letter is sent to the Chief of the First Nation noting, with respectful gratitude, that the General Assembly met on the traditional territory of the First Nation and that this privilege was acknowledged by the General Assembly.³⁸

2015: The Rev. Mary Fontaine and Elder Ruth Adams of Hummingbird Ministries introduced Elder Henry Charles who welcomed the 141st GA to the Traditional Territory of the Musqueam First Nation on whose land the Assembly had gathered.³⁹

An Overture to the 141st GA requested that an endowment fund be set up in support of Presbyterian Native Ministries. A Committee was struck to respond.⁴⁰

The 141st GA approved an additional motion that the Assembly Council develop a plan to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission related to church apologies and reconciliation throughout the committees, agencies and departments of The PCC and the synods, Presbyterian and congregations and to report to the 142nd GA on the plan and the progress made.⁴⁰

The Moderator of the 141st GA wrote to the companies in which The PCC holds investments inquiring if they have operations in Canada or other countries that impact Indigenous communities, whether they have a policy on free, prior and informed consent and what benefits or challenges they identify with regard to supporting, or not supporting free, prior and informed consent.^{*41}

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that congregations and presbyteries be encouraged to study the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and recommended that sessions and presbyteries consider ways to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in their communities GA recommended that 1) congregations be encouraged to acknowledge the traditional territory on which the congregation meets to worship by posting this

* Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a requirement to engage in dialogue with Indigenous communities and come to an agreement on when, how and where to carry out activities that may have a significant impact on Indigenous communities and the environment. The concept of FPIC is enshrined in the International Labour Organization Convention 169 concerning forced relocation of Indigenous peoples and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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information in bulletins, by a sign in the church or a combination of both; 2) congregations be encouraged to acknowledge the traditional territory on which the congregation meets to worship on Aboriginal Day Sunday and 3) that sessions, presbyteries and all church groups be encouraged to acknowledge the traditional territory on which they gather to meet.⁴²

GA adopted a strategic plan for The PCC which included, as an objective, engaging in healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Assembly Council).⁴³

The 2015 GA asked Assembly Council for a plan to implement the TRC's Calls to Action. GA adopted a report that identified several Calls to Action for churches, plans to consult with the NNMC to discuss a process for The PCC to comply with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that draws attention to national and local healing and reconciliation initiatives that respond to particular Calls to Action.⁴⁴

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action for the church fall broadly within these areas, with the particular Call to Action number in brackets:

- 1. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): using the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples principles as a framework for reconciliation and report how churches are doing. (46 and 48)*
- 2. Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius that have been used throughout history to justify sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples. (46 and 49)*
- 3. Indigenous Spirituality. Educate within the church to respect Indigenous Spirituality in its own right (e.g. the right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practice, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies). (48, 60, 61)*
- 4. Ongoing Education on the church's role in colonization and Indian Residential Schools. (59)*
- 5. Covenant of Reconciliation. Develop and sign a Covenant of Reconciliation with other parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. (46)*
- 6. Permanent Funding. Provide ongoing funding for projects that promote Indigenous healing and reconciliation, culture, language and spirituality. (61)*
- 7. Cemeteries. In collaboration with Indigenous groups and the federal government, support initiatives to provide a registry of children buried at schools, notify families, and properly maintain cemeteries. (73, 74, 75)*

The Calls to Action can be found at:

trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

2017: The 143rd GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, and encourage sessions and presbytery members to write to Members of Parliament, to inquire about the Government of Canada's plans to provide clean and potable water in Indigenous communities that remain under boil water advisories.⁴⁵

The GA recommended that: individuals, congregations and presbyteries be encouraged to give to the Native Ministries Fund; the Life and Mission Agency promote the Native Ministries Fund, and ministries with Indigenous people, during the years leading up to the 25th anniversary of the church's 1994 Confessional Statement in 2019; that 10% of monies realized from assets of dissolved congregations within The Presbyterian Church in Canada be invested in the Native Ministries Fund to a maximum of \$400,000; and that the formula for proceeds of assets of dissolved congregations become 50% for pension solvency (to a maximum of \$2,000,000), 10% for the Native Ministry Fund (to a maximum of \$400,000) and 40% for presbytery for approved mission work.⁴⁶

The GA asked the Moderator to write to the Prime Minister of Canada urging the Government of Canada to comply with the Order of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (January 26, 2016 decision involving First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, et. al.) pertaining to the elimination of discrimination against First Nations children regarding funding for social services and education for children on First Nations reserves.⁴⁷

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “Indians of Canada”, BWM report, 1976⁴⁸

Over 110 years have passed since the concern of Presbyterians for native people was first rallied by the Reverends John Black and James Nisbet. Since then a steady stream of missionaries has come to the Prairie synods with but one purpose: to preach and live the Good News of Jesus Christ. ... “Living the Good News” meant helping to build homes, dispense medical supplies and drugs, offer clothing, books, and finally, through the vision and generosity of the WMS, hospitals, residential schools, as well as nurses, teachers, deaconesses, and ministers.

But with all our zeal and good works, we must confess it has been flavoured with bigotry, paternalism, and seeking to impose our culture and our language, on the people we would serve in Christ’s name.

The day of the church’s paternalistic attitude and welfare handouts is finished. If we persist in this, we only depreciate our effectiveness as instruments of God’s grace. ... Most native leaders today know that welfare is not the answer to their problems. They request equal opportunity in education, job-seeking and a sympathetic consideration of their land claims.

Statement on northern development from motion adopted by the 102nd GA, 1976.⁶

1. Whereas Canadian northern development in the past few years has proceeded without adequate safeguards,

Whereas the rights of the native people of Canada in the north are in danger of being abused due to this development and,

Whereas the 101st General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada designated the following five years as emphasizing the church’s concern for native people,

Therefore, be it resolved that the 102nd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada supports the principle of a moratorium regarding development of non-renewable energy resources in the Canadian North until such time as the following priorities have been established and adopted by the Canadian government.

- (i) Just settlement of the land claims of the Dene and Inuit People
- (ii) Development of native peoples’ programs for economic development in the north
- (iii) Adequate safeguards to deal with environmental problems like oil spills, blowouts, damaged terrain, and living creatures
- (iv) New programs to regulate domestic consumption and export of energy resources and that this statement be forwarded to the Berger Commission and to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Excerpts from “Aboriginal Rights” BCL report, 1991¹³

The crisis at Oka and Chateauguay has some painful lessons to teach us about the fragile character of justice, peace and truth in our society. These lessons include the awareness of major cultural differences, the entrenched realities of racism, the recourse to violence, the use of intimidation tactics, the misinformation campaigns, the forced negotiations at gunpoint, and the decision to resort to a military solution. Individual Christians, congregations and denominations need to reflect and act based on their deeply held convictions on injustice and fairness so that

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redress may be made for past errors and strong voices of faith may speak out sensitively to support the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. New approaches to Aboriginal rights issues in Canada are required which reflect principles of justice, peace and truth.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees to all Canadians the full range of fundamental human rights and freedoms. In addition, the Canadian constitution contains specific provisions for the recognition and protection of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. Also, Aboriginal peoples are protected by provincial human rights codes.

...

As Aboriginal peoples continue their struggle to decolonize themselves and regain their Aboriginal and historic rights, they face numerous challenges. These include: the need for a comprehensive native land claims policy and a just settlement of outstanding land rights issues; the need to re-open and complete constitutional negotiations on Aboriginal rights, particularly the right to self-government; the resurgence of major resource development projects on traditional native lands and their environmental consequences; the increase in military operations in Aboriginal territories; and, the growing crisis in social services for Aboriginal communities.

*Excerpts from “Hydro-Electric Mega-Projects” BCL report, 1992*⁴⁹

There have been tremendous costs borne by Aboriginal peoples in the northern regions of Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec because of hydro-electric megaproject development. There is also concern for the Innu Nation of Labrador who could be similarly affected by the proposed large dams on the Churchill River in Nitassinan. The construction of hydro megaprojects has disturbed, even destroyed, sections of land and waterways, which has disturbed the traditional way of life for Aboriginal peoples whose economy is tied to the waterways. This in turn has contributed to increasing sociological problems of violence and substance abuse in the effected communities. For Aboriginal peoples there have not been benefits such as cheap electric power or increased employment from the hydro megaproject.

The presence of hydro-electric megaprojects on Aboriginal lands represents an injustice within Canadian society. It is cruel and unjust to disturb a way of life by the destruction of trapping lands, the contamination of fish with mercury released from decomposing trees, and the flooding of native burial grounds. What is most disturbing is that the phenomenon of hydro megaprojects is typical of the injustice done to Canada's Aboriginal peoples because there is often no consultation and hence no participation with them in the planning of these projects. The valid and legitimate concerns of Aboriginal peoples are ignored when the power corporations plan to develop these megaprojects on lands which native peoples inhabit. In particular, Hydro Quebec's James Bay II project violates the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement signed in 1975, which requires the involvement and approval of Cree and Inuit people in the assessment process for any further hydro-electric projects in their region. It is clear that Aboriginal people have been treated as second-class citizens. While these projects are promoted as being 'for the common good', a portion of the population is generally excluded.

...

The Christian faith calls one to respect and consider those who are adversely affected when growth occurs for growth's sake, and when humans manipulate the environment and each other by an excessive emphasis on bigness and control. Christians are called to challenge attitudes, practices and structures which do not promote the well-being and the preservation of God's created order. Especially we are called to challenge and protest against the decision-making processes behind the planning and development of hydro megaprojects which do not take seriously enough the concerns of all people. In particular, injustice has been done to Canada's Aboriginal peoples in not respecting their way of life, and in not listening to their stories. In following the example of our Aboriginal sisters and brothers let us, as the church, acknowledge and proclaim that the relationship between the land and the people is based on respect and

gratitude not domination. Let us aim to protect God's creation as a way of meeting the Creator's will. One way the church can support Canada's Aboriginal peoples is by supporting responsible development of hydraulic resources by those native groups who have themselves expressed their willingness to do so in a way that destroys neither the land nor their way of life.

*Excerpts from "Response to the Constitutional Proposals", BCL report, 1992*¹⁸
(see also **French-English Relations; Ecology, Energy and Environment; and Social and Economic Issues for more excerpts from this document.**)

The Inherent Right for Aboriginal Self-Government

Aboriginal peoples in Canada governed themselves long before the arrival of Europeans. This right to self-government is an inherent right that pre-dates the Canadian Confederation and should be recognized in the constitution. It is not a legal right delegated to Aboriginal peoples by federal and provincial authorities that could be extinguished by political decision.

This implies, therefore, that Aboriginal peoples have an inherent right to self-government with an adequate land and economic base arising from Aboriginal title. Their communities should participate in all constitutional discussions leading to the development of appropriate forms of self-government. Political negotiations and not the decisions of the courts should determine forms of self-government.

*Excerpts from "Reconciliation with Aboriginal Peoples" LMA report, 1994*¹⁶

Efforts to assimilate Aboriginal peoples have had far reaching effects. While these are still being fully documented, it is recognized by Aboriginal peoples, the federal government and churches that these efforts contributed, in ways that are still being felt, to the dysfunction of family units, lack of skills for child rearing, loss of a sense of community, cycles of physical and emotional abuse, and a relationship of dependency on outside agencies.

As more and more Aboriginal communities begin to tell their stories and to reflect on the impact of residential schools, it is becoming clearer that the devastating impacts, impacts that are real in spite of the intentions of those who gave many years in Christian service and devotion, will take years to overcome.

Residential schooling should be thought of more as a nuclear explosion, with the blast damaging some more directly than others, but with fallout and nuclear winter affecting everyone. A disease metaphor (i.e., you either have it or you don't, and those who do may have it more or less intensely) fails to capture the complexity of what has happened in First Nations communities, while at the same time denying or demeaning the experience of many who have suffered.*

For Aboriginal peoples this history represents a betrayal of trust by governments and churches. Aboriginal peoples have indicated that they want their stories to be heard and acknowledged by governments and churches.

Both churches and the federal government have been called by several national consultations to respond to the allegations of abuse and to work towards healing and reconciliation. The report of the Canadian Panel on Violence against Women is but one example.

*Cited from "Faith Misplaced: Lasting Effects of Abuse in a First Nations Community." Cariboo Tribal Council, *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, vol. 18, 1991, pp.182-183.

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There is both a moral and a legal obligation for the Canadian government and the churches of Canada, who jointly participated in the victimization of Aboriginal children, to share equally the responsibility of providing financial assistance to help heal residential school victims and their families and of compensating for their pain and suffering all living victims of abuse committed by staff at the schools.**

The 1994 Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada regarding injustices suffered by Canada's First Nations Peoples

The Holy Spirit, speaking in and through scripture, calls The Presbyterian Church in Canada to confession. This confession is our response to the word of God. We understand our mission and ministry in new ways, in part because of the testimony of Aboriginal peoples.

1. We, the 120th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, seeking the guidance of the Spirit of God, and aware of our own sin and shortcomings, are called to speak to the church we love. We do this out of new understandings of our past, not out of any sense of being superior to those who have gone before us, nor out of any sense that we would have done things differently in the same context. It is with deep humility and in great sorrow that we come before God and our Aboriginal brothers and sisters with our confession.
2. We acknowledge that the stated policy of the Government of Canada was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples to the dominant culture, and that The Presbyterian Church in Canada co-operated in this policy. We acknowledge that the roots of the harm we have done are found in the attitudes and values of western European colonialism, and the assumption that what was not yet moulded in our image was to be discovered and exploited. As part of that policy we, with other churches, encouraged the government to ban some important spiritual practices through which Aboriginal peoples experienced the presence of the creator God. For the church's complicity in this policy we ask forgiveness.
3. We recognize that there were many members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who, in good faith, gave unstintingly of themselves in love and compassion for their Aboriginal brothers and sisters. We acknowledge their devotion and commend them for their work. We recognize that there were some who, with prophetic insight, were aware of the damage that was being done and protested, but their efforts were thwarted. We acknowledge their insight. For the times we did not support them adequately nor hear their cries for justice, we ask forgiveness.
4. We confess that The Presbyterian Church in Canada presumed to know better than Aboriginal peoples what was needed for life. The church said of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, "If they could be like us, if they could think like us, talk like us, worship like us, sing like us, work like us, they would know God as we know God and therefore would have life abundant." In our cultural arrogance we have been blind to the ways in which our own understanding of the Gospel has been culturally conditioned, and because of our insensitivity to Aboriginal cultures, we have demanded more of Aboriginal peoples than the gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ who loves all peoples with compassionate, suffering love that all may come to God through him. For the church's presumption we ask forgiveness.
5. We confess that, with the encouragement and assistance of the Government of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada agreed to take the children of Aboriginal peoples from their own homes and place them in residential schools. In these schools, children were deprived of their traditional ways, which were replaced with Euro-Canadian customs that were helpful in the process of assimilation. To carry out this process, The

** "Changing the Landscape", p. 177.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Presbyterian Church in Canada used disciplinary practices which were foreign to Aboriginal peoples, and open to exploitation in physical and psychological punishment beyond any Christian maxim of care and discipline. In a setting of obedience and acquiescence there was opportunity for sexual abuse, and some were so abused. The effect of all this, for Aboriginal peoples, was the loss of cultural identity and the loss of a secure sense of self. For the church's insensitivity we ask forgiveness.

6. We regret that there are those whose lives have been deeply scarred by the effects of the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. For our church we ask forgiveness of God. It is our prayer that God, who is merciful, will guide us in compassionate ways towards helping them to heal.
7. We ask, also, for forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples. What we have heard we acknowledge. It is our hope that those whom we have wronged with a hurt too deep for telling will accept what we have to say. With God's guidance our church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people.

*Excerpts from "Healing and Reconciliation Program", Assembly Council report, 2005*²³

The most effective healing and reconciliation programs can be those that are started by individuals or small groups initiating meetings with local Aboriginal people. Having conversations will lead to more awareness of the needs and the development of programs and/or projects that can involve joint efforts. This sharing and working together will build friendships and lead to healing and reconciliation. If this type of activity can occur in many locations across our country and continue on a regular basis, the effect will be large and lasting.

By the grace of God a situation can radically change by transforming the attitude and mindset brought to it. Many words are descriptive of the situation faced by Aboriginal people in this country of Canada – poverty, suffering, discrimination and racism to name but a few. Many issues are identified as crucial to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people wherever they live: education, housing, healing, restoration of culture and community. Words and issues do not define Aboriginal people. What was found through the consultative process was hope, and it is in an attitude of hope that we bring forward our 'learnings'.

¹ A&P 2011, p. 32

² A&P 1966, pp. 281, 289, 92

³ A&P 1969, pp. 311-312, 322, 37

⁴ A&P 1970, pp. 309-310, 313-314, 40, 56, 102-103

⁵ A&P 1975, pp. 206-207, 65

⁶ A&P 1976, pp. 50-51

⁷ A&P 1976, p. 78

⁸ A&P 1978, pp. 402, 34

⁹ A&P 1980, pp. 413, 90

¹⁰ A&P 1984, pp. 525, 486, 48

¹¹ A&P 1987, p. 55

¹² A&P 1990, pp. 555, 38

¹³ A&P 1991, pp. 289-292, 50-51

¹⁴ A&P 1992, pp. 303-309, 45

¹⁵ A&P 1992, pp. 565, 73

¹⁶ A&P 1994, pp. 365-377, 29, 69, 71

¹⁷ A&P 1995, p. 270

¹⁸ A&P 1996, pp. 309-310, 214-215

¹⁹ A&P 1997, p. 57

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- ²⁰ A&P 1997, p. 33
- ²¹ A&P 2003, p. 36
- ²² A&P 2004, pp. 213, 19
- ²³ A&P, 2005, pp. 218-230, 24, 27
- ²⁴ A&P 2005, p. 39
- ²⁵ A&P 2006, pp. 212-15, 35
- ²⁶ A&P 2006, pp. 215, 18
- ²⁷ A&P 2006, p. 19
- ²⁸ A&P 2006, p. 35
- ²⁹ A&P 2007, pp. 333-334
- ³⁰ A&P 2007, pp. 323-325
- ³¹ A&P 2008, pp. 319-23
- ³² A&P 2009, p. 338
- ³³ A&P 2010, p. 430-6, 36
- ³⁴ A&P 2011, pp. 369-70, 31
- ³⁵ A&P 2013, pp. 368-9, 19
- ³⁶ A&P 2013, pp. 508-518, 13
- ³⁷ A&P 2014, pp. 370-372, 13
- ³⁸ A&P 2014, pp. 372-373, 13
- ³⁹ A&P 2015, p. 6
- ⁴⁰ A&P 2015, p. 25
- ⁴¹ A&P 2015, pp. 388-389, 18
- ⁴² A&P 2016, pp. 379-381, 20
- ⁴³ A&P 2016, pp. 219-220
- ⁴⁴ A&P 2016, pp. 223-225
- ⁴⁵ A&P 2017, 27, 369-70
- ⁴⁶ A&P 2017, 17, 217-9
- ⁴⁷ A&P 2017, 47
- ⁴⁸ A&P 1976, pp. 240-241
- ⁴⁹ A&P 1992, pp. 298-303, 45

Ecology, Energy, Environment

Also see Book 5, Caring for Creation

The Church Speaks

Theology

- The church must relate humankind's redemption through Christ to the redemption of all creation (Romans 8: 19-21).²
- Human stewardship is not defined as mastery, but it is about unequivocal love for this world, exercised with respect for the integrity of natural systems and for the limits that nature places on economic growth and material consumption.⁶

Energy

- Energy policy should be guided by the values of justice, participation and sustainability.¹⁹
- Congregations are encouraged to conserve energy through improved energy efficiency in church buildings.¹⁷
- We encourage the responsible use of nuclear technology, warn against apathy towards the dangers of it and deplore the attempts to justify nuclear power.¹⁸
- Businesses should be helped to adapt to responsible, but costly, energy policies.²⁰
- Development of policies that embody the environmental and social costs of energy production should become the norm.²⁰
- Canada should reduce the use of fossil fuels in order to limit emissions that contribute to global warming.²⁰
- Funding for research and development of renewable energy sources should be increased by redirecting funds from the development of conventional fossil fuels and nuclear energy.²⁰
- Publicly owned power corporations should consider purchasing power from industries which use cogeneration.^{20*}
- The GA should continue to develop policies and strategies to reduce its carbon emissions, such as tracking its carbon footprint.^{22**}
- Purchasing carbon offsets should never replace attempts to reduce overall carbon emissions.^{22***}

Land Use, Biotechnology and Sustainable Development

- The federal government must have the power to enact minimum national environmental standards.¹⁷
- Provincial governments should be permitted to enact stronger legislation than federal minimal standards.²¹
- Farmers should not be forced by economic constraints to engage in farming practices that harm the land.¹⁴
- Policy should be developed and implemented that will move Canada toward self-reliance in food supply.¹⁵
- The ability to create new life forms through genetic engineering should always be exercised in mindfulness of our responsibility to the vaster creation of God.
- Over-reliance on a few hybrid and genetically modified species should be discouraged in favour of preserving genetic diversity.

The Church Acts

* A cogeneration system produces electricity and heat at the same time.

** A carbon footprint is a measurement of all the greenhouse gases released by the combustion of fossil fuel, either by a particular company, organization or company, or during a particular activity.

*** The idea between carbon offsets is that one company that produces considerable amounts of greenhouse gas might offset that pollution by financially supporting projects with either produce no greenhouse gas or reduce the amount of greenhouse gas that already exists.

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General

1972: The 98th GA recommended members read *The Limits of Growth*. Also, the ESA was asked to prepare environmental policy with the CCD and to work with the Board of Christian Education to provide members with information on ecology and the environment.¹

1973: The 99th GA adopted “A Theology of Ecology” and urged local congregations to initiate ecological chapters in their communities. The GA praised the GOC’s quest for sound national energy and resource policies. It suggested that restrained consumerism could combat the environmental dangers of extravagant production.²

1974: The BCL recommended to the 100th GA some programs and resources on ecology and population.^{3*}

1976: The 102nd GA called for a moratorium on the development of non-renewable resources in northern Canada until the GOC had settled Aboriginal land claims and had adopted policies for environmental protection (see Berger Commission, First Nations).⁴

1978: The 104th GA accepted the position of the Presbytery of Newfoundland concerning the annual Canadian seal hunt and supported the GOC’s defense of the hunt.⁵

1984: The 110th GA endorsed a binational agreement concerning acid rain and called on federal and provincial governments to reduce sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions.⁶

1990: The 116th GA called on the GOC to produce environmental legislation without delay and to continue urging better environmental legislation in the United States.** The GA asked provincial and federal governments to include religious representatives at the round tables on the environment and economy and to pay particular attention to packaging standards, recycling and hazardous waste. The GA praised the WCC on its environmental work, instructed agencies to examine the environmental impact of their purchasing practices, and requested members to do likewise. The GA asked members to promote environmental stewardship by working with local and national environmental groups.⁷

1994: The 120th GA asked the GOC continue to implement fisheries management programs to protect ground fish stocks. It encourage the GOC to extend its jurisdiction over the “nose” and “tail” of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.^{8***}

2008: The PCC became a signatory to the Carbon Disclosure Project.^{9****}

2009: Church groups were invited to hold at least one “100 mile meal.”¹⁰

2011: Church groups were invited to share with Justice Ministries how they were reducing their carbon footprint.¹¹

2012: The Moderator of the 138th GA thanked the 49 companies that responded to the 2011 Carbon Disclosure Project’s questionnaire and wrote letters to the 17 companies that did not

* Programs included an Inter-Church Project that encouraged members to contribute to the 1974 International Conference on Population and the National Survival Institute’s goal of forming local ecology chapters.

** In 1997, the new Canadian Oceans Act extended Canada’s jurisdiction to 200 nautical miles, covering the head and tale of the Grand Banks.

*** The project is an organization that encourages corporations to disclose the potential impact of climate change on their operations.

**** These meals contain only those foods that are produced within a 100 mile radius of the dinner.

ECOLOGY, ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT

respond, urging them to participate.^{12*} Congregations and presbyteries were asked to calculate the carbon emissions of their commissioners' travel to the GA and to develop initiatives to offset the emissions.¹³

Agriculture

1987: The 113th GA asked the federal and provincial governments to study sound ecological farm practices and to provide incentives to encourage the preservation of wetlands.¹⁴

1988: The 114th GA recognized that the current state of food production and distribution constituted a national crisis.^{**} The GA asked the GOC to rescind sections of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement that made competition with American exports nearly impossible. It also asked the GOC to develop a comprehensive policy that would move the nation toward self-reliance in food supply. The GA asked lending institutions to follow the example of their American counterparts by writing down farm debt. Churches were encouraged to care for the farmers in their midst and to rethink their attitudes toward food production and distribution.¹⁵

Biotechnology (non-human applications)^{***}

2000: The 126th GA adopted the LMA's report on human cloning and biotechnology, which was prepared by Justice Ministries.¹⁶

Energy

1981: The 107th GA asked congregations to conserve energy and save on fuel costs by improving energy efficiency.¹⁷

1982: The 108th GA adopted a statement on the responsible and creative use of nuclear technology in Canada.¹⁸

1983: The 109th GA adopted a statement on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which called for a moratorium on the development of nuclear energy until certain safety issues were resolved and the GOC developed a sustainable energy policy for the nation.¹⁹

1991: The 117th GA asked the federal and provincial governments to develop a comprehensive energy policy in response to the environmental crisis. It suggested all governments consider ethanol as a sustainable fuel option. The GA asked the GOC to amend its plan to reducing carbon dioxide emissions so that it would meet the recommendations of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment.²⁰

1992: The 118th GA urged federal and provincial governments to institute a moratorium on hydro megaprojects until full environmental assessments were completed and to adhere to the principle that exporting power should not adversely affect the local ecosystem. It also suggested that groups displaced by hydro megaprojects be adequately compensated.^{21****}

* As of 2012, The PCC owned shares in all of these companies.

** The farm crisis had its roots in the 1970s, when inflation and the cost of credit were high. By the late 1980s, the cost of land had dropped by 25 per cent, bringing down the cost of crops. The loss of equity and income left many farmers with more debt than equity. The total farm population decreased by 8 per cent as farm units were consolidated into larger holdings.

*** For concerns about medical applications of biotechnology, see Life/Biotechnology. For concerns on the impact of biotechnology on overseas development, see World/Caring for Creation. For concerns about biological weapons, see World/Peacemaking.

**** This request concerned plans to proceed with the second phase of Quebec's James Bay hydroelectric project despite evidence that the project would negatively impact the environment and the Cree people living in the area.

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2010: The 136th GA decided that those attending the next GA would record their air and automobile mileage in order to measure the GA's carbon footprint. It was also decided that consideration of future GA sites would include inquiries related to venue policies regarding energy efficiency and environmental.²²

2017: The 143rd GA recommended that the Moderator, in consultation with Justice Ministries and the Trustees, write to Vermillion, Enbridge, Cenovus, Husky Energy, Keyera Corp, Suncor Energy and TransCanada Corp. Canadian Natural Resources, Encana, Crescent Point Energy, Imperial Oil and ShawCor Ltd.¹ affirming their participation in the CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project) and requesting information of how their company plans to meet emissions reduction targets set by the Government of Canada to meet Paris Agreement targets; their plans to introduce or increase investments in renewable energy in their operations and/or holdings; and to include the risks and opportunities posed by climate change as one of the required competencies for their boards of directors.²³

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy”, BCL report, 1983²⁴

1. Justice: In a just society everyone would have access to the energy necessary to meet their basic needs. People must learn to limit their demands rather than endlessly extend them. Justice would also require fairer distribution of energy between rich and poor, within countries as well as between countries. ... We believe that justice requires the development of more self-reliant national policies which place emphasis on the needs of local areas.

2. Participation: ... In a society based on participation, the basic choices cannot be made by a small body of experts, planners or entrepreneurs alone. Despite the complicated nature of some of the problems to be solved, democracy must not yield its place to technocracy.

3. Sustainability: A society which is sustainable and considerate of the future must resolutely combat the wastage of the earth's riches and make the development of renewable energy a top priority.... Energy choices should be carefully evaluated in terms of their implications for the world's long-term ecological sustainability and for the existence of other species on the earth. Energy politics must be designed to reduce international tensions and contribute towards the solution of other global problems including the establishment of a new international economic order.

Excerpts from “Acid Rain”, BCL report, 1984²⁵

As Christians we affirm that:

- God, as creator of heaven and earth and all earth's creatures, looks lovingly upon all the works of creation and pronounces them very good. God continues to care for creation and to fill all the creatures with good things.
- God as deliverer acts to protect, restore and redeem the earth and its creatures. These have become ... victims of the sinful pride and greed that seek unwarranted mastery over the natural and social orders, and the sinful sloth and carelessness that refuse responsibility for understanding and serving God's world.
- God as Jesus Christ has acted to reunite all things and to call the human creature back to the role of the steward, the responsible servant, who as God's representative cares for creation and acts in society for the sustenance and fulfillment of the one human family.

¹ The Presbyterian Church in Canada has investments in the oil and gas companies listed.

ECOLOGY, ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT

- The creator-deliverer acts in the ecological-social crisis of our time to demonstrate that same divine love which was manifested in the cross of Christ....
- Human stewardship ... is a dominion of unequivocal love for this world. It is to be exercised with respect for the integrity of natural systems and for the limits that nature places on economic growth and material consumption.

Excerpt from "The Canadian Family Farm: A Rural-Urban Crisis", BCL report 1987¹⁴

In order to survive, farmers need to make the business profitable despite the economic pressures working against them. This in turn forces many farmers into practices that are harmful to the land. Monocropping year after year without allowing the soil a chance to recover is tantamount to mining it of its natural riches. Chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, which are required to replenish the soil's lost nutrients and sustain high yields are affecting groundwater supplies and the natural environment. Our modern agricultural practices are promoting soil erosion at such a rate that on the prairies two bushels of topsoil can be lost for every bushel of wheat harvested. If our society does not allow farmers to care for the land as they need to, we run the risk of permanently damaging one of Canada's greatest and most vital resources.

Excerpts from "The Crisis in Canadian Agriculture", BCL report, 1988¹⁵

Food is essential to all life; without it we die. This is a truism, but many of us have forgotten just how tenuous our food supply is and who its true source is. From the opening chapters of Genesis we learn that food is a gift from God to all people. All human beings are to obtain their sustenance from God's hand. As the Israelites wandered in the desert, God provided for their needs, sending manna and quail. When the people of Israel entered the Promised Land, God provided the rain needed for crops to grow. In the New Testament Jesus calls on his followers to cultivate this same attitude, teaching us to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread". As a gift from a gracious and loving God, food is not something that we may withhold from others nor may we use it as a tool to reach political ends. It is to be enjoyed by all people as all God's gifts are.

...

Four areas of concern arise from the present situation in agriculture. First, the soil and water resources of Canada are being rapidly depleted by the present form of agriculture.... Second, the lending institutions -- the banks, credit unions, Farm Credit Corporation, and provincial lending institutions -- do not seem to be adequately aiding the farmers in this crisis.... Third, the farm crisis is leading to farm family dislocation and the breakdown of the rural community.... Fourth, free trade will have a profound effect on Canadian agriculture.

...

Pastorally, as Christians, we are called to "be there" for people in need. As we live out this incarnational theology we will be able to respond to the genuine human needs that those caught in the farm crisis feel.... Because of the lack of social services in rural areas, rural clergy must start to develop some of the skills that are not available in this context as well as establishing a network of social service contacts that farmers in need can be referred to. Although rural clergy must not carry all the burden, they can function as an early warning system pointing out to other social agencies individuals and families in special need.

By speaking about the farm crisis in a public way, clergy legitimize the discussion of the issue and encourage openness in the community about the issue. This freedom to talk about one's problems is an important step in the helping and healing process, but in the tight-knit farming community this kind of openness is the exception and not the rule. The church can lead the way in encouraging this self-help process. Indeed, the church should be involved in establishing self-help groups. In prophetically addressing the issue from the pulpit, clergy will challenge urban dwellers to re-think their attitudes towards food production, will challenge the protagonists in the

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crisis to stop blaming each other and to move towards true healing and hope, and will speak God's word to and for a people in need. Due to the extraordinary workload already carried by largely rural presbyteries, the majority of the work should be done on a congregational and synod level, with the presbyteries being consulted. On the local level there should be an effort made to work on an ecumenical basis. This will allow for a sharing of the burden and a wider group with which to communicate.

...

On the level of advocacy, The Presbyterian Church in Canada should ... lobby for farmers to obtain a price for their product which covers the costs of production plus a reasonable return for the farmer's labour.

...

One of the most important areas for advocacy is the urging of Canadian lending institutions to forgive farm debt. This write-down of farm debt would allow farmers caught in the financial crisis of the mid-1980's ... a new chance. Many of the farmers caught in financial straits would be able to survive the present troubles, if they did not have to pay for debts incurred when interest rates were at their peak.

Structurally, Canadians must look for ways to provide farmers with a way to cover their costs of production and make a reasonable return on their labour - in an economist's words, to cover their economic costs. Subsidizing production is not a good solution as it leads to overproduction and land misuse.... A system of farm income support, while extremely attractive on paper, would be extremely difficult to introduce politically because of the benefiting of only one sector of the economy. Thus the best system seems to be one that controls the price that the farmer receives. In a free enterprise system the only way to raise the price and not produce a surplus is to lower production. And the only way to lower production at a higher price for the long term is through supply management.

Excerpts from "A Statement on Genetic Engineering" BCL report, 1989

The biblical message that humankind has dominion over creation certainly does not give humankind carte blanche to alter or destroy part of creation. Instead we are given the awesome responsibility to protect it. This stewardship of creation demands from the people of God an ethical response to guard it. ... In this age of genetic engineering, humankind has become a creator itself of new life forms and special life forms. We must always act in our creating ability mindful of our responsibility to the vaster Creation of God.

One underlying message of scripture is that all life forms are sacred in the sight of God. It is God who made all things holy. Humankind has a special place in creation: to "have dominion over" it, but not to destroy it. God gave humankind special responsibility over nature as a guardian of nature.

...

All life forms have special worth as part of God's creation. ... While biotechnology gives humankind the potential to make great advances towards solving global problems such as famine, it must not be conducted at the risk of the ecosystem. ... Irresponsible use of genetic engineering would dishonour God's creation.

Excerpts from "Human Cloning and Biotechnology", LMA report, 2000¹⁶

Scientists offer several reasons for cloning animals. The Roslin scientists' work focused on a search for more effective ways of genetically engineering sheep to produce therapeutic proteins in sheep's and cow's milk. The first product for emphysema and cystic fibrosis sufferers is undergoing clinical trials. Cloning could produce identical livestock, allowing farmers to select

the most desirable traits. Other potential uses of animal cloning include testing for diseases and preserving rare species.

...

There is no federal legislation requiring that products be labeled if they are genetically engineered or if they contain products that have been genetically engineered, unless there is a health-related reason to do so, for example, the genetic difference may induce an allergic reaction.

...

There are several reasons why life science corporations are introducing genetically engineered crops:

- Some crops are herbicide tolerant, allowing farmers to reduce the amount of herbicide used.
- Some crops have added stress resistance. These crops could grow in conditions they could not otherwise tolerate such as drought or cold.
- To develop a specific trait to make the crop more commercially valuable.

To date, genetically modified crops have been developed to increase food production efficiency and facilitate food processing. There are other applications like bio-remediation which uses living organisms to remove or render harmless dangerous pollutants and hazardous waste.

...

Canada and the U.S. use the risk-benefit analysis and seek to determine what is an acceptable health or environmental risk. The precautionary principle is more prevalent in Europe and essentially means that if there are any doubts in terms of risks to human health or to the environment, the product cannot be put on the market.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for assessments relating to plant and animal health and the safety of the environment. The assessment looks at:

- the process used to develop the food or plant,
- the characteristics of the modified food compared to its non-modified counterpart,
- the nutritional quality of the food, and
- the presence of any toxicants, anti-nutrients or allergenic proteins introduced into the food.

Critics of the regulatory process note the following concerns:

- Most research and testing is done by the industry. Government agencies review the process, but do little independent research or testing. The fear is that the regulatory agencies have insufficient independence from the industries to be regulated.
- The review of genetically altered organisms is too narrowly focused on particular differences. There is no process for determining the interaction of the foreign gene in its new setting....
- More testing needs to be done on toxicity and digestibility. Currently, the effect of a novel food on the digestive process is determined by submitting it to a mixture of digestive juices found in a “typical” digestive tract. But there are no differentiated studies into nontypical digestive tracts, such as those of diabetics.
- There are no planned long-term studies on the effect of genetically modified foods or plants on humans or on the environment.

Excerpts from “Response to the Constitutional Proposals” BCL report, 1992 ^{26}*

The federal and provincial governments must share responsibility for environmental protection and resource conservation. The federal government must have the power to enact minimum

* For more excerpts from this document, see French-English Relations; Ecology, Energy and Environment; and Social and Economic Issues.

BOOK FOUR — NATION

national standards. Provincial governments, moreover, should be permitted to enact stronger legislation. We believe that, in the words of Living Faith, “Our care for the world must reflect God’s care. We are not owners, but stewards of God’s good earth. ...Our stewardship calls us to explore ways of love and justice in respecting God’s creation and in seeking its responsible use for the common good.”

Excerpts from “Genetics” LMA report, 2003⁶

On December 5, 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled by a narrow 5 to 4 margin against allowing the patenting of higher life forms in Canada. ... What was at stake was not only whether a mouse would be patented, but whether all higher animal forms of life (excluding humans) could be patented.

...

The CCC/EFC brief [the primary interveners in this court case] brief [stated];, “the notion that a part of a species of complex animal life should be viewed as an invention [by virtue of human genetic manipulation of a preexisting animal], a mere industrial product, is based on the metaphysical position which holds implicitly that nature and/or the environment is simply composed of manipulatable data - a standing reserve of calculable forces, completely subject to human manipulation. ... [Such a notion] fundamentally objectifies the natural world and would inevitably objectify humans, as they are part of the natural world...” While the Harvard scientists modified a complex life form, they did not invent that life form. God creates life.

Excerpt from “Additional Motion Re: The Cost of Holding A Carbon Neutral General Assembly” Justice Ministries report, 2010²²

Christians seeking to understand the need and implications of sustainable living are embracing a theology of caring for creation sometimes called eco-theology. Such a theology is based on the belief that all parts of creation are interconnected and interdependent.

...

We believe that God has made a covenant with all of creation (Genesis 9:8-12). God has brought into being an Earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. The covenant is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the marketplace (Isaiah 55:1). It is an economy of grace for the household of all of creation. Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are preferential partners and calls us to put justice for the “least of these” (Matthew 25:40) at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hosea 2:18ff).”

...

Sin is seen “in the breakdown of human relationships, revealed in the unjust distribution of resources which creates a chasm between rich and poor. Sin also lies in the loss of connectedness between human beings and the environment, which has brought about the crisis of global warming. And in all this there is, too, the breakdown of the relationship between us and God.”* Humankind’s refusal to acknowledge this brokenness and inaction to heal this brokenness is sinful.

...

A theology of care of creation is inconsistent with an individualistic view of human life or a consumer-based economy built on:

- unlimited resource development;
- the belief that bigger and more are better than smaller and less;
- monetary measures of development rather than human and environmental measures like life expectancy, child mortality, clean water, forest reserves, biodiversity.

* Quoting Paula Clifford of Christian Aid in “Theology of Climate Change,” The Micah Challenge, Frenchs Forest, Australia, May 2009, p. 11.

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- ¹ A&P 1972, pp. 296-298, 302, 65
² A&P 1973, pp. 270-274, 281-282, 40
³ A&P 1974, p. 355
⁴ A&P 1976, pp. 36, 50-51
⁵ A&P 1978, pp. 470, 57
⁶ A&P 1984, pp. 363-366, 26
⁷ A&P 1990, pp. 359-368, 51
⁸ A&P 1994, p. 68
⁹ A&P 2008 pp. 327-8, 41
¹⁰ A&P 2009, p.339
¹¹ A&P 2011, p. 379
¹² A&P 2012, p.373, 32
¹³ A&P 2012, pp. 373-6, 43
¹⁴ A&P 1987, pp. 327, 51
¹⁵ A&P 1988, pp. 339-344, 29-30
¹⁶ A&P 2000, pp. 333-341, 20
¹⁷ A&P 1981, pp. 305, 79
¹⁸ A&P 1982, pp. 316-317, 58, 85
¹⁹ A&P 1983, pp. 326-329, 29
²⁰ A&P 1991, pp. 286-289, 50
²¹ A&P 1992, pp. 298-303, 45
²² A&P 2010, pp.440-6, 36
²³ A&P 2017, 36, 379-82
²⁴ A&P 1981, pp. 305, 79
²⁵ A&P 1984, pp. 363-366, 26
²⁶ A&P 1992, pp. 303-309, 45

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Social and Economic Issues

See Also: Poverty and Social Policy

The Church Speaks

- Social and economic policies must seek the same objectives and be bound by the same requirements.¹
- It is a false notion that social policy is bound by principles that promote human well-being while economic policies are bound by principles that promote material prosperity.¹
- Economic policies exist so that human and financial resources will provide for people's needs. Social policies must encourage job creation and enable people to make a useful contribution to society.¹
- Social policies should help people develop their skills and abilities.¹
- Economic and social policies must be fiscally responsible and fiscally fair.¹
- The principles on which the church's social vision is based include:¹
 - human dignity
 - mutual responsibility
 - social equity
 - economic equity
 - fiscal fairness
 - ecological sustainability.
- Competition and greed are not the only significant motivations of human endeavours.³
- Society may not assert, on the basis of economic changes, that it no longer has the same obligations to the poor, sick, disabled, aged and children.³
- Respect for human beings is not based on merit, but on the unmerited rights and dignity of all guaranteed by the incarnation and the grace of God.³
- Believers in Jesus Christ and members of his church will pray for and work at the overcoming of greed in our own lives. We will realize that there are limits to what we should own and consume. We will use our strengths, talents and will not merely for personal gain, but for the welfare of the community.³
- No one should be left out of our human community. To receive the blessing of lasting peace and prosperity the last and the least must be taken into account along with the first and foremost.³
- Plans must be made to break down the enormous disparities between the advantaged and disadvantaged.³
- Those who have been given authority over the affairs of women and men are responsible for all the people. Their obligation is to recognize the dignity of every person and to bring all segments of the community together rather than, for political advantage, to turn one group against another.³

The Church Acts

1995: The 121st GA urged the federal, provincial and municipal governments to expand the framework for economic policy decisions to include social and environmental effects as part of the socioeconomic framework, to remove current disincentives to work experienced by social assistance recipients and to provide services needed for those able to work to move from assistance to employment. The GOC was urged to adhere to the formula of “national standards” for major programs. Sessions and congregations were to encourage members who work with business and labour organizations to reflect on ways to exercise their social responsibility to all members of society.¹ GA mandated courts and agencies of the church to engage in dialogue with

the CCD on the proposed mission statement, “Our mission, in a world of limited resources, is to use God’s gifts wisely and fairly for all.”²

1997: The 123rd GA sent the CCD paper, “The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy”*, to the courts, agencies and committees of the church for study and response, with a view to the possible formulation of a future interim statement.³

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “Serving the Common Good” LMA report, 1995²

Two major challenges face Canadians. The first is a subject of much discussion: fiscal deficit. The national debt causes serious concern. The second is what might be called a “human deficit”: massive unemployment, increasing child poverty, pollution and resource depletion. This is less talked about and often seen as less important than the fiscal deficit. Too often the debate is polarized and the positions inflexible. No one system or theory can adequately cover the actual reality. No one system or theory can be raised to an unconditional absolute.

...

Today we are in the process of redefining the fundamental rules of economics. For conservative as well as liberal economic thinkers, the rules that govern economic outcomes are unpredictable. We have lost sight of the purpose of economic enterprise. It is time to step back from technical debates and work to create an economy that serves the needs of people.

Social and economic policies must seek the same objectives and be bound by the same requirements. They are not just “interdependent” but more accurately mutually reinforcing, building a stronger and more just social community within the broader global family. In 1982 the General Assembly affirmed that “...social welfare and economic development and progress, rather than being competing elements, are intimately related and interdependent. Nations which seek economic revival at the expense of cutbacks in social programs have invariably failed.”⁴ It is a false notion that social policy is bound by principles that promote human well-being while economic policy is bound by principles that promote material prosperity. Yet, most discussion is on which set of principles has priority.

...

Economic policies exist so that human and financial resources will provide for people's needs. They should support the proper role of families and other social institutions, and not bring harm. Social policies must encourage job creation and enable people to make a useful contribution to society. Social policies should also help people to develop their skills and abilities. They must be fiscally responsible and fiscally fair.

...

After World War II the social safety system was erected on three pillars: full employment, an industrial growth strategy, and income security through a social insurance system. Industrial growth was fostered by financial assistance to retool and rejuvenate business along with direct government intervention in research and development. The Canada Assistance Program (CAP), established in 1966, is a federal-provincial cost-shared program providing income funds for support and services for low income Canadians. The rights outlined in CAP include the right to income support, the right to appeal if disentitled, and the prohibition of workfare. Provinces are to respect these rights or they will not receive federal money for welfare.

Many in Canada want to erode national standards and introduce workfare. Current uncertainty has led to increased individualism, to a form of social Darwinism, to a concern for “globalization

* A revised version of this report is available as a study guide.

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and competitiveness” and to growing hostility between various sectors of Canadian society. “Social Darwinism exists when a philosophy of linear evolution and ‘natural’ selection through the capacity to adapt to the environment and history is applied to societies, groups and individuals. Those who cannot keep up with the development or ‘progress’, who cannot ‘adapt’ or ‘adjust’ their modes of action and thought to the dominant norm, to the prevailing criterion of what constitutes an acceptable performance, are doomed to disappear.”*

On what can Christians base their decisions on directions Canada should pursue? What do members of the Canadian community owe to each other? How can people of faith encourage morally responsible public choices? How can people of faith measure the “success” of particular policies? Are Christian affirmations of love of neighbour, stewardship of the earth and its resources, and justice for all peoples and communities outmoded or unrealistic?

Principles for Ethical Reflection

Through public policy discussions [the church] has developed, along with our ecumenical partners, a social vision for Canada’s future within the global human family. The test of such a vision is not our treatment of the affluent, the powerful, or the competitive, but the degree of commitment to restore those who have been forced to exist on the margins, particularly the poor and the disadvantaged, to a fuller life in the Canadian community. This social vision is based on principles which represent the fundamental values that should inform public policy.

Human Dignity: The right of all persons and their communities to be treated with justice, love, compassion and respect, and their responsibility to treat others the same.

- Mutual responsibility: The obligation of the community to care for and share with its people, so that basic needs are met.
- Social equity: The right of all people to adequate access to basic resources, and to full participation in the life and decision-making of the community.
- Economic equity: The right of all persons and communities to adequate access to the resources necessary for a full life, including access to worthwhile work, fair employment considerations, and income-security provisions, and their responsibility to use such resources responsibly.
- Fiscal fairness: The right of all persons, communities, and institutions to fair fiscal treatment, and the responsibility of all to contribute fairly for the well-being of all.
- Ecological sustainability: The obligation of the community to practice responsible stewardship of the earth and its environment, so that creation is preserved for future generations.

Conclusion

Social security should enhance human dignity and enable all Canadians to be integrated into the mainstream of economic and social life. ... Meaningful employment is essential to dignity and self-respect. The federal government cannot afford to ignore the devastation wrought by the social deficit in order to address the difficulties presented by our financial deficit. Social deficits will bring problems that will increase financial deficits. We cannot allow the present situation to jeopardize our ability to analyze, to hear the voices of the exploited, to imagine alternatives, to act in solidarity, and to be faithful to God.

*Excerpts from “What does the Lord require of us?” LMA report, 1996*⁵

* UN World Summit for Social Development, October 1994.

What does the word “justice” mean?

In the Bible, justice is the standard by which the benefits and penalties of living in society are distributed. Justice is a state of being right, of right conduct or being in a straight way. When applied to God in scripture, justice designates the perfect agreement between God’s nature and God’s acts, providing a standard for humankind.

...
The biblical concern for the poor, the economically marginalized, is both general and specific. The Old Testament repeatedly draws attention to the condition of the widowed, the orphaned and the foreigner, the most vulnerable and least protected of their day. Jesus expressed a similar priority, not only addressing their needs, but confronting those structures and practices that excluded them. In defining his vocation (Luke 4), Jesus borrowed the Old Testament concept of the jubilee (Leviticus 25, Deuteronomy 15, Isaiah 58, 61, 65). Both the Sabbath year and the jubilee were based on a critical social analysis of economic realities that called for drastic, periodic and systemic reversals of the upward funneling of wealth. During those years, debts were canceled and debtors’ prisons emptied; land was redistributed and left for fallow; workers rested and slaves were freed. Right relations between landholders and peasantry, between the beneficiaries and the victims of economic injustice, between the farmer and the land were restored. Though theologians have argued for centuries over the application to their day of the jubilee mandate, God’s intention seems clear. To love God and neighbour is to practice jubilee: to turn back the forces of economic injustice in favour of the excluded, making full community for all God’s people a real possibility (F. Ross Kinsler*, p.11).

Justice as “Right Relations”; as Incarnation

Through Hebrew and Greek to Latin and English, the word “justice” has maintained the sense of “right” or “straight”. To do the work of justice is to bring people into right relationship with one another:

- Aboriginals with colonizers;
- corporations with consumers/hosts;
- humankind and the ecosystem;
- women and men;
- south and north;
- poor and rich; and
- the governed and the governors.

Similarly, the “justifying” work of Christ brings human beings into right relationship with God. Justice, founded as it is in the being of God, is most clearly demonstrated in the life and work of the God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. Even as God sent Jesus, so Christ sends us out (John 20:21) to imitate in our lives and work that which we see modeled in the life and work of Christ. The justifying work of Christ finds its incarnation in the justified’s work of justice, bringing God’s creation into right relationship with itself and with God, restoring community. Justice is the flesh on conversion, the deed that brings life and integrity to the word (James 1:22; 2:14-17).

...
Two ideas would underlie the creation of the welfare state in the social democratic economies of the North Atlantic: the adherence to a minimum level of support below which no person would be allowed by the state to fall and, secondly, the notion that the welfare state is for everyone, not just the poor, in a society in which everyone gives and takes during the various ups and downs of life, sometimes giving more, sometimes receiving more (Preston,** p.10). New laws and regulations

* Author of *The New World Economic Order: Challenge to Theological Education*, 1995

** Ronald H. Preston, *Religion and the Ambiguities of Capitalism*, London, SCM Press, 1991

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and tax structures reined in the crude greed and individualism of capitalism and ensured that everyone received key goods and services.

Injustice: the unequal distribution of God's gifts

The greatest divide in the human community is along the fault lines of economics. Much of the conflict that infects our homes and our cities, conflict within and between nation states is rooted in economics -- the unequal distribution of wealth, the accumulated hoards of the few and the despair of the many. Even more than generalized poverty, it is the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the awareness by the poor of their poverty and rising expectations for something better, that issues in conflict.

...

Taxes are, in effect, the price that people pay for public goods and services. When people purchase cars, video games, televisions and clothing, they see this as contributing to their well-being, a conversion of money into desirable goods and services, not a burdensome reduction in their disposable income. It would seem that when people recognize the link between the price they pay in the form of taxes and the public good or service they are receiving, they see it as good value for their money. In addition, taxes are levied by democratically-elected governments, while prices are set according to the limit of what the market will bear, often with little relation to their intrinsic value. What the government does with over 60 per cent of the taxes it receives is to pay them to others in the form of transfer payments. In a market economy, to have money is to have freedom: the more money you have, the more courses of action are open to you. In a market economy, to lack money is to lack freedom. The greatest constraint on freedom is low income. Thus when government taxes people, it unavoidably restricts their freedom, but it enlarges the freedom of the people who receive the transfer. On the whole, freedom is actually increased greatly. Many government transfers, such as pensions, children's benefits and social assistance, not only enlarge the freedom of many members of society, but provide the basic necessities of life.

...

While the market is good at doing some things -- producing goods of ever-increasing quality, creating wealth -- it is not particularly good at producing jobs. Jobs or the number of jobs created is incidental to the goal of producing goods and wealth. Neither is it designed for redistributing the wealth that it creates. That is what governments are for. Otherwise, wealth tends to collect in the hands of those who have it already. In a free market economy there are invariably casualties, those who sustain losses through no fault of their own and as a result of the inevitable workings of that free market dynamic. The responsibility to compensate for inadvertent injury is a collective one. Those displaced by the free market have a moral claim on compensation from the rest of us as a basic entitlement that the market itself cannot supply. Benefits are paid and assistance given, not because someone has taken pity, but because there is human need. Through collectively provided support, dependency on the vagaries of the market is reduced and the mutuality of our interdependence as a community affirmed.

Fourth century bishop Ambrose of Milan once said to the wealthy who gave some of their possessions to those in need: "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself." As long as society at large worked on the concept that assisting the poor was "charity", then the role of the church was to set up street missions and benevolent funds and used clothing depots. But at that point when churches perceived that care for the disadvantaged involved much more than charity, but justice, responsibility fell to society as a whole and government in particular. Particularly for Christians, caring for those in need is not optional; it is a matter of justice.

Excerpt from “Christian Faith and Economic Claims”, CCD report, 1996 ⁶

Various Christian churches played a significant role in the downfall of the communist system in Eastern Europe. Churches, including those of the Reformed tradition, became involved not because of Christian opinion on economics as such, but because the all-encompassing claims of Marxist ideology and the unlimited reach of communist practice threatened the integrity of Christian freedom.

Since the demise of Marxist socialism in Russia and Eastern Europe, the West has experienced the almost complete triumph of a renewed and extremely confident capitalism.

Were this development merely a matter of economics, one aspect of socio-political policy, the churches might have no cause to express an opinion. It is not the task of churches, as institutions, to endorse or condemn any particular economic theory.

This present situation in the West, and perhaps especially in North America, is one of politics, social policy, education and almost the whole of life being controlled by economics. In this case, rather than being controlled by the Marxist socialism, it is by an unrestrained capitalism. The churches in this climate should be concerned because the almost unlimited claims and seemingly boundless purpose of this economic theory threaten some of the fundamental teaching and aims of the Christian faith. Unrestrained capitalism is a concern for the following reasons:

1. it claims a pseudo-religious authority;
2. it exalts other needs over human needs;
3. it recognizes no motivation but greed; therefore, it becomes a form of behaviourism in conflict with the Tenth Commandment;
4. it eschews the compassion of Judeo-Christian ethics; and
5. it has garnered support from a religious segment.

Excerpts from “The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy” CCD report, 1997 ³

Capitalism or market economics, in various forms, has been the dominant economic system in Western Europe and North America for at least 300 years. ... At times, as in the period of the industrial revolution, many churches, including the Church of Scotland, became almost promoters of an expanding, unregulated capitalism.

On the other hand, the churches have been, at times, quite critical of the system. For example, the social gospel movement played a major part in bringing about certain checks and restraints on the system. What resulted from Christian and secular efforts were the various social programs which are in place today: social insurance, health care, welfare programs, aid to the disabled, minimum wage, etc.

...

During the last few decades, however, a new capitalism has emerged. Perhaps with the downfall of Marxist communism in the West, there was the perception that capitalism had proven it could be universally applied. Or, is it possible that in the long struggle with communism, the capitalist West unwittingly adopted some of the tenets of its Marxist adversary.

Whatever the timing or the cause, European and North American societies are now seeing a more confident capitalism being promoted by powerful forces as a system which claims control over the whole of life.

...

What we have in the new capitalism is another form of economic determinism. It would seem that our capitalism has unwittingly followed the lead of Karl Marx in believing that economics is

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a science like natural science and that economics is the answer to the whole of life. Capitalism, which had once been defended as a good practical method of doing business, is now being promoted as an essential way of life.

Why the Churches Cannot Remain Neutral in regard to the Market System

The claim that any philosophy, social science or economic system provides the answer to human life must be challenged by a people who obey the first commandment: “You shall have no other gods besides me.” (Ex. 20:3)

For example, the claim that an ‘Invisible Hand’ controls the economic welfare of a society and, finally, in a beneficial way, bestows blessings on deserving people, is in itself an idolatrous claim.

...

Biblical and Historical Background

First, it must be recognized that the Bible is profoundly concerned with the issue we call economics. The human tendency to desire things in life beyond the necessities of life is taken for granted. Never does the Bible regard us as angels or forget that we are human beings. (Heb. 2:5ff) The scriptures, however, place serious limitations on the human drive to accumulate.

...

Old Testament

The Old Testament certainly does provide for a welfare system. (Dt. 15:7-11) ... There is also the regulation concerning needy relatives. (Lev. 25:35) ... There is the practical law concerning the gleaning of crops which plays such a prominent role in the book of Ruth. ... Ownership of the land and of everything else is limited. (Le. 25:23) The whole concept of the tithe and other offerings is to remind Israel that possessions do not belong to a person because of hard work or skillful transactions but because of the unmerited grace of God.

...

All these passages are but examples of an overwhelming weight of evidence that the Latin American liberation theologians are correct in finding in the Bible, a “preferential option for the poor”. In these issues of fair play, sharing of wealth, redistribution of resources, Yahweh does seem consistently to be on the side of the needy. Perhaps this is because Yahweh knows that all the forces in the world favour the rich and the powerful. The God of Israel is the God who helps “those who have no helper”. (Ps. 72:12) As for the Old Testament admonition to the affluent, certainly it is about the opposite of “accumulate, accumulate”.

...

New Testament

The primary concern in Jesus’ teachings on this matter would seem to be in regard to the first commandment. Jesus tells the disciples categorically that: “You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Lk 6:13). ... Jesus’ teachings ... often identify the poor and the wretched as God’s special people.

In the Beatitudes:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

On the other hand:

Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation,

Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. (Lk 6:20-26)

Jesus’ admonition to share worldly goods has nothing to do with the merit of the recipient: “Give to everyone who begs from you...”. (Lk. 6:30) The point is to emulate God who “is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Lk 6:35,36)

...

The incarnation of Jesus, God assuming human flesh (Jn 1:14) demands that every human being be treated with respect. ... The weight of the New Testament message is unmistakably that no person or group in society can be treated as if he, she or they do not matter. Followers of the incarnate Lord cannot accept as normal a system in which there are winners and losers and the losers do not count.

The Reformed Tradition

What does our particular tradition have to tell us on the question of economics? This question especially requires an answer from Canadian Presbyterians because our most prominent founding theologian, John Calvin, has often been associated with capitalism and his followers either touted or taunted as being the founders of capitalism.

...

John Calvin ... did seem to endorse certain aspects of the new, developing capitalism of the times. Unlike the medieval church, and unlike Luther, he did not oppose the loaning of money for interest. ... If Calvin and his followers are accused of being the authors of the Protestant work ethic, the verdict would have to be: guilty. Calvin certainly believed that every able-bodied person should be hard at work. ... Calvin ... endorsed the concept of private property ... [arguing] that private property is essential to social order. ... Without private ownership, Calvin held, there would be anarchy. It would "turn the world into a forest of brigands where, without reckoning or paying, each takes for himself what he can get." ... Calvin comes across here as not only an ardent supporter of the capitalist system, but also of the propertied class.

...

Having noted these seemingly positive endorsements of the system, however, it must also be said that Calvin has many reservations about the economic arrangements of his own time and place. Far from being the "father of capitalism" as some would have it, he was one of the first critics of modern capitalism.

Interest on loans, for example, was acceptable to Calvin only when subject to severe restrictions. Absolutely no interest could be collected from the poor.

...

Even the "work ethic" had its limits: "...men torment and weaken themselves in vain when they busy themselves more than their calling permits or requires ... a great many people are their own executioners through working constantly and without measure."*

...

The holding of private property is by no means an endorsement of *laissez faire*. ... Paul Lehmann [states]: "The Reformers believed in private property. But ownership, as they understood it, is never the exclusive right of possession. ... According to the Reformation, the right to use determines the right to possess; whereas the capitalist doctrine is that the right to possess determines the right to use."**

...

Precisely because greed leads to all sorts of abuse and results in untold suffering of the poor, Calvin was quite insistent that the economy be regulated by the state. The guiding principle of such regulations would be that the needs of the community supersede the rights of the individual. Put in a more positive way, the rights of the individual are held in balance by his obligations to the community. ... Those who advocate less and less government will find no friend in Calvin. In Bousma's picture of Calvin: "The administration of 'justice' means, in addition to punishment,

* from John Calvin: *A Sixteenth Century Portrait*, William J. Bousma, p. 199

** Paul Lehmann, *The Decalogue and a Human Future*, pp. 192-193

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protecting the weak and helpless (especially widows, orphans, and strangers) and ensuring that all receive their due.”***

In more recent times ... the social conscience of Reformed people has been reawakened. The Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation, adopted as a subordinate standard of The PCC in 1954, attempted to describe and delimit the functions of the church and the magistrate (the state) in the twentieth century. ... Since the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation, The PCC has spoken on several occasions in regard to economics and related subjects. Generally, our church’s recommendations have followed the historic Reformed position initiated by Calvin. There has been an attempt to be at once faithful to the teachings of scripture and sensitive to the issues of the day.

¹ A&P 1995, pp. 297-304, 30-31

² A&P 1995, pp. 225, 24

³ A&P 1997, pp. 235-254, 38

⁴ A&P 1982, p. 319

⁵ A&P 1996, pp. 332-346, 37

⁶ A&P 1996, pp. 239-240, 24

*** Bousma, op cit. p. 210

Automation

The Church Speaks

- Deliberate planning is needed to protect those displaced by automation.¹
- The church should assist in preparing people to live with new technology by:³
 - using worship and educational materials that do not presume an overwhelmingly rural society but one in which science and technology have become dominant,
 - equipping people to make ethical decisions in a context where such decisions will have a far wider impact than in former times,
 - encouraging attention to human responsibility to be stewards, not exploiters, of the environment, and
 - helping people find creative (not just recreative) ways of using freed-up time.

The Church Acts

1965: The ESA reported to the 91st GA that, together with the Board of Christian Education, it had sponsored a joint consultation on Automation and Its Impact on Persons. One of the keynote speakers was a negotiator for the typographical union which had called a strike against all three of Toronto's daily newspapers over the issue of automating typesetting. Representatives of the publishers also participated. A letter was written to the premier of Ontario by the ESA, commending his efforts to re-open negotiations in the case of the printer's strike and recommending a process of binding arbitration should negotiations fail.¹

1967: The 93rd GA urged sessions and congregations to study the report of the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva, Switzerland, "Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of our Time". It also mandated the ESA to study the implications of automation on the political, social and religious life of the nation.²

1970: The 96th GA commended for study the ESA's paper on automation³ and "The Doctrinal Implications of Today's Technology", a paper prepared by the Committee on the Articles of Faith.⁴

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from "Automation and its Impact on Persons", ESA report, 1965¹

It is important, however, to recognize that the responsibility for keeping automation working for us and not against us is ours and not that of the machines. Machines are neutral: they are neither for us nor against us. Ours is the task of seeing to it that automation is used properly, and that its benefits are shared by all people and all nations.

Excerpt from "Automation", ESA report, 1970³

"It is the short term where the hardship comes. People have fallen victims, not of automation, but of automating—that process of transition from one system to a radically new one. At the present time this automating process is intense and painful. The time may come when the pain will subside as more and more industries complete the changeover to automation, and as more and more people are educated to live in this kind of technical world.

This last is very important, and perhaps it is the area in which the church can perform an effective ministry: to help people learn to live in this new kind of technical world. What this means specifically is difficult to say, but several possibilities suggest themselves:

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1. Let our worship and Christian education take into account the fact that we no longer live in a society that is overwhelmingly rural, but one in which science and technology and engineering have become dominant.
2. In this new kind of way of life, ethical decisions have become more crucial than ever before. The moral decisions that are made are apt to have a far wider impact than in former times. The church needs to be about her task of equipping the saints for the work of ministry so that these decisions they make will spring from a living faith and a deep commitment.
3. Our environment has become dangerously polluted and appears more fragile and less to be taken for granted than man had suspected. There is theological work for the church to do, bringing to mind the responsibilities God has given us to be stewards of creation, not its exploiters, and there is a moral task: to support government in the development of a proper environment.
4. People need help in finding new ways to use their time creatively (not just recreatively) as some of them have more time to spend. Not all of them will find it so; managers may be even busier than before as the demands upon them for policy decisions quicken in tempo. But for many people a four-day work week will be a possibility, and they will have opportunity for errands of mercy, for true gospel work. Will the church help them find a new vocation and equip them for it?

Excerpts from “The Doctrinal Implications of Today’s Technology”, report of the Committee on the Articles of Faith, 1970⁴

There are certain distinctive themes that characterize today’s technology and make its thinking very different from that of all its forerunners. Three of these distinctive themes are systems thinking, the concept of information and the use of models.

...

In systems thinking nothing stands alone and out of relation to anything else. Everything is normally related to an enormous number of other things. If nobody is entirely cut off from the rest of the world that realization provides a very valuable starting point for ethical thinking. No real ethics is possible for absolute authority or absolute individualism. If systems thinking is correct, that individual is just plain wrong who claims that he has a right to do whatever he wants to do whenever he wants to do it, or that what he does with his own life is nobody else’s business, or that his life is meaningless. Systems thinking emphasizes the relationships in which he inevitably finds himself, which have always sustained him and into which he still may enter. A team ethic, the notion of individual and corporate responsibility, the relation between man and his natural environment, present themselves as worthwhile extensions of Christian ethical teaching. Systems thinking goes along nicely with many older Christian insights which it grasps in a new way with new force. Some of these are: the covenant people, the branches and the vine, the household of faith, the family of God, and the body of Christ.

...

As parts influence parts within systems, so systems influence other systems. They impinge on one another at their boundaries and that is where ‘information’ appears. ... When we change or re-shape anything in any way, we make information. When we do this deliberately and according to certain rules, we call it communication. ... We communicate, however, by more means than sounds. In how many ways can you change yourself or something by your power? In that many ways we can affect other people and create information. Our communication is our whole life. A man’s word is the man. Mutual communication of our lives is communion.

...

Today it is possible to think of the world as ‘message’. What is its message? What do the heavens declare? Who sent the message? Have we received the message? What have we done to the message? What have we done with message? What has the message done to us? What is the Word? The Word become flesh? What about the worldly and fleshly Word-bearer? Is the church a divinely instituted communication system? What is prayer and the offering of worship? What is the message we are sending out? These few questions indicate the kind of depths into which the concept of information can lead us when we look for its doctrinal implications.

...

A model simply claims that a certain rather familiar pattern of relationships is very like the relational set-up of some less known phenomenon. ... Absolute knowledge of reality is known only to God. The rest of us must be content with some ‘likenesses’ of this mysterious universe and its contents.

...

The concept of model is very helpful in understanding the biblical references to the image of God.

...

The church’s task of preaching, teaching and Christian living is that of doing what can be done to inform the whole world with the model or image of Christ who is the image of God in man. This mission of the church must reach out in every possible direction in every possible way. His image is to be created in every individual, in every organization of every society and even in the world of nature. ... Christ was the image of God in man and now is also the image of man in God. By him communication is maintained between our sinful systems and the system we call the Kingdom of God. He came to love the world into his likeness, but we left the image of our sin in his crucified hands, feet and side. He is the Message, the Messenger, the Message received. System thinking, information, and models are only three of the very many facets of the new thought-world. The mind-style which is gradually emerging from contemporary technology is not altogether sterile as a means of expressing Christian teaching. It may turn out that models drawn from this contemporary milieu are in fact ... friendly to the biblical way of thinking.

¹ A&P 1965, pp. 341-342, 99

² A&P 1967, pp. 339, 81, 98

³ A&P 1970, pp. 307-309, 313, 56

⁴ A&P 1970, pp. 284-289, 293, 38

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Economic Crisis

Also see **Book 4 Nation, Poverty and Social Policy**

The Church Speaks

- Social welfare and economic development and progress, rather than being competing elements, are intimately related and interdependent. Governments should not seek to secure recovery from economic crisis through the neglect of those very citizens and communities for whom they exist.¹
- In times of economic crisis, it falls to the ministry of the church to relieve human suffering wherever it may be found.¹

The Church Acts

1982: The 108th GA adopted two statements on the economic crisis: one calling for action by the courts of the church and another on government cutbacks in social programs which was sent to federal and provincial political leaders.¹

1984: In its report to the 110th GA, the BCL provided a list of both denominational and ecumenical resources for congregations about the ethical aspects of economic concerns in the wake of a statement on the subject by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.^{2*}

1987: The 113th GA urged the federal and provincial governments to study the economic crisis in family farming with a view to preserving the family farm and maintaining prime agricultural land for agricultural purposes, and to find ways and means for farmers to receive a fairer share of the overall price of food products. It also encouraged presbyteries and congregations to educate members about the economic crisis in agriculture and to promote dialogue between farmers and consumers.³

The early 1980s was a time of economic crisis in which recession was accompanied by high inflation. To reduce inflation, interest rates were raised by the Bank of Canada. Typical mortgage and credit rates could be up to 24 per cent. Many farmers, home owners and small businesses could not meet the credit conditions for new loans. Meanwhile governments were seeking to reduce deficits through cost-cutting, mostly affecting social programs. So benefits from unemployment insurance or welfare were reduced in scope and became more difficult to access.

1992: The 118th GA urged federal and provincial governments to examine means other than curtailing social programs as more appropriate ways of stimulating economic recovery, for example: tax reform, energy conservation and conversion of military expenditure.^{4**}

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Economic Crisis”, BCL report, 1982¹

The church has always been at the forefront of efforts to alleviate suffering. Many of the social agencies had their origins in the church or under the auspices of the church. Once more it falls to the ministry of the church to relieve human suffering wherever it may be found. In the present situation, we call upon all of our congregations through the presbyteries to join with other churches and community organizations to make every possible effort to see that the hungry are

* “Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis”, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983

** Although there had been an economic recovery from the crisis of the early 1980s, another and deeper recession afflicted the Canadian economy in the early 1990s. This was also a period of stringent supply-side fiscal management that resulted in maintaining high real interest rates to maintain investment and severe cuts to government spending, primarily through reducing social benefits.

fed, the naked clothed, the sick tended, the homeless housed and the pain of stress and deprivation relieved. Through co-operative efforts, sensitivity to need, creative use of available planning, we can and must minister to the needs of our fellow citizens in the name of Jesus Christ.

Excerpt from “Government Cutbacks in Social Programs”, BCL report, 1982¹

The struggle to regain economic growth and well being in the nation is a concern of all aspects of our society, not just government alone. In times of constraint as well as times of plenty, it is essential that all society take part in ordering the priorities of the nation. We are deeply concerned that the present federal government and many of the provincial governments are attempting to deal with the present economic crisis by stimulating economic development at the expense of social objectives and needs of the people of this land. ... In its budgetary measures, the government appears to be saying that social programs are the culprit in the current crisis and that cuts will have to be made here to reduce the deficit while shifting spending priorities to the economic sector. This shift says, in fact, that human resources and the well-being of all our people are of no direct economic value; that the proper functioning of persons, families and communities are not essential to the smooth running of our industrial complex. Yet these very social welfare programs have been developed to deal with the human casualties of economic and technological change. In short, social welfare and economic development and progress, rather than being competing elements, are intimately related and inter-dependent. ... [W]e urge the government not to try to realize the good life of recovery entirely through material progress to the neglect of those very citizens and communities for whom the government exists. In the present crisis, we believe that both priorities must go hand in hand if we are to achieve renewed national health and unity.

Excerpt from “The Canadian Family Farm: a Rural-Urban Crisis” BCL report, 1987³

Our society cannot lay the blame for this situation on the farmer alone. In part, the urban consumer is to blame for demanding the cheapest prices for food regardless of the real cost. In part, the food-processing and distribution industry is responsible for demanding the lowest farm-gate prices to keep their costs to a minimum. The governments of the country are responsible in part for being more concerned with consumer satisfaction than the health of agriculture, and for responding to the problem only through treating the symptoms rather than curing the disease. By continuing to abuse the trust given us through our self-centered exploitation of the land and its resources, we, as Canadians, rob future generations of their hope.

We, as Christians, are called to love our neighbour and to put our neighbour's concerns ahead of our own. Yet we do not express that love if we value low food prices more than the well-being of those who produce food for us. We do not express that love if we are willing to let an economic system have free reign in our society heedless of the social cost. To express that love, we, as Christians, must change our attitudes and challenge all of society to change theirs.

¹ A&P 1982, pp 318-319, 77

² A&P 1984, pp. 368-369, 46

³ A&P 1987, pp. 326-328, 51

⁴ A&P 1992, pp. 308-309, 45

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Health Care

The Church Speaks

- In principle, a national health service is in harmony with the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹
- Everyone has the right to expect the implementation of those social, economic, occupational and environmental measures which encourage health.²
- Everyone has the right to effective participation in health decisions to ensure and maintain high quality individual and community health.²
- Everyone should have equal access to the best available health care regardless of ethnic, religious, sexual, age or economic distinctions.²
- The “five pillars” of the Canadian health care system* need to be affirmed and strengthened.⁴
- Consideration needs to be given to expanding the health care system to include home care and the cost of prescription drugs.⁴
- The Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan should not penalize caregivers who leave the workforce to care for family members discharged from hospital to home care.⁴

The Church Acts

1963: The 89th GA approved in principle a national health service, providing due recognition is given to the rights and best interests of the medical profession, and the plan is worked out in consultation with the recognized medical association.¹

1982: The 108th GA adopted a set of principles on health care, directed the BCL to seek membership in the Canadian Health Coalition, encouraged synods and presbyteries to seek representation on provincial health coalitions, and mandated the BCL to provide resources and models to congregations and courts of the church for their participation in health care decisions.²

1997: The 123rd GA affirmed the “five pillars” of medicare as set out in the Canada Health Act and mandated the LMA to produce a “carefully researched public statement analyzing the economics and politics of health care in Canada from theological, ethical and pastoral perspectives accompanied by strategies for its use in congregations.”³

1998: The 124th GA adopted a report on health care to be sent to presbyteries and congregations for study, for local action on the recommended strategies in the report as appropriate, and for report back to the LMA. The LMA was mandated to monitor changes in the health care system and letters were sent to the ministers of health for Canada and the provinces affirming support for the five principles of the health care system and requesting they continue to undergird any changes made to the health care system. Congregations, presbyteries and synods were also encouraged “to participate in networking with and being involved in pro-active ecumenical church coalitions that will safeguard against any further unjust policy changes to the health care system.”⁴

* The “five pillars” of medicare: **universality**—all those eligible are covered; **affordability/accessibility**—coverage provided without cost to the user; **comprehensiveness**—all required medical services are covered; **portability**—coverage no matter where you go in Canada; **public administration**—health insurance is not a fit subject for profit.

2000: The 126th GA urged the GOC to enforce the Canada Health Act (see box), to increase funding for health care to the 1995 level and to cooperate with the provinces to introduce national pharmacare and homecare programs.⁵

2002: The 128th GA received the report of the LMA regarding the work of the Ecumenical Health Care Network and the briefs presented on behalf of the participating churches to the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, which was reviewing the health care system, and to the Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care (Romanow Commission). GA informed the prime minister of its recognition that the health care system was in need of reform while recommending that changes fall within the five principles of the Canada Health Act. GA also encouraged synods and presbyteries to communicate in similar terms with provincial ministers of health.⁶

By the 1990s, several trends were undermining the comprehensiveness of public health care. Many Canadians who could not obtain treatment in Canada or faced long waiting lists were seeking treatment in U.S. facilities. Several provinces had delisted some services so that they were no longer covered under medicare. More early releases and day surgeries meant more prescription drug costs were borne by the patient, since these were only covered for patients in hospital. Private, for-profit companies were becoming involved in home care, especially under Ontario's competitive model for awarding contracts.

Of particular concern was Bill C-11 tabled by the province of Alberta. This bill would permit private hospitals to accept contracts from local health authorities to provide surgeries requiring overnight stays. Questions were raised as to whether this was consistent with the principles of the Canada Health Act, whether it would actually reduce waiting times, whether it would introduce a two-tier system and whether it would jeopardize the protected status of the health care system under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

2003: The 129th GA sought assurance from the GOC that the health care system is not vulnerable to international trade agreements.⁷

2004: The 130th GA recommended that federal and provincial governments develop policies and procedures to assess the feasibility of Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) in the construction and management of health care facilities; and that these studies compare publicly funded and managed projects to P3s based on the following criteria: compatibility with the Canada Health Act, cost effectiveness, efficiency, public accountability, risk liability and transparency. The Moderator was mandated to communicate this recommendation to ministers of health at the federal and provincial/territorial levels of government.⁸

2005: The 131st GA approved the Minister of Health's commitment to strengthening public accountability of spending on health care, especially in identifying and assessing the impact of privatization on Medicare. It called on the federal government to implement Recommendation 44* of the Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, (titled *Building on Values*) and asked the Moderator to inquire about the specific steps federal government is taking to

* Recommendation 44 stated "The federal and provincial governments should prevent potential challenges to Canada's health care system by: ensuring that any future reforms they implement are protected under the definition of public services included in international law or trade agreements to which Canada is a party and; reinforcing Canada's position that the right to regulate health care policy should not be subject to claims for compensation from foreign based companies. *Building on Values* p. 241

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address evergreening* and the notice of compliance regulations** as they relate to pharmaceutical drugs. GA recommended that the Health Council of Canada establish annual consultations with the health care sector and individual citizens.

2009: The 135th GA adopted a report on homecare and pharmacare. Letters were sent to the federal and provincial and territorial ministers of health inquiring about the progress in meeting the commitments they made on homecare and in establishing a catastrophic drug coverage program as agreed upon in the 2004 Accord (Ten-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care).⁹

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “A National Health Service”, ESA report, 1963¹

The church believes that in principle a national health service is in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the following reasons:

- It helps to insure the dignity and worth of all individuals. All people have been created in the “image and likeness” of God and are of infinite value in His sight. Every person, therefore, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and is entitled to a decent standard of living and adequate medical care. When a national health service is provided for all people indiscriminately, the dignity of each is enhanced, and the possibility of some being branded as second class citizens is eliminated.
- A national health service makes it possible for the richer people of the community to join with the poorer people in the interest of the health of the community as a whole.
- A national health service is one of the ways in which the people of the community can show their love for each other.

While the gospel emphasizes the worth of the individual, and stresses the fact that the individual must not be sacrificed to the group, it also reminds us that we are all dependent on each other and are members of one another. “God could himself indeed have covered the earth with a multitude of men; but it was his will that we should proceed from one fountain in order that our desire of mutual concord might be the greater, and that each might the more freely embrace the other as his own flesh.” (John Calvin) In other words, mutuality should characterize our relations with each other, and a national health service might be considered as one expression of our concern for the health and welfare of all people in the nation.

Excerpts from “The Canadian Health Care System”, LMA report, 1998⁴

Jesus cared for all, rich and poor. His was a wholeness ministry that centred on spiritual health in its fullest sense. We need to remind ourselves of the vital connection between spirituality and health. Health needs to be considered in all of its dimensions, at both an individual and societal level.

...

Introduction

Our health care system is undergoing massive and rapid change. It is important, as we come to grips with and reflect upon these changes, that we not isolate them from broader social, economic and political processes sweeping Canada and the world. ... An examination of the health care system serves as a sharp and timely lens through which to focus on our Canadian polity. A study

* Evergreening means that manufacturers of brand name drugs make variations (sometimes quite minor) in order to extend the patent coverage. This delays the ability of generic manufacturers to develop cheaper products.

** These regulations require manufacturers of generic drugs to determine that they are not infringing copyright, rather than requiring patent holders to show that the patent has been infringed. Since a patent holder may have multiple patents on versions of the same drug, it is often difficult to make this determination and the production of generic drugs may be delayed for many years.

(however limited) of health care policy cannot avoid considering the values which both bind us together as Canadians and which also bring much debate and division. What kind of society do we want? How do we care for vulnerable individuals, sectors and regions of our country?

...

Today, public discourse is increasingly shaped by the values of the marketplace. And the private sector's role in our publicly funded (but mixed) health care system is growing. It is especially notable in the pharmaceutical industry. Recent legislation has strengthened the power of foreign pharmaceutical companies and in the process has weakened the Canadian-based generic industry. The role of the private sector is expanding in home care. Clearly, there are activities best left to the private sector. But as the private sector's role in health care grows, different values will seep into our publicly funded system. The private sector is driven by profit. The public sector, on the other hand, has a very different mandate and ultimately is publicly accountable in a way that the private sector is not. The non-profit sector in turn operates by different values. This is not to suggest that there should not be a cross-fertilization of ideas across these sectors, but society needs to be aware of what this cross-fertilization actually means and what implications this is likely to have.

Much of the debate about Canada's health care system focuses on whether we can (or want to) afford a publicly funded system. This may be the wrong question. Instead, we might ask what are the social costs of a two-tiered system which replaces our present public system with a mix of private and public services? As a Christian community, our concern has to be for the weaker sectors and regions of Canadian society.

...

There are broader factors which ultimately affect our individual and community well-being. In the current debates too little attention is given to prevention and to public health generally. Both are at the bottom of the funding hierarchy. A clean and adequate supply of water has done wonders for our health and, as the church knows, clean water projects are frequently the kind of development we support in the Third World. We would do well to bear in mind the social and environmental determinants of health which are affected by a wide range of social policies. A toxic environment has a profound impact on public health. Our individual and societal health is affected by unemployment, poverty and inadequate housing. ... There are intangible factors at play as well. We live in an urban society, fragmented and characterized by mobility. A strong affirming social network does wonders for our mental and physical health. Lonely people, especially the elderly, are vulnerable. The importance of church as community needs to be underscored.

Historically the church has played a strong role in health care and that role continues to be important even as it changes its form and focus. There is an ongoing role for our church to engage in policy dialogue with all levels of government. Parish nursing programs are growing in popularity in congregations and denominations across Canada. There will be opportunities in the coming years to find practical ways to improve health care and to faithfully respond to the needs in our congregations and in our communities. Many congregations are on this journey already. We would do well to learn from their experience.

The Costs of Privatization

The call for privatization is growing in Canada and is supported by several assertions. First, it is argued that no one's access to public health care will be denied because someone else pays out of their pocket (or through a private insurance program) for private health care. Second, as some people turn to a private system, we can expect less demand for similar services in the public system. The danger with both these arguments is that as more people use and pay for private services, how long will they be content to continue paying taxes for the publicly funded system?

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It is also alleged that a private system is more effective and more efficient. This assertion is largely based on a comparison with the United States. So, how does our system compare to that of our neighbour? Access to treatment in the United States is faster than in Canada and for that matter, the United Kingdom. ... However, there are other variables to consider in weighing the relative efficiency and effectiveness of health care systems. Over 35 million Americans have no health insurance. Another 20 million have inadequate insurance, so a hefty medical bill can spell financial ruin. Our neighbour's system may be faster, but it is not equitable.

...

As a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the United States spends more on health care, 14 percent. Canada spends 10 percent, a figure that has remained stable for the last decade, while costs in the United States continue to rise.

Our system is not perfect. There are ways to make it more cost-effective and patient-efficient. On the other hand, it is accessible to all Canadians and at a considerable savings in administrative and payroll costs in comparison to our American neighbour.

Home Care -- in the comfort of familiar surroundings

While our hospital system is under stress, home care is increasingly viewed as a viable and more cost effective option.

With adequate support systems, most of us would prefer to be cared for in our homes. As hospital stays become shorter, many of us will have no choice. There is a great deal of uncertainty for patients recovering in their homes or for palliative care patients who wish to be at home. The objective of the continuing care model is to “enable individuals requiring help to return home from hospital or to remain at home in the community; to delay or avoid a nursing home admission and to place individuals in a nursing home if necessary”.

...

The need for home care is growing but continues to receive only two to four percent of the health care budget. Home care is not included in the Canada Health Act. Some procedures that are covered in a hospital are not covered in a home setting. This applies to many prescription drugs. National policies and standards are non-existent. There is a great deal of inconsistency across the country. There are few up to date studies which provide a national picture.

Beyond the health care system: social determinants of health

Over the past quarter century, much more attention has been given to the social determinants of health. In the past, health was defined as the absence of disease or health problems. Increasingly, health is viewed as “... a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being. Well-being also includes the ability to realize hopes and satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment”. For Christians, this would include spiritual well-being. In the final report of the National Forum on Health, Canadians are reminded that improving our health involves action on factors outside the health care system. This does not in any way diminish the importance of ensuring access to health care, but points to social, economic and environmental factors which have a bearing on our health.

A case in point is an extensive study released by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) on the environment and its impact on our health. In this study, the OMA identifies air pollution in Ontario as a public health hazard which directly contributes to the respiratory and cardiac problems “treated daily by Ontario's doctors in emergency, hospital and consulting rooms across the province.” The OMA drew attention to an Ontario government study which calculates that “... as many as 1,800 people a year are dying in Ontario from polluted air.”

...

A report by the Canadian Council on Social Development states that 1.4 million children are living in poverty. ... Children born in poor families are twice as likely to be born prematurely and with low birth weight. Poor people live shorter lives and face greater risks of chronic health problems. Unemployed people face greater stress which is often internalized within a family. Aboriginal Canadians can expect to live on average, seven fewer years than non-Aboriginal Canadians. As the final report of the National Forum on Health states, "higher incomes are related to better health not only because wealthier people can buy adequate food, clothing, shelter and other necessities, but also because wealthier people have more choices and control over decisions in their lives. This sense of being in control is intrinsic to good health".

The Federal Government and the Provinces: Funding and National Standards

The federal Liberal government under Lester Pearson passed the National Medical Care Insurance Act in 1966. . . It was implemented two years later and, by 1971, all provinces were participating. Federal block funding for Medicare was a major intervention into what is a provincial jurisdiction and it was based on a 50/50 cost sharing between the federal and provincial governments. The 50/50 formula gave the federal government the ability to set national standards.

The funding rules changed in 1977 when the federal government passed the Established Program Financing Act (EPF) in which it abandoned the 50/50 cost sharing formula for a complicated arrangement of cash grants and tax points. The EPF also consolidated existing federal grants for both health and post-secondary education. Total EPF grants grew in size along with the population and were designed to grow at the same rate as the economy. So if health costs grew faster than the economy, provinces were expected to make up the difference on their own. If costs were contained, the provinces would benefit.

As the provinces' share of health care costs grew, some provinces began to allow some hospital user fees or extra billing by physicians. In response, the GOC enacted the Canada Health Act in 1984. The act reaffirmed the program criteria for public health insurance and specified that the federal government could withhold some of its contribution from any province that breached them. Federal transfers could be deducted dollar for dollar by the amount collected through direct charges to patients. Three years later the Mulroney government linked EPF growth to GNP growth minus two percent. In the 1990 and 1991 federal budgets, the total EPF contribution was frozen for five years. Beginning in 1995, it would grow by GNP growth minus three percent. Consequently, fewer and fewer federal funds were being transferred each year.

The 1995 Canada Health and Social Transfer Act combined transfers for health and social programs in a single block grant to give provinces and territories the flexibility to allocate payments among social programs according to their priorities, while upholding the principles of the Canada Health Act and the condition that there be no period of minimum residency with respect to social assistance.*

The changes in the federal-provincial funding arrangements since Medicare was established in 1966 have had two consequences. The first and most obvious is that the provinces' share of health spending has increased. The second, less obvious consequence is the move by some provinces towards different health care models. Both consequences make it increasingly difficult to maintain national standards in health care.

* Another feature of this act was to remove sections on social program funding that barred workfare programs and required access to an appeal process when welfare eligibility was denied. In 2003, as part of the post-Romanow negotiations, the CHST was broken again into two funds: one for health care and one for post-secondary education and other social programs.

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God calls us to care for each other and to protect the most vulnerable in our society. Social analysts are drawing our attention to the need to invest in social capital; that is people and the communities they live in. Effective social programs have done much to improve our well-being individually and as a society. The United Nations development program does an annual survey which ranks countries according to quality of life. Canada has consistently ranked high. In part, it is due to our social safety net. Sadly, this net is frayed. It needs to be strengthened and improved if we as a society are to address pressing social problems.

Recommended Strategies for the Church

Congregations can set up learning opportunities (workshops, seminars, study groups) focusing on one or more of the following topics:

- It is worth reflecting on what life was like for most Canadians before medicare. We can learn from older members of our congregations.
- Our health care system can be improved. The resources are finite. We are called to practice good stewardship. What major changes to the health care system do you see taking place in your community? What impact do these changes have on the five pillars of Canada's health care system? Are there vulnerable sectors in your community affected by the changes? How are they affected?
- Are there other denominations or community groups monitoring these changes? Working with others would strengthen our capacity so that these changes could be monitored more broadly and effectively.

Patients are generally being released more quickly from hospitals. Home care is growing in importance. In the absence of national policies and procedures, support systems are very uneven across the country.

- Caregivers for recovering patients or palliative care patients need our support. The provision of hot meals and doing house chores can do much to relieve the burden that caregivers carry.
- What pressures do people who work in our health care system face? How can congregations support them? Congregations might consider organizing a forum to learn from those who work in the health care system.
- Parish nursing ministries: This ministry is growing in popularity across Canada. Several congregations have already established a parish nursing ministry. ... The LMA can help in developing a wider network and in providing resources about this Ministry.

Learning about and monitoring the changes taking place in our health care system is an opportunity to dialogue with policy-makers.

- The five pillars of our health care system need to be affirmed and strengthened. A publicly funded system is more efficient and effective than a two-tiered or privately funded system. We need to be mindful that these pillars (as imperfectly as they are practiced) are not violated.
- Expanding medicare to include a home care and pharmacare program for essential prescription drugs should be included in public discourse about our health care system. In "Canada Health Action: Building on the Legacy" -- final report of the National Forum on Health, it is noted that because pharmaceuticals are medically necessary, Canada should take the necessary steps to include drugs as part of the publicly funded health care system. In its research, the national forum reported public financing is the "only way to control costs and to promote universal access."

- Home care is a major emerging issue. There are no national policies or national standards. So, there are great variations across the country and within jurisdictions. Services and prescription drugs that are covered while a patient is in hospital, are not when the patient is discharged and returns home. This is inconsistent and these services should be covered.
- Some steps have been taken which recognize the sacrifices made by caregivers, such as the caregiver tax credit announced in the February, 1998 federal budget. This is a start. The Canada and Quebec pension plans currently penalize caregivers who leave the workforce for a period longer than two years. Our population is aging. Patients are being discharged earlier to recover in their homes. Caregivers should not be unfairly penalized. The CPP and the QPP need to be updated to reflect these changes.

Excerpts from “Health Care: what we are learning from P3s”, LMA report, 2004⁸

One way of understanding P3 is to consider the merits of a 30-year lease versus a 30 year mortgage. A mortgage is considered an asset, while a lease is not. Increasingly, governments are considering the leasing option because the lease does not show up as debt on government books.

...

Governments can, in fact, borrow more cheaply than the private sector, so in a P3, the additional interest charge adds to the cost to the public. ... In addition, government, on behalf of citizens, pays, not only for service but also for the return on investment to shareholders.

...

The auditor for the State Government of New South Wales in Australia found that at the end of a lease arrangement for its P3 hospital, the government will have paid for the hospital twice, yet it will still not own it.

...

P3 hospitals are not de jure inconsistent with the requirements of the Canada Health Act. The risk is that they create an institutional environment within which two-tiered services can flourish.

¹ A&P 1963, pp. 316-317, 318, 78

² A&P 1982, pp. 326-327, 99

³ A&P 1997, pp. 28, 44

⁴ A&P 1998, pp. 398-416, 27

⁵ A&P 2000, pp. 332-333, 20

⁶ A&P 2002, pp. 334-335, 25

⁷ A&P 2003, pp. 366-367, 42

⁸ A&P 2004, pp. 379-81, 17

⁹ A&P 2009, p. 342

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Housing

The Church Speaks

- Synods and presbyteries should consider taking advantage of provincial and federal grants to purchase or build housing for senior citizens.³
- All citizens should have access to decent housing.⁶
- Subsidized housing is an effective means of providing adequate housing to low-income households.⁶
- There is a need for public housing and co-operative housing in addition to what is supplied by the private sector.⁷
- Provision should be made within housing projects for such necessary facilities as recreation, child day-care, etc.⁷
- The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation should give priority to meeting the housing needs of people with low incomes, operating as a social service agency, not as a profitable business.⁷
- Expropriated property needs to be compensated at current market values with consideration being given also to the disruption from the community and the difficulty in acquiring equal accommodation.⁷
- Residents in areas under redevelopment should be consulted and given powers in the decision-making processes that they may have a part in the shaping and restoration of their own communities.⁷
- Adequate, affordable housing is a vital pillar for building communities in which all human beings can flourish according to the will of God, and a foundation for good health, employment and education. When housing is inadequate or unaffordable these things diminish.¹⁸
- Inadequate housing contributes to poorer health, increased likelihood of preventable illness and death, and increased risk of exposure to violence (particularly among those who are homeless). Poor housing affects a child's performance at school, which may have an impact into adulthood.¹⁸
- Addressing inadequate housing in Indigenous communities is a fundamental pillar to initiatives that would address health and education.¹⁸
- Affordable housing should be part of a comprehensive national poverty reduction strategy with regular and predictable funding and a long term plan. It should support new housing; funding to maintain and repair the current stock of affordable housing and funding for support services to help people access and maintain their housing.¹⁸
- Addressing homelessness and the need for adequate affordable housing in Canada will involve different approaches and the cooperation of federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and First Nations levels of government.¹⁸

The Church Acts

1954-1955: The 80th GA (1954) mandated a special committee to study the question of purchasing or building a home for the aged.¹ The 81st GA (1955) approved the recommendation to refer the matter to Synods for study and action in light of the need to comply with provincial legislation in any such undertaking.²

1961-1962: The 87th GA (1961) urged presbyteries to “consider seriously the possibility of establishing new housing facilities for senior citizens ... in view of both the need and the provision through loans and grants on the part of the National Housing Act (NHA) of 1944 (Canada) and provincial governments.”³ The 88th GA (1962) asked the GOC for amendments to

the NHA which would facilitate meeting “the particular needs of various categories of elderly persons.”⁴

1965-1968: The 91st GA (1965) called on provincial governments to study the needs with regard to housing and education where it affects the poor.⁵ The 92nd GA (1966) asked synods, presbyteries, evangelism and social action councils and/or study groups in congregations to give serious consideration to the problem of sub-standard housing and to support proposals for the provision of decent housing for all citizens.⁶ The 94th GA (1968) adopted a position statement on housing directed to the GOC and the provincial governments and a second statement directed to presbyteries and congregations. It also endorsed the principle of fair (i.e. market-value) compensation for expropriated property, and of consultation with current residents of neighbourhoods under redevelopment. The ESA noted that some synods had adopted resolutions on housing in 1967 and that the ESA had produced a study-action guide on housing, “A Situation Close to Home.”⁷

1969: The 95th GA urged presbyteries and groups of presbyteries to take steps to establish and maintain homes for older persons within their bounds and that properties such as Penmarvian* be better used as homes for older persons.⁸ It also encouraged congregations which had amalgamated to use some of the money from the sale of buildings and properties and/or the land made available for the care and housing of senior citizens.⁹

1970: The Administrative Council reported to the 96th GA that \$15,000 of National Development Funds had been invested in Interfaith Housing, a housing project in Calgary. \$25,000 was allocated to Presbyterian and Reformed Senior Citizens Housing Society, New Westminster BC.¹⁰

1973: An ESA task force set up to ascertain the extent of the need for senior citizens’ housing and the degree of involvement by the churches of Canada produced a comprehensive report on the subject which was available for sale at the 99th GA. It noted that PCC congregations and presbyteries had been “much slower getting into this field than other churches.” GA urged again that presbyteries and congregations become more involved with senior citizens both in the provision of housing and in meeting the social and spiritual needs of the elderly. It also recommended that the finance committee of the Administrative Council review the 1969 recommendation to invest 25 per cent of the liquid assets of The PCC in residential mortgages with a view to its implementation.^{11**}

1975-1976: The Administrative Council reported to the 101st GA (1975) that it had agreed to direct the interest of the Endowment Fund of John Penman to the Building Fund of Penmarvian of Paris*** until the new senior citizens’ home was completed and thereafter to direct the interest to the support of Presbyterian ministers, missionaries, their wives and widows.¹² The 102nd GA (1976) adopted a plan outlined by the Administrative Council to provide assistance with

* The house and grounds of Penmarvian were bequeathed to The PCC in 1931 to be used as a residence for retired ministers, missionaries, their wives and widows.

** This recommendation had originally gone from the ESA to the Administrative Council in 1969, which referred it to its finance committee. As it was still under review, it was not ready for adoption by the 95th GA (1969), nor had it been brought forward since. The ESA noted that while this would mean possibly reduced financial yield, it would be in line with the church’s mission to meet the needs of those in all financial situations. Part of the National Development Fund was used for this purpose from 1973 until the fund was completely expended in the 1980s. Currently The PCC has no investments in residential mortgages.

*** Penmarvian of Paris was a corporation set up to maintain the Penmarvian home when it was acquired from The PCC by the Presbytery of Paris in 1969. Penmarvian of Paris had set up a building fund for replacing the home as rising costs made the original home too expensive to maintain. The original home was closed in 1977.

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retirement housing to ministers and full-time employees of the church through the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC), with a substantial grant for this purpose coming from the National Development Fund.^{13*} The 102nd GA also sent greetings to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat Conference) meeting in Vancouver and a message to the Canadian delegates to the Conference.¹⁴

1987: The 113th GA stated to the federal and provincial governments that the lack of adequate and affordable housing had reached a national crisis, while commending such steps as had been undertaken to provide housing for the disadvantaged. It called for increased assistance for private non-profit and co-operative housing developments, mandated a task force to develop strategies through which the church could address the housing crisis, asked the BWM to consider becoming financially involved in providing transition housing for refugees and immigrants, called on congregations and presbyteries to be active in many ways** to address the housing needs in their own communities, and recommended that the PCBC, the BWM, and the Administrative Council review surplus properties of congregations and courts of the church to determine the worthiness and appropriateness of use by the church for housing purposes.¹⁵

1988: The Administrative Council reported to the 114th GA that a survey of congregational activity on affordable housing had drawn 264 responses indicating that “many congregations are aware that there is definitely a housing crisis and that the crisis is larger than seniors’ housing.” It also reported on the Canadian Alternative Investment Co-operative (CAIC), which made mortgage loans for urban renewal programs and co-operative housing. The trustee board and the PCBC were asked to study CAIC as an appropriate vehicle for investment by The PCC.¹⁶

2007: The Moderator of the 133rd GA wrote to the prime minister and premiers recommending the establishment of a national social housing program.¹⁷

2014: The Moderator wrote to: 1) the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development inquiring about the Government of Canada’s plans to address the need for decent housing in Aboriginal communities; 2) the federal Minister of Employment and Social Development recommending that the GOC’s long term plan for housing put core investments on solid ground, increases predictability, protects Canadians from the planned expiry of \$1.7 billion in social housing agreements and ensures a healthy stock of affordable rental housing for Canadians; 3) the relevant minister in every province and territory recommending that they take every opportunity to collaborate with the federal government to develop long term strategies and programs to reduce homelessness and provide adequate and affordable housing.

Presbyterians are encouraged to offer prayers for the homeless and those who lack decent, affordable housing in the community on the Sunday nearest to National Housing Day (November 22).

* The National Development Fund was established for two purposes: Category A was invested and the income from the investments added to the general income to assist in supporting the church’s ministry, especially in increasing minister’s stipends. Category B was used for grants to various projects of the church.

** Congregations were asked to: a) to approach existing social agencies to determine their concerns and recommendations on housing needs; b) to act as facilitators and advocates for housing needs in the community; c) to consider offering space free of charge to help tenants’ associations and to assist evicted tenants to find alternate housing; d) to support an affordable rent registry; e) to consider ways to use the manse (if not used by the minister) for housing the disadvantaged; and f) to work ecumenically to acquire larger sized homes to provide residential facilities to single parents prepared to share with others in similar circumstances, and to those with social, physical or emotional problems who cannot afford rooming house accommodation.

Congregations and presbyteries were invited to consider ways of establishing or supporting affordable housing initiatives in their communities.¹⁸

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Homes for the Aged”, ESA report, 1954¹

Your board has become increasingly exercised about the lack of social institutions in our church. We have shown commendable concern for men’s souls, but not always commensurate concern for their bodies. ... Our primary concern in this report ... is the lack of adequate housing for the senior members of our church who have not the funds to provide proper quarters for themselves. ... The command of Christ to care for those less fortunate than ourselves is inescapable.

Excerpt from “The Effect of Sub-Standard Housing on Family Life”, ESA report, 1966⁶

We have declared a war on poverty in Canada.* It can be assumed that a large proportion of the poor will be found in sub-standard housing. ... The war on poverty will have to be fought on many fronts. It would seem obvious that the possibility of obtaining adequate housing should be the privilege of every Canadian family. Subsidized housing has often proved a most effective means of encouraging a despondent family to once again make a try to better themselves. If we are interested in prevention, the possibility of adequate housing would remove one major source of stress in family life and thus reduce the number of family breakdowns to some degree.

“Statement of concern on sub-standard housing”, ESA report, 1968⁷

We have not been sufficiently concerned about the plight of families who are compelled to live in inadequate dwellings and ... we have often been too much concerned with the prestige of the communities in which we live and the value of our own properties to welcome the stranger to our street or public housing and low rental projects to our neighbourhood.

We call upon the presbyteries and congregations in our church to engage in honest study of their communities to identify the needs for adequate housing of the poorly paid, the unemployed, the pensioner and the incapacitated; and then to pursue courses as God directs, whether through private and congregational action, or through public or political channels, to the end that the lot of people living in inadequate housing may be improved.

We declare ourselves opposed to the taking of excess profits made at the expense of the economically hard-pressed by those property owners who are tempted to take undue advantage of a housing situation which is in their favour, whether they are owners of slum housing, or absentee landlords, or land speculators; and we call upon our people to shun the immorality of this kind of profiteering.

Message from the 102nd GA to Canadian Delegates to the UN Conference on Human Settlements, 1976¹⁴

We urge the Canadian delegation to commit Canada to a national human settlements policy that will afford justice to peoples and nations in need: the native peoples of Canada whose aboriginal rights must be maintained; the needs of those who intend to migrate or immigrate but are restrained when immigration policies are based solely on the manpower needs of urban industrialization; the needs of ordinary citizens, the poor and the near-poor, who are victimized by land speculation and decision-making processes beyond their reach; the needs of the

* The U.S. Congress approved the President’s program called a “War on Poverty” in 1964. The GOC developed a Canadian War on Poverty program in 1965.

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developing nations of the world for clean water and reasonable access to world markets and resources.

*Excerpts from “The Crisis in Adequate and Affordable Housing”, BCL report, 1987*¹⁵

The thematic statement for the church’s 1986 Consultation on Adequate and Affordable Housing was taken from a brochure of Homes First Society of Toronto:

“A home is more than shelter. It is part of ones’ security, identity, privacy, hospitality. Being homeless is not only a physical deprivation. In ways that we who have homes can scarcely conceive, homelessness subjects a person to experiences and problems that undermine his or her sense of worth as a human being.”

Deuteronomy 10:17-19 reminds us that fair treatment for the poor and the stranger is a constant theme throughout scripture. Fundamental to our relationship with God is how we, as a community of faith, relate with others. Those who are most in need or at risk in society were to be cared for by those who were privileged. Matthew 23:23-24 reminds us that sometimes we are so preoccupied with our own concerns that we neglect justice, mercy, and honesty. We are called to live out our faith in the context of justice. As Christians we are called to strive constantly for justice in our society and in our personal lives. The spread of God’s reign requires the breaking down of the walls of separation in our society and building a community that recognizes the needs and aspirations of all people.

...

Many people automatically assume that hostels are part of the housing solution. In fact, hostels are not a solution, but a symptom of a deeper problem. Hostels are a form of accommodation established to provide shelter to those who are in transition or in crisis and have limited or no means to pay. Hostels are to provide emergency shelter for those who would otherwise have no option but to sleep in the street. They are also supposed to provide a point of transition to more stable and appropriate housing. Unfortunately hostels have become long-term housing options for many of their residents. There is a need for appropriate and affordable long-term housing. Hostels are worthy of support because of the service provided to persons in crisis in our society, but must not be seen as a solution to house permanently individuals or family groups.

...

One attempt to solve the housing crisis in the past has been the construction of public housing. This is, economically speaking, the most cost-effective way to produce rent-geared-to-income units over the long term. However, there are many social problems associated with large-scale developments and the concentration of projects in a particular neighbourhood. Housing solutions need to be focused on mixed housing for the social well-being of all concerned.

...

Rent supplements and shelter allowances have also been proposed as solutions. Rent supplements are the most cost-effective way to produce rent-geared-to-income units over the short term, which makes the proposal seem attractive. However, costs continue to escalate over time. Further, rent supplements are more expensive than public housing and non-profit programs in the longer term. There is a possibility that this proposal would isolate low-income tenants in specific areas (ghettoization). Shelter allowances would result in substantial rent inflation in a high rental market and would do little to increase the supply of affordable housing. Most subsidy dollars would simply improve the return on investment of landlords.

The most commonly advocated solutions are mixed-income non-profit and co-operative housing. These have high initial subsidy costs, but are increasingly cost-effective over time. ... Mixed-income projects can avoid the stigma associated with large-scale public housing projects, while

still creating a sense of community. ... It is in the sectors of non-profit and co-op housing that churches, congregations and presbyteries could have the most impact.

Excerpt from “What the Bible says about home,” Justice Ministries Report, 2014¹⁸

In biblical times, the home was the basic economic unit in society (Oikonomia (oikos + nomos) is Greek for the law or management of the household, and is the root of the English word “economy.”) Home is meant to provide a place of belonging and protection for family members. The family unit is responsible for acquiring the necessities of life and each member has responsibilities. If a member is unable to fulfill their expected responsibilities, he or she might beg to contribute to the household, or could be excluded entirely. In a patriarchal society a male was the household head. In his absence, family members (widow, children, orphans) were at risk. There were cultural norms to provide some recourse (for example a deceased man’s brother was to marry the widow). Sometimes, however, family members lost economic security and protection of the household. He or she might be marginalized and have to struggle to survive against the elements, hunger, violence, and death. The return and restoration to the household of the prodigal son, who was alienated from his family and had become homeless, is described by his parent to his sibling: “this brother of yours was dead and has come to life” (Luke 15:32b). In a home, one belongs to a family and community. Churches can (and do) offer God’s unconditional love, acceptance and hospitality through supportive social housing ministries.

¹ A&P 1954, pp. 263-264, 41-42, 45

² A&P 1955, pp. 244, 84

³ A&P 1961, pp. 299-300, 301, 71

⁴ A&P 1962, pp. 299, 302, 36

⁵ A&P 1965, pp. 351, 98

⁶ A&P 1966, pp. 279-280, 289, 75

⁷ A&P 1968, pp. 265-268, 280, 65-66, 75-76

⁸ A&P 1969, pp. 312, 322, 106

⁹ A&P 1969, pp. 355, 362, 34

¹⁰ A&P 1970, pp. 384, 387)

¹¹ A&P 1973, pp. 279, 283, 40

¹² A&P 1975, p. 414, 67

¹³ A&P 1976, pp. 404-406, 55

¹⁴ A&P 1976, pp. 30-31

¹⁵ A&P 1987, pp. 315-321, 21

¹⁶ A&P 1988, pp. 230-231

¹⁷ A&P 2007, p. 335

¹⁸ A&P 2014, pp. 373-381, 13, 20

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Labour-Management Relations

The Church Speaks

- Labour unions have been instrumental in achieving a higher standard of living, in improving working conditions through safety and health measures, in the relief of the disabled, the sick and the unemployed in a measure reaching far beyond their own membership, and to the benefit of those who have not shared in the activity.¹
- Labour has the right to organize, to engage in collective bargaining and to withhold services.¹
- Labour is to express toward the total community a responsible stewardship of its powers.¹
- We uphold the principle of union security in collective bargaining whereby the payment of union dues is compulsory for all employees covered by the collective agreement irrespective of union membership (Rand formula).²
- All Canadian citizens have a right to work without coercion from any quarter.³
- Theological students are encouraged to participate in seminars and other events on industrial relations which will improve their knowledge of labour issues and clarify their exercise of Christian responsibility in this field.⁴

The Church Acts

1962: The 88th GA recognized the contributions of labour unions to the betterment of society and the right of labour to organize, while calling on labour to practice “a responsible stewardship of its powers.”¹

1966: The 92nd GA approved support of the Rand Formula as upheld by the bulk of the labour movement.²

The Rand Formula

Named after Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand, the Rand Formula was instituted in 1946 in the wake of the Ford strike in Windsor, Ontario. It provides unions secure collection of the financial contributions they need to negotiate and provide services to members of the bargaining unit. It makes unions responsible to act for all members of the bargaining unit (not only members of the union) and guarantees that there will be no strike during the period of the contract, but mandates that disputes will be handled by a grievance procedure instead.

The Christian Labour Association of Canada (which is not a member of the Canadian Labour Congress) was arguing that compulsory payment of union dues by non-union members of a bargaining unit was a violation of their rights. The controversy continued up to 1991 when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously in “Lavigne vs. the Ontario Public Service Employees Union” that the collection of union dues under a Rand formula agreement was not a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In Ontario, the Rand Formula is the legal minimum union security provision for private sector collective agreements.

1968-1969: The 94th GA (1968) affirmed the right of all Canadian citizens to work without coercion from any quarter.³ The 95th GA (1969) approved encouraging students for the ministry to attend the annual seminars of the Institute on Church and Industry.⁴

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from “The Right to Work”, ESA report, 1966*²

LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

The Rand formula states that no man can be forced to join any union in order to keep his job, but insists that since all employees in the government-defined bargaining unit are beneficiaries of union-negotiated improvements and eligible for union services, all must pay an equal share of the costs. ... [T]his is recognized in management and labour circles as just and fair.

While the Church of Jesus Christ must insist on freedom and justice for all, the real issue here is this; namely, do groups as well as individuals have rights? Yes, they do, and history is full of illustrations in which individual rights have had to be subordinated to the rights of the community. Freedom must never be interpreted as meaning the liberty to do as we please without regard to the welfare of others.

...

There is a real moral issue involved here. To say an individual worker should be accorded rights and benefits under an agreement, but that he should be allowed to ignore his responsibility for seeing that the agreement is carried out, is to invalidate the principles of democracy. To grant an individual worker privileges above those of his fellow-worker is to place a premium on irresponsibility and irresponsibility cannot provide a proper basis of successful and harmonious co-operation between employer and employee.

Though the right to work theory may appear on the surface to have some justification, it is an expression of individualism which could ... undermine the labour union as an effective bargaining agent. ... This is not to say that labour unions cannot make mistakes, nor is it to suggest that they have not abused their powers on occasion. ... There have been times, and no doubt there will be times in the future, when some labour unions will have to be rebuked. ... However, there is a vast difference between this and attacking the labour movement per se.

¹ A&P 1962, pp. 300-301, 302, 57

² A&P 1966, pp. 281-282, 289, 101

³ A&P 1968, pp. 69, 102

⁴ A&P 1969, pp. 325-26, p. 107

BOOK FOUR — NATION

Poverty & Social Policy

The Church Speaks

- God's love and concern for the needy should be a constant reminder and challenge to His Church to join Him in His concern and action on behalf of the poor in Canada and the world.²
- There is strong [scriptural] evidence that God judges individuals and nations for their neglect of the poor.²
- Poverty is a great destroyer of human rights and one of the greatest causes of tension in Canada and the world.¹
- We should endeavour to understand and have empathy for the poor and assist them to solve their problems where possible.⁵
- Levels of support should be adequate and should include opportunity for self-improvement.⁵
- A guaranteed annual income is a necessary component in the alleviation of poverty.⁷
- Sessions and congregations can be catalysts in bringing together community groups to discuss ways and means of improving the lot of the poor and in enabling the poor to have a voice in determining their own destinies.³
- As we seek justice, we must both minister to individual citizens and advocate for policy changes which reduce poverty.⁹
- Poverty is more than material deprivation. A measure of one's well-being must include the realization of self-worth, dignity and social inclusion.⁹
- A national strategy with measurable targets and a time line is a necessary component of poverty reduction in Canada.⁹
- Federal leadership is needed in working with the province and territories, the non-profit sector, faith communities, the labour movement and the business community in developing a national vision to reduce poverty. The December 2009 report from the Senate Committee (See box entitled "Federal Leadership and Poverty Reduction in Canada") is an important step.¹⁰
- As Canada begins to emerge from the 2008-2009 recession, the church's concern should be about neighbours who have absorbed the brunt of the recession. Government spending and tax decisions should take into account the impact of these decisions on citizens living in poverty.¹⁰
- Lenders and borrowers should conduct financial transactions in a fair and just manner. This includes the principles of truthfulness, non-discrimination and ensuring that both lender and borrower are clear about the terms and conditions of borrowing.¹⁴
- Payday loans are predominantly used by the working poor to cover the costs of basic necessities, emergencies and routine bills. There are underlying systemic issues that contributed to the growth of the payday loan industry including increases in the cost of living, wages that do not keep up with the cost of living, and the closure of bank branches in poor neighbourhoods and rural communities¹⁴
- Payday loans are inordinately expensive, and seem to unfairly penalize people experiencing financial distress.¹⁴

The Church Acts

1965-1968: The 91st GA (1965) commended the federal government for its “policy to intensify and broaden the programs directed against poverty” and urged provincial governments to undertake studies of the needs in their respective provinces with regard to housing and education where it affects the poor.¹ The 93rd GA (1967) alerted congregations to “the insidious effects of poverty” and urged congregations to do “all within their powers” to help eradicate poverty.² The 94th GA (1968) received a report on the Canadian Conference on Church and Society, held in Montreal in May 1968, which had discussed Christian conscience and poverty. It commended materials from this conference to Sessions and congregations for study and authorized the ESA to study the finding “so far as these call for re-examination of our national priorities and policies”.³

The latter half of the 1960s was a time of much optimism and hope for social betterment in North America. President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed a vision of the Great Society in 1965 and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau presented his ideal of a Just Society in 1968. Both countries declared a war on poverty.

1969-1970: The 95th GA (1969) asked presbyteries and congregations to study the question of the guaranteed annual income and to study the needs of their communities with a view to providing a forum in the community for free discussion of the issues of poverty. GA encouraged the erection of multi-functional buildings to serve both the mission of the church.⁴ The 96th GA (1970) asked congregations to consider involvement in government programs or to initiate programs themselves or ecumenically (e.g. day-care and drop-in centres, language, prenatal, nutrition classes, etc.). The GOC was asked to mount a media education program to eliminate a condescending, sneering attitude to the poor, and to publicize the facts regarding the varying standards of living in Canada to arouse the concern of all. GA commended the GOC for seeking improvement in the welfare system and urged that any changes be based on a set of recommended principles. (See below)⁵

1971: The 97th GA approved involvement in the Canadian Coalition for Development* as the church’s major thrust in the effort to combat poverty in Canada. To facilitate this involvement a task force on poverty was established to co-ordinate the concern and expertise of several boards including the ESA, Christian Education, Stewardship and Budget, and the General Board of Missions. Financial support for the task force and the Canadian Coalition for Development was supplied by providing for Interchurch Aid to receive funds for anti-poverty projects in Canada and abroad.⁶

1973: The 99th GA communicated its support of a guaranteed annual income** to the federal government. It also approved PCC participation in and funding for an ecumenical funding body for low income/self help groups.*** Sessions and congregations were encouraged to support local community self-development groups.⁷

1992: The 118th GA encouraged federal and provincial governments to ensure that efforts directed towards economic recovery should not occur in concert with the curtailment of social programs. GA also encouraged presbyteries and congregations to support initiatives such as the Family

* The Canadian Coalition on Development was a loose federation of churches and secular agencies interested in combating poverty.

** A special Senate Committee on Poverty in Canada chaired by Senator Croll published a report favoring a guaranteed annual income via a negative income tax. The Task Force on Poverty established by the 97th GA affirmed this report and that of the National Council of Welfare, and GA.

*** Later named PLURA after the initials of the contributing churches. \$10,000 was committed to this work in 1974. PLURA is now the KAIROS anti-poverty fund.

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Nutrition Program* and increase efforts to alleviate human suffering due to the current economic situation.^{8**}

Federal Leadership and Poverty Reduction in Canada

A growing number of provinces have introduced laws, policies and programs to reduce poverty. These are hopeful sign.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) introduced the following motion to the House of Commons: “That with November 24, 2009, marking the 20th anniversary of the 1989 unanimous resolution of this House (House of Commons) to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000, and not having achieved that goal, be it resolved that the Government of Canada taking into consideration the Committee’s work in this regard and respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, develop an immediate plan to eliminate poverty in Canada.” The motion passed.

Within weeks of releasing its final report, HUMA’s work was suspended with the prorogation of Parliament on December 30, 2009. In December, 2009, the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology released its landmark report, “In from the Margins – A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness.” The Committee concluded unanimously that “eradicating poverty is not only the humane and decent priority of a civilized democracy but absolutely essential to a productive and expanding economy.”

2007: The 133rd GA affirmed the need for a national strategy with measurable targets and a timeline to reduce poverty in Canada and encouraged congregations to write to their federal, provincial and local officials to establish such a strategy. The Moderator wrote to the GOC and Provincial and Territorial governments recommending:

- a minimum wage of \$10 per hour^{***} and that minimum wage should be indexed to the annual cost of living;
- the establishment of a national social housing program;
- that Employment Insurance coverage be expanded to make it more accessible and that benefit rates and the maximum benefit period be increased.

Congregations were encouraged to write to their Premiers recommending an end to the claw back^{****} to social assistance and to meet with representatives of low-income groups to learn about the challenges they face and how the church might assist them.⁹

* In a Family Nutrition Program, groups of 5-7 people participate in initial planning and then are trained over a period of five months to maximize family nutrition through wise purchase and preparation of food. An Ottawa congregation offered such a program with assistance from the Community Health Care Centre and the Emergency Food and Clothing Centre.

** The early 1990s were a period of deep and prolonged recession. Both federal and provincial governments introduced major revisions to social programs in order to reduce their spending. Some measures taken were: a) withdrawal of federal and provincial support for social housing, b) reduction of federal transfers to provinces for health care, c) reduced rates in several provinces for social assistance and more stringent eligibility requirements (including provincial residency requirements and workfare), and d) reduction in benefits and access to unemployment insurance (renamed Employment Insurance).

*** A single person must work full time hours for a full year for about \$10 per hour to reach the Low-Income Cut Off (LICO), There is no official measure of poverty in Canada. LICO was developed by Statistics Canada and is a relative measure of poverty. This number is reflective of the 2007 economy.

**** The National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) is part of the Canada Child Tax Benefit. The NCBS is designed to assist the lowest income families and its introduction by the federal government has led to a reduction of the number of children living in poverty. Some provinces/territories have limited the impact of this program by reducing (or “clawing back”) provincial assistance to those who receive federal assistance from the NCBS.

2010: GA endorsed the “Dignity for All Campaign”, an initiative of the Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), a Christian research and education agency and Canada Without Poverty, an organization dedicated to the elimination of poverty in Canada. The goals of the Campaign are: 1) a comprehensive, integrated federal plan for poverty reduction (this would be linked to provincial and territorial plans); 2) a federal act to eliminate poverty, promote social inclusion and strengthen social security; and 3) sufficient federal revenue to invest in social security. Individuals in The PCC are invited to sign the “Dignity for All” postcard.¹⁰

2011: The 137th GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Minister of Finance regarding the ethical and moral dimensions of economic decisions, and the GOC’s responsibilities to wisely manage public resources, and to acknowledge the need for specific policies and programs to reduce poverty and ensure that low-income citizens do not disproportionately bear the burden of budget cuts in addressing the federal deficit.¹¹

The 137th GA recommended that sessions, presbyteries, synods, mission and outreach committees, youth groups, the Women’s Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society share with Justice Ministries ways they are supporting and walking with low-income neighbours, including advocacy initiatives they have taken.¹²

2012: The 138th GA recommended that individuals or courts of the church be requested to write to or meet with their provincial and/or federal politician to discuss what steps they are taking to reduce the growing gap between rich and poor in Canada.¹³

Poverty and Population Health

In 2006 and 2007, poverty and related issues in Canada was considered by two bodies in the Senate and one in the House of Commons.

*The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry issued an interim report on December 2006, entitled **Understanding Freefall: The Challenge of the Rural Poor**.*

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology's Subcommittee on Population Health focused on population health. Population health (also known as the social determinants of health) considers the factors (employment, quality of housing, environment, social network, etc.) which affect an individual and a community's health.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities was examining employability issues in Canada, such as workers mobility, seasonal workers, older workers, skilled worker shortages, workplace literacy and the recognition of foreign credentials.

2015: The 141st GA recommended that the Moderator write to the three largest payday loan companies in Canada asking that they publish annualized interest rates and to provinces recommending that payday loan companies be required to publish annualized interest rates. The Moderator wrote to chartered banks in which The PCC has investments asking about the availability of small, short term loans and encouraging the banks to establish these services if they do not provide them and to the Credit Union Central of Canada asking for information from its member credit unions across Canada on the availability of small loan services.¹⁴

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The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “The Board and Inter-Church Relations”, ESA report, 1961*¹⁵

Our representatives, along with the representatives of other churches on the Department of Social Relations of the Canadian Council of Churches, helped to prepare a statement with regard to social security for Canada. This states that the program should be built on the following basic principles:

- a recognition of the worth and dignity of the individual as a child of God;
- an emphasis on the fact rather than the cause of need;
- that assistance should always be given in such a way as to strengthen and restore the recipient’s capacity for self-dependence;
- the necessity of providing good administration and adequate staff to ensure full effectiveness of the social security programs.

*Excerpt from “Christian Responsibility and Poverty”, ESA report, 1967*²

Poverty is much more than simply being short of money. The scriptures depict poverty as a state of deprivation that results in people being bowed down and afflicted. It is an insidious thing that not only causes suffering, but also robs people of the opportunity for personal fulfillment and of making effective use of their lives in the service of God and Man.

The poor are robbed of freedom by being forced to live in sub-standard housing. ... [P]overty deprives [young people] of both the possibility and incentive to take advantage of educational opportunities. Higher income groups have better health care than lower income groups, although the low income groups have greater health problems and their illnesses tend to be more severe. Poverty results in less participation in community affairs. Poor people not only have very little say in the decisions that affect their lives, but also the community is robbed of the contribution this group of people should be able to make.

One of the most serious effects of poverty is the attitude of the “well-to-do” to the poor people of the community. There are those who blame the poor people for their condition. They believe that anyone can succeed if he wants to, so they tend to think of the poor as lazy, shiftless and undeserving. In fact, by way of justifying their attitude to the poor, they give the impression that God is the God of the “well-to-do”. This attitude leads to a feeling of inferiority on the part of the poor and also an alienation from the society that rejects them.

The Church’s responsibility in the war on poverty is ... to provide the right attitude to the poor and the motivation that is born of God’s redeeming love in Christ and His concern for the needs of the whole man. It is important then to know God’s attitude to the poor and poverty.

[T]he scriptures speak of a God who loves poor people as well as others, and who is genuinely concerned about their plight. The scriptures are ... inclined to attribute [poverty] to the sin of society. They suggest the plight [of the poor] is due to the greed of the rich (Amos 6:8), to the low wages paid by employers (James 5:1-4), and to the lack of genuine concern on the part of all of us for the total welfare of the people of our communities and the world. (Matthew 25: 31-46) In both the Old and New Testaments God is described as the defender of the poor, the fatherless and the widow, and there are laws designed to insure their just treatment by society. (Deut. 10: 18; 14: 28-29; 15: 1-11; Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22; Prov. 14:31; Jeremiah 22:16; Zechariah 7:10; Matt. 5: 3; 11:5; 25:31-36; Luke 4:18; Romans 15:26; James 2:5) There is strong evidence that God judges individuals and nations for their neglect of the poor. (Exodus 3:7; Amos 8:6; James 5:1-4)

While scriptures speak much of God’s love for the poor, there is nothing to suggest that He is happy about poverty, or that He permits it to help develop character. In fact, the exact opposite is

the case. Since the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and since it is His will that all His people should enjoy His bounty, the cause of poverty is to be found in the greed and avarice of man and not in the will of God.

God's love and concern for the needy should be a constant reminder and challenge to His Church to join Him in His concern and action on behalf of the poor in Canada and the world. This concern will of necessity express itself in demanding adequate financial assistance for the poor, but it will also mean identifying ourselves with them, getting alongside of them, working with them to the end that they may assume their rightful place in society, and come to know God and the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Excerpt from "The War on Poverty", ESA report, 1968³

The difficulty with too many otherwise good, honest citizens is that they oversimplify the causes of poverty. It is so easy to salve our consciences by pointing to poor families who aren't trying to help themselves and their children—and these there are—and jump to the conclusion that all poor people are lacking in initiative; that they are lazy and shiftless, and would sooner live on welfare than work. Yet the very same people would resent it greatly if the poor were to generalize and classify them all as greedy and avaricious—which of course some of them might be!

This quotation from Harris Chaiklin's paper "Motivating the Poor" which appears in Benjamin Schlesinger's book "Poverty in Canada and the United States" deserves our consideration;

"If we are to help the poor, we should not be overly concerned about their motivation. A necessary prior condition is to assess basic needs—material and emotional. Only when minimal security is provided can we begin to assess how large is the problem of motivation. ... If we really provide for people's material needs, our concern with the problem of motivation will, if it does not disappear, at least decline greatly. To really help the poor is not an easy job—not because we don't know how; not because it is too expensive; not because the poor are not motivated; but because it still continues to be a somewhat dangerous idea to assume that if society meets the material needs of people, they will take care of themselves. The Golden Rule is a radical position. Organized social welfare cannot seem to espouse openly the idea that people should be provided the wherewithal for some security in their lives without society's expecting something from them in return." (used by permission)

[The church] can help the "disadvantaged", not so much by doing things for them, as by identifying with them, getting to know them as persons, and supporting them in their need and right to have a voice in their own destinies. It is difficult for poor people to stand up for their rights, but to know that the people of the Church are with them as well as being for them, should give them the hope that so many of them need so badly.

Excerpts from "The Church and Poverty", ESA report, 1970⁵

The church's interest in the problem of poverty stems both from a biblical imperative and by our historical involvement in the concerns of the poor. We believe that wrong attitudes toward him can deepen a poor man's poverty and engender in him wrong attitudes toward himself and consequently an impoverishment of spirit.

We do not believe that the fear of starvation is the only reason why men work. ... Indeed the provision of a guaranteed annual income would provide for many the opportunity to demonstrate that their employment is a true vocation, or to undertake their vocation in an area which,

BOOK FOUR — NATION

otherwise, might not be economically feasible. ... Provision of a guaranteed annual income or negative income tax... would do much to restore the dignity of all of our citizens.

We do not believe that “anyone who really wants to can find a job.” Lack of training, education, or opportunity and regional economic problems make this a myth. We recognize too ... that the present system of supplement or welfare very frequently carries with it a certain stigma which engenders a feeling of humiliation or lack of self-respect in the person requiring such assistance.

...

[The 96th GA] commend[s] the GOC for seeking improvement in the Canadian welfare system and [urges] that it be based on the following principles:

1. The method, whether it be the guaranteed annual income or some other, should have for its objective, giving people necessary support without the dehumanizing effect and the stigma associated with “welfare” as at present understood.
2. The level of support should be adequate, perhaps necessitating an increase in the minimum wage, and it should include the opportunity for self-improvement so that people might be encouraged to increase the degree of their self-reliance through training, and part or full-time work without penalty.
3. The scheme should be integrated with health departments in ways which would help the emotionally disturbed, mentally incompetent and those otherwise unemployable because of physical handicaps.

Excerpts from “Poverty and Development”, ESA report, 1973 ⁷

Jesus’ comment, “You will always have the poor with you” will be regarded either as an inevitable fact about which little can be done or as a constant summons to action. We believe the Church is called to combat poverty.

The usual way of prescribing an antidote for poverty is to provide more money and more consumer goods. But we may now be entering an era when all of us should be eating and consuming less for our own good and for the sake of the environment. It may be that the style of life now lived by the poor people in our society resembles the pattern the rest of us may be compelled to follow in the future. In fact, leisure is a way of life which may be forced upon many people as time goes on.

We believe that society should begin to recognize as legitimate vocations certain types of work that at the moment do not produce wages and salaries. Among these is the role of the housewife or the volunteer person who works with neighbourhood or community groups.

“[The National Council of Welfare] believes that the forms of activity of social benefit to communities should be defined by those communities. It believes that all should be enabled to contribute their views to the design of what is to be done and their skills to the doing of it. It believes that all should be remunerated for their contributions and that all should receive a sufficient share of the nation’s collective wealth that none of us is forced to live as less than a full and equal member of Canadian society. It believes that a program of guaranteed jobs based on the definition of community needs by communities themselves, together with a program of income guarantees, can lead us to that end. The two programs are

not alternates; rationally and equitably they are complements. Together they can ensure both income and equality for all.”*

*Excerpts from “Response to the Constitutional Proposals”, BCL report, 1992*⁸
(see also **French-English Relations, Aboriginal People and Ecology, Energy and Environment for more excerpts from this document.**)

In Living Faith we read, “Justice requires concern for the poor of the world. It seeks the best way to create well-being in every society. It is concerned about employment, education, and health, as well as rights and responsibilities.” We believe that all human beings are valuable persons and that any attempt to measure the value of human life in economic or educational terms provides an opportunity for a display of injustice, prejudice, arrogance and racism. Deuteronomy 10:17-19 reminds us that fair treatment for the poor and the stranger is a constant theme throughout scripture. Fundamental to our relationship with God is how we, as a community of faith, relate to others. Those who are most in need or at risk in society were to be cared for by those who were privileged. Matthew 23:23-24 reminds us that sometimes we are so preoccupied with our own concerns that we neglect justice, mercy and honesty. We are called to live out our faith in the context of justice. As Christians we are called to strive constantly for justice in our society and in our personal lives. The spread of God’s reign requires the breaking down of the walls of separation in society and building a community that recognizes the needs and aspirations of all people.

We are opposed to any shifting of priorities that adversely affect the poor and disrupt current social programs. Such a shift says, in fact, that human resources and the well-being of all our people are of no direct economic value and that the proper functioning of persons, families and communities are not essential to the smooth running of our industrial complex. Yet these very social welfare programs have been developed to deal with the human casualties of economic and technological change. In short, social welfare and economic development and progress, rather than being competing elements are intimately related and interdependent. Nations which seek economic revival at the expense of cutbacks in social programs have invariably failed.

*Excerpts from “The Growing Gap in Canada”, Justice Ministries Report, 2007*⁹

In Mark 12: 28-34, one of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him Which commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered: “The first is, Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Jesus explains that these two commandments belong together. As individuals and as communities of faith, we are called to serve our neighbour - even the neighbour we do not know. Through God’s abiding love, we are relational beings with a responsibility to care for each other.

In Living Faith, we read that “Justice requires concern for the poor of the world. It seeks the best way to create well-being in every society. It is concerned about employment, education, and health, as well as rights and responsibilities.” (Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Wood Lake Books, 1984, 8.4.4.)

Congregations seek to practice a theology of neighbourliness through ministries to fellow citizens on low incomes in communities across Canada. Equally important, the church engages with elected representatives on measures to reduce poverty.

* Cited from “Guaranteed Incomes and Guaranteed Jobs” National Council of Welfare, 1973

BOOK FOUR — NATION

We are created in the image of God. All humans are equal before God and are to be treated with dignity. We are called to share God's abundance. Canada is a prosperous nation and ranks sixth on the United Nations Human Development Index. Poverty in Canada is not only about material deprivation; self-worth and dignity suffer. Social exclusion is a painful consequence of poverty. Our society has a tendency to blame the poor for their predicament.

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13: 1-2)

Many congregations minister to low income neighbours. This day to day support and witness gives the church credibility with our elected representatives at the local, provincial and national levels. The church has a contribution to make in building a national commitment to reduce poverty. There are organizations in our communities committed to the same vision that would welcome the church's active participation.

“The Bible and Usury” from Justice Ministries’ report on Payday Loans, 2015¹⁴

Usury is the practice of lending money for exorbitant profit. Old Testament scripture reveals a strict prohibition against earning a profit on lending money to the poor. Money was to be lent to fellow Hebrews without interest (Ex.22:25; Lev. 25:36; Deut. 23:19). Interest could be charged to a stranger (Deut. 23:20). Psalm 15:5 is preceded by the question “Who shall abide in God's sanctuary?” and answers “Those...who do not lend money at interest and do not take a bribe against the innocent”. This passage is quoted at the Council of Nicaea 121in 325 AD and used to argue against usury in the early church (Moser, 1997).

Deuteronomy outlines the laws of Sabbath. One provision is the forgiveness of debts every seven years (Deut. 15:1–2). Creditors were warned against withholding loans to the poor in the waning days of the seven year cycle lest poor borrowers default on their loan, and lenders are forced to forgive it (Deut. 15:9–11).

Calvin and Usury

John Calvin approved of lending money with interest under certain conditions...Calvin defended only those interest-bearing loans that would benefit lender and borrower alike...While condemning interest on lending to the poor, he outlines principles under which it is acceptable between the rich. Mutual benefit where the benefit of lending is shared between lender and borrower is one such condition.

...

Calvin also advised that usury practices must take into account the common good. Usury is not just a matter for consideration between private parties. What is deemed acceptable under these conditions for lending is dependent on principles of justice and charity...

Calvin emphasized protection of the poor. “[Christ] corrects the world's vicious custom of lending money [only to those who can repay] and urges us, instead, to lend to those from whom no hope of repayment is possible.” (Calvin, “Ecclesiastical Advice”).

...

Biblical teachings emphasizes care for our neighbours, especially the poor. Jesus rejected financial transactions that place profit-earning above adherence to God's laws... Several themes emerge from biblical reflections on money and lending. They include: protecting the poor and fairness and transparency.

¹ A&P 1965, pp. 342, 351, 98

- ² A&P 1967, pp. 332-333, 340, 98
- ³ A&P 1968, pp. 269-271, 98
- ⁴ A&P 1969, pp. 311, 314-315, 355, 34, 36
- ⁵ A&P 1970, pp. 310, 314, 56, 101
- ⁶ A&P 1971, pp. 301-303, 305, 89
- ⁷ A&P 1973, pp. 274-278, 282, 40
- ⁸ A&P 1992, pp. 308-309, 45
- ⁹ A&P 2007, pp. 329-337
- ¹⁰ A&P 2010, pp. 447-9, 39
- ¹¹ A&P 2011, pp. 46-7
- ¹² A&P 2011, pp. 379-80, 42
- ¹³ A&P 2012, pp. 376-7, 43
- ¹⁴ A&P 2015, pp. 393-9, 18
- ¹⁵ A&P 1961, p. 299

BOOK FOUR — NATION

Senior Citizens

See also: Housing

The Church Speaks

- It is a public responsibility to see that older persons have an income sufficient to enable them to maintain a decent and dignified standard of living in relation to the rest of the community.⁵
- Seniors can contribute to the strength of the church through their experience, judgment and devotion.²
- The church needs to encourage acceptance of the aging, recognize the value of seniors in the congregation, develop programs to nurture their spiritual growth and enable them to share fully in the life of the church.²
- Congregations are encouraged to take an interest in older people and shut-ins, including those outside their congregations.⁴
- Ministers should familiarize themselves with services available to the elderly in their community.⁷

The Church Acts

1955: The 81st GA approved an appeal to the GOC to increase the Old Age Pension.^{1*}

1961-1962: The 87th GA (1961) urged presbyteries to “study the local needs of the aged, to inform themselves of existing services for the aged in the area of the presbytery, and to pass on the information to the people concerned.”² The ESA reported to the 88th GA (1962) that in order to provide ministers, sessions and congregations with study materials, it had printed several papers for free distribution including “Philosophy of Aging”, “The Contribution of the Older Person to Society” and “Friendly Visiting to Older Persons”.³

1965-1967: The 91st GA (1965) encouraged congregations to take a greater interest in older people and shut-ins including those outside their congregations.⁴ The 92nd GA (1966) supported the recommendations of the special committee of the senate on aging and the First Canadian Conference on Aging and again called for an increase in the Old Age Security Pension, that the elderly be assured of an income adequate to a decent and dignified standard of living.⁵ The 93rd GA (1967) called on sessions, ministers and elders to give special attention to the spiritual well-being of the older person, and to take action, directly and through approaches to the several levels of government, “toward meeting more effectively the needs of older persons for housing, places for group fellowship and financial support.”⁶

1971: The 97th GA commended federal, provincial and municipal authorities which had adopted measures to alleviate the financial distress of the elderly.** GA urged increasing the basic allowable income for eligibility for the Guaranteed Income Supplement and relief from educational taxes for all pensioners receiving the supplement and owning property. It called on governments to make their services to the elderly better known and urged ministers to familiarize themselves with services available to the elderly in their communities.⁷

* The suggested increase was from \$40 to \$60 per month.

**The federal government had increased Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement; the province of Ontario exempted seniors from paying provincial medical and hospital insurance premiums if they could not afford them, and provided assistance in paying property taxes. In some provinces, municipalities paid the cost of drugs for pensioners.

The Church Reflects***Excerpt from “The Church and the Aged”, ESA report, 1961***²

The quotation of two introductory paragraphs from a booklet entitled “Aging” by the National Council of Churches will serve as an introduction to this subject. “Our country has gained a new generation in the last half-century through the dramatic increase in the average length of life. This presents the church with the urgent need to decisive thought and action. No longer can the church fulfill its social mission to the aged by the provision of shelter alone. Its task now is to lead society to a greater acceptance of the aging and recognition of their value. ...This new generation can contribute much to the strength of the church through its experience, judgment and devotion. At the same time it presents special needs. Parishes of the church are faced daily with the urgent problems of aging people: housing, medical care, insufficient income, loneliness, loss of status and many others. ... The church has a responsibility and unique resources with which to assist people in this period of life to live creatively.”

Excerpt from “The Church and Older People”, ESA report, 1965⁴

A few years ago, our older citizens were cared for in the home, and the family relationship was warm and secure. Today the pattern is changing, and people are living in apartments and institutions. Our older citizens are often faced with many lonely hours which foster feelings of uselessness and insecurity. Here the church is challenged with one of its greatest responsibilities and opportunities in years. The congregation must offer the love of God and his people to the large number of older persons in its midst, who need courage for daily living.

¹ A&P 1955, pp. 346-347, 99

² A&P 1961, pp. 299-300, 301, 71

³ A&P 1962, p. 299

⁴ A&P 1965, pp. 346, 99

⁵ A&P 1966, pp. 282, 289, 101

⁶ A&P 1967, pp. 339-340, 98

⁷ A&P 1971, pp. 303, 305, 89

BOOK FOUR — NATION

Taxation

The Church Speaks

- Taxation is a moral issue. Churches have the duty to question the government about the effect of taxation on society as a whole, groups within society, and individuals.¹
- Those whose income places them below the poverty line should not be required to pay income tax.²

The Church Acts

1982: The 108th GA approved support for the proposal of the National Voluntary Organizations Coalition that the \$100 standard deduction for charitable donations be replaced with a tax credit to be deducted from tax payable. This would not only place charitable donations on an equitable basis with donations to political parties; it would also remove the regressive nature of charitable tax deductions which made the cost of a charitable donation more expensive for low income households than for higher income households.*

Taxation Systems

Progressive systems use a sliding scale of taxation at which higher incomes are taxed at a higher rate.

Degressive systems use a similar scale for refunding or reducing taxes, giving greater benefits to those on lower incomes. The Child Tax Benefit is an example of degressive taxation.

Regressive taxation provides that all income earners pay the same amount of tax, e.g. sales taxes. These taxes consume a larger percentage of the income of the poor than of the well-to-do.

Flat taxation provides that all income earners be taxed at the same rate. This also poses a greater hardship on low income-earners than on more affluent tax-payers as the more affluent may be able to pay a flat tax from income above their basic needs while low-income households have to reduce expenditures on basic needs to pay the tax.

1987: The 113th GA called on the federal minister of finance to ensure a fair and equitable tax system,** to establish a national standard for federal sales tax relief, taking into consideration regional disparities in income and living conditions, and not to replace lower personal income tax with increased or more comprehensive sales taxes.¹

1989: The 115th GA urged the GOC to adopt the principle that Canadians whose incomes place them below the poverty line should not be required to pay income tax and to direct future changes in the tax system toward making this principle a reality.²

1990: The 116th GA expressed its concern over the effects of a regressive tax such as the proposed Goods and

Services Tax (GST), and requested a thorough review of the whole tax system, including substantive discussion of a wealth tax, a capital gains tax, restoration of more progressivity to personal income tax, effective collection of corporate tax, reform of the existing manufacturer's tax, reducing loopholes, preferences and special arrangements in the income tax system.³

* When charitable donations are deducted from income rather than tax payable, the value of the deduction is the equivalent of the tax rate for the taxpayer. A person who is taxed at 10% effectively deducts 10% of a charitable donation and gets no reimbursement for the other 90%. A person whose higher income is taxed at 50% effectively deducts 50% of the donation. Changing to a tax credit system removes this anomaly and treats all charitable donations equally for tax purposes.

** The GOC had issued proposals for the reform of the tax system which were implemented in 1991. A key change was the replacement of the Manufacturer's Tax (paid by manufacturers of goods and included in the price of goods sold to wholesale and retail outlets) with the Goods and Services Tax (paid by the end-use consumer.) This allowed exporters to lower their prices to wholesalers and retailers outside of Canada as no tax was included in the manufacturer's price. The GST was included for sales inside Canada but could be reclaimed by wholesalers and retailers, who resold the goods.

1995: The 121st GA urged the GOC to review the tax system to eliminate unfair tax exemptions and deferrals so that all Canadians contribute fairly to the costs of maintaining public services.⁴

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “An Interim Report on the Canadian Tax System”, BCL report, 1987¹

Every decision about who or what should be taxed involves important moral decisions about values shared in our society or values that the taxing authority wishes to inculcate in our society or values the church should speak against or values the church should advocate as important for our society.

...

Taxation is a moral issue because of the values raised: freedom, material well-being and employment, health and welfare, equity and distributive justice. Taxation does infringe upon one’s liberty to dispose of one’s economic resources as one sees fit. To live in society means to live collectively and one willingly gives up total freedom over economic resources for one’s own benefit and the mutual benefit of others.

...

Calvin ...called ... for official church scrutiny of all government. ... The church has a theological duty to teach the rulers the proper extent of taxing rights. The church, therefore, becomes involved when the taxing privilege is abused and becomes oppressive.

Excerpts from “Canadian Tax System”, BCL report, 1989²

The federal government is to be commended for certain elements of the tax reform proposal such as a better integrated set of taxation and social security measures and the replacement of regressive deductions and exemptions by a system of tax credits.

One of the federal government’s chief principles for tax reform is the concept of fairness. A careful scrutiny of tax reform proposals indicates that Canadians subsisting on incomes thousands of dollars below the poverty line will still pay income tax. In addition, middle income families with children will suffer severe cuts in child benefits. ... The small number of households with over \$100,000 in income (2 per cent) will receive 18.2 per cent of the tax savings.

...

In light of the above information, the Church and Society Committee of the BCL will ... continue to make representations to government regarding fairness, especially for low-income families and the working poor.

Excerpt from “What Does the Lord Require of Us?”, LMA report, 1996⁵

The real question, some say, is not: “Are we taxed too much?” but “Do we get good value for our tax dollar?” ... What the government does with over 60% of the taxes it receives is to pay them to others in the form of transfer payments. ... Many government transfers, such as pensions, children’s benefits and social assistance, not only enlarge the freedom of many members of society, but provide the basic necessities of life.

¹ A&P 1987, pp. 322-325, 22

² A&P 1989, pp. 348-349, 62

³ A&P 1990, pp. 396-370, 51

⁴ A&P 1995, pp. 297-304, 30-31

⁵ A&P 1996, pp. 332-346

BOOK FOUR — NATION

Unemployment

The Church Speaks

- High levels of unemployment are a hideous social evil.²
- Government has a responsibility to provide the opportunity to secure the necessities of life through gainful employment.¹
- Labour and management, along with governments at all levels, need to co-operate in every possible way to strengthen the economy.³

The Church Acts

1954: The 80th GA affirmed that it is a responsibility of the state to provide the opportunity to secure the necessities of life through gainful employment and encouraged the GOC in all efforts to alleviate the causes and hardships of unemployment. The ESA sent a resolution to the prime minister and minister of labour asking that the GOC study means to overcome the hardships created by seasonal employment and pointing to the inadequacy of the current level of Unemployment Insurance benefits.¹

1961-1962: The 87th GA (1961) expressed its deep concern over continuing unemployment and, while commending steps already taken by the GOC*, urged it to “bring all its power to bear upon this issue.”² The 88th GA (1962) called on all concerned to co-operate in combating unemployment: the unemployed by seeking employment, employers by employing the maximum number of employees, and legislative assemblies through vigorous and imaginative job creation programs. It called on labour, management and all levels of government “to co-operate in every possible way so that the Canadian economy may be strengthened rather than continually riven by conflicts between employer and employee...”³

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from “Unemployment”, ESA report, 1954¹

We are compelled by the Spirit and the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be concerned as we observe the steady increase in the number of our Canadian people who are being denied the right of gainful employment. Seasonal employment...is responsible for a large portion of this difficulty. ...Frequently, Unemployment Insurance benefits are not sufficient to meet these needs or else run out before employment is found again. Hardship, unrest and ill-will result from such conditions. As Christians we cannot be unconcerned about the plight of those so distressed.

...

It is to be understood, however, that Unemployment Insurance is a last resort and not a solution to the problem. The solution is year-round adequate employment. The state has a responsibility under God to provide the opportunity to secure the necessities of life through gainful employment for all those created in His image and for whom Christ died.

¹ A&P 1954, pp. 264, 95

² A&P 1961, pp. 299, 300, 96

³ A&P 1962, pp. 300, 302, 56-57

* e.g. The Technical and Vocational Training and Assistance Act, which provided assistance for training and re-training of youth and unemployed workers in these fields.

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BOOK FOUR — NATION

Glossary of Acronyms

A&P.....	Acts & Proceedings
BCL	Board of Congregational Life
BWM	Board of World Mission
CCC.....	Canadian Council of Churches
CCD.....	Committee on Church Doctrine
CSRI.....	Committee on Social Responsibility in Investments
ESA	Board of Evangelism and Social Action
FTAA.....	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GA	General Assembly
GATT.....	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GOC	Government of Canada
IAC	International Affairs Committee
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund
KCCJ.....	Korean Christian Church in Japan
LMA	Life and Mission Agency
MECC.....	Middle East Council of Churches
NAFTA.....	North America Free Trade Agreement
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
PCN.....	Presbyterian Church in Nigeria
PCT.....	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
PWS&D.....	Presbyterian World Service and Development
WARC.....	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC.....	World Council of Churches
WTO.....	World Trade Organization

Our Global Mission

The Church Speaks

- Offering critical commentary or proposing alternative policies on public issues is intended to contribute to public life and to the common good, and is therefore a part of our global mission.¹

The Church Acts

2010: The 136th GA acknowledged that it is within Minister Oda's purview to reject a proposal from KAIROS (or any agency) because the GOC disagrees with the policy options KAIROS might be proposing. However the church urged the GOC to be transparent and publically state the rationale for its decision. The 136th GA communicated its disappointment to the Prime Minister of Canada for the poor treatment KAIROS (and its member denominations and agencies) received, regarding KAIROS' 2009 - 2013 program application.¹ In April 2010 KAIROS submitted a revised 2009-2013 program to CIDA. As of July 2010 no decision had been made about the revised program.

Should critical commentary of government policy influence whether or not an organization receives public funding?

KAIROS, and the ecumenical coalitions that preceded KAIROS, have partnered with CIDA to do overseas development work for 35 years. Overseas development programs developed by non-governmental agencies (such as KAIROS, or PWS&D) are accountable to CIDA.

KAIROS' 2006-2009 overseas development program received (in 2009) an excellent evaluation by CIDA. In 2009, KAIROS submitted a program proposal for the period 2009-2013. In November 2009, KAIROS was informed that the Hon. Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, had decided not to fund this program.

Two different reasons were offered by two different Cabinet Ministers for the rendering of this decision.

Correspondence from CIDA stated that KAIROS' proposal was declined because it did not meet CIDA's program priorities. In May 2009 (after KAIROS' proposal had been submitted) Minister Oda announced new priorities for CIDA. It is regrettable that it was not made clear that these new priorities would affect proposals from the voluntary sector (such as KAIROS' proposal), or that these changes would affect program proposals that had already been submitted to CIDA for consideration.

The Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, delivered a speech at the Global Forum to Combat Anti-Semitism in Jerusalem on December 16. He stated that KAIROS had been "de-funded" because of the leadership KAIROS was providing in Canada on the boycott against the State of Israel. This is not KAIROS' position. KAIROS wrote to Minister Kenney demanding a retraction and an apology. In response to an editorial in the Toronto Star, Minister Kenney wrote a letter to the editor of the Toronto Star, stating that the decision not to fund KAIROS' proposal was made by Bev Oda "because it did not meet CIDA's current priorities, such as increased food aid." Minister Kenney continued to assert that KAIROS has taken a leadership role in the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel. This is erroneous.

Should critical commentary of government policy influence whether or not an organization receives public funding?...continued

During this crisis, KAIROS received tremendous support from the Christian community, and from non-governmental organizations involved in development work. The opposition parties publicly supported KAIROS.

In April 2010, KAIROS submitted a revised program proposal to CIDA. As of July 2010, no decision had been made regarding this proposal.

The churches have a rich history of engaging governments and powerful institutions in Canada. This reflects over thirty years of ecumenical cooperation on social justice issues in Canada. The churches were among the first bodies in Canada to draw the Canadian public's attention to the apartheid system in South Africa. When Canadian churches spoke out against apartheid and the Canadian connections to the apartheid system, the churches were criticized. Offering critical commentary or proposing alternative policies on public issues is intended to contribute to public life and to the common good. This is part and parcel of the democratic fabric in our country.

KAIROS brings policy issues to the attention of the public it serves and to Canadian policy-makers. The issues that KAIROS brings forward come out of the lived experiences of vulnerable human beings. The issues may be controversial and challenge conventional discourse. But carefully researched issues inspired by the gospel's call to care for the widow, the orphan, the outsider and informed by the experiences of church partners, reflect KAIROS and its members' commitment to justice and are intended to contribute to public life in Canada. To do otherwise is to become indifferent to the world around us and to commit "acedia." "Acedia" is from an ancient Greek word describing a state of listlessness or torpor, of not caring, of spiritual or mental indifference.

Are we now at a moment in our country's history when critical commentary on public policy puts an ecumenical agency or a non-profit organization at risk of losing public funding, not because the program is weak and poorly developed, but because an organization offers commentary that runs contrary to the policies of the government of the day? Offering critical commentary or proposing alternative policies on public issues are intended to contribute to public life, and to the common good. It is an important part of how the church is present in the public square and carries out its global mission work.

2011: The 137th GA recommended that individuals and courts of the church be encouraged to become members of KAIROS' Companions and Communities initiative*.²

The 137th GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Prime Minister of Canada about the GOC's lack of response to KAIROS' global partnership program proposal submitted to CIDA in March 2010 and the October 2010 letter from the Moderator of the 136th GA requesting that the decision regarding KAIROS' proposal be based on the merits of the proposal in terms of CIDA's stated priorities, and that the decision making process be transparent and fair.^{3**}

The 137th GA recommended that congregations and presbyteries be encouraged to study and be aware of the GOC's commitment to partnership with Canadian organizations, including churches working to improve the lives of people around the world through development, relief, refugee and justice programs. The 137th GA encouraged congregations and presbyteries to reflect, pray, and

* The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a full member of KAIROS. The Companions and Communities initiative was developed as an additional way for courts of the church, particularly congregations and individuals, to be connected to KAIROS.

** Also see Overseas Development Assistance.

act on the major issue of hunger; nearly one billion people remain hungry in a world that produces enough food for everyone.⁴

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from “The Signs of the Kingdom”, IAC report, 1999*⁵

As we stand on the verge of a new millennium, it is instructive to cast our eyes back on the last century, using the lens of the beatitudes. We shall see the dark forces that created poverty and sorrow, ignored the meek and denied the righteous. But we shall also note how the poor in spirit, the merciful, the pure in heart and the peacemakers sought to live in obedience to the laws of the kingdom, and in spite of (or perhaps, because of) persecution, became beacons of hope. The first four beatitudes are Jesus’ declaration of God’s bias. They tell who the rightful inhabitants of the kingdom are.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It is easy to spiritualize this saying so that even the very wealthy can claim to be poor in spirit. But at a minimum, the blessing must imply understanding and solidarity with the spirituality that is rooted in the experience of poverty.

Two essential characteristics of this spirituality are a visceral understanding that poverty is unjust and a realization that one is completely dependent on God to change the situation. Poverty is not fundamentally caused by defects in the poor, nor by the vagaries of fortune. Poverty becomes endemic when the greed of the powerful overrides the needs of the less powerful. Poverty is exploitation, injustice and violence used to enforce the will of the mighty and to deprive the weak of their portion of God’s abundance. In the face of this entrenched exploitation the poor turn, with Mary, to God who “pulls down the powerful from their thrones and lifts up the lowly; [who] fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty.” (Luke 1:52-53).

...

According to the United Nations today there are sufficient material resources, know-how and people to make a poverty free world a reality in less than a generation. Redistributing just 0.5 percent of global income would be enough to meet the basic needs of 1.3 billion of the world’s poorest people. But, within sight of the goal ... a neo-liberal economic ideology has emerged to become a dominant force in global politics. Poorer nations have had the prescriptions of this ideology imposed on them through International Monetary Fund-prescribed structural adjustment programs, while trade and investment agreements have accomplished the same in industrialized nations. These policies have led to a global widening and deepening of poverty. Not only are more people poor today, including 100 million people in “developed” nations, the gap between the wealthy and the poor has widened significantly. Social attitudes toward the poor have hardened and become more punitive.

The poor are those whom society has cast aside. The poor know that only God stands with them in their misery. It is God who gives them the courage and strength to retain their human dignity when the world insists on treating them as commodified, and disposable, units of labour. Only God sees their human worth and only God will act to rescue them. As the poor know that God alone is their refuge because they put their trust in God alone to save them, God promises to them the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Mourning never ceases. Mourning can be personal as when a loved one dies, or is lost to addiction, a life of crime, or some other tragedy. And it can be public. Major accidents, natural disasters and horrendous crimes give rise to public mourning.

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To those who mourn God promises comfort. This is more than sympathy, and more than the catharsis of grief. The roots of the word “comfort” are the Latin words for “strength” and “together”. Comfort implies finding strength in togetherness. Strength to bear unbearable pain, but also strength to act so that no one need suffer this pain again. In the early 1980s, such strength was found by a small group of Argentinean women who began to gather weekly in Buenos Aires’ Plaza de Mayo to mourn the disappearances of their loved ones and seek answers about their fate. They were scarcely noticed at first, except by other sufferers who slowly came out of their isolation and joined the group. Week by week, as their numbers grew, they gained strength through sharing pain, supporting each other with scraps of information and accompanying each other on visits to hospitals, police stations and army barracks. They also gained confidence and credibility in their confrontation with the regime. Their simple presence each week testified to the crimes of the military and helped lead to its downfall.

Similarly, around the world, people find that joining together to mourn, both diminishes grief and generates strength to confront evil. The funerals of the victims of apartheid became foci of resistance and new resolve to continue the struggle. ... At the annual remembrance of the Montreal massacre, women affirm the slogan “First mourn, then work for change.” In such mourning we find “strength in togetherness”, and know the blessing of God’s comfort.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The meek are the dispossessed of the earth. This century has seen a massive increase in the numbers of uprooted peoples. Aboriginal and indigenous peoples struggle to hold on to the small patches of ground we have left them. Peasants eke out a subsistence on small holdings, or work as day labourers on the plantations of the rich, while huge areas are planted in crops destined for export. In North America, the family farm is rapidly disappearing before the onrush of agribusiness. Poor people are losing land to mega-development projects and to the dumping of toxic or nuclear waste. Many no longer find room in the land, but migrate to the slums and barrios of the burgeoning urban centres. Here, too, they are denied a place of their own; no more than a bit of sidewalk or a heating grate to sleep on.

What is true of meek people is also true of our fellow creatures on the earth. Every day, approximately 100 plant and animal species disappear forever due to over-consumption and destruction of habitat. Every week the earth loses more species than were lost in the last three centuries combined.

...

Often the meek are so busy in a struggle for mere survival they have no time even to attend a demonstration. Yet, time and again, their desperation demands action. In Brazil, the Sem Terra (Without Land) movement organizes landless peasants to invade unused land and build squatter settlements. ... In India, people hug trees to prevent logging and lie down to obstruct bulldozers intent on building dams that will flood their lands. The meek know their need of the earth, and so God promises them the earth as their inheritance.

...

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

The poor, the mourners, the meek of the earth hunger after righteousness; a world in which they are no longer shunted aside, their sorrows no longer ignored, their rights no longer trampled on by the mighty. Elsewhere, Matthew tells us to seek the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness. Righteousness comes with the kingdom and in this kingdom the hungry shall be filled. The kingdom comes for the poor in spirit, those who mourn the fallen, the meek of the earth and those who look for a better world.

OUR GLOBAL MISSION

If the first four beatitudes tell us for whom the kingdom is, the next four are a call to action. They describe the life-style of the kingdom, a life-style which believers are to exemplify here and now in this world.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

Mercy is the first quality of the citizens of heaven. Matthew's ethic is not a tight-lipped concern with standards, but an open hand and an open heart. It is an ethic which is ready to forgive, ready to share. In forgiving it finds forgiveness; in giving it receives more than it gave away. ... One situation in which mercy is desperately needed today is in regard to the foreign debts of poor nations. ... The Jubilee 2000 campaign, now active in forty countries, is a means of bringing this call for mercy to the attention of international decision makers.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The heart is the soul, the seat of the personality. Blessed are those who are pure or clear at the centre of their being. They are people without guile, people who know who they are, know their faults, and know, because they have seen God in the face of Christ, that they have been forgiven. ... The world seldom recognizes the pure in heart. But there are many ordinary men and women who quietly and persistently do what is right because God has shown them the way. ... [Such] people ... enrich our lives with their vision and inspire us to continue in the struggle for justice.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Peace is a great word in the semitic languages. Its root meaning is wholeness or completeness. Those who make peace do not merely end wars; they build a whole or complete society, a society in which each family can tend its own field and vineyard, a just, participatory and ...sustainable society.

...

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those who are merciful, without guile and makers of peace cannot expect an easy time. The dark forces that crucified the Prince of Peace also oppose the children of the kingdom. Oppressors have always relied on accumulated wealth and power to impose their will. But more than ever today, economic rather than military force, is their weapon of choice.

...

[I]n recent decades, a dangerous ideology has taken hold among the powerful, which assigns to unregulated capitalism the prerogatives of government. A key component in implementing this ideology are trade and investment agreements which consolidate the gains of globalized finance and capital at the expense of human needs, ecological sustainability and social solidarity.

...

The beatitudes are first of all, a declaration of God's concern for the people the world passes by: the poor, the meek, the mourners, those who seek after righteousness. Secondly, they are a call to a way of living worthy of the citizens of grace: a life which is merciful, which is honest, which seeks peace and pursues it, and which is prepared to accept the consequences of living for righteousness' sake. In the context of our time, this means accepting the challenge of globalizing justice and standing in solidarity with those already engaged in this process.

Excerpts from "Proclaiming God's Reign" IAC report, 2000⁶

We proclaim God's kingdom through our choices.

Over and over again the Old Testament prophets called people to make choices: choices that would change the way they were living, choices that would proclaim God's reign. ... These calls echo Joshua's explicit call to the Israelites in Canaan ... "Choose you this day whom you will serve." ... All people are invited to choose God's kingdom. The story of Jonah reminds us that

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the choice is there even for those people like the Ninevites against whom we may have prejudices. They too can choose and by their choice proclaim God's reign.

We proclaim God's reign when we make choices to stand by the poor and the meek, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; when we choose to live counter to society's values of consumerism, self-centered power, retributive justice. The people of South Africa proclaimed God's reign when they chose the path of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation (i.e. the process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) rather than of revenge and retribution.

...

We proclaim God's kingdom through our persistent actions.

Moses did not give up on the Israelites despite their repeatedly wavering faith in situations like hunger (Exodus 16:3), thirst (Exodus 17:3), and uncertainty (Exodus 32:1). In close relationship with God, Moses over and over again took action to show the people that God continued to be present with them.

...

We proclaim God's reign when we do not give up in the face of violence, pain, injustice and persecution, when we hold onto our faith and keep acting on behalf of what we know is God's loving and just way. The people of East Timor proclaimed God's kingdom in persistent demands for justice and freedom. We proclaim God's reign with ongoing participation in such activities as vigils, human rights movements, dialogues with governing bodies about social, economic, and environmental issues, when we advocate ceaselessly on behalf of those parts of creation that are crying out. Jesus, the most persistent of all the people in the New Testament, knew the extent of effort and persistence required when he said, "But *strive* first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness." (Matthew 6:33)

...

We proclaim God's kingdom through our words.

Jesus ... "came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near...'" (Mark 1:14). Jesus spoke about God's kingdom to Galileans who were suffering under the oppressive and violent rule of the Romans. In a time and place of despair, Jesus taught his disciples to proclaim God's coming reign in prayer, "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10), and in public speech, "Go everywhere and announce the Message of God's good news to one and all ... And the disciples went everywhere preaching ...".

...

Sometimes we are like Paul in prison, trapped or made helpless by circumstances, unable to make choices or to act persistently, but still able to proclaim through the written or spoken word. In the wake of the assassination of Monsignor Juan Gerardi, (which followed the presentation of a study documenting over 55,000 deaths during Guatemala's civil conflict), our brothers and sisters in Guatemala proclaimed through their tears their faith in the reign of God in a prose poem published in the newspaper: "We hereby declare ourselves to be unconditional accomplices to the Gospel of Jesus Christ...". We proclaim God's reign when we talk about our experience of God's presence even in the face of incidents like personal tragedies, high school killings, ethnic civil wars, and environmental disasters; when we express words of comfort and faith to the poor and meek, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Like our Guatemalan brothers and sisters in Christ, let us strive to be "unconditional accomplices for the Gospel of Jesus Christ".

Every week, many of us come together for worship and say as a community of faith, "thy kingdom come". When we say these words, we are asking to be part of the emerging kingdom and the radical changes it brings. "For intercession, to be Christian, must be prayer for God's

reign to come on earth. It must be prayer for the victory of God, over disease, greed, oppression and death in the concrete circumstances of people's lives, now." *

¹ A&P 2010, pp. 517-20, 39

² A&P 2011, pp. 272-3, 32

³ A&P 2011, pp. 46-7

⁴ A&P 2011, pp. 448, 28

⁵ A&P 1999, pp. 268-284, 45

⁶ A&P 2000, pp. 284-294, 19

* Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, Fortress Press, 1992, p.303

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HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Also see “God’s Will for Wholeness Report”*

The Church Speaks

- The church encourages its partners in Africa and Asia to 1) provide complete and accurate information about HIV/AIDS, 2) emphasize that sexual intercourse should be confined to marriage, and 3) advocate the use of condoms for those individuals who choose to go against the teachings of the church and engage in extra-marital sexual intercourse.¹

The Church Acts

1997-2003: The 123rd GA (1997) adopted a statement encouraging partner churches in Africa and Asia to develop practical and realistic educational programs on preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.¹ The 126th GA (2000) invited congregations to recognize World AIDS Day (December 1) by planning events which focus on education about HIV/AIDS and called on International Ministries, PWS&D and the IAC to prepare resources on HIV/AIDS for congregational use.² The 129th GA (2003) commended the GOC for its commitment to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria** and recommended the GOC provide leadership at the World Trade Organization in changing trade and patent policies so that medicines needed to combat public health crises are accessible in an equitable manner to citizens in poor countries.³

2004: The 130th GA approved an appeal to congregations and individuals to support a church-wide response to the world-wide HIV/AIDS crisis that would support our partners*** in a long-term program of gospel care and relief and asked all committees and agencies of the church to collaborate in this project. GA appealed to all members and adherents of The PCC to pray regularly for:

- the children who have lost parents to HIV/AIDS,
- adults infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, struggling with daily life and worried about their families
- communities and nations scourged by HIV/AIDS,
- all searching for a cure and vaccine for HIV/AIDS, and working with ministries of care and relief, and
- ourselves that we may be moved to further action, to the good of neighbour and the glory of God.⁴

2007: The Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly wrote to the Minister of Industry requesting information on the specific steps the Government of Canada is taking to address the obstacles in “Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime” so that life-saving medicines can be made available to the citizens of countries in the Global South who are intended to benefit from this legislation.⁵

2011: The 137th GA encouraged congregations and presbyteries to reflect, pray and act on the major issue of HIV and AIDS that requires our continued commitment with global partners.⁶

* A&P 2006, pp. 268-284

** The Global Fund was created by the United Nations in 2001 to dramatically increase resources to fight three of the world’s most devastating diseases, and to direct those resources to areas of greatest need.
<http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/how/>

*** “Partners” refers to either the churches with whom The PCC has formal relationships through International Ministries or to development organizations supported by PWS&D.

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Requesting Partner Churches to Address the Issue of HIV/AIDS and its Prevention”, LMA report, 1997¹

Our church, like the churches in Africa and Asia, does not condone extramarital sexual intercourse. If everyone, or even a large majority of the population, practised fidelity within marriage and chastity outside it, the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus would be arrested. But we know that the teachings of the church in this area are frequently ignored. In our own country, Christian parents object to condom dispensers in high schools because they feel it gives implicit approval to extramarital sex. In Africa and Asia, church leaders exhort their people to lead chaste lives and prefer to say nothing about ways to protect themselves if they choose to disobey. Like us, they believe that promoting the use of condoms is encouraging illicit behaviour.

Health workers in the church see a different situation. They see hundreds of thousands of women raising children in rural villages while their husbands work at casual labour in the cities. They see women infected and dying of the HIV/AIDS virus contracted from their husbands returning to the village for holidays. Refusal to urge the men to use condoms not only results in their getting infected, but also condemns their wives and children to deprivation and possibly illness and death.

The health workers in the church in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa and India have described to us their struggle to encourage their pastors to do more than simply condemn extra-marital sex. More and more are beginning to see it is not enough simply to preach abstinence.

...

... [W]e are prepared to encourage our partners ... by urging them to 1) facilitate the provision of complete and accurate information about HIV/AIDS, 2) emphasize that sexual intercourse should be confined to marriage, and 3) advocate the use of condoms for those individuals who choose to go against the teachings of the church and engage in extra-marital sexual intercourse.

Excerpt from “Toward a World without AIDS”, LMA report, 2004⁴

The reality of HIV/AIDS is that there is no cure. The reality is that currently this disease has the upper hand. We are witnesses to the profound impact of HIV/AIDS on women, men, children and communities around the globe. The pandemic is exacerbating existing emergencies, reversing development gains, and creating new crises on a global scale. As Christians called to work for justice, silence and inaction are not viable options. We must join together as a church community to actively respond to the suffering and injustice we witness.

¹ A&P 1997, pp. 336-337, 26

² A&P 2000, pp. 286-288, 19

³ A&P 2003, pp. 304-306, 308, 15

⁴ A&P 2004, pp. 443-446, 33

⁵ A&P 2007, pp. 289-290

⁶ A&P 2011, p. 28

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Caring for Creation

Also See Book 4, Ecology, Energy, Environment The Church Speaks

Biotechnology: non-human applications

- Governments and farm organizations should promote and encourage the preservation of plant and animal species to preserve genetic diversity.²
- Research in the field of genetic engineering should benefit the global community and sharing of discoveries should not be unreasonably limited for commercial reasons.²
- In principle, it is not acceptable to consider higher (i.e. multi-cellular) animal life forms as patentable objects.⁸

Climate change and the Environment

- Global warming represents one of the most serious global environmental challenges to the health, security and stability of human life and natural ecosystems.³
- Natural resources should be recognized as “capital” to be sustained for future generations.⁶
- The full environmental cost of doing business should be incorporated into the pricing system in both the public and private sector.⁶
- Government financial incentives to resource and manufacturing industries should not encourage over-consumption.⁶
- A nation’s decision to encourage environmentally friendly trade should not be treated, under international trade agreements, as a barrier to trade.⁶
- Any denial of access to water represents lack of respect for God’s creation and lack of concern for our neighbour.⁹
- The earth and all that is in it is a gift from God. To survive, human beings are called to honour God as Creator.¹³
- Our climate is a public good and all humanity is responsible for taking care of it, especially those who live in countries that produce a disproportionate share of greenhouse gases. The ethics of climate change confer a responsibility on wealthy countries to support countries that are least able to adapt to climate change—particularly those in the Global South.¹³
- The GOC’s withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011 is a significant withdrawal of Canadian leadership at a time when international cooperation is urgently needed.¹⁴
- The Bible, in declaring the goodness and abundance of creation, suggests that there is enough for all so long as we exhibit temperance in the way we live. Wide disparities in wealth and power result from a sinful view of creation.¹

The Church Acts

1989: The 115th GA called on the GOC to monitor genetic engineering research to ensure that the research is for the good of the global community and asked that priority be given to promoting the preservation of genetic diversity. It asked the BCL to monitor developments in genetic engineering research and application and asked the WCC to develop a human rights code in respect of genetic engineering. The GA expressed concern that sharing of scientific discoveries in areas of genetic engineering might be limited for commercial reasons and that patents might be issued on life forms.²

1990: The 116th GA adopted a contemporary statement on the environment and endorsed the Tokyo Declaration of the World Commission on Environment and Development. The GA also asked the GOC to reach firm international agreements for the reduction of greenhouse gases and

the promotion of reforestation.* It praised the GOC for signing the Montreal and Helsinki agreements.^{3**}

Key Points from The Tokyo Declaration*

1. *Revive Growth: Economic growth must be stimulated, particularly in developing countries, while enhancing the environmental resource base.*
2. *Change the Quality of Growth: The goals of growth should be sustainability, equity, social justice, and security.*
3. *Conserve and Enhance the Resource Base: Sustainability requires the conservation of environmental resources such as clean air, water, forests, and soils; maintaining genetic diversity; and using energy, water and raw materials efficiently.*
4. *Ensure a Sustainable Level of Population: Population policies—including family planning—should be integrated with other economic and social development programs – education, health care, and the expansion of the livelihood base of the poor.*
5. *Reorient Technology and Manage Risks: The focus of technological development must pay greater attention to environmental factors.*
6. *Integrate Environment and Economics in Decision-making: The ability to anticipate and prevent environmental damage will require that the ecological dimensions of policy be considered at the same time as the economic, trade, energy, agricultural, and other dimensions.*
7. *Reform International Economic Relations: Fundamental improvements in market access, technology transfer, and international finance are necessary to help developing countries widen their opportunities by diversifying their economic and trade bases and building their self-reliance.*
8. *Strengthen International Co-operation: Higher priorities must be assigned to environmental monitoring, assessment, research and development, and resource management in all fields of international development.*

*A&P 1990, pp. 367-368

1991: The 117th GA asked boards and agencies to participate in networks addressing the greenhouse effect. It urged the GOC to participate in negotiations on an international convention on world climate.^{4***}

1992: The 118th GA urged the GOC to re-examine its foreign policy and to reverse any policies that contribute to environmental degradation in developing countries.⁵

1994: The 120th GA re-affirmed its position on the sharing of scientific discoveries.^{6****}

* The GA also asked the GOC to (a) help developing countries achieve standards of energy efficiency, (b) facilitate participation in the Montreal and Helsinki agreements, (c) condemn the practice of dumping chemicals in developing countries, (d) negotiate a treaty to stem the fallout of airborne chemicals in the Arctic, (e) ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, (f) vote “no” on all projects that cause environmental destruction and involuntary resettlement, and (g) change regulations so that immature fish might reach a reproductive age. In addition, the GA adopted a Water Declaration, which affirmed the PCC’s belief that “access to clean water is a basic human right” and that protecting fresh water is “a collective responsibility.”

** These agreements aimed to phase out the use of chlorofluorocarbons, which are partly responsible for destroying the ozone layer of the atmosphere

*** This conventions, which was signed in 1992, led to the development of the Kyoto Protocol.

**** The GA urged the GOC to (a) end all patenting of biological life forms and investigate the issue before implementing the Uruguay Round Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, (b) shorten the period of patent protection for pharmaceutical drugs, (c) increase support for alternate energy sources, (d) help send non-polluting technologies to developing countries, and (e) remove incentives that encourage over-consumption.

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2003: The 129th GA expressed opposition to the GOC's decision to extend patent law to include higher (i.e. multi-cellular) animal life forms.⁷ The GA also encouraged members to encourage local and provincial government to meet or exceed the Kyoto Protocol targets.⁸

2005: The 131st GA urged the GOC to ban the commercial export of water and to make sure water services for domestic use did not come under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services.⁹ The GA endorsed the Water Declaration.*

2007: The 133rd GA encouraged each congregation to do an energy audit of its buildings and to implement energy conservation measures that are financially feasible.¹⁰

2008: The Assembly Council recommended congregations read the KAIROS document "Energy Workbook for Religious Buildings."¹¹ The Moderator of the 134th GA wrote to the GOD, encouraging it to recommit to meeting Canada's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.¹²

2010: The Moderator of the 136th GA wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressing disappointment in the country's lack of progress in adhering to the Kyoto Protocol. He encouraged the GOC to support a second agreement at the 2010 meeting that would build on existing environmental protections and asked the GOC to increase funding under the Copenhagen Accord.** He also wrote to the Minister of International Cooperation, requesting information on policies and financial commitments for projects dealing directly with climate change mitigation, and to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, encouraging all necessary steps toward transparency and openness. Members were invited to study climate change and consider how they could reduce carbon emissions.¹³

2012: The 138th GA encouraged the GOC to develop policies and initiatives to promote more responsible stewardship and care of natural resources. It urged the GOC to maintain or increase funding of scientific projects that help Canadians understand the realities of climate change.¹⁴

2015: The 141st GA recommended that Presbyterians write to and meet with their Members of Parliament and that the Moderator write to the Minister of the Environment prior to the Conference of the Parties 21(COP21) meeting in December 2015 to express their support for the development of an internationally negotiated and binding agreement that sets reductions targets in greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the increase in the globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature to two degrees Celsius.¹⁵

2017: The GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs encouraging the government to meet its existing financial commitments to assist countries in the Global South to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change affirming Canada's pledge to meet its commitments in the Paris Agreement¹⁶

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "A Theology of Ecology", ESA report, 1973¹⁷

It is surely no accident that the two explicit passages about humankind's dominion in nature (Genesis 1: 28, Psalm 8:6) follow on statements of a unique God-like nature. So it is not a merely human or natural dominion over nature that humankind is commissioned to exercise. Rather it participates in the rule and dominion of the Creator after whom humankind is patterned. God's redemptive and creative rule over us, therefore, must define humankind's dominion in nature.

* KAIRS and the Canadian Catholic Organization made the declaration for Development and Peace as part of their yearlong campaign on water.

** Twenty-five countries made this voluntary agreement after international negotiations broke down at the United Nations' 2009 climate change conference.

God's creative activity cannot be separated from God's redemptive activity. Just as humankind may share in the latter, so we are called upon to share in the former. The image of the Creator God in humankind means that our dominion must be creative.

Excerpts from "A Statement on Genetic Engineering" BCL report, 1989²

At a recent international conference on the impact of biotechnology, participants declared "while biotechnology may promise to increase production and reduce costs, it is more likely to accentuate inequalities in the farm population, aggravate the problem of genetic erosion and uniformity, undermine life-support systems, increase the vulnerability and dependence of farmers and further concentrate the power of transnational agri-business."

...

Recently large pharmaceutical companies have been buying biotechnology companies or entering strategic alliances with them. The results of industry control of genetic engineering could be extraordinarily limiting for marginalized people and those in the third world. Discoveries of treatments for genetic diseases must be made available to all researchers and treatment offered to all people regardless of wealth, race, sex, religion, occupation or country of residence. While business needs to continue to support research, it must let its findings be available to all and not limited to those with the ability to pay.

Excerpts from "Energy Policy Framework", BCL report, 1991¹⁸

A sustainable global society ultimately requires a limit to overall material prosperity. This requires recognition of the limits of non-renewable resources and of the capacity of the earth's ecosystem to absorb pollutants. We cannot continue to operate on old assumptions. The present energy situation emphasizes the inequalities between rich and poor both within and among countries, the depletion of resources at the cost of serious damage to the environment and the choice of options without adequate information. Those who exercise power are called to be accountable to God and to those who are affected by the exercise of power. A just society will at least mean that everyone has access to whatever is necessary for their basic needs. A just and sustainable society requires more growth of energy use in poor countries, the curtailment of its use in rich countries, and a major shift from non-renewable sources to renewable ones. But justice will also mean much greater equity of distribution between rich and poor, within countries as well as between countries. Justice includes access to technologies related to energy use. Access to information must not be restricted, nor evaluation and control procedures be kept secret. Discussion on the full range of risks and benefits associated with each option is essential.

Excerpt from "Environmental-Global Warming", IAC report, 1991⁴

Principles for a just north-south relationship that would address global warming are offered as follows:

1. Self-reliance: ...Each country should be able to concentrate on developing its own resources to an optimum level before entering a world market which is biased in favour of the north.
 2. Leap-frog development: ...It is in the interests of both the south and the north for the poorer countries to leap-frog over the path followed in the north, and to move directly into more sustainable and cleaner approaches in their development strategies.
- ...
3. Transfer of resources: The transfer or sharing of resources (information, technology, skills, research capacity and financial assistance) among countries is required if meaningful and effective steps are to be taken to combat global warming and its

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ramifications. The uniqueness of the resources and needs of each country of the south should be recognized so that each can best help itself and also help each other.

- ...
4. Just trade practices: ...World trade in food must be regulated in a way which reduces unnecessary trade, encourages [local] production, and permits trading of southern goods at fair prices.

...

 5. Sustainable energy practices: ...Every effort should be made by the north and the south to improve greatly the efficiency of how energy is used in every sector of our respective economies.... Providing resources for biomass production to be put on a sustainable footing is an urgent need and can make a major contribution to helping meet basic energy needs in the future.
 6. Protection of the oceans: The capacity of the oceans to function naturally is being eroded by oil pollution, sewage, waste disposal, nuclear testing and the impact of tourist activities. Laws and conventions on regulating ocean traffic, fishing and waste disposal must be enforced ...Assistance must be given to countries of the south to maintain and develop both traditional and new ways of using marine resources which are non-polluting and non-destructive.
 7. Population: ...Social and economic conditions must ... be created which will make voluntary limitation of family size an attractive and achievable option for families throughout the world. These conditions should not include any form of discrimination against large families or against female children, but should take the form of measures including basic health care for all ... and the availability of free family planning resources.

*Excerpt from “Signs of Hope” IAC report 1992*⁵

Ethical principles for environment and development [from the World Council of Churches’ declaration regarding environmental protection]:

1. Justice for the world’s poor must be the foundation of people-centred development strategies.
2. Human societies bear a responsibility toward the earth as a whole.
3. Lifestyles of high material consumption must yield to greater sufficiency for all.
4. The carrying capacity of the earth must become a criterion in assessing economic development.
5. Militarism must yield to non-violent approaches to conflict resolution.
6. The full participation of individuals and groups in decision-making is critical to just and ecologically-sound development.
7. Access to education must be assured.
8. The rights of future generations must be recognized.
9. The principle of precautionary/preventive action should guide development decisions.
10. The “polluter pays” principle should be affirmed as an international standard.
11. Procedures and mechanisms should be established permitting a transnational approach to environmental issues and disputes.
12. The biodiversity of the earth must be respected and protected.

*Excerpts from “The World Trading System” IAC report 1994*⁶

Trade and the Environment

...To be good stewards of creation, we should include the full environmental cost of “doing business” into both the public and private sector, as well as recognize that natural resources are “capital” to be sustained for future generations.

...

At present a nation's decision to encourage environmentally-friendly trade may be perceived only as a trade barrier. In 1991, GATT ruled against a U. S. law banning the import of tuna caught in a type of fishing net that endangers dolphins; the same panel also ruled more generally that countries may not use trade barriers to discourage the production of goods in an environmentally-unfriendly ways.

One of the arguments against environmentally-motivated trade restrictions is that some corporations can "hijack" health or environmental agendas for their own profit. But there is a greater danger that this possibility becomes an excuse for limiting the incorporation of environmental concerns into the trading system.

Trade and Farming

...

A key principle of sustainable development is that all regions of the world should maintain their traditional and ecologically appropriate food supply. This is known as food sufficiency.

The present trading system inhibits food sufficiency in many ways.... Overproduction by those in control of the trading system is sometimes a problem: huge grain production in the north over the past decades has kept prices so low that African grain production has been falling since 1970.

...

Structural adjustment programs and new trade agreements give agribusiness [in developed countries] vastly expanded access to local markets [in developing countries], which further undercuts local food prices and thus local farming.

For example, Mexican corn and beans now compete with the highly-mechanized, historically-subsidized, and chemically-intensive farming of the United States. NAFTA also ended the constitutional protection of communal land held by indigenous peoples in Mexico. These changes combined with the historic and ongoing oppression of indigenous peoples led to the Chiapas rebellion in January 1994. In Mexico and elsewhere, the ongoing impoverishment and displacement of the rural population will only increase unemployment and urban problems.... The Presbyterian Church in Canada was founded by many who were escaping from a land and food system which concentrated power in the hands of a few.... In rural areas throughout the world, including Canada, "we are repeating the history our forefathers and mothers sought to change ... but this time there is nowhere else to go."*

Excerpts from "Structural Adjustment Programs", IAC report 1995 ¹⁹

Structural adjustment tends to provide economic incentives to large-scale agri-business producing for export and eliminate incentives for small-scale producers for local markets. This threatens food security, particularly in countries like Zimbabwe where most of the population is rural.

As part of structural adjustment, the Zimbabwean government raised prices for export crops like tobacco, cotton and cut flowers, persuading many farmers to abandon maize production. Once a surplus maize producer, Zimbabwe had a food deficit ... in 1991. Yet, as late as February 1992, when the extent of the region's drought and imminent crop failure was clear, the marketing board was still exporting grain. Over half the population required food aid in 1992.

...

Although ending food subsidies should help local farmers, in fact the practice rewards large commercial farmers, pricing food beyond the reach of local consumers. Many development analysts believe that ending food subsidies can work only if poor consumers have jobs and control over their local economy.

...

* Rural Ministry Advisory Committee, 1993.

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Structural adjustment programs often ignore the environmental costs of certain patterns of economic development, costs that will ultimately be borne both by individual nations and the whole world. As a result of its disastrous environmental record in Asia and Latin America, the World Bank has begun to take environmental concerns more seriously.

*Excerpts from “Food Security: Bread of Life for the Common Good”, IAC report 1997*²⁰

Capital and chemical-intensive farming of the type that has developed in the northern hemisphere since the Second World War has a price. Based on economies of scale and the exclusion of environmental and social costs to the pricing system, this kind of farming has enormously increased agricultural productivity as measured in output per unit of land and labour. For consumers in Europe and North America, the agri-business model provides relatively cheap food and profitable investments.

But this kind of agriculture draws heavily on petroleum for fuel and on petroleum-based fertilizers or chemicals, manufactured in energy-intensive ways. These resources are finite. Agribusiness tends inevitably towards expansive monoculture, for example, devoting large tracts of farmland in the Maritime provinces to potatoes instead of rotating crops to relieve the soil. Worldwide, monoculture is also responsible for serious and ongoing loss of biodiversity. The world’s topsoil is relatively shallow in most regions of the world, and an estimated one-fourth of an inch is lost annually through erosion. Because monoculture tends to mine the soil rather than continually renew it, modern industrial farming is ultimately unsustainable.

*Excerpts from “Rainforest Depletion: Causes and Consequences”, IAC report, 1999*²¹

Just as the exiled children of Israel lamented the loss of their homeland, so we mourn the loss of our inheritance in God’s creation. Since the end of the Second World War, half the world’s tropical rainforests have been destroyed.... It is estimated that one in five of all forms of life, all God’s creations, may vanish in the next generation.

...

In many countries, much of the actual destruction is caused by peasant farmers clearing land for cultivation.... As population pressure grows, the land is cleared at a faster rate.... In addition, there is tremendous pressure on the forests to supply firewood, the only fuel available to millions of people.

...

The second part responsible for the disappearance of the rainforest is governments and large commercial interests. Governments have put the immediate income to be gained from the export of tropical forest products well ahead of the need to exercise stewardship of these resources to ensure that they will be there for future generations to harvest.

...

The economic and social factors which drive people to destroy the rainforest are complex and inter-related. In nearly every case, the problem of rainforest destruction must be addressed in the context of fundamental economic and political change. Some problems are local in nature, but others, such as the international policies which force countries to eliminate “discretionary” expenditures in order to make debt payments, can be addressed by the common action of donor countries such as Canada.

Time is running out for the rainforests. This fact alone lends an urgency to the jubilee call for a fresh look at debt burdens of poor countries, and for a new respect for God’s marvelous, yet threatened creation.

*Excerpts from “Environmental Degradation as a Human Security Issue”, IAC report, 2003*⁸

The survival of humankind is inextricably linked to the preservation of the natural world. This has been emphasized in the recent debate about the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The

international community can no longer ignore the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on human security. Pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, floods and drought deplete precious land and water resources and create “environmental refugees”.

One potential impact of environmental degradation is in conflict over diminishing resources. Egypt, for example, depends on the Nile River for 90% of its water supply. It is, however, the last of eight countries through which the Nile flows, and has no control over the use of water upstream. It is highly vulnerable if any of these countries significantly increases its use of Nile water. Egyptian officials have recognized that action which brought about a dramatic reduction in the flow of the Nile would be seen as a threat to Egypt’s security.

...

It is also important to recognize that the Kyoto targets are just a beginning. They will not prevent climate change. And they are only a first step to limiting the impact of climate change. Many nations and peoples around the world will be confronted with severe social and economic problems in the wake of climate change and other environmental crises. The church must be ready to play a role in alleviating human suffering and enhancing human security through these difficult changes.

The following statement by the World Council of Churches acknowledges that if humans are to enjoy environmental security, the developed world’s entitlement to unchecked economic growth at the expense of the developing world must be challenged:

Churches must call into question the dynamics of the present economic systems. They need to point to the contradictions in which society finds itself, despite clear analyses of the threats endangering the future of humankind...Development is not a constant upward movement. We have to be content if we succeed in containing the process of degradation and maintain a sense of solidarity among the nations and their people.*

Whether water is scarce or abundant, accessible or hidden, the Bible portrays it as a free gift from God and a sign of our dependence on God. When Hagar and her child, Ishmael, are driven out into the desert and the skin of water runs out, God provides a well of water for them to survive. When the people of Israel thirst in the wilderness and find only bitter water at Marah, the Lord shows Moses how to make it sweet and drinkable (Ex. 15). When they are thirsty again at Rephidim and can find no water at all, the Lord shows Moses how to strike the rock so that water will flow from it.

Because water is God’s gift, we are to use it as responsible stewards. We are not to fight over it (Gen. 26:20) but to share it (Mark 9:41, Gen. 24:17-20). The inequity of access to sufficient, clean water is at heart a spiritual problem. Any denial of access to water represents lack of respect for God’s creation and lack of concern for our neighbour. As the Letter of James says, it is no good to wish our impoverished brother or sister well if we do not supply their bodily needs (James 2:15).

The physical and the spiritual are inextricably linked as the sacraments show us. In baptism, the “water signifies the washing away of sin, the start of new life in Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Living Faith 7.6.2). In communion, “Christ places his table in this world to feed and bless his people. . . . proclaiming salvation until he comes—a symbol of hope for a troubled age” (L.F. 7.7.2, 7.73). Spiritual and physical nourishment are gifts of God’s grace. God wills that all

* Solidarity with the Victims of Climate Change: Reflections on the World Council of Churches’ Response to Climate Change, January 2002, p. 15, 25-26.

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should enjoy God’s blessings, without discrimination. Since human life, health and dignity depend on water, it is more than a need—it is a right.

...

Sin has led humans to hoard, waste, pollute and misuse water, causing conflict and injustice. But, through Christ, sin does not have the last word. God offers grace and new life through the Living Water given by Jesus (John 4:10). The Church of Christ is called to see that God-given blessings are managed and shared wisely, ensuring availability, access to, conservation and sharing of water.

Excerpt from “Caring for God’s Creation,” IAC report, 2010¹³

The Proclamation

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.” (Psalm 24:1)

For God’s people, consideration of the planet’s wellbeing begins with proclamation and praise. The Psalmist sings “Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!” (Ps. 150:6).

The Covenant Relationship

...The covenant made with Noah is “with all of creation (Gen. 9:8-12). God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. . . All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hos. 2:18ff).”*

The Calling

God calls human beings to a special responsibility within creation: “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion . . . over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen.1:28).

...

The use of “subdue” in Genesis 1 suggests a differential in power between humans and the rest of creation ** “Dominion” indicates royal rule but does not necessarily include coercion or force. A ruler can exercise dominion for good such as to strengthen the weak and heal the sick (Ezek. 34:2-4). In Genesis 1:26, 28 “human dominion, limited to the earth and the animal kingdom, derives from being made in the image of God and is understood as an aspect of God’s blessing.”*** The blessing is not just for humans but for the whole creation.****

...

Human beings, understanding their creation in God’s image, have too often interpreted God’s power and might as license to rule over the rest of God’s creation, making it subservient to human will. The Bible, though, also portrays God as the source and sustainer of life (Isa. 40:28-29), shepherd (Ezek. 34:15), creator and provider (Ps. 104) and compassionate liberator (Ex. 3:7-8). The image of God and true humanity is seen in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15-20). In Christ, who humbled himself (Phil. 2:5-11), dominion is expressed not as mastery or subjugation but as self-giving, unconditional love. Created and sustained by this love, humans are “to care for the earth

* “The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth”, World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) 24th General Council, 2004, p. 4, paragraph 20.

** Wagner, S., Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed. G.J. Botterweck, trans. David Green, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004, p. 52-57.

*** Zobel, H.J. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed. G.J. Botterweck, trans. David Green, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004, Vol. 13, p. 330-336.

**** The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Vancouver School of Theology, is thanked for her help with the biblical background of the terms “subdue” and “dominion”.

even as the Creator has already begun to care, to protect and enhance the earth as God's creation."^{*}

The Lament

The regrettable truth is that human beings have forgotten the covenant relationship by seeking mastery over others and over nature. Science has brought much good but has also given humans the capacity to pollute and destroy.

...

The Need for Repentance

Humans are called to "return to the Lord, that he may have mercy. . . and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7b). The Accra Confession of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches states, "We confess our sin in misusing creation and failing to play our role as stewards and companions of nature."

...

The Promise and the Hope

The prophet Joel envisions a day of abundance when the soil and the animals of the field can lose their fear and rejoice in God who has done great things (Joel 2:23-24). The Book of Revelation promises "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:10).

Excerpts from "Whose Land? Who Benefits?" IAC report, 2011²²

In the biblical defense of the poor and powerless it suggests that wide disparities in wealth or power are not inevitable or a consequence of forces beyond our control. In fact, it constitutes a sinful tarnishing of the goodness of creation and requires correction through a process of redistribution of land and property. As the relationship of land, land ownership and the power conferred by land ownership is examined, biblical witness attests that access to land, and the need for the poor to derive sustenance from it, are part of the prophetic announcement of good news to all.

¹ A&P 2011, pp. 286-297, 17

² A&P 1989, pp. 341-348, 67-68

³ A&P 1990, pp. 415-416, 62

⁴ A&P 1991, pp. 329-331, 57

⁵ A&P 1992, pp. 331-341, 41

⁶ A&P 1994, pp. 301-313, 36-38, 67-68

⁷ A&P 2003, pp. 364-366, 42

⁸ A&P 2003, pp. 301-302, 308, 15

⁹ A&P 2005, pp. 294-307, 14-15

¹⁰ A&P 2007, p 326

¹¹ A&P 2008, pp. 212-3, 20

¹² A&P 2008, pp. 324, 41

¹³ A&P 2010, pp. 390-405, 17, 39

¹⁴ A&P 2012, p.372, 32

¹⁵ A&P 2015, pp. 391-3, 18

¹⁶ A&P 2017, 20, 306-9

¹⁷ A&P 1973, pp. 270-274, 281-282, 40

¹⁸ A&P 1982, pp. 316-317, 58, 85

¹⁹ A&P 1995, pp. 250-262, 33

²⁰ A&P 1997, pp. 301-316, 31

²¹ A&P 1999, pp. 273-274, 45

²² A&P 2011, pp. 286-297, 17

* Brueggemann, Walter, *Image of God, Reverberations of Faith: A Theological Handbook of Old Testament Themes*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002, p. 106.

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Global Economic Justice

The Church Speaks

- All that the earth provides we are to receive as gifts from God to all God's people. We are expected to use these gifts according to God's will.¹
- Economics is a major area of ethical concern for Christians.³
- Economic systems which impoverish people who are created in God's image are an affront to God.² No one is to be left out of the human community.³
- A social theory that claims respect for human beings should be based on merit rather than the unmerited rights and dignity of all under the grace of God is unacceptable to the church.³
- Our failure to seek economic justice is disobedience to God and has consequences that are unbearable to the social life of the human community, and even the earth itself.²
- Plans must be made to break down the enormous disparities between the advantaged and the disadvantaged.³
- The church's role is to remind policy makers and consumers of the broader global and domestic public interests at stake in economic debates² and to be advocates of those who have no helper.³

The Church Acts

1992: The 118th GA urged members, congregations and courts of the church to continue to inform themselves about the ways that peace is broken through unfair trade, unfair debt arrangements, reductions in Canadian foreign aid, environmental abuse, human brutalization (e.g. child prostitution) and ethnic violence, and to continue to pray for and seek ways to show solidarity with those robbed of their peaceful enjoyment of life.¹

1994-97: The 120th GA (1994) mandated the Committee on Church Doctrine to pursue a careful study of the scriptural teaching and the doctrinal position of the faith in regards to economics.² The 123rd GA (1997) sent "The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy" produced by the Committee on Church Doctrine to church courts, agencies and committees for study and response.^{3*}

2006: The 132nd GA requested that presbyteries and congregations draw attention to the Make Poverty History campaign and encourage support for this initiative.⁴

2007: The bible study guide "Wisely and Fairly for the Good of All", which highlights issues outlined in "The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy" was produced by the Committee on Church Doctrine.⁵ The WARC document (approved at WARC's 24th General Council (2004) in Accra, Ghana) "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" was adopted by the 133rd GA. This is a confessional document which condemns trends in globalization and economic systems which exclude and prey upon poor and vulnerable people, and the environment. This document originated from the 23rd General Council (Debrecen,

Make Poverty History is an international campaign initiated in February 2005 with organizations in over 80 countries participating. The goals of the campaign are:

1. More and Better Aid
2. Trade Justice
3. Cancelling the Debt
4. End Child Poverty in Canada*

(*Canada only)

<http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/el/home.php>

* The committee revised this document on the basis of the responses received and, as of 2004, was preparing to publish a study guide for congregational use.

Hungary, 1997) of WARC where member churches reflected on Isaiah 58:6 "...break the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free".⁶ The 133rd GA (2007) urged the GOC to promote the inclusion of a regular review process to assess the human impact of trade agreements. Congregations were encouraged to purchase fair trade products as a tangible response to globalization and unjust economic systems.⁷

2008: 2009 is the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. Presbyterians were encouraged to mark this date by participating in faith and justice activities that honour Calvin's legacy. Justice Ministries provided suggestions for ways congregations could mark the anniversary.⁸

2009: The 135th GA encouraged congregations and presbyteries to use the online resource for "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" produced by the WARC North American working group and to examine more deeply the implications of the document with respect to economics and investments.⁹

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from "The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy", CCD report, 1997*³

Neutrality of the Church in Regard to Economics

Historically the Christian churches have tended to remain neutral in regard to economic systems.

...

The two seminal texts for this neutral posture regarding economics and, for that matter, the much broader area of politics, would be ... :Lk. 20:25 ("Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.") and Jn. 18:36 ("My kingship is not of this world.") ... Those two teachings of Jesus are often interpreted as distinguishing between the task of the church and the task of the state. The churches have for the most part adopted what is a self-limiting, conservative role in regard to economic-political systems.

The downside of such a conservative stance might be that in certain instances the churches have, through their inaction, become almost silent partners with unjust regimes. In being quiet and respectful citizens, the prophetic role of God's people has sometimes been lost.

...

Under Certain Conditions, the Churches Cannot Remain Neutral

The churches' neutral stance can no longer be taken when claims are made regarding an economic system in vogue which goes beyond the confines of what is practical and beneficial to human beings. When the claim is made that a particular economic program is the meaning of all effort and the answer to the human predicament, the Christian churches cannot help but be alarmed.

...

Such, for example, was the situation in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe during the recent reign of Marxism. Marxist philosophy made extraordinary claims concerning the whole of human existence. ... Such all encompassing claims could not be accepted by the churches. Both in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, the Christian churches were, for the most part, actively anti-Marxist. Christian people played a major role in the peaceful overthrow of Marxist regimes.

The Claims of Market Economics in the West Today

Capitalism or market economics, in various forms, has been the dominant economic system in Western Europe and North America for at least three hundred years. During much of this period,

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for better or worse, the Christian churches of the West have adopted their traditional conservative stance of coexistence, in this case, with capitalism.

...

Until recent times in the West, capitalist economics has been tempered by particular humanising elements which are to a large extent the result of Christian influence. During the last few decades, however, a new capitalism has emerged.

...

What we have in the new capitalism is another form of economic determinism. It would seem that our capitalism has unwittingly followed the lead of Karl Marx in believing that economics is a science like natural science and that economics is the answer to the whole of life. Capitalism, which had once been defended as a good practical method of doing business, is now being promoted as an essential way of life.

...

Capitalism, as a philosophy, claims to be based on a scientific understanding of human nature. Human nature, so the argument goes, is selfish and acquisitive. Each person is primarily concerned with his/her own welfare first. To base an economy on any other understanding, the argument goes, is unrealistic and even utopian.

On first consideration, it would seem that capitalism and Christianity share a common world view. In various Christian confessions, the faithful also hold that humanity is selfish.

...

Christians, however, believe that humanity has also been redeemed. ... “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (Jn. 3:16)

...

The truth about our human situation was expressed by Martin Luther as *simul justus et peccator*, “justified but yet in sin”. Human nature is both damned and redeemed. Evidence of this dialectic is all around us.

In light of this realistic understanding of humanity, Christian people would be satisfied only with economic and political systems which see our human situation as profoundly limited by sin, but at the same time wonderfully liberated by grace.

Any system based on the individual need to acquire and disregarding or even contemptuous of the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount cannot be left unchallenged by Jesus’ followers.

...

An unfettered capitalism, according to its advocates, rewards the right people: the hard workers, the intelligent, the risk-takers, the creative, etc.. Without going into some obvious discrepancies in the system, the idea of rewarding only the meritorious with the benefits of life is, in itself, incompatible with the Christian faith. “God makes his rain to fall on the just and the unjust ...”. (Mt. 5:45) And, of course, it is the duty of a biblical people to emulate the justice of God. “What does the Lord require of you, o man, but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with the Lord your God.” (Mic. 6:8)

It could be that the most frightening fruit of a new unrestrained market economy is the prevalent attitude toward the poor it has engendered. While the rich get richer and the poor become poorer, abuse is heaped on the poor. The single mother, the welfare recipient, the homeless are being excoriated for their immoral, trifling ways. People in economic misfortune are not only seen as material losers in the competition; they are spiritual losers who brought their misfortune on themselves.

...

The *Living Faith* document of 1984*, states in a positive way some of the requirements of a just society:

Justice involves protecting the rights of others.
It protests against everything that destroys human dignity.
Living Faith 8.4.3

Justice requires concern for the poor of the world.
It seeks the best way to create
well-being in every society.
It is concerned about employment, education, and health.
as well as rights and responsibilities.
Living Faith 8.4.4

What can the churches say to demands for an unregulated capitalism?

1. When the claim is made that any economic or political system provides the answer to the complexities of the human predicament, the churches may and must say no.
2. When, within the economic and political arena, the argument is made that society has no choice, that human beings must be governed by necessity, the churches may and must say no.
3. When a new capitalism makes the claim that competition and greed are the only significant motivations for human endeavours, the churches may and must say no.
4. When those who experience misfortune: the unemployed, the sick, the single parents, the disabled, the aged are blamed for their situation, the churches may and must say no.
5. When the assertion is made that due to changes in the economy, the society no longer has the same obligations to the poor, sick, disabled, aged and children, the churches may and must say no.
6. When a social theory claims that respect for human beings should be based on merit rather than on the unmerited rights and dignity of all guaranteed by the incarnation and the grace of God, the churches may and must say no.

Excerpts from “God’s Will for Wholeness”, IAC report, 2006 (A&P 2006, 268-286, 21¹⁰)

The church’s role in God’s plan of restoration is to “permeate all of life with the compassion of God” (Living Faith 9.1.3). This role has ranged from the apostles’ healing of the sick to the founding of hospitals and development of health care policy. Health has a social as well as a personal dimension. What Paul says of the church shapes our pursuit of the common good for humanity: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it” (I Corinthians 12:26). The true well-being of one depends on the well-being of all. So in Christ’s name, we encourage health policies and programs that include everyone, especially people who are marginalized and impoverished. In Christ’s name, we challenge structures and attitudes that interfere with the just and equal sharing of resources essential for good health. In Christ’s name, we reach out with love and generosity to relieve suffering and restore wholeness.

¹ A&P 1992, pp. 331-341, 41

² A&P 1994, pp. 249, 25

* This document was adopted as a subordinate standard in 1998.

³ A&P 1997, pp. 235-254, 38

⁴ A&P 2006, pp.280, 21

⁵ A&P 2007, p. 245

⁶ A&P 2007, pp. 261-263

⁷ A&P 2007, p. 280

⁸ A&P 2008, pp. 328-31, 42

⁹ A&P 2009, pp. 279-280, 24

¹⁰ A&P 2006, pp. 268-286, 21

Overseas Development Assistance (Foreign Aid)

The Church Speaks

- In order to be God’s agents of change in an unjust global economic imbalance, it is necessary:⁸
 - to identify and study underlying problems, including the role played by Canadians and Canadian government policy,
 - to make known our concerns to all levels of government urging aid that will be sustainable and not exploitative,
 - to protest against the world arms race that diminishes our ability to fight hunger, and
 - to consider adopting a simpler, personal life-style in order to free financial resources which can be directed to long-range development projects.
- Humanitarian, rather than political or economic, interests should determine Canadian overseas development aid. Eligibility for Canadian aid should not be tied to acceptance of structural adjustment programs.¹⁰
- The GOC should make a serious commitment to meeting the United Nations target of contributing 0.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product to Overseas Development Assistance.¹³
- The GOC should oppose the mandatory privatization of water systems as a condition for receiving loans from the IMF and the World Bank.¹⁴
- Overseas Development Assistance should not be considered as discretionary spending. The recovery of the global economy (from recession) should not be at the expense of vulnerable people in the Global South.¹⁶
- Humanitarian assistance needs, not political or economic interests, must guide the rationale for development programs.¹⁷

The Church Acts

1953-1958: The 79th GA (1953) encouraged the GOC to provide increased financial support on the part of our country to efforts being made to assist the underdeveloped areas of the world to achieve a higher standard of living.”¹ The 84th GA (1958) recommended all political parties be informed “of the fact that our Christian conscience is disturbed by the presence in this land of surplus grain and the lack of food in other areas of the world; and that we urge them to take whatever steps are possible to remedy this situation.”²

In the early 1980s 25 countries in Africa were suffering from drought and famine. A BBC documentary on the effects of the famine in Ethiopia (where it was especially severe) shocked European and North American audiences and spurred an emergency response. PWS&D launched an “African Famine Appeal” in April 1984. (A&P 1985, p. 406)

1971-1975: The 97th GA (1971)

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

recorded its “profound dismay at the vast man-made disaster in East Pakistan”^{*} and urged strong government, church and civil relief efforts and political efforts to resolve the situation.³ The 98th GA (1972) commended the GOC for its rehabilitation program in Bangladesh and for opening an aid office in its capital city of Dacca.⁴ The 100th GA (1974) asked that GOC bilateral aid to Sudan be renewed to assist in post-war development.⁵ ** The 101st GA (1975) recommended that where a surplus of food existed, the GOC distribute the surplus, wherever possible without cost, among non-profit institutions at home and abroad.⁶

1984-1985: The 110th GA (1984) called for government support of humanitarian aid programs to Vietnam, noting that in the decade following the end of the war, the country’s efforts to rebuild were further hampered by severe natural disasters including cyclones and floods. Churches and other humanitarian agencies had been assisting, but there was little government assistance.⁷ The 111th GA (1985) commended the GOC and the provincial governments which had responded to the African famine crisis, and thanked the individuals and congregations which had responded to PWS&D’s African famine appeal. It urged congregations, presbyteries and synods to consider the on-going and long-term needs of the area and to study the issue of food aid and development in the context of our responsibility to share the world’s resources with all people. It asked the GOC, as it developed policies on foreign aid, international trade and domestic agricultural policies to consider the needs of citizens, as well as governments, to be self-sufficient in food production, and to reconsider its decision to postpone achieving the goal of raising overseas development assistance to 0.7% of the Gross National Product.⁸

1990: The 116th GA expressed appreciation for the leadership shown by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation in contributing to peacemaking and relief of suffering in Sudan and Ethiopia.⁹

1992-2003: The 118th GA (1992) urged the GOC to re-examine its foreign policy with a view to

Millennium Development Goals

These goals were adopted by the United Nations at its General Assembly of 2000 as a way to mark the new millennium. Each of the eight goals is accompanied by specific objectives to be achieved by 2015.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

reversing the current trend toward decreasing foreign aid, and to urge a more flexible attitude within the Canadian International Development Agency, so that participation in structural adjustment programs not be a necessary pre-condition for receiving Canadian governmental aid.¹⁰ The 119th GA (1993) urged the GOC to conduct a full review of Canada’s aid policies in consultation with non-governmental organizations, churches and the public prior to the upcoming fall election, to honour its commitment to the goal of increasing overseas development assistance, and to maintain a separation of development and strategic trade interests in the implementation of its foreign policy.¹¹ The 128th GA (2002) welcomed the increase of

^{*} Until 1971 Bangladesh was East Pakistan, even though it was separated from West Pakistan culturally, linguistically and physically by the nation of India. East Pakistan’s movement for independence brought a swift and brutal response from the government in which thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands became refugees.

^{**} Sudan had ended a civil war of 17 years during which aid to the people of Sudan was channeled through non-government organizations and no bilateral aid was provided by the GOC to the Government of Sudan.

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aid to Africa* and urged full restoration of GOC cutbacks to aid in the 1990s and a commitment to a time-line for achieving the United Nations aid target of 0.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.¹² The 129th GA (2003) welcomed the GOC's commitment to increase the level of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the next three years and express hope that levels of ODA would minimally reach 0.4% of gross national income by 2010.¹³

2005-2006: The 131st GA (2005) urged the GOC to oppose mandatory privatization of water systems as a condition for receiving loans from the IMF and the World Bank. GA also commended the Canadian government for recent increases in Official Development Assistance, scheduled to reach 0.33% of gross national income by 2010, and requested a plan to reach the target of 0.7% of gross national income by 2015.¹⁴ The 132nd GA (2006) re-iterated the latter request.¹⁵ The 132nd GA called on the GOC to promote public health measures* as a necessary component for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to direct CIDA to give strong support to projects which strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the public health sector.¹⁵

2010: the Moderator of the 136th GA wrote to the Minister of International Development and the Prime Minister asking that 0.7% be set as Canada's aid target, and that a plan be developed to reach this target by 2015, in line with the United Nations target for donors to support the Millennium Development Goals.¹⁶

2014: The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA) requires that ODA contribute: 1) to poverty reduction; 2) take into account the perspectives of the poor and, 3) be consistent with international human rights standards. The Moderator of the 140th GA wrote to the Minister of International Development affirming the preparation of guidance notes regarding two ODAAA criteria (take into account the perspectives of the poor and be consistent with international human rights standards) and inquired when a similar note would be available regarding poverty reduction. The Moderator inquired about the GOC's plans to increase ODA as a percent of gross national income over the next three years and what policies are in place to ensure that the participation of Canadian corporations in Canada's aid program are consistent with the ODAAA.

The Moderator wrote to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development recommending that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs hold public hearings on the future of Canadian aid.** The letter was copied to opposition party critics. Courts of the church and individuals were invited to meet with their Members of Parliament to dialogue on Canada's aid program.¹⁷

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Minister of International Development asking what the GOC's plans are to increase ODA in the next three years and encouraging the GOC to ensure that Canada's ODA policies are consistent with the values and goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)****. GA recommended that congregations be

* The 2002 summit of the G8 (i.e. eight wealthiest) nations adopted a New Economic Program for African Development (NEPAD).

* Immunization programs, sewage systems, programs to assure clean air and water, and social programs that improve health such as affordable housing, education, living wage, etc.

** On June 26, 2013, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was amalgamated into the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The new department is called Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Development Canada. The rationale for the amalgamation was to strengthen coherence across foreign affairs, trade and development.

**** Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 to guide the international development agenda until 2015. The SDGs build on the MDGs and guide the international

encouraged to review the SDGs as a means of evaluating the conduct of Canadian development priorities.¹⁸

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Politics of Food” IAC report, 1985⁸

Food aid as an immediate response to urgent need, such as the African famine crisis, is essential for saving lives. Such generosity, however, needs to be coupled with sincere determination to discover and eradicate the underlying causes of starvation and malnutrition. Over-population, climate and weather are factors which aggravate conditions of hunger but do not cause them. Eliminate poverty and the birth rate will go down, since having many children is necessary to ensure enough survivors to eke out an existence for the family. Eliminate misuse of land, and trees and plants will survive to send moisture into the air which then returns as rain.

What then is at the root of the terrible problem of hunger in the world? ... The main reason that millions do not receive [sufficient] nourishment is that food is considered less as a basic human right than as a commodity produced for profit. Affecting fair and equal distribution of food to all people are the factors of power, control and money. Even food aid can be used as a lever in the balance of trade.

Excerpts from “How Peace is Broken-Obstacles to Peace” IAC report, 1992¹⁰

The Third World owes one trillion dollars in outstanding debts. We were happy to lend those funds because we wanted our money to earn interest, and we had run out of other people willing and able to pay us a return on our investment. The Third World was paying us back until we jacked up the interest rates in the early 1980s and the value of Third World exports fell to record lows combined with wild increases in the price of oil. How can a people whose per capita income is less than \$400 pay back a trillion dollars if their cash export crops and raw minerals are worth less and less while tractors from our factories cost more and more?

Of course, they offered to cut down their forests, to sell us prime furniture lumber, but we decided the greenhouse effect requires that their forest remain standing while we keep our lumber mills operating as best we can. Half of the world's forests of a century ago are now gone and we want others to keep theirs intact to protect the world's atmosphere. The world's poorest peoples have to cut down the few remaining trees, even though they are needed as forest cover to prevent soil erosion, to cook food to live on until tomorrow comes, even though these same trees are a vital key to their survival.

With regard to the outstanding debt of one trillion dollars we want our monies returned with interest paid in full, so we put pressure on poor debt-ridden countries to restructure their economies so that food and raw material production is directed towards raising funds to pay back their foreign debt. Impoverished countries are forced to export the cream of their foodstuffs and resources, while their own peoples are in danger of starvation, and their fragile economies are geared to making payments to rich money-lenders rather than to education and health care at home.

...

The question is: Are the world's poorest people still the Canadian priority? If so, which is really the more appropriate yardstick for Canadian overseas development aid: imposed structural

development agenda for 2015-2030. As of 2016, they had been drafted, but were still being discussed and changed by the international community.

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economic theories or a Third World government's serious attempt to ensure the poorest of its society are able to meet their basic needs? And which is really the most appropriate way to offer Canadian overseas development: bypassing repressive Third World governments and injecting cash directly into private enterprise without addressing the great inequalities between its top and bottom levels of society, hoping that some crumbs will fall down to feed the poor; by supporting church and development groups with direct aid; or by continuing Canada's somewhat independent approach that works with Third World governments on humanitarian projects that explicitly target the needs of its poor by providing water and enabling literacy?

...

Canada is a nation greatly blessed. But we have yet to allow ourselves to be a blessing to others in proportion to the blessings we enjoy. Overseas development aid is a tool for peace that we have yet to wield with commitment. Our failing aid is a clear example of how peace is broken.

*Excerpt from "Supplementary Report", IAC report, 1993*¹¹

God has called us to relieve suffering to 'do justice' and recognize the face of Christ in every person in need. ... Churches have raised number of concerns about recent proposals to reduce and restructure Canada's foreign aid budget:

1. Significant overall cuts to the aid budget, which include major reductions in the allocations to churches and non-government organizations.
2. The reduction and in some cases withdrawal of aid to the poorest countries, notably in eastern and central Africa.
3. A shift in emphasis from development assistance to programs of economic co-operation reflecting Canada's own trade interests.

Canada's credibility and influence on the world stage will be undermined by its failure to live up to its 1988 commitment to an aid budget equal to at least .7% of its Gross National Product, a commitment reaffirmed at the UN in 1988 and at last year's Earth Summit.

*Excerpt from report on Official Development Assistance, IAC report, 2014*¹⁷

The prophet Amos admonished the nations, including the Israelites, for oppressing the poor. In Amos' time the kingdoms of Judah and Israel enjoyed prosperity. The nations incorrectly interpreted their wealth and luxury as a sign of God's favour. Israel, however, was neglecting God's concern for the poor. Grace offers the privilege of salvation, but that grace comes with the responsibility to love and care for our neighbor and to uphold justice; justice and righteousness are preconditions for worship.

In Matthew 25 Jesus teaches that those who will inherit the kingdom when the Son of Man comes will be those who cared for strangers, those who were hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and imprisoned. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:37). Jesus speaks to us, promising that we meet him, the King, in serving "the least of these". Those who inherit the kingdom, though, are not aware that in serving a neighbour in need, they have met Jesus. Moreover, those who have not responded to the poor are judged for their inaction. The people called to judgment in Matthew 25 are "the nations." "Too often what has been glossed over in Matthew 25:31-46 is the prospect of an eschatological judgment (judgment at the end of time) for nations, not people or congregations, for not caring for the needy" (Simpson 2011). In the end, we will be held to account on our record of caring for the least among us.

¹ A&P 1953, p. 67

² A&P 1958, pp. 260, 75

³ A&P 1971, p. 57

⁴ A&P 1972, p. 61

⁵ A&P 1974, p. 284, 285, 45

⁶ A&P 1975, pp. 344, 40

⁷ A&P 1984, pp. 390, 39

⁸ A&P 1985, pp. 346-347, 33, 406-410, 25-26

⁹ A&P 1990, pp. 391, 62

¹⁰ A&P 1992, pp. 331-341, 41

¹¹ A&P 1993, pp. 255-256, 38

¹² A&P 2002, pp. 285-286, 17

¹³ A&P 2003, pp. 302-304, 308, 15

¹⁴ A&P 2005, pp. 294-307, 14-15

¹⁵ A&P 2006, pp. 273, 15

¹⁶ A&P 2010, pp. 405-6, 17

¹⁷ A&P 2014, pp. 281-292, 22

¹⁸ A&P 2016, pp. 314-315, 23

The Problem of Foreign Debt

The Church Speaks

- The rich are not to profit at the expense of the poor, nor are the poor to be left without means of improving their situation.²
- The debt of the heavily indebted countries of Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean should be reduced to a level that is humanly possible for these countries to carry and leave them with sufficient capital to promote their own development.²
- The debt of the poorest countries, specifically those of sub-Saharan Africa, should be eliminated.²
- Countries should be expected to carry only that level of debt payment that is compatible with an ability to provide for the basic human needs of their people.²
- Negotiations with debtor countries should include the elimination of some debts as being morally and ethically illegitimate and therefore not legally binding within the context of a negotiated settlement.²
- Those parts of public spending which directly affect the health and well-being of the poor, particularly the children of the poor, should be exempted from structural adjustment plans which call for a reduction of overall government spending by a debtor nation.²
- International financial institutions (IMF and World Bank) should be allowed to cancel or reschedule the debts of countries of the south.⁴

The Church Acts

1986: The 112th GA called on the GOC to seek means of overcoming the overwhelming financial indebtedness of Latin American nations and to encourage the U.S. to re-direct funds currently supporting the contra forces engaged in conflict with the government of Nicaragua to the reduction of the indebtedness of these nations.¹

1989: The 115th GA affirmed the necessity of reducing and eliminating the debts of heavily indebted countries, calling on the GOC and creditors to support the recommendations of UNICEF's report on its study of the social impact of debt; to enter into bilateral negotiations with all countries experiencing difficulty in repaying loans to Canada, to require full disclosure of large-scale foreign assets held in Canada and of Canadian assets held abroad; to seek an international agreement regarding the repatriation of flight capital; and assess, on a case-by-case basis, the potential impact of exchanging debt for equity.²

1992: The 118th GA urged the GOC to re-examine its foreign policy with respect to the unfair imposition of structural adjustment programs on debt-ridden countries.³

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1994: The 120th GA requested the GOC to continue to press for changes in the articles of the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank) to allow for the cancellation or rescheduling of debts owed by countries of the south.⁴

1995: The 121st GA sent greetings to the Caribbean Council of Churches, the Guyana Presbyterian Church, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Evangelical Church of South Africa and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa conveying prayer and support for their faith and work in the face of economic crisis. It called on the GOC not to make further aid or debt remission conditional on the adoption of structural adjustment programs by severely indebted low-income nations; to seek revision of the articles of agreement of the IMF and World Bank to allow for the reduction or cancellation of multi-lateral debt owed by severely indebted low income nations; to call for an end to the imposition of structural adjustment programs as a condition of new loans or aid to severely indebted low income nations; to take steps to insure that the review of the international financial institutions called for in its response to the joint parliamentary committee's report on foreign policy review not take place in secrecy ... but be participatory and democratic, taking into account the views of Canadians as well as partners in the south; and to support continued reform of the World Bank, to ensure that its projects become more participatory, accountable, ecologically sensitive and relevant to the needs of local populations.⁵

The Jubilee Movement

Originally initiated by Christian Aid in the United Kingdom, the Jubilee quickly developed into an international movement supported by churches, and church development agencies around the world.

In Canada, the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative co-ordinated the Jubilee program.

The principal activity of the Jubilee movement was to gather signatures on a petition to leaders of creditor countries calling for the immediate and unconditional cancellation of the foreign debts of the 50 poorest countries in the world. 24 million signatures (including 675,000 from Canada) were presented to the leaders of the G7 (the 7 most affluent nations) at Cologne, Germany where they met in June, 1999.

1999: The 125th GA sent a message of prayer and support to the Moderators of the synods of Blantyre and Livingstonia in Malawi and encouraged members of the church to meet with their Members of Parliament to raise the issue of debt cancellation for the 50 poorest countries.^{6*}

2000: The 126th GA sent the report of the IAC to church partners in Japan encouraging them to support Jubilee 2000 and advocacy with the government of Japan.** A letter was sent to the Church of Central Africa-Presbyterian in Malawi in support of their involvement in jubilee and letters to the prime minister and minister of finance encouraged continued Canadian support for the aims of Jubilee. GA also encouraged congregations and presbyteries to communicate with these officials.⁷

2002: The 128th GA urged the prime minister to take vigorous action at the G8 summit in Kananaskis, Alberta to achieve significant decisions leading to actual debt cancellation for low-income countries, an end to structural adjustment programs as a condition of receiving debt relief and initiation of meaningful provisions to deal with illegitimate debt.⁸ (pp. 285-286, 17)

* Malawi was one of the most heavily indebted poor countries in 1999 and was struggling under an IMF Structural Adjustment Program.

** Japan was Malawi's largest bilateral creditor according to Jubilee 2000. "Jubilee 2000 Briefing: Japan and the Debts of the Poorest Countries" <http://www.jubilee2000uk.org/>

THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN DEBT

2004: The 130th GA recommended the federal government be asked to re-evaluate the Heavily Indebted Poor Country process to assure more timely and adequate debt relief, take a leadership role internationally in establishing an international debt arbitration tribunal with authority to investigate claims that repaying debt at current levels would violate the rights of citizens in the debtor nation and mandate a reduction or cancellation of debt, and support the development of measures to adjudicate appeals for the cancellation of other types of odious debt.^{9†††}

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from “The International Debt Crisis”, IAC report, 1989*²

The poor in our world have become poorer. In the past ten years, despite massive development assistance, the gulf which divides the world’s people into rich and poor, into powerful and powerless, has grown wider.

There are several reasons for this, but one stands out because of its significance and complexity: the developing countries are deeply in debt to the governments and banks of Europe, North America, and Japan. Despite their efforts to meet interest payments, many countries are in such economic distress that they can only make partial payments, or none at all. Unpaid interest is added to the principal, and the mountain of debt continues to grow.

Banks and governments in the creditor nations now realize that the loans made to many of these countries can never be repaid under current conditions. Yet they cannot agree on an alternative way of resolving the crisis.

Meanwhile, debtor nations continue to be pressed to pay as much as they can. Conditions imposed by the international financial institutions force them to impose stringent austerity measures on their people, many of whom are already among the poorest on earth. Fr. Jose Alamiro said (Brazil, 1985): “The government keeps telling us that we must work harder, to produce more, and, at the same time, consume less, in order to have more to export, and with these exports to pay - not the debt! - only the interest on the debt.... We in the Third World are exporting food while we are dying of hunger!” A conference of African governments was held in Khartoum, Sudan, March 1988, by the Economic Commission for Africa under the auspices of the United Nations. The Khartoum Declaration (March, 1988) stated that “We will not tolerate economic formulas, will not apply economic indices...which fail to assert the primacy of the human condition... Nutrition imbalances are as crucial as trade imbalances. High infant mortality requires just as immediate and as serious attention as high rates of inflation or huge budget deficits....”.

... In 1984 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Brazil noted: “Development projects undertaken by a dictatorship which took its priorities from the rich upper class resulted in huge ostentatious building projects of no real value to the nation. ... These projects are false developments, built at huge cost to the public.” Peoples’ organizations and the governments of these countries have wrestled with the problem and have put forward their own proposals which merit careful consideration by the creditors.

††† Odious debt refers to debt incurred by a despotic regime to strengthen its power and repress opposition rather than for the general benefit of all its citizens. Some expert legal opinion holds that such debt falls with the regime and is not a national obligation for the government which succeeds it.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

As the people of the world call on the international community to redress the injustices caused by the debt crisis, so we, as Christians and Canadians, need to call on our government and banks to accept their social responsibility to work towards a resolution of the problems. An examination of our biblical and reformed heritage teaches us that it is contrary to the will of God for the rich to profit at the expense of the poor. It also teaches us that the poor are not to be left powerless to improve their situation. Many feel helpless in the face of economic forces that appear to operate according to their own internal dynamic. Exploitative economic systems, like any human institution, are of the 'principalities and powers' against which Paul warns us. However unconscious or unintentional, our own greed, irresponsibility and abuse of power have contributed to the very crisis we now protest against.

...

Debt relief, given on a country by country basis according to the history of the loans given, and the country's situation, assessed in human, not in purely economic terms is necessary. Countries should be expected to carry only that level of debt payment that is compatible with an ability to provide for the basic human needs of their people. Countries should not be required to divert their economies from development models designed to improve the quality of life for all to models dictated by an imposed need for export earnings.

Currently, analysis of the situation of a country experiencing problems with its debt servicing is carried out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), following which 'structural adjustment' are prescribed for its economy. Very often debtor nations find these conditions either impossible to fulfill or destructive to the well-being of their people and long-term development goals. In many cases these adjustments have led to the disruption of local economies, job losses and a tremendous social cost. The United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) has prepared a report on the impact of the adjustment policies which many developing nations have had to adopt during the 1980s at the insistence of the IMF, the World Bank, and the regional development banks (The State of the World's Children, 1987). UNICEF recommends that when the IMF instructs a government to reduce its overall spending, those parts of public spending which directly affect the health and well-being of the poor, and particularly the children of the poor, be exempted. UNICEF also recommends that debtor countries should involve government officials responsible for health, education and agriculture in debt negotiations.

...

One factor that needs to be taken into account in any debt negotiation is the concept that some of the debt incurred may be illegitimate. Our church partners in countries where some debts were contracted by dictators for grandiose projects, personal gain, armaments used for aggression or to repress the opposition have declared that they do not believe that these specific debts should be considered morally binding. These are the kinds of debts considered to be illegitimate.

Another factor that needs to be considered is the flight of capital. The deposit overseas of the wealth of part of the elite in developing countries has had a serious negative impact on their debt situation. If such capital could be returned to the countries of origin, the debtor governments would be enabled to gain access to at least a portion of it for reinvestment in their own economy. While developing countries need to introduce measures to discourage the flight of capital, governments of the creditor nations need to take steps to prevent receiving this drain of funds from desperately poor economies. An international agreement that requires a measure of disclosure of private and corporate bank deposits and investments of non-residents above a certain level would prevent much capital flight and allow for the repatriation of flight capital.

Debt-equity swap and sale of debt are two options being considered by banks in dealing with the debt crisis. Essentially debt swaps involve exchanging one form of debt for another. Most often bank debt is traded for equity investment, that is direct ownership of productive assets. Other

THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN DEBT

versions of debt swaps involve exchanging bank debts for debtor government pledges to protect the environment and contributions in local currencies to non-governmental development projects. Debt swaps can be very attractive for foreign investors but need to be examined carefully to ensure that benefits accrue to the debtor country. Sales and purchases of debt are negotiated through a 'secondary' financial market based in New York. The debt is sold by the creditor in this market and is purchased either by the debtor government or by a transnational corporation. This corporation in turn will exchange the debt for local currency of the debtor country. The corporation will employ the currency in the debtor country where it has a subsidiary. One problem with this transaction is that it is inflationary. As likely as not the debtor country will not have the cash to buy the debt and may print it.

A problem with debt-equity swaps that is cited by some analysts is the very simple problem that while some relief from overwhelming debts is achieved, it is achieved at the cost of transferring existing national wealth to foreigners, wherein they buy up third world assets at discount rates.

"A Theological Reflection on Debt and Poverty", IAC report, 1995¹⁰

Usury, the charging of exorbitant interest on loans, and the general problem of debt and poverty are among the oldest moral concerns of the Judaeo-Christian tradition (Deut. 24:10-13; Hab. 2:5-8). Most of the biblical references pertain to survival loans rather than loans to finance new enterprises. Numerous passages prohibit interest on loans to the poor and measures that deprive debtors of their livelihood or of the necessities of life. Although lenders had a right to fair, agreed-upon payment, loans held legal obligations for only six years (Deut. 15:1-2). People who had sold themselves or their labour to pay off debts were to be released in the seventh year (Ex. 21:2-3; Deut. 15:12). Other passages, however, protested the whole practice of debt slavery (Neh. 5:1-13).

Old Testament economic ethics often speak of restoring creation to a proper balance, to the state of well-being and wholeness known as shalom. Every seventh year, the land was to be rested to prevent its depletion and to allow poor people and wild animals to gather food (Ex. 23:10-11). The year of Jubilee was to occur at the end of seven cycles of seven years (Lev. 25), when land would be restored to its original owners to counteract the displacement of small landholdings and the growth of huge estates, a social evil contrary to God's will (Isa. 5:8-9). All debts would be forgiven, all slaves set free. The link to reconciliation with God was clear: Jubilee would begin on the Day of Atonement, when as sacrifice removed everything unclean from the temple and from the people.

Israelite society had as much difficulty as ours in living up to this ethic. Slavery was reformed, but not abolished. Although resting the land and debt remission every seventh year were sometimes observed, jubilee remained only an ideal. This made Jesus' invocation of the Jubilee tradition even more radical. "He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor ... to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. ... Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:16-19, Is. 61:1-2, Ps. 146:5-9).

Planting and reaping, labouring and resting, became metaphors for the rhythm of God's creation and grace. The same themes of rest and release from toil or bondage applied to human relations. The jubilee theme of debt remission is most prominent in Matthew's Greek version of the Lord's prayer (6:9-13, "forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors"), which echoed the first Greek version of Leviticus 25. Our social and spiritual relationships are inextricably linked. (2 Cor. 8; Acts 4:32-35).

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

What would the world be like if Christians dared to act on the vision of jubilee, which Christ proclaimed as the central focus of his ministry? Could we build a world where all people could share the freedom and security that is God's shalom? Ideal? Yes, that's what jubilee is meant to be. Impossible? Not when God is at work, as God was when Moses made an ideal, impossible request to Pharaoh: "Let my people go". Dare we believe that the year of God's favour is possible? Forgiveness, release, freedom, what an occasion for joy. There is hope for all of creation if we dare to believe and work towards the vision of jubilee. Christ did. Will we do the same?

*Excerpts from "Structural Adjustment Programs", IAC report 1995*⁵

The theory behind structural adjustment is that if a country deregulates its economy, reduces government expenditure, tightens the domestic money supply and focuses on export-oriented industries, it will attract foreign investment and pay off its foreign debt. These measures are intended to "kick-start" its economy into growth.

...

[The debate over structural adjustment] involves weighing the benefits and costs of structural adjustment. This involves determining what actually happened over the past twenty-five years in nations that underwent structural adjustment. Even studies by the IMF and the World Bank admit that most countries which underwent structural adjustment did not experience the intended results.

...

Ghana has lost three-fourths of its forests because of timber exports required by structural adjustment, resulting in climate change that increases desert land. In spite of good years in agriculture, the Ghanaian population is now* one of the most malnourished in the world, worse off than it was in the 1960s.

...

Until recently, [Zimbabwe] had one of the best health systems in Africa, one that emphasized preventive health care through medical services and the provision of clean water and public sanitation, particularly in previously neglected rural areas. With free birth control, Zimbabwe had one of the highest rates of contraceptive use in Africa.

After 4 years of IMF imposed structural adjustment in the early 1980s, Zimbabwe experimented with its own version ...[until 1990, when it] embarked on another structural adjustment program ... of cutting health budgets 30 per cent and increasing user fees. Now there are shortages of staff and medical supplies, although far fewer Zimbabweans can afford to go to a clinic or hospital. Large reductions in mobile health clinics cut immunization programs. ... Since 1990, inflation has increased by 45 per cent and 60-70 per cent of the population now lives in poverty. Infant and maternal mortality have increased; tuberculosis and cholera have returned; and cuts to health care have come when HIV is spreading rapidly.

...

Structural adjustment often ignores market forces. Countries may be told to expand the production of commodities, whose future is uncertain. ... [A]nalysts have argued that part of copper's price decline in the 1980s was because the IMF told several countries to expand their production, despite a saturated world market.

...

The structural adjustment model assumes that government is less rational and uses resources less efficiently than economic forces. Yet economic forces are the outcome of past history and present policies and can be as irrational and inefficient as any government.

...

* i.e. as of 1995, the date of the report. As of 2004, this was no longer the case.

THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN DEBT

Critics say that the anti-state intervention bias of structural adjustment programs reflects political opinion more than objective research. For example, the economies most often cited as models by proponents of Structural Adjustment, the newly-industrialized smaller Asian countries, have involved significant state intervention. The bias is ironic, given the evolution of the international financial institutions as powerful, large, secretive and well-paid bureaucracies intervening in a local economy.

...

Nations of the northern hemisphere need to acknowledge that they bear a significant responsibility for the debt crisis. As economists have stressed, the original lenders were naively over-optimistic and failed to respond rationally and soon enough to the evidence of their bad judgment. High interest on debts has given back to creditor banks and nations their original loans many times over. Northern economies have benefitted from poorest nations becoming exporters of cheap primary resources, deterred from developing their own value-added industries by centuries of imperialism and protectionism. With commodity prices kept low, nations such as Guyana or Rwanda are in fact donating cheap coffee, tea, cocoa and sugar to the north.

¹ A&P 1986, pp. 370-373, 56

² A&P 1989, pp. 378-382, 64

³ A&P 1992, pp. 331-341, 41

⁴ A&P 1994, pp. 301-313, 36-38, 67

⁵ A&P 1995, pp. 250-262, 33

⁶ A&P 1999, pp. 278-282, 45

⁷ A&P 2000, pp. 290-291, 19

⁸ A&P 2002, pp. 285-286, 17

⁹ A&P 2004, p. 318

¹⁰ A&P 1995, pp. 251-252, 33

Trade & Trade Agreements

Also see Book 5, Middle East, The Church Acts, 2009; Asia, India, The Church Acts, 2011.

The Church Speaks

- The church cannot ignore the importance of the relationship between Canada and the United States.⁵
- Social welfare programs should not be negotiable in trade talks.⁵
- Canada has a responsibility to promote its own cultural identity, and therefore, to use legitimate and financial means to support the cultural development of its citizens.⁵
- Education and dialogue are key to establishing healthy relationships between nations.⁵
- Canada has a moral responsibility to develop trade agreements which are in keeping with the basic ethical demands for global justice and peace.⁶
- Trade agreements should incorporate the following as essential principles:¹⁰
 - *Democracy and participation*: citizens should actively participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of any trade agreements.
 - *Sovereignty and social welfare*: individual countries should maintain the power to take care of their citizens in the short and long term.
 - *Reduce inequalities*: all agreements should contain measures to reduce inequalities within and among nations, between women and men, and among races.
 - *Sustainability*: Trade agreements should give priority to the quality of development, which implies establishing social and environmental limits to growth.

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- Trade agreements can lead to economic growth, but this should not be the only measure of success. Trade agreements should include a regular review process to assess the human impact of the agreements.¹

The Church Acts

1973: The 99th GA asked all Presbyterians to avoid purchasing brands of coffee which used Angolan coffee in protest over the system of forced labour on the Angolan coffee plantations. Concern was also expressed to the GOC and to the presidents of the companies producing these brands of coffee.²

1976: The 102nd GA urged congregations, particularly those members in places of responsibility and decision in economic life, to examine their actions in the light of a gospel concern for the welfare of man as over against economic growth for its own sake.³

1981: The 107th GA called on the GOC to remove tax concessions from companies operating in Namibia until a representative government approved by the United Nations was established. GA urged agencies, congregations and members to become informed about the marketing practices of certain infant feeding formula companies in light of the condemnation of these practices by the World Health Organization and to engage in appropriate action such as the boycott of the Nestle company.⁴

1987: The 113th GA recommended study of the IAC report, preparation of a study booklet on Canada-U.S. relations, and reports from congregations engaged in cross-border dialogue on their experiences. It also called on the GOC to state unequivocally that “social programs such as universal health care, social security, unemployment insurance and welfare are not negotiable in any trade talks...” and to continue and improve its support of the television, radio and publishing industries in Canada.⁵

Canada and Free Trade Agreements

The IAC undertook the study of Canada-US relations during the negotiations leading up to the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement signed in 1988.

The concept of free trade with the US goes back to the 1911 attempt to forge a “reciprocity” treaty—an attempt which came to an end with the defeat of the government of Wilfred Laurier.

The Canada-US Free Trade Agreement was no less controversial and was the principal election issue of 1988. In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) extended the free trade area to Mexico.

Negotiations to extend free trade throughout the western hemisphere, with the exception of Cuba, were initiated immediately with the intention of concluding a hemispheric agreement by 2005. There were significant popular protests in Quebec City in 2003 and Miami in 2004. No agreement was reached in 2005.

In 2005, the U.S. signed the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) with six countries of Central America. As of 2006, Canada is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (CA4FTA) with four of these countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

1988: The 114th GA expressed its concern and disquiet over the implementation of the January 1988 Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., especially on the matters of energy and resources,

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services, culture and human rights. The GOC was asked to guarantee the protections of social programs in Canada (specifically universal health care, social security, unemployment insurance, welfare and the management services that maintain them.) It was also asked to guarantee the protection of the cultural identity of Canada. GA expressed deep concern that the nations of the Third World would be further disadvantaged by the Canada-U.S. bi-lateral agreement. The IAC was authorized to take the initiative in establishing a joint Canadian-U.S. task force with the Presbyterian Church USA, the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Church in America to study Canada-U.S. relations.⁶

1991: The 117th GA called on members, congregations and church courts to provide educational opportunities that alert communities to the role of first world demand in sustaining the international drug trade.⁷

The Nestle Boycott

The practices condemned by the World Health Organization included the provision of free formula samples to new mothers, including those who would have no access to clean water or sterilization facilities in their home, as well as insufficient income to purchase the formula when the samples ran out. The child was often malnourished and subject to severe diarrhea as mothers substituted corn starch and other substances for formula. Other condemned practices included home visits and educational programs by nurses working for the formula company, free samples to hospitals, free conferences for doctors, etc.

The Nestlé's boycott was organized by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) and ran for 10 years (1975 to 1985) eventually persuading formula companies to agree to a code of marketing practices recommended by the World Health Organization. IBFAN continues to monitor compliance with the code and to encourage all nations to adopt the code in their domestic legislation. Canada has not yet acted on this recommendation.

1992: The 118th GA urged the GOC to reconsider its foreign policy with respect to discovering and reversing any of its trade policies that lead to economic oppression in third world countries.⁸

1994: The 120th GA sent greetings to the Caribbean Conference of Churches conveying prayer and support for its work in a context of political and economic crisis. It urged the GOC to seek support for an international review of trade agreements to take into account the needs of smaller less developed countries, to seek to change the annex to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* which prevents Canada and Mexico from co-operating with an International Coffee Agreement, and to conduct regular public reviews of the trade agreements of which Canada is a part, notably NAFTA. GA also requested the GOC to urge international financial institutions to supplement the criteria currently used in determining eligibility for international credit with new criteria more consistent with the values of social justice, respect for human rights and democratic participation, and to continue to review Canada's participation in international financial institutions and the impact of their policies on the poorest people and on

The People's Summit of the Americas brought together 2,000 representatives (60 from Canada) of labour and social organizations in 25 different countries to begin an ongoing discussion on an alternate vision for trade in the Americas. The Summit produced the first draft of a document titled "Alternatives for the Americas: Building a People's Hemispheric Agreement" covering a variety of trade issues.

* NAFTA, which came into effect January 1, 1994, revised the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement and enlarged it to include Mexico.

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the environment. In addition, GA drew the attention of presbyteries and congregations to the availability of coffee, tea and spices from Bridgehead Trading Company,** an alternative model which offers higher returns to small farmers in developing countries.⁹

1999-2000: The 125th GA (1999) encouraged congregations to participate in the annual Ten Days for Global Justice program, and recommended a bibliography of resources on the global economy as background for meetings with members of parliament. GA urged the GOC to make concern for human rights central to the practice of Canadian foreign policy, and ... promote trade and investment practices that protect internationally agreed labour rights and build a more equitable global order. The four principles on trade agreements developed by the People's Summit of the Americas (see "The Church Speaks" above) were endorsed as essential to equitable trade and investment agreements and these principles were commended to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as guidelines for the Free Trade Area of the Americas.^{10***} The 126th GA (2000) encouraged Presbyterians to engage in persistent, faithful proclamation of the four principles on trade agreements adopted in 1999 and to support policies consistent with these principles such as excluding education, health care, social services and culture from any trade agreements reached under the auspices of the World Trade Organization.¹¹

2004-2005: The 130th GA endorsed the statement "What does God require of us? A Declaration for Just Trade in the Service of Life"^{12****} The 131st GA commended the document "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" which had been prepared for and adopted by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches at its 24th General Council in 2004.¹³

2006: The 132nd GA called on the GOC to remove disincentives from legislation permitting the export of less expensive medicines to nations without production capabilities, to explain how the GOC assesses the impact of trade agreements on public health, and to provide leadership in reforming intellectual property rights so that patents do not stand in the way of providing access to essential medicines to those unable to pay for them. The GOC was commended for its support of a World Health Assembly resolution on "an enhanced and sustainable basis for needs-driven essential health research and development" and urged to take steps to implement the terms of the resolution. The GOC was encouraged to host an international conference to consider alternatives to the patent system for stimulating needed research and improving access to essential medicines.¹⁴

2007: The 133rd GA urged the GOC to promote the inclusion of a regular review process to assess the impact of trade agreements on human rights.¹

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "Canada – United States Relations", IAC report, 1985¹⁵

Canada's unique relationship with the United States colours all her other relationships. So much depends on the reaction of Canada's closest neighbour, its largest trading partner, its military ally, that every decision on foreign affairs (and even many judgments on domestic matters) has to take

** Bridgehead was the first Alternate Trading Company organized in Canada to offer fair trade coffee, tea and other Third World commodities on the Canadian market..

*** The Free Trade Area of the Americas is a proposed Agreement for a hemispheric free trade area due to be completed and implemented in 2005. It borrows heavily from the precedents set by the North American Free Trade Agreement.

**** This Declaration was created by a North American consultation of church representatives from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico in January 2004.

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into account what the United States perception of Canada's position will be as well as what its reaction will be.

The committee feels that this aspect of international affairs – the most important aspect of international affairs from the point of view of the Canadian government – cannot be ignored by our church.

*Excerpts from “Canada-U.S. Relations”, IAC report, 1987*⁵

It is important for us to see how issues like free trade mesh with the demands of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the fundamental tenets of the Gospel is the preferential option for the poor, the afflicted and the oppressed. We agree with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops who, in their paper “Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis” (1982) said economic recovery would have three goals: first, the needs of the poor to take priority over the wants of the rich; secondly, workers' rights to come ahead of the maximization of profits; thirdly, the participation of marginalized groups to take precedence over the preservation of a system that excludes them. We are called to break down barriers (Ephesians 2:14). The most serious barriers in our world are not trade barriers, but the barriers between the rich and the poor, between nations, between ideologies and races. The social programs that we have in Canada to provide health and well-being to all are attempts at breaking down barriers between the rich and the poor. Canada has a responsibility to maintain and improve our own social programs and an opportunity to be prophetic in the biblical sense, calling the nations ... to do justice. ... The social welfare programs must not be negotiable in trade talks with the U.S.

...

We have a responsibility to promote our own cultural identity as well and not simply borrow it from elsewhere. ... That means that Canada has the right to control broadcasting and publishing industries as well as music, theatre, films dance and other expressions of culture. What we see on television or hear on radio influences us and our children and we have to consider the sources. ... We cannot learn what is happening in our own country by watching American television.

*Excerpts from “Canada-US Relations”, IAC report, 1988*⁶

The Canadian government states that the [Free Trade] Agreement will mean that “Canada will become a stronger, more confident country....” a richer Canada “which will allow governments to ... strengthen development in Canada's poorer regions and strengthen social programs for all Canadians.” Opponents insist that the FTAA places our social, cultural and regional programs at risk by removing existing protections.

...

Christians believe and The PCC has consistently confessed that the creator's mandate to the human race involves not only dominion over the earth but also the duty to replenish and care for it in responsible stewardship. The energy generated by Canada's vast stores of oil, natural gas, coal, uranium, and hydro-electric systems, and the rich resources of our forests and farms, of our lakes and rivers and coastal waters – all these things we hold in trust to serve the well-being of all God's creatures, not to serve the priorities of a competitive market system. Yet the FTAA seeks to bind all our resources, with unprecedented scope and permanent authority, to that very system.

...

Agriculture, closely linked to stewardship of the good earth and the provision of basic needs, presently receives support in Canada in terms of supply management through marketing boards. ... The American agricultural industry has made it abundantly clear that it puts marketing boards and subsidies in the same category. The “security of access” promoted under this agreement will surely render marketing boards impotent. Agribusiness transnationals will be able to buy our farm produce cheaply and then sell it back to us at the price of their choice. This is part of the

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continuing drive to make the law of the marketplace the final arbiter in determining how the world gets fed.

...

In the preamble to last year's statement the committee stressed the importance of considering the impact of any free trade agreement on the poor. The proposed agreement clearly has the full support of the business community, and reflects their interests, namely the expansion of business opportunities, growth and profit. It is conceivable that the pursuit of these objectives will lead to the improvement of the lives of Canada's poor; however, American experience does not lead us to be hopeful. For example, privately funded medical care in the United States has proved to be much more expensive than the public medical insurance common in Canada and therefore tends to exclude the poor.

A good deal of anxiety was expressed [in responses to the 1987 IAC report] because cultural sovereignty was apparently being compromised. Those anxieties find ample warrant under the proposed agreement. Under present circumstances Canadians involved in cultural activities, particularly those in radio, television and publishing, are at a severe disadvantage. The proposed free trade agreement erodes our control over our cultural life even further.* box on two items

...

...the problem ... is not so much the specific provisions of the deal as the tendency which it represents. In an age when ideas are transmitted ... by electronic and print media, the game goes not to the best, but to the biggest. Even the notion of best is not very helpful. Cultures are not better or worse than each other, only different, and in a world such as ours the big one has all the advantages, unless public power is deliberately used to redress the balance. But the avowed intent of the American Federal Trade Administration is to restrict, if not virtually eliminate, the use of countervailing public power.

...

Critical questions remain:

- Who will be liberated and who will be unprotected?
- Whose interest will be served and whose rights will be compromised?
- What will be the impact of a trade system designed to maximize profits upon the rights of women, seniors, the disadvantaged, the marginalized, the culturally deprived?
- Will the profits generated trickle down to such, or be siphoned off for capital intensive projects that concentrate wealth and power in the hands of "competitive" corporate elites?
- Will the Agreement liberate us from the overwhelming impact of American protectionism, or irretrievably bind us to it?
- Will it help or hinder social services designed to meet human need—services which by definition are neither profitable nor competitive?
- What are the global implications?
- Will the FTAA restrict Canada's ability to promote human rights in societies suffering under oppression, especially if the oppression comes from "free market" transnationals or regimes supported by the American hegemony?

...

At the heart of the Free Trade Agreement lies a fatal contradiction. On the one hand, it tells us that "Canadian business will become more competitive..." On the other hand it insists "it is a win-win situation." But surely this cannot be. Paul long ago stated the obvious: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize?" (Corinthians 9:24) Someone always wins and someone always loses in a system where everything is for sale and nothing is free.

*Excerpts from "The World Trading System", IAC report, 1994*⁹

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Why Do Christians Care About Economic Justice?

Economics is about people seeking food, clothing, shelter and livelihood, and about all of these things the bible has much to say. Consider the question of ownership: “The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it” (Ps. 24:1). All that the earth provides we are to receive as gifts from God to all God's people. We are expected to use these gifts according to God's will.

We must, however, confess the reality of sin, our sin as we relate to other individuals, and the sin we bring to the structures and forces in human society. It was personal greed that led the elites in the era of the prophets to “join house to house” and “add field to field” (Isa. 5:8). But it was also the social organization of land and labour that made this possible. Social sin not only destroys the lives of those “sinned against”, but also eats away at the humanity of the perpetrators.

God is concerned not only with those who suffer in any way, but with the social situation of those who have the least power or status. God calls us to care for and bring justice to the homeless, people who are without family, or shelter, people who have been displaced from their livelihoods or communities (Ex. 22:21-22; Isa. 10:1-2; Heb. 13:2; Js. 1:27-2:7). There, economic systems which impoverish people who are created in God's image are an affront to God.

The bible is clear that we are called both to praise God, to serve those in need, and to work for justice. We cannot substitute one for the other. We must not replace seeking economic justice with more zealous worship or belief (Am 5:4; Mic. 6:6-8). Hunger may not seem an theological problem for the well-fed, but it is a theological problem for God! “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith, by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (Js. 2:15-17)

Seeking economic justice is a matter for people and their governments. When Israel was given a king, he was reminded that his task was to “defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressors” (Ps. 72:4). The state can function as God's servant, but it can also sin. By the time of the prophets, Israel's prosperity rested on exports of oil and wine to Mediterranean markets, grown on land taken away from subsistence farming. The Lord “enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: ‘It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?’ ” (Isa. 3:13-15).

It is God's will that we seek economic justice; our disobedience is unbearable to God; as well, it has consequences that are unbearable to the social life of the human community, and even the earth itself.

...

From Confession to Discipleship

Just as our sin is both personal and social, so is our repentance and conversion. Early Hebrew agricultural codes exhorted landowners to be personally generous with the fruit that fell on the ground and leave it for the poor. But the law of Jubilee also called on the community to periodically re-distribute land and wealth, to ensure that human sin was not perpetuated from generation to generation. (Deut. 24:21-22; Lev. 25)

...

[Jesus'] words to the wealthy made explicit what his presence amongst the poor implied (Lk. 6:20-25). In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man is condemned not for any specific act of cruelty or greed, but for ignoring the poor man at his gate (Lk. 16:19-31). When the disciples picked grain on the Sabbath, this was not just a protest against empty ritual but an

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act in defiance of social structures that oppressed the poor. The issue was one of idolatry – “You cannot serve both God and money” (Lk. 16:13).

Why Focus on ‘Global’ Economic Justice?

There are a number of reasons why this is an important topic for Canadian Christians.

We are all part of global trade

Your cup of tea likely links you to the world’s largest tea company, Unilever, one of the largest conglomerates which dominate world trade.

Multinational companies are now more often called ‘transnationals’, reflecting their growth in size and the lessening ability to influence them on the part of government, consumer groups, or corporate management. This has resulted in enormous concentrations of power.

We are all part of global finance

If you have a Registered Retirement Savings Plan or a mutual fund, it may contain international investments. Many shares in Canadian funds or corporations are held by foreign investors. As the ownership of units or shares gets more international, diverse and broken down into smaller units, the influence of shareholders is minimized, even though many of us have a stake.

Moreover, recent developments in technology have changed the way global finance works, and have made it an enormously important force. During the same period that technology has made the global money-market possible, international regulations governing such activities has been scaled back. Governments react to the market rather than control it.

Global trading patterns have endangered our environment

Current levels of trade have damaged our renewable resources and depleted those that are not renewable. ... At current rates of consumption, the next century will see forced rather than managed reductions.

Current global trading patterns widen the gulf between rich and poor

According to conventional economic theory, overall North American economic growth since the 1960s should have ‘trickled down’ to improve individual standards of living at all economic levels. Instead, North American wages stagnated in some sectors or regions, declined in others, while the numbers of very poor and very rich increased.

This was reflected in the world at large. In many countries of the south, national economic output and individual standards of living declined. “The world's richest billion people are 150 times wealthier than the world’s poorest billion, a gap five times wider than several decades ago.* One fourth of the world lives in absolute, desperate poverty.**

The World Trading System

The World Trading Organization (GATT)

Critics ... point out that the current enthusiasm of many northern governments for highly selective freer trade developed only after decades of exploitation and protectionism had ensured them their present dominant position. In the Christian view of justice, the equal treatment of unequals is unfair.

* David Kilgour, “Towards a World in Balance” Policy Options, September 1993

** United Nations, Human Development Report, 1992

TRADE AND TRADE AGREEMENTS

...

Trade and Structural Adjustment Programs

When currency is devalued through restructuring, countries and citizens have less purchasing power. Restructuring also requires developing countries to concentrate even more on export industries, which are mainly commodities. Ironically ignoring the market theory adhered to by the international financial institutions, structural adjustment policies have required some nations in the South to ignore low demand for their export commodities and continue high production levels. The natural result has been to flood the market, and lower the price still further, resulting in declining amounts of foreign exchange earned by the exporting countries. ...World coffee prices have been at record lows since the late 1980s. ... Market theory states that, as price goes down, sales go up and so the return to the producer is the same or higher. This is not the case with coffee. Since we are slightly addicted, we drink about the same amount no matter if the price goes up. But we do not drink more if the price goes down. We exhibit what is called 'rigid demand'. So, when the price paid to the exporting country goes down, they can only lose.

...

Trade and Labour

More than ever before, corporations can move to where labour is cheapest. Workers, regions or nations are pitted against each other for jobs, further limiting their ability to combine and demand better working conditions and higher wages. ... The cost of labour in the South has been kept down by either the absence of labour organization or its repression.

...

According to the theory behind agreements such as NAFTA, foreign companies in Mexico should experience high productivity making it possible for them to increase wages. But historically, a need for new consumers, unionization, and labour shortages are also required for this to happen.

...

Some argue that families in less developed countries need the income from youth employment. Others argue that regional trade agreements such as NAFTA must include and enforce a common minimum working age.

Some labour issues are particularly relevant to women. Structural adjustment programs cut health and welfare services, which have a heavy impact on women, who in most cultures still carry the burden of caring for the sick and needy. Free trade zones ... concentrate on hiring young women at the lowest wages to work in poor conditions.

...

How Can We Respond?

We Can Begin By Looking At How Economic Issues Are Discussed In Our Society

We must demystify economic debate, and identify the assumptions and reasoning that are sometimes hidden. For example, many discussions of farming use the word 'profit' for any surplus that remains after the sale of a crop and cash costs, but the labour of the farm family is not considered a cost of production. But in corporate accounting, 'profit' is the surplus after all wages have been paid.

Economic theories are created by humans in historical contexts to describe experience and try to predict the future. But sometimes theories are endowed with mystical or inevitable force, and treated as if they were articles of faith (consider phrases like "the will of the people" or "the invisible hand of the market"). But as Christians, we refuse to worship any human theory.

The church's role is to remind policy makers and consumers of the broader global and domestic public interests at stake in economic debates. We must fill the gaps in information, perspective, and choices that will appear in media and governmental debates. New research and new ways of

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analyzing problems are continually revising our knowledge of actual economic experience and the theories we use. But we must never forget that it is seldom the researchers and policy analysts whose lives will be most affected by the results of these debates. We must help ensure that all voices are heard.

We Must Ourselves Strive To Practise What We Preach

In economics as in all else, we are not without alternatives. Perhaps one of the greatest temptations to evil is the suggestion that tomorrow must be like today, that the world is closed to reform and resurrection.

We need not let ourselves be deceived into believing that economic manipulation is inevitable, that we must accept changes which we can see are encouraging the strong to flourish and the rest to wither away. We can work together to choose, in some measure at least, changes that promote justice and equity.

To bring security to today's 'Jericho road', we must engage in the struggle of compassion against callousness, of strong hope and outrage against cynicism or stoic acceptance. We have global neighbours in need of both relief and justice, and a Lord who is eager to empower us to work with them toward achieving both.

*Excerpt from "What Does God Require of Us? A Declaration for Just Trade in the Service of an Economy of Life", IAC report, 2004*¹²

We work for just trade because of the justice of God. God's justice creates and sustains the conditions for life. God has made an all-inclusive covenant with all creation. This covenant has been sealed by the gift of God's grace, a gift that is priceless, not for sale in the marketplace. What does God require of us? Act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God. Our peoples need policies that restore right relationships, preserve responsible communities, shrink economic inequalities, and allow space for all creation to flourish in its diversity.

¹ A&P 2007, pp. 280-281

² A&P 1973, pp. 49-50, 72

³ A&P 1976, pp. 258-259, 38

⁴ A&P 1981, pp. 315, 97, 50, 111

⁵ A&P 1987, pp. 345-349, 33

⁶ A&P 1988, pp. 368-373, 51-53

⁷ A&P 1991, p. 57

⁸ A&P 1992, pp. 331-341, 41

⁹ A&P 1994, pp. 301-313, 36-38, 67-68

¹⁰ A&P 1999, pp. 275-278, 45

¹¹ A&P 2000, pp. 289-290, 19

¹² A&P 2004, pp. 320, 15

¹³ A&P 2005, pp. 282-286, 37

¹⁴ A&P 2006, pp. 278-279, 15, 21

¹⁵ A&P 1985, pp. 345-346, 33

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate Social Responsibility

Also see Book 5, Middle East, The Church Acts, 2009

The Church Speaks

- As part of its mission, the church has a role to play in promoting the social responsibility of business corporations and other economic institutions.⁶
- As one institution among many others in the world, the church must examine its own activities and operations to see that it is using its resources to serve the needs of justice in society to the glory of God. In particular this involves an examination of how the church invests its money and exercises its role as a shareholder.⁶
- The Presbyterian Church in Canada believes that Canadians have a responsibility to learn more about the mining industry and the social and environmental impacts of Canadian companies' activities.¹²
- The policies and practices of corporations in which Church bodies hold investments should be evaluated with respect to the following criteria:³
 - pollution control and abatement
 - the pursuit of justice in world development
 - the achievement of just and equitable national development
 - equality of opportunity for minority and oppressed groups
 - the reduction of offensive armament production
 - the provision of adequate housing, health and welfare.
- Ethical guidelines should consider:⁶
 - the rights and needs of employees (wages, working conditions, trade unions, employee participation)
 - the economic development of the community and country in which the corporation is operating (undeveloped regions, job creation, resource extraction, tax incentives, capital re-investment)
 - the social and environmental conditions of the community or country in which they operate (company towns, land use, internal migration, minority groups, pollution problems)
 - the civil, political and religious liberties of the community and country within which they operate (repressive regimes, racial apartheid, religious freedom, cheap labour)
 - production and marketing of the corporation's products (consumer goods, harmful products, arms production, advertising practices, monopoly control).*

The Church Acts

1971-1973: The 97th GA (1971) instructed the Administrative Council to establish a committee charged with the task of examining and evaluating the policies of companies in which the church holds stocks; in addition, the committee should examine ways in which the church may express its support or opposition to such policies.¹ The committee was established as a special committee by the 98th GA (1972).² The 99th GA (1973) adopted the guidelines on investment proposed by the special committee and mandated a "small permanent sub-committee" to be set up by the Administrative Council for continued study and action relating to corporate social responsibility and co-operation with other denominations engaged in similar study and activity. The 99th GA also encouraged local congregations and other bodies of the church having investments to examine them in the light of the guidelines proposed by the special committee and agreed that all

* Each item in brackets heads a list of questions to be asked in evaluating the company's efforts to act in a socially responsible manner such as "Does the company re-invest its profits in the community to serve local development or are those profits taken out of the community for investment elsewhere?"

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companies in which The PCC has investments should be informed from time to time of the church's concerns and be invited to discuss these matters in relation to the criteria set forth.³

1977: The 103rd GA asked the Committee on Social Responsibility in Investments “to recommend actions towards just employment practices by such companies as have direct activity and/or influence in countries which have declared or apparent discriminatory policies, particularly South Africa” and the GOC was requested to “reconsider the extent of its program of trade promotion in South Africa in relation to the need of other African states for trade facilities.”⁴

1978: The 104th GA re-affirmed the policy of the previous year in regard to companies working in countries with discriminatory policies. The CSRI reported that it was unable to comply with the request of the previous GA as it did not have the capacity or resources to do the requisite studies, and referred GA to the work of the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility (TCCR).^{5*}

1981: The 107th GA adopted an investment policy with comprehensive set of ethical guidelines and options for action and ordered them distributed to congregations and agencies of The PCC for information and implementation. GA also adopted a resolution on investment in South Africa. This resolution called on the GOC to:

- publicly discourage new and expanding investments in South Africa.
- instruct the Export Development Corporation to withdraw its corporate account facility to all commercial transactions with South Africa.
- abrogate Canada's Double Taxation Agreement with South Africa.**
- revise the Canadian Code of Conduct for companies operating in South Africa.***
- remove tax concessions from companies operating in Namibia until a UN approved government had been established there. (See Human Rights, South Africa, front-line states)

It called on the Canadian private sector to be “actively non-supportive of apartheid policies” by:

- providing family dwellings for African workers in proximity to the workplace.
- promoting the formation of black trade unions and recognizing them as bargaining agents.
- providing legal assistance to employees detained for violation of apartheid laws.
- support (including financial) for an equal education system for all South Africans.
- compliance with the Canadian Code of Conduct and annual publication of progress made.

Two other clauses in the resolution called for all Canadian participation in direct or indirect financial assistance in the form of loans to or bond purchases from the South African public or private sector to be suspended until apartheid was abandoned, and disclosure of sales to the Government of South Africa of equipment destined for use by the South African police or military. Companies were asked to terminate such sales if possible, or to initiate a phased withdrawal of investment in South Africa.⁶

* TCCR was an ecumenical coalition established in 1975 to do research, policy formation and advocacy about the use of church funds in investments. It helped to co-ordinate church policy on sanctions and disinvestment as part of the anti-apartheid strategy of Canadian churches and co-ordinated a number of shareholder proposals on the human rights and ecological policies of corporations. Its work is now continued by KAIROS.

** Abrogation of this agreement would mean that corporations could not deduct taxes paid in one country from taxes owed in the other country.

*** Revisions suggested were that companies should: a) not employ migrant labour, b) recognize and bargain with Black trade unions, c) press for equal education programs, and d) that the Code be made mandatory, including an obligation on companies to give annual detailed progress reports.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1984: The 110th GA directed the trustee board, the pension board, the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation and the colleges to note in their financial reports that details of their investment portfolios are available from the comptroller's office and at General Assembly.⁷

1994: The 120th GA requested the Finance Committee to give consideration to an increase in the contribution of The PCC to the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society (ECDS).^{8*}

Talisman, Inc., a Calgary based petroleum company, had entered a consortium with the oil companies of Sudan, China and Malaysia to develop oil production in southern Sudan. In view of the serious human rights violations imposed on the people of the southern region by government forces, The PCC participated in shareholder actions to encourage Talisman to suspend operations until there was a just and lasting peace.

2001: The 127th GA mandated retention of a minimum number of shares in Talisman in order to permit taking part in shareholder activities to pressure the corporation to withdraw from Sudan until there is a just peace; to develop a divestment strategy

in concert with other denominations and religious communities should divestment be warranted; invited members holding Talisman shares to write to the chief executive officer (CEO) of Talisman opposing the payment of oil revenues to a government which was using them for military repression and calling on Talisman to suspend operations until there is a just peace in Sudan. GA mandated the Moderator to write to: the CEO of Talisman expressing its position that Talisman's operations in Sudan were not contributing to peace or respect to human rights and that the corporation should withdraw from Sudan until there is a just peace; to PriceWaterhouseCooper expressing concern over the terms of reference under which it prepared the Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2000 for Talisman since they precluded any consideration of the overall human rights situation as it might be affected by oil development and the distribution of oil revenues by the Government of Sudan; and to the prime minister encouraging further steps in the peace process through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and calling for legislation to be implemented or developed which would restrict Canadian investment in countries where there is conflict or severe violations of human rights as well as a code of conduct with measurable standards and transparent, independent monitoring and verification.⁹

2002: The 128th GA, noting the substantial investment in Talisman shares held by the Canada Pension Plan recommended to the minister of finance that the GOC reconsider its investment in Talisman. It asked for legislation to set limits on corporate activities in countries where human rights are systematically violated. GA mandated the Moderator to communicate the church's ongoing concern about Talisman's continuing role in Sudan to the chairperson of its board of directors, invited members to communicate with their local PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) office stating their concern over the integrity and transparency of Talisman's 2001 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** report, and extended thanks to a taskforce of the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod for its decision to engage in dialogue with Talisman officials.^{10 ***}

* ECDS, now named Oikocredit, is an international, ecumenical organization which receives investment capital from individuals and churches all over the world and uses it to provide loans for cooperative self-development enterprises. See www.oikocredit.org

** The 2001 CSR report for Talisman was done by PWC Northern Ireland.

*** The Presbytery was invited to have members meet with the management of Talisman after the Presbytery sent a letter of concern. This taskforce was also accompanied by Rev. Dr. Arthur Van Seters who had participated in a fact-finding trip in Sudan the previous year.

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2011: The 137th GA recommended that the Moderator write to Goldcorp Inc. asking for information on the company's policies and practices regarding allegations of human rights abuses and/or environmental degradation, and encouraging Goldcorp's co-operation with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights with regard to its Marlin mine operations.¹¹

2012: The Moderator of the 138th GA wrote to Barrick Gold requesting a report on the progress and impact of programs it has instituted for human rights training and conflict minimization for staff and security personnel at the North Mara mine (in Tanzania) and other mines the company owns in Tanzania and Chile. In partnership with other organizations, Justice Ministries will engage in dialogue with Goldcorp and report back to the 139th GA.¹²

The Moderator wrote to Barrick Gold and Goldcorp to affirm the companies' support of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)* and encourage their continued involvement and compliance with the EITI.¹³ The Moderator wrote to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade urging the GOC to become an EITI compliant country.¹²

The GA requested that the Trustee Board obtain from The PCC's fund managers a list of all mining companies in which [The PCC] holds shares (excluding Barrick Gold and Goldcorp because Justice Ministries wrote to them) and, with assistance from Justice Ministries, to ascertain if a company is an EITI supporting company and 1) if the company is an EITI supporting company, write to the company affirming this position or 2) if the company is not an EITI supporting company, request an explanation for this position, and report back to the 139th GA (2013).¹³

The Moderator wrote to the Ministers of International Trade, Industry and Health 1) asking the GOC to support the listing of chrysotile asbestos as a hazardous substance in the United Nations Rotterdam Convention** ; and 2) asking the GOC to list chrysotile asbestos on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Schedule 3 the "Export Control List"***.¹³

The Moderator wrote to the Minister of International Trade recommending the inclusion of asbestos in the environmental assessment of any Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement negotiated with India.¹³

2015: The 141st GA recommended that Presbyterians write to their Member of Parliament in support of the "Open for Justice" campaign.****¹⁴

* The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a method for identifying government corruption with six strict criteria for membership and a transparent process by which the revenues (tax, royalties, etc.) of signatory governments are independently verified and published.

** Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade is an international treaty to promote shared responsibilities in relation to the importation of hazardous chemicals and other products including asbestos. When it came to a vote at a meeting in Geneva in 2011, Canada objected to the addition of chrysotile asbestos fibres in the Rotterdam Convention – it was the only G8 country to do so.

*** The Export Control List (Schedule 3) is a list of substances whose exports are controlled because their use in Canada is prohibited or restricted, or because Canada has accepted to control the export under the terms of an international agreement (such as the Rotterdam Convention). An example would be ozone-depleting substances like chlorofluorocarbons.

**** There is no federal legislation ensuring that the overseas activities of Canadian mining companies do not cause or contribute to environmental harm or human rights violations. The campaign encourages the government to establish an extractive sector ombudsman with the power to independently investigate complaints and to make recommendations to corporations and for access to the Canadian courts by individuals and communities in the Global South that allege harm by Canadian mining companies in order to have their claims heard.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to Asociación Maya-Mam de Investigación y Desarrollo (AMMID), PWS&D's partner, asking 1) for its reflections on the impact the Marlin mine has had on communities in which AMMID has programs; and 2) whether AMMID has concerns regarding the mine after Goldcorp closes the mine.¹⁵

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from the report of the Special Committee on Social Responsibility in Investment (CSRI), 1973*³

The issue of corporate social responsibility centers on the social effect that large corporations have on human welfare, both within their own organizations and in the public arena. ... Any activities pursued by church bodies in this area should always be governed by the attempt to achieve consistency between the church's social ideals and concerns and its investment policies with a view to bringing all of the church's resources into action in achieving those goals to which the church has committed itself and to which it has been commissioned by the gospel.

...

The church's voice on these matters will be one among many, but it is essential that it be a responsible voice. ... Theologically, the church is motivated by four considerations that lead to our active response:

- The doctrine of creation affirms that God is the Maker and Lord of this world and that it is only as His servants or deputies that we enjoy the fruits of that marvelous work. God has shown us that his purpose is to sustain the life of his creation and that all of our resources, including economic power, fall under his call for responsible stewardship.
- Our responsibility for obedient stewardship involves consistency in the use of our resources. The church's charter is to increase the love of God and neighbour among men. With such a mandate, the church is called to use its resources as instruments of justice and righteousness among men.
- The doctrine of redemptive love is shown most clearly in the full life that is offered to men in Christ, life which promises justice, righteousness and eternal life. It is because of such redemptive love on the part of Christ that we can presume to care for our fellow men, to express concern for their welfare and take steps to ensure that all men are treated with justice and righteousness.
- The final consideration is that God's love for man implies that man being made in the image of God has a dignity and sanctity that must be respected. We must actively oppose all "principalities and powers" that deny man's dignity and the sanctity of his personal and social life. To discharge this responsibility, the church must be constantly sensitive to the subtle ways in which dignity and justice are denied in our modern, bureaucratic society.

*Excerpt from "Social Responsibility in Investment Policy", BCL report, 1979*¹⁶ *

Our Committee on Social Responsibility in Investment Policy recognizes in its own life the deep complexity of the issues at stake in seeking to define moral guidelines for public investments, particularly where these relate to Canadian involvement in projects of third world countries. It is important that the church be seen, not as sitting in judgment of those who are in positions of responsibility in large corporations, many of whom are themselves active churchmen, but as caring about people. In a world where oppression and revolution are everywhere, the church's

* The 104th GA (1978) had transferred responsibility for the CSRI from the Administrative Council to the BCL.

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deep concern for people must be heard, especially the gospel concern for those who suffer poverty, degradation and the loss of basic human rights.

Excerpts from “Investment Policy”, BCL report, 1981 ⁶

The PCC has acknowledged that its life and ministry must remain open to the reforming guidance of the Holy Spirit, witnessing to a living Word, Jesus Christ, and speaking through the fellowship of the Church universal. In recent years, our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Third World have confronted us with the brutal reality of their everyday lives and the role we in North America play in maintaining the structures of exploitation, injustice and oppression under which many of them suffer.

The PCC, in examining and exercising its social responsibility, has become aware that modern corporations, particularly transnational corporations, represent a new form of economic power and possible domination. The increasing concentration of economic power and means of production in the hands of a small number of large corporations represents a possible threat to the common good of peoples and nations. ... Today a relatively small number of large corporations have an enormous impact in determining the conditions under which people live.

...

The church, like other institutions, tends to use its money for conventional investments where potential financial opportunities exist. However, the church is concerned with more than profit-making, important as that may be to its work. Therefore agencies and individuals within the Church should consider other investment options.

Public Investments: Consider the possibility of investing a percentage of available capital in institutions of the public sector when it is clear that the proceeds are being used for social needs such as community development projects, poverty programs, urban renewal projects, pollution control, etc. This type of investment can highlight the importance of those public sector institutions designed to serve the needs of people in the community.

Creative Investments: Consider the possibility of investing a percentage of available capital in alternative development projects or social change programs. Such projects might include co-op housing, co-op food stores, “worker-owned” industries, native land claim programs, etc. While Church agencies may not have large amounts of capital for creative investments, seed money of this type can serve to illustrate the larger purposes of the church and its mission.

Incentive Investments: Consider using capital as an incentive to stimulate or promote social responsibility on the part of companies. For example, money might be invested in companies that have an adequately defined code of ethics or a social audit to evaluate their business practices. This type of investment may help support and stimulate those companies that are effectively practicing social responsibility in their operations.

Conventional Investments: Most capital will continue to be used for conventional investments, since agencies and individuals are dependant on the returns for a portion of their income. A total withdrawal from this type of investment may generate other social injuries. However, it is important that conventional investors take full advantage of their position as shareholders to raise ethical questions about the operations of their companies.

Strategic Investments: Consider the possibility of investing for the specific purpose of actively promoting corporation responsibility in companies known to be insensitive to social injustices. As shareholders, we are in a better position to advocate policy changes to correct unjust practices of specific companies.

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Disinvestment: This option should be used only as a last resort when it is clear that no changes are possible in a given company. In doing so, however, taking our money out of that company should be undertaken as a means of drawing public attention to the particular injustices of the situation.

Excerpts from “Land: Resource Extraction and Canadian Mining Companies”, IAC report, 2012¹²

The Sabbath and Jubilee laws had elements that directly addressed issues of land ownership and use, and more particularly the redressing of injustices around land (Ex 20:8-11, 23:11, Lev 25:1-7).

For neither ancient nomadic peoples nor modern corporations is the land a free gift without the responsibility to care for the people it has supported for generations as well as the land itself.

Responsible stewardship of the land is a foundational principle acknowledging that it is God’s creation, which God declared to be good and over which God exercises dominion and lordship (Gen 1, Ps 24:1-2). To use it in such a way as to destroy it or make it unusable is an offense against God (Jer 2:7, Isa 24:4-5).

Jesus told us that to love our neighbours is one of the two greatest commandments (Lk 10:25-28) and described his ministry in terms of “bringing good news to the poor, release to the captives ... and to let the oppressed go free” (Lk 4:18). Throughout scripture we are instructed to care for and meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable: “when you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings” (Deut 24:19-20)...

Perhaps the clearest scriptural guidance is found in the prophetic call for justice – to treat people fairly, to uphold human dignity and well-being and protect human rights, and to shape our common life as befits the kingdom of God.... Amos’ call to the people of his own day, as well as ours, is “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Am 5:24).

¹ A&P 1971, pp. 56-57

² A&P 1972, pp. 31, 72

³ A&P 1973, pp. 389-391, 63

⁴ A&P 1977, pp. 371-373, 76, 82

⁵ A&P 1978, pp. 336, 36, 54, 204, 50

⁶ A&P 1981, pp. 310-316, 97

⁷ A&P 1984, pp. 369, 46

⁸ A&P 1994, pp. 301-313, 36-38, 67-68

⁹ A&P 2001, pp. 322-326, 20

¹⁰ A&P 2002, pp. 281-285, 17

¹¹ A&P 2011, pp. 290-2, 17

¹² A&P 2012, pp. 273-288, 25

¹³ A&P 2012, pp.273-288, 29

¹⁴ A&P 2015, pp. 384, 18

¹⁵ A&P 2016, pp. 315-316, 23

¹⁶ A&P 1979, pp. 295-296

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Human Rights

The Church Speaks

- The church abhors political repression wherever it is found.¹
- Christians should support the universal Declaration of Human Rights and encourage awareness of its provisions.²
- Aid and development funds should be linked with human rights performance.⁵
- Non-indigenous people need to educate themselves about indigenous peoples and issues.⁶
- Congregations are encouraged to offer prayers for all whose human rights are violated including prayers for persecuted Christians.⁹
- Access to land is a foundation of human existence and well-being. Biblical witness attests that access to land and the ability to derive sustenance from it are part of the prophetic announcement of good news to all. The church can support the right of people everywhere to access and enjoy the life-giving benefits of land by urging governments and corporations to honour the land rights of the poor and to allow the poor to glean some living from large plots of land owned by others.³

The Church Acts

1972: The 98th GA noted that the GOC had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. The GA asked that the GOC sign and ratify three other United Nations Conventions: The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the Optional Protocol on Civil and Political Rights.^{4*}

1992: The 118th GA praised the GOC for ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.^{**} The GA urged the GOC to adopt policies to protect children from child prostitution, to encourage travel agents and the traveling public to become aware of the evils of the overseas sex trade and to cooperate in the prosecution of any Canadian tourist who is caught sexually exploiting a child in another country.^{5***} The GA also urged members, congregations and courts of the church to familiarize themselves with one or two regions of the world in which peace is badly broken and to establish some direct contact with people there; also, to become familiar with, pray for and offer tokens of support to one or two traditional partner churches

1993: The 119th GA asked the Canadian ambassador to the United Nations to work toward strengthening the institution's framework to deal with issues affecting indigenous peoples.^{6****}

1996: The 122nd GA affirmed the efforts of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to promote human rights and democratic development. The GA encouraged the GOC to emphasize human rights in Canada's trade policy.⁷

* The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination was ratified by the GOC in 1970. The other three Conventions were ratified in 1976.

** Adopted by the United Nations on November 20, 1989, convention upholds a child's right to survival, proper development and protection from abuse and exploitation. On December 11, 1991, the Prime Minister of Canada announced that Canada had formally ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*** ECPAT-Canada was formed November 20, 1991, to create public awareness of the widespread problem of child prostitution, to collect data on Canadian involvement in child prostitution in Asia and to develop strategies for ending Canadian involvement.

**** 1993 was the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.

1997: The 123rd GA re-affirmed its position that sharing scientific discoveries in areas of genetic engineering should not be limited unreasonably for commercial purposes. The GA also re-affirmed its position that the GOC honour its commitment to increasing overseas development assistance to 0.7% of gross domestic product and to continue to focus that assistance on basic human needs. The GA encouraged the GOC to meet the commitments that were made at the Rome Summit on Food Security and to communicate progress in this regard to concerned Canadians on a periodic basis.^{###} Finally, the GA encouraged the GOC to look at how its domestic policies of debt and deficit reduction impacted the poor, the unemployed and the.⁸

2002: The 128th GA asked the GOC to affirm its opposition to the persecution of Christians around the world. The GA also called on the church to communicate its concern over these violations to governments of countries in which The PCC has partners. The GA asked the LMA to prepare information and appropriate worship resources on this issue and to produce web content for Justice Ministries and International Affairs.⁹

2005: The 131st GA urged the GOC to affirm that access to clean, safe water for personal use is a basic human right.¹⁰

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs encouraging the Government of Canada to continue calling for an end to violence against LGBT people and for the respect of human rights of all people regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity in relevant international fora.¹¹

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “Indigenous Peoples” IAC report, 1993*⁶

Indigenous peoples include not just tribal peoples whose way of life or social condition differ from other groups within a nation or region, but also peoples who are descended from the populations which inhabited a nation or region at the time of conquest or colonization, or before the establishment of existing national boundaries. Worldwide, roughly 300 million indigenous people live in more than 70 countries; an estimated 30 million in the Americas, of whom more than 900,000 live in Canada. Although the theme of the “International Year” is partnership, indigenous peoples throughout the world face a reality of exclusion and marginalization from economic and political life.

The lands inhabited by indigenous peoples are often wanted by the state or commercial interests for economic exploitation, while indigenous peoples are denied the right to sustainable and equitable development. Because they often live in ecologically sensitive areas, indigenous peoples have suffered much from the worldwide degradation of the environment. Much of the world’s tourist industry does not benefit local populations, and is particularly hard on indigenous peoples. Their cultures have been destroyed, their beaches and even their sacred sites taken over or intruded upon by hotels or resorts. Irresponsible tourism can introduce or expand local alcohol and drug abuse, as well as prostitution and even slavery.

This economic marginalization reflects the implicit and explicit racial discrimination that continues to “ravage the lives of indigenous peoples in both developing and developed countries”

^{###} The summit on food security was held in Rome in November 1996. It resulted in a commitment to split the number of hungry people in the world by 2015.

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(Mary Simon). Deprivation and discrimination occur not just in the areas of land management, but in health care, education, and housing. More broadly, racist attitudes and actions strike at the very heart of human dignity and harm the cultures or societies they target.

Many states deny or ignore the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples. As Amnesty International has recently documented, indigenous peoples in the Americas continue to be deprived of internationally recognized human rights. Human rights abuses include murder, disappearances, torture, and sexual assault. The victims of human rights abuses include both men and women: the political or religious leaders of indigenous communities and activists who work with these communities, but also witnesses to abuses, and even children or the elderly.

*Excerpt from “A Theology of Human Rights”, IAC report, 1996*⁷

When the law is biased, when the poor are oppressed, when the stranger is turned away, when the prisoner is forgotten, human rights are violated (Amos 8:4-6; Micah 3:9-11; Isaiah 3:13-15; Jeremiah 5:26-28). These calls for justice were pleas to more powerful social groups such as religious or civil leaders, landowners, families or ethnic groups to protect the human rights of those seeking justice in courts, of tenants and labourers, of the widow and the orphan, of the stranger in Israel, or the refugee in Babylon. ... [Our] understanding of human rights must be grounded in the whole thrust of the gospel--that peace and justice includes the welfare of all.

*Excerpts from “Food Security: Bread of Life for the Common Good”, IAC report 1997*⁸

In the beatitudes recorded in Luke, Jesus declares: “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be filled,” (6:21) and “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry” (6:25). The message of Jesus is a reversal of the way our human-made systems work. There is a note of judgment upon those who have wealth that we need to hear. Some interpreters see the miracle of the loaves and fishes (Matt. 14: 13-21 and parallels) as an example of selfless sharing, a microcosm of a world sufficient in production but wanting in solidarity.

The earliest followers of Jesus were inspired by his model. The Acts of the Apostles shows that the common pooling and sharing of resources was a reality for the earliest Christian community. They strove to realize an inclusive vision, where the needs of everyone were met. “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.” (Acts 2:44-47)

...

[Food security] is a newer and broader expression than speaking of “ending hunger”. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank defines food security as “access at all times by all people to enough food to lead an active, healthy life.” Food security means more than a community containing sufficient quantities of food; the food must be nutritional and accessible to everyone, including the poor.

...

Food security does not imply total self-sufficiency. Canada has a much smaller percentage of arable land and an overall colder climate than much of the United States. Some forms of agriculture are ecologically inappropriate here, but so is transporting egg and milk over longer distances instead of buying them from local suppliers. Canada could pursue food sufficiency and still rely on citrus fruits as a source of vitamin C, provided we did not, in the process, destroy our apple producers. Trade can complement domestic food security strategies, but it should not be allowed to replace them.

Excerpts from “Biblical and Theological Reflection”, IAC report, 1998 ²

In his ministry, Jesus restated, elaborated and demonstrated in a very personal way the meaning of God’s covenant for our individual lives and relationships. Again there is no mention of human rights or responsibilities in the New Testament, but simply a confirmation that God loves and cares for every individual regardless of differences, and that God asks all individuals to bring about God's realm by serving others with the same kind of love and care and justice. Jesus consistently treated everyone as equal and valuable, regardless of gender, nationality, economic class, age, or disability.

...

We may reasonably assume that God will not object to others adopting the life style expected of God's people.... More than once Jesus commended people outside the covenant who acted as if they were in it (Matthew 5:8; Luke 17:18). The biblical tradition then can be used as a standard against which to measure the wisdom of the world, in this case the universal Declaration of Human Rights.

1. Israel’s relation to God

You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not worship images

...

There is, of course, no parallel to these commandments in the declaration. But the concept of human rights as applicable to every person without exception is consistent with God's self-revelation as a universal creator and with our understanding of God's activity in a sinful world.

2. Israel’s relation to work

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
Six days shall you labour and do all your work.

Like the fourth commandment, the declaration provides for both rest and work.
Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.... (Article 24)
Everyone has the right to work.... (Article 23)

In this age we need both the right to work and the right not to work. We need the right to work because this era of globalized and technologically sophisticated capitalism seems to prefer machines to workers. Machines are much more malleable; they can be programmed at will, work all the time and never strike. But we also need a right not to work because our present way of living is unsustainable. We cannot go on forever exploiting resources and people as if there were no tomorrow. Both the earth and its inhabitants need time to rest and recover.

...

3. The centrality of the family

Honour your father and mother.
Do not commit adultery.

Those of us who learned the ten commandments as children are inclined to think of the fifth commandment in terms of doing what we are told and avoiding anything of which our parents would disapprove. But we may assume that the Law was written for adults, and that the parents in question are senior citizens, people who are no longer economically active, and thus not contributing to the family purse. They are entitled to be honoured because they too are people of the covenant, and are not to be despised because they are also a couple of extra mouths to feed.

...

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Sex is central to marriage. Therefore to engage in a sexual relationship with someone other than one's partner is to undermine the marriage, or marriages, if both people are married. Marriages are too important to be trifled with; marriages mean families, the primordial communities in which we learn first to be human and second, people of the covenant. Families are central to the life of the community of faith.

The declaration's position on marriage is, by and large, consistent with that of the Christian faith: Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and found a family. (Article 16.1)

...

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state. (Article 16.3)

4. The importance of life

You shall not kill.

The prohibition is not absolute. The rest of the law makes clear that Israel accepted the death penalty and for a much wider range of offences than we would accept today.... What is forbidden here is murder as a means of settling disputes; the people of the covenant do not take another life except in very limited circumstances.

The agonizing debates which we have over just wars, euthanasia, abortion and capital punishment were unthought of when this prohibition was formulated. We have learned in this century, to our sorrow, how easy it is for human sinfulness to excuse authorized murder in all its forms, on the battlefield, in a hospital, or in prison. But the stark uncompromising language of the ten commandments calls us to account, as does its echo in the declaration:

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person. (Article 3)

5. The necessity of integrity

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not use lightly the name of the Lord.

...

"Judge" in this context is not neutral word. The prophets were calling upon the elders to give the poor a fair shake.

Similarly people were not to use the name of God for false purposes, either under oath, or by means of a curse.... The ten commandments call for open and honest arbitration.

In the same way the declaration insists on equality before the law: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection before the law. (Article 7)

6. The relevance of property

You shall not steal

You shall not covet

Both provisions teach that everyone has a right to a measure of this world's goods. Most people in the Old Testament had barely enough to survive, and for one to take by guile or force that which another needed was clearly wrong.

...

The assumption of scriptures and the clear statement of the declaration, is that people are entitled to this world's goods not for their own sake but to support an "existence worthy of human dignity".

...

In the declaration this concept is given voice in these words:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his(sic) family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care....(Article 25)

...

An abuse of human rights is about the misuse of power by one person or group over another. Jesus' ministry carried a clear message about power in human relationships. According to his ministry, our God-given human power is to be used to nurture, strengthen, "empower" others. It is by loving service to others that we raise others up and bring about God's realm.

Excerpt from "Persecuted and Suffering Christians" LMA report, 2002⁹

The persecution and violation of basic human rights of Christians occurs in many countries, including countries where The Presbyterian Church in Canada has partnerships and programs, notably China, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sudan. The context of the persecution and the restrictions on religious freedom varies among these countries.

In countries such as Pakistan the government is closely related to Islam. Anyone not subscribing to the official religion faces discrimination, which includes being excluded from opportunities in employment or education. The government makes life difficult for Christians and reinforces the cultural and religious opposition to them.

In countries such as India and Nigeria, the official government policy is pluralist and secular. But in both countries there are powerful forces that want to make one religion dominant..... In both countries, violent acts have been committed against Christians and churches have been burned. But there is also evidence of official national government protection and statements in support of religious tolerance.

The situation in China is different. State-approved Christian churches can function, but independent churches are considered outside the law. One can make a case that Christians in China are or are not persecuted. In Sudan, Christians share in the persecution directed at all opponents of the regime, for religious, ethnic and economic reasons.

Excerpt from "Religious Persecution," IAC Report, 2015 (A&P 2015, pp. 294-309)

Freedom of religion is a basic human right. It is enshrined in many important international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations as one of its founding documents in 1948. Article 18 of the Declaration reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

...

Using data collected by ARDA from an analysis of information contained in International Freedom Reports from 2000 to 2007, Grim and Finke point out that in the 21st century there is no religion that is free from violent persecution somewhere in our world...

Grim and Finke further report that of 143 countries they have researched, representing 99% of the world's population, 123 (86%) have documented cases of people being physically abused or displaced from their homes due to religious persecution. Of these countries, 36 had more than

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1,000 people physically abused or displaced and 35 had more than 10,000 victims. ... It is the countries with the most restrictions on religious freedom that experience the most religious conflict. They also demonstrate that countries that are experiencing religious conflict leading to persecution can be placed on a scale, where the greater the number of restrictions, the greater the conflict.

Excerpt from *The Treatment of Minority and Indigenous Peoples, IAC Report 2016*,¹¹

Sometimes differences between groups of people become the basis of marginalization, disenfranchisement or conflict. And yet God blessed a minority group to be a light to all nations and instructed them to care for vulnerable people. The Bible says: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.” This advice is from Leviticus 19... Human relationships are often marked by xenophobia, bigotry, marginalization and hatred. But God’s message of care leads us to offer sanctuary and to be concerned with healing broken relationships and upholding the dignity of all people.

Much is revealed about the values and qualities upheld by countries and its peoples, by the treatment of vulnerable people. Scripture reveals specific responsibilities of Israel toward the treatment of aliens and strangers. Jesus’ ethic of love and care for neighbours is subordinate only to loving God. The situation of Indigenous and minority groups that are affected by racism, discrimination, hatred and persecution are painful examples of how humankind fails to love and treat each other with dignity. The suffering love of Jesus Christ reminds us that as God’s grace is miraculously given to us, so we too must strive to reflect God’s love in our treatment of all people.

¹ A&P 1989, p. 377

² A&P 1998, pp. 283-298, 33

³ A&P 2011, pp. 286-297, 17

⁴ A&P 1972, pp. 302-303, 70

⁵ A&P 1992, pp. 331-357, 41-2

⁶ A&P 1993, pp. 246-247, 38

⁷ A&P 1996, pp. 278-294, 48-49

⁸ A&P 1997, pp. 301-316, 31

⁹ A&P 2002, pp. 331-332, 25

¹⁰ A&P 2005, pp. 294-307, 14-15

¹¹ A&P 2016, pp. 306-314, 23

Africa

See also, People with Disabilities in Book 3.

Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Somalia & Sudan

The Church Acts

2017: The GA recommended that the Moderator write to church partners in The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Synods of Blantyre and Livingstonia), The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, and the Africa Inland Church Tanzania encouraging them to provide a caring and non-discriminatory environment within their congregations for people with albinism; advocate for the fundamental human rights of people with albinism by informing them of their rights to legal recourse; and urge their governments to either establish or enforce laws that make it illegal to discriminate or harm people with albinism.

The GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Governments of Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania urging that they rigorously enforce laws related to the protection of people with albinism and address

loopholes that allow for impunity; counter myths that perpetuate discrimination and violence against people with albinism through the education system starting in elementary school.¹

Kenya

1996: The 122nd GA sent greetings to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa as they sought to be faithful in a society experiencing civil and economic upheaval and violations of human rights.* The GA also supported the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa and other organizations in advocating for the release of political prisoners in Kenya.²

Malawi

1981: A report from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian was presented by the BWM to the 107th GA. The report spoke of the role of women in the church, the democratization of church procedures, and the steps taken to minister to the country's leaders.³

1993: The 119th GA sent greetings to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. The GA also asked the GOC to urge the Government of Malawi to support referendum guidelines and to further promote and encourage the protection of human rights.^{4**}

2011: The 137th GA recommended that The PCC encourage its partners—the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre—to promote development that benefits the poor and vulnerable and protects the country's environment.⁵

Nigeria

1967: The 93rd GA sent a letter of concern to The Presbyterian Church in Nigeria concerning Biafra's declaration of independence.^{6***}

1968: The 94th GA petitioned the GOC to encourage the end of hostilities, to ask the British government to stop supplying arms to the combatants, to ensure safe passage of relief, and to assure the security and legitimate aspirations of the people of Biafra. A campaign was launched through the Committee on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service to raise at least \$75,000 for relief in Nigeria-Biafra.⁷

1969: The 95th GA sent a statement of concern to Nigerian Presbyterians on both sides of the conflict, offering to help them in the difficult task of reconciliation. The IAC recommended continued church and government support of relief efforts, including protection of relief in transit to affected areas, and government involvement in arrangements to secure a cease-fire.

1970: The 96th GA, while thankful for an end to the Nigerian conflict, expressed concern for the Nigerian church. The GA assured Presbyterians in Nigeria that further assistance would be provided upon request.⁸

1996: The 122nd GA supported two statements made by The Presbyterian Church in Nigeria and the Christian Association of Nigeria in 1995.* The GA also supported the GOC, which suggested suspending Nigeria from the Commonwealth and imposing harsher sanctions.^{9**}

* Among the 59 documented political prisoners in Kenya at this time were three prominent leaders of the political opposition, all of whom were known for promoting human rights and democracy.

** The United Nations had suggested guidelines for Malawi's June referendum on a new constitution.

*** Civil war broke out in Nigeria in 1967 between the eastern region, known as Biafra, and the national government. The war began when Biafra declared independence and ended with a ceasefire and Biafra's defeat in 1970. Close ties between Presbyterians in Canada and Nigeria resulted in a massive relief effort on both sides of the conflict.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

1998: The 124th GA asked the LMA to work with ecumenical partners to protest the deaths of political prisoners and to call on the Government of Nigeria to postpone future executions. The GA asked congregations and individuals to pray for Nigerians and The Presbyterian Church in Nigeria. It also asked International Ministries and PWS&D to find ways to show solidarity with the church in Nigeria.¹⁰

1999: The 125th GA encouraged congregations and individuals to pray for Nigerians caught in economic and political turmoil and to support church activities, such as welcoming Nigerian visitors. The GA also encouraged solidarity with The Presbyterian Church in Nigeria as the country struggled through a period of political transition.¹¹

2000: The 127th GA prayed for religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, for national leaders to demonstrate wisdom and courage in guiding the country's policies and for strength for Christians in Nigeria as they worked to mitigate tensions exacerbated by the extension of Shari'a law. The GA encouraged the LMA to strengthen the church's relationship with partners in Nigeria by increasing the number of Canadians working in Nigeria, by bringing Nigerians to Canada on short-term visits and by supporting community projects that empower women, promote human rights or support democratic change. The GA asked the Moderator to write to the GOC, stressing the need to support grass-roots projects, especially those preparing Nigerians for elections in 2003.¹²

2002: The 128th GA sent a letter of support to The Presbyterian Church in Nigeria, expressing concern and offering prayers for the violence it was experiencing.¹³

2012: The Moderator of the 138th GA wrote to The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria assuring it that The PCC would continue to pray for and support them as they worked to bring peace and reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and as they ministered to victims of sectarian violence.¹⁴

2014: The 140th General Assembly urged Commissioners to pray for 276 kidnapped high school girls taken from Chibok in Borno State in Northern Nigeria by the Boko Haram.^{***} The Moderator wrote to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria offering prayers for the kidnapped girls, their families and the people of Nigeria and that a peaceful and successful resolution is reached.¹⁵

2015: The 141st GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Prelate and Moderator of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, His Eminence, The Right Reverend Dr Emele M Uka, assuring him and the members of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria of the prayers of our church during this time of extreme terrorist activity in their country, (IAC 12.1.14) and to the Nigerian High Commissioner to Canada, His Excellency Chief Ojo Uma Maduekwe expressing the concern of The PCC as his nation faces this devastating terrorist activity.¹⁶

Somalia

* These statements called for an improvement in human rights and the implementation of democracy.

**Nigerian Dictator General Sani Abacha was internationally condemned in 1995 when he ordered the execution of nine Ogoni leaders who were seeking redress for environmental and economic devastation caused by development. After this event, the GOC severed diplomatic ties with Nigeria and succeeded in persuading the Commonwealth to suspend Nigeria as a member.

***Boko Haram means "Western education is sin." It is an Islamist terrorist organization in Northern Nigeria (and also in other African countries). The Boko Haram is responsible for approximately 10,000 deaths in Nigeria since 2002.

1993: The 119th GA praised the GOC for supporting international peacekeeping in Somalia.* The GA asked the GOC to increase its relief efforts and its involvement in refugee resettlement.¹⁷

Sudan

1991: The 117th GA sent greetings to the Sudan Council of Churches, offering to pray for Christians facing persecution there.¹⁸

Sudan is divided culturally, racially, and religiously between the North and the South. A civil war began in 1983, when the president—presiding in the predominantly Arab and Muslim North—extended Islamic law over the whole country. This offended rebels in the predominantly African and non-Muslim South. Although the president's decision was later modified, Sudanese from the South continued to rebel. In the North, a new dictator abolished all political parties.. Tensions have been exasperated by the geographic distribution of Sudan's natural resources. The country's oil reserves are located in the South. Southerners accuse militia from the North of taking their land and developing the oil fields for the North's sole benefit. (See entry on *Talisman, Inc.* under *Corporate Social Responsibility*, p. 39) In 2003, another conflict began in Darfur, a province in western Sudan. Pro-government Janjaweed militias have conducted a campaign of ethnic cleansing, leaving more than 400,000 dead by May 2006.

1993: The 119th GA urged the GOC to support efforts to end subjugation and persecution in southern Sudan.¹⁹

1998: The 124th GA called on the GOC to protest the persecution of Christians in southern Sudan, to pressure the Khartoum government to allow the free movement of food aid into non-government controlled areas, and to support the growth of civil society in Sudan, .²⁰

1999: The 125th GA called on the GOC to re-invigorate the peace process in Sudan and to use its influence in the United Nations Security Council to pressure the government of Sudan to lift the blockade on humanitarian assistance.²¹

2000: The 128th GA sent letters of support to the Sudan Council of Churches and the New Sudan Council of Churches, expressing concern and offering prayers for violence they were experiencing.²²

¹ A&P 2017, 20, 303-4

² A&P 1996, pp. 278-294, 48-49

³ A&P 1981, p. 436

⁴ A&P 1993, pp. 250-252, 38

⁵ A&P 2011, pp. 292-4, 17

⁶ A&P 1967, p. 73

⁷ A&P 1968, pp. 33, 73,74, 75

⁸ A&P 1970, p. 73

⁹ A&P 1996, pp. 278-294, 48-49

¹⁰ A&P 1998, pp. 295-296, 33

¹¹ A&P 1999, pp. 289, 45

* The national government in Somalia collapsed in 1991, leaving a country torn by conflicts between multiple rival groups. In 1992, 900 Canadian soldiers participated in the multi-lateral operation, which tried to restore order and protect relief supplies.

¹² A&P 2001, pp. 314-316, 19

¹³ A&P 2002, pp. 275, 15

¹⁴ A&P 2012, pp. 272-3, 35

¹⁵ A&P 2014, pp. 39-40

¹⁶ A&P 2015, pp. 307-8, 27

¹⁷ A&P 1993, pp. 251, 38

¹⁸ A&P 1991, pp. 324, 57

¹⁹ A&P 1993, p. 64

²⁰ A&P 1998, p. 33

²¹ A&P 1999, pp. 287-289, 45

²² A&P 2000, pp. 275, 15

Southern Africa and Apartheid

The Church Speaks

- Apartheid is sinful and incompatible with the gospel.^{6*}
- The moral and theological justification of apartheid is a travesty of the Gospel and, in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy. It constitutes a status confessionis : an issue on which it is not possible to differ without seriously jeopardizing the integrity of our common confession.⁷

The Church Acts

South Africa

1971: The 97th GA asked the IAC to further research apartheid policies in the region and to recommend how church leaders in South Africa should respond.¹

1972: The 98th GA adopted policies on apartheid previously affirmed by the WCC (between 1954 and 1968) and by the 183rd GA of the United Presbyterian Church (in 1971). The GA encouraged the GOC to strengthen trade relationships with newly-independent African states. It also praised the Presbyterian Church in South Africa for refusing to withdraw from the WCC.^{i**} The GA also authorized the ESA and other boards to make the elimination of racism the primary task of the church.²

1977: A report to the 103rd GA from the stated that 16 black prisoners had died in custody and that certain files of the South African Council of Churches had been seized and its director detained. The same report outlined the new homelands policy.^{***} The GA approved a statement on apartheid prepared by the BWM, which condemned apartheid and racism.³

* By 1970, the only English-speaking countries in which racial segregation had legal status were South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa. In these two countries, apartheid continued until 1980 and 1990 respectively. The struggle against apartheid in these states had repercussions throughout southern Africa.

** The Government of South Africa demanded that the Presbyterian Church in South Africa withdraw from the WCC, due to the council's Program to Combat Racism.

*** See *The Church Reflects*, below, for implications of the homelands policy.

1978: The 104th GA asked the IAC and congregations to study the Koinonia Declaration and report to the 105th GA.^{4****}

1981: The 107th GA resolved to initiate and support efforts designed to pressure the South African government to abandon its apartheid policies.⁵

1983: The 109th GA adopted the BCL's report concerning the actions of WARC in electing Rev. Alan Boesak as its president, re-affirming that apartheid is sinful and incompatible with the gospel, and suspending the membership of two Reformed churches in South Africa.^{6*}

1984: The 110th GA approved and adopted the 1982 statements of WARC and the 1983 statement of the WCC on the sinfulness of apartheid and the heresy of providing it with moral and theological justification. Letters of support were sent to the South African Council of Churches, the Council of Churches in Namibia and the Christian Council of Lesotho. The members of those churches were encouraged to express and intensify their support for the people of southern Africa.⁷

1985: The South African Council of Churches called for a day of prayer to end the unjust rule in South Africa. The 111th GA responded by encouraging all commissioners to share this appeal with their congregations and presbyteries. The GA also approved communication with the Government of South Africa, in order to persuade it to speak with the black people of South Africa as equals.⁸

1986: The 112th GA adopted eleven recommendations regarding apartheid in South Africa.⁹

1987: The 113th GA suggested members study the Kairos Document, along with a commentary from the CCD.^{10*}

Eleven Recommendations (1986)

- to call on all congregations to commit themselves to join the struggle against racism within our own society and also against apartheid in South Africa.
- to recommend presbyteries and congregations use the action package on South Africa prepared by the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa.
- to observe a day of prayer on June 16, 1986, to end unjust rule in South Africa.
- to prayerfully support (Anglican) Primate Edward Scott and other members of a Commonwealth team, who are seeking to bring about substantial change in South Africa.
- to re-affirm moral and material support for the South African Council of Churches.
- to re-affirm moral and material support for the South African Council of Churches.
- to pray for The Presbyterian Church of South Africa as it seeks to be a force for reconciliation and justice within South African society.
- to commend the GOC for its public stance against apartheid and its implementation of limited sanctions
- to recognize the African National Congress as the legitimate voice of the majority of the people of South Africa. *
- to ask the GOC to extend moral support and humanitarian aid to the African National Congress.
- to ask the GOC to call on the Government of South Africa to begin negotiations with the ANC, in order to dismantle apartheid and create a democratic, non-racial state.

* Founded in 1912 to promote democracy and a non-racial South Africa, the African National Congress was banned under South African law. Since 1964, the leader of the African National Congress—Nelson Mandela—had been serving a life sentence in prison.

**** The Koinonia Declaration was prepared by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. It was a theological approach to political participation based on Calvinistic theology.

* The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk were suspended from WARC until (a) black Christians were no longer excluded from services, (b) support was given to victims of apartheid, and (c) resolutions were made rejecting apartheid.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

1988: The 114th GA praised the GOC for its leadership in opposing apartheid. It asked congregations to support Christian leaders who were opposed to apartheid in South Africa and pray for those “who in fear and blindness fight to maintain power and control.”^{11**}

1989: The 115th GA endorsed the Kairos Document and re-affirmed its commitment to support those who were oppressed by apartheid. The GA called on the GOC to impose comprehensive sanctions against South Africa and to send messages of support to the South African Council of Churches.¹²

1990: The 116th GA greeted the WARC President Rev. Allan and endorsed a call by the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa for continuing support of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa as it pressed for full democratization. The GA called on the GOC to support the democratization movement by implementing full economic sanctions and exercising appropriate diplomatic sanctions. It also encouraged commissioners to observe the third Sunday in June as Freedom for South Africa Sunday.¹³

1992: The 118th GA urged the GOC to continue to support democratization in South Africa and to give high priority to external aid to Africa.¹⁴

1994: The 120th GA drew attention to “In Support of Democracy in South Africa,” a record of statements on apartheid in South Africa.^{***} The GA also sent greetings to the South African Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Evangelical Church of South Africa.¹⁵

The “front line” states (Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe) and Namibia

1960: The 86th GA approved a letter to Sir Francis Ibiyam of Nigeria, chairman of the All Africa Council of Churches. In response to a trip to Rhodesia, Ibiyam had written a book which called on English-speaking Christians to help end the violence in Africa.^{****} In its letter, the GA expressed concern for the tragic events playing out in South Africa and informed Ibiyam of its efforts to persuade the GOC to declare its opposition to apartheid.^{16*****}

1982: The 108th GA sent letters of encouragement to the South African Council of Churches, the Council of Churches in Namibia and the Christian Council of Lesotho, which were all facing political harassment.^{17*}

1983: The 109th GA indicated its support of and concern for the Councils of Churches in South Africa, Lesotho and Namibia as they continued to lead and encourage Christians who faced rising

* This document originated at the Institute for Contextual Study in Johannesburg. One-hundred-and-fifty theologians, pastors and laypersons in South Africa endorsed it. The CCD called it “an incisive document, penetrating in its analysis of the present situation of South Africa.”

** The buildings which housed the South African Council of Churches and the South African Council of Catholic Bishops were bombed in 1988. In 1998, it was confirmed that the Government of South Africa ordered the bombings.

*** South Africa’s first democratic election involving citizens of all races was held peacefully in 1994.

**** Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) declared independence from Britain in 1965. From then until 1980, the country was the site of intense civil strife as the majority black population sought to unseat the white government. A truce between the government and the main resistance group—the Patriotic Front—resulted in democratic elections and a new constitution in 1980.

***** On Mar. 21, 1960, police in Transvaal Province, South Africa, opened fire on a group of protestors, killing 69 of them. A state of emergency was declared a week later amid mounting protests and demonstrations.

* The South African Council of Churches had just elected its first black General Secretary, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and was facing costly legal action by the Government of South Africa. The Council of Churches in Namibia was under extreme physical harassment by the South African Defense Force and the Lutheran Church had its printing press.

violence and persecution.** The GA called on Canadian church members to remember southern Africa in their prayers and actions.¹⁸

1987: The 113th GA praised the GOC for international leadership in matters concerning southern Africa. The GA asked educators and journalists to promote awareness of African issues so that all who wished might assist in letter and prayer campaigns.¹⁹

1989: The 115th GA sent greetings to the Rand Presbytery of the Lesotho Evangelical Church in South Africa and to the Christian Council of Namibia. It also prayed for members of the United Nations Peace Keeping Force in Namibia and for the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. The GA urged the GOC to support peacekeeping efforts and to assist front line states that were suffering because of sanctions against South Africa.²⁰

1990: The 116th GA sent greetings to the United Congregationalist Church of Southern Africa in Namibia.²¹

1991: The 117th GA asked the BWM to consult with the South Africa Council of Churches and consider ways to help re-build post-apartheid South Africa. Letters were sent to the Council of Churches in Namibia, the Council of Churches in Mozambique and the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa expressing affirming its support to continue economic sanctions against South Africa until the apartheid was completely dismantled.²²

1993: The 119th GA sent greetings and prayers of support to the Christian Council of Mozambique, where a ceasefire was being monitored and preparations were in progress for an election.²³

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Statement on Apartheid”, BWM report, 1977 ³We must realize that the large majority of employable black people do not live in their homelands but provide the major part of the labour force throughout South Africa. They are classed as migrant labourers (even though many have not resided in the homeland areas for several generations), and have no rights to property or political self-determination apart from their homeland. It has recently come to light that when the homeland receives independence the persons of that tribal group will be declared as citizens of that country and be deprived of South African citizenship. Thus the labour force for South Africa could become primarily composed of non-resident aliens who could be subjected to even greater proscriptions than at the present time.

Excerpts from “Statement on Southern Africa”, BWM report, 1984 ⁷

The suffering, injustice and oppression go unabated in southern Africa. The forced removal of thousands of people from their homes and relocation in remote areas; the daily mass exodus of blacks from cities in which they are permitted to work but not to sleep; the harassment and imprisonment of those who dare to speak out against apartheid; and the continued illegal occupation of Namibia by South African forces are a few tragic examples of the effects of the policy of apartheid as practiced by the government of South Africa.

...

Several churches with which we have been in contact in southern Africa, both black and white, have urged us to demonstrate our solidarity with them in their struggle for justice. Their request is a reminder to us that Christians and Christian churches are called in obedience to Jesus Christ

** Namibia was a German colony until 1919, when the League of Nations gave South Africa a mandate to govern the colony. That mandate was terminated by the UN in 1966, but South Africa refused to withdraw and occupied Namibia until 1989.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

to oppose apartheid in all its forms, to support those who struggle against this sinful system of injustice and to denounce any theological justification of apartheid as a heretical perversion of the gospel. In thus condemning apartheid, we acknowledge and commend the great courage and faith of many Christians, white and black, in South Africa in their defence of the Gospel and their struggle toward justice for all in the name of Christ.

*Excerpt from “The Kairos Document”, report of the Committee on Church Doctrine, 1989*¹²

To endorse the Kairos document ... is to say: “Yes, I hear you; I hear your cry.” However ... it is also to endorse the course of action it proposes. The document reflects the view that non-cooperation with evil is as much a Christian duty as cooperation with good. The praxis of non-cooperation with evil it proposes is civil disobedience.

...

On our understanding that, informed by the gospel, Christian civil disobedience is intrinsically neighbour-oriented, that its calculated objective is to expose injustice in the name of justice and thereby bring about just constitutional and government policy changes, we judge the Kairos document to be an appropriate theological comment on the South African crisis by South African Christians and hereby affirm our commitment to the oppressed in their struggle against the injustices of apartheid.

¹ A&P 1971, p. 87

² A&P 1972, p. 302, 66

³ A&P 1977, pp. 371-373, 76, 82

⁴ A&P 1978, p. 54

⁵ A&P 1981, pp. 314-316, 97

⁶ A&P 1983, pp. 329-330, 65

⁷ A&P 1984, pp. 482-483, 48

⁸ A&P 1985, p. 41

⁹ A&P 1986, pp. 374-376, 56

¹⁰ A&P 1987, pp. 248-250, 70

¹¹ A&P 1988, pp. 367, 51, 525, 47-48

¹² A&P 1989, pp. 261, 24, 366-367, 28

¹³ A&P 1990, pp. 391, 62, 556, 38

¹⁴ A&P 1992, pp. 341-356, 42

¹⁵ A&P 1994, pp. 314, 68

¹⁶ A&P 1960, p. 64

¹⁷ A&P 1982, pp. 374, 76

¹⁸ A&P 1983, pp. 376, 80

¹⁹ A&P 1987, pp. 341-343, 33

²⁰ A&P 1989, pp. 366-367, 28-29

²¹ A&P 1990, pp. 391, 62, 556, 38

²² A&P 1991, pp. 319-324, 57

²³ A&P 1993, pp. 252, 38

The Americas

Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana (see Peacemaking for Central America)

The Church Acts

Chile

1974: The IAC reported to the 100th GA that its members had consulted with the GOC on behalf of Chilean refugees.^{1*}

1975: The BWM reported to the 101st GA that funds were raised for the Canadian Fund for Refugees from Chile, administered by the National Inter-Faith Immigration Committee.²

1977: At the request of the IAC, The 103rd GA approved a grant to the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America.³

Cuba

1982: The 108th GA asked the BWM to form a closer relationship with the Reformed Church in Cuba.⁴

1996: The 122nd GA sent greetings to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Cuba, along with prayers for their faith and work in a time of change and challenge. The GA stated its support of the GOC's objections to United States legislation.^{5**}

1998: The 124th GA encouraged exchanges between members of The PCC and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba and send a letter of support to the Cuban Moderator. The GA also drew attention to a study on Cuba and asked members to remember the Cuban people in prayer.⁶

1999: The 125th GA encouraged congregations to learn about the partnership between The PCC with the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba and find ways to participate in it.^{7***}

Dominican Republic

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing The PCC's concern about the treatment and deportation of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic and particularly those impacted by the 2013 decision of the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal which stripped Juliana Deguis Pierre of her citizenship, and request that GOC officials raise these concerns with Dominican Republic government officials (IAC 11.1.5) The Moderator wrote to the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Canada urging the Government of the Dominican Republic to discontinue revoking citizenship of people of Haitian descent impacted by the 2013 decision of the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal.⁸

Guatemala

2011: The 137th GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Asociación Maya-Mam de Investigación y Desarrollo (AAMMID) with greetings and prayers for their work and wellbeing.

* General Pinochet toppled the socialist government of Chile in 1974, bringing an end to more than a century of democracy.

** The United States passed the Helms-Burton Bill in 1996. Its aim was to penalize non-American corporations whose trade with Cuba supposedly benefited from that country's seizure of American properties. The GOC objected to the bill, due to the economic hardship already imposed on the Cuban people by American trade sanctions and the extra-territorial reach of this legislation.

*** The PCC and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba signed a Covenant of Partnership on Feb. 24, 1997.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

AMMID partners with PWS&D, in seven communities in the western highlands of Guatemala. These communities have expressed concerns regarding a gold and silver mine that is owned by Goldcorp Inc., a Canadian company.^{9****}

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Maya-Mam Association of Research and Development and the Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials to inquire if the Government of Guatemala's support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has resulted in improvements in the lives of Indigenous people and greater respect for their human rights. The GA recommended that the Moderator write to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs urging that Canada encourage the Government of Guatemala to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁸

Guyana

1983: The 109th GA sent a message to the Guyana Council of Churches, expressing concern over the apparent erosion of human rights.^{10*****}

1985: The 111th GA appreciated the Guyana Human Rights Association for its efforts to keep the situation in Guyana before the world. The GA also expressed solidarity with the people of Guyana and with the Guyana Presbyterian Church. It urged the GOC to ensure that any bilateral assistance offered to Guyana contributed to the well being of all Guyana's people.¹¹

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from "Cuba: An Uncertain Transition", IAC report, 1998⁶

Our prayer must be that, in the post Cold War era, all Cubans will have the space and international support to chart a Cuban course that is peaceful and preserves the tangible social gains of the revolution, but expands civil and political rights and democratizes the country's institutions.

¹ A&P 1974, p. 285

² A&P 1975, p. 229

³ A&P 1977, p. 329

⁴ A&P 1982, pp. 375, 76

⁵ A&P 1996, pp. 278-294, 48-49

⁶ A&P 1998, pp. 289-292, 33

⁷ A&P 1999, pp. 285, 45

⁸ A&P 2016, pp. 306-314, 23

⁹ A&P 2011, pp. 290-2, 17

¹⁰ A&P 1983, p. 375, 80

¹¹ A&P 1985, pp. 432, 32

**** See Corporate Social Responsibility.

***** Guyana's political situation was marked by ethnic tensions between Guyanese of African and Indian origins, each represented by its own political party.

*Asia***Burma and Indochina, India, Indonesia, Korea, Nepal, Philippines**

(see separate articles below for China, Japan and Taiwan. See Peacemaking for Middle East region, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.)

The Church Acts**Burma and Indochina**

1991: The 117th GA supported the efforts of Amnesty International to protect human rights in the region of Burma and Indochina.* It encouraged congregations to support the work of Amnesty International and the Canada Asia Working Group. Greetings were sent to the Burmese Council of Churches. The GA also praised the GOC for renewing development aid to Indochina.¹

1993: The 119th GA sent greetings to the Burma Council of Churches and encouraged presbyteries and congregations to familiarize themselves with the work of the Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility.^{2**}

India

1980: The BWM reported to the 106th GA that the Church of North India had protested anti-conversion bill, proposed in the Indian parliament.³

1998: The 124th GA asked members to remember the people of India in prayer. It asked the GOC (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) to continue raising concerns about human rights abuses in India. The GA also sought ways to support the struggle against the discrimination of Dalit Christians.⁴

1999: The 125th GA assured the Church of North India of its prayers during a turbulent time.^{5*}

2011: The 137th GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Church of North India and the Church of South India to support their endeavors to tackle the cast system. The GA recommended that the Moderator encourage the GOC to criticize human rights violations against the Dalit and the indigenous people of India, and to do so before the Commonwealth and the United Nations Human Rights Council. The GA also recommended that the Moderator encourage the GOC to integrate human rights assessments and in all free trade negotiations with the Government of India.⁶

2015: The 141st GA recommended that the Moderator write to: 1) The PCC's partners in India expressing the church's dismay and condemnation of the Ghar Wapsi movement and prayers for our partners' wellbeing; 2) the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing The PCC's concerns about the attacks on Christians and other religious minorities in India by extremist Hindu organizations and encourage the GOC to raise this issue with officials in the Government of India; 3) the Prime Minister of India expressing The PCC's deep concern about the attacks on Christians and other religious minorities by extremist Hindu organizations and seek assurance from the Prime Minister that the government will ensure that those responsible for attacks on religious minorities will be

* In 1991, Burma was under military rule, while Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam were all recovering from war. In Cambodia, the Khmer-Rouge ran a brutal dictatorship, which resulted in genocide and a Vietnamese invasion.

** The Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility coordinated a shareholder action, which caused Petro Canada to withdraw from a controversial mining exploration program in Burma.

* The rise of Hindu nationalism and the election of the Bhartiya Janata nationalist party stimulated attacks on Christian churches and leaders.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

brought before India's justice system and that religious freedom, enshrined in India's constitution will be enforced by the Government of India.⁷

Indonesia

2000: The 126th GA asked the GOC to intercede with the Government of Indonesia, to seek an end to sectarian violence and to safeguard human rights for all citizens in Indonesia.^{8**}

Korea

1974: The 100th GA sent messages of support to the National Christian Council of Korea in South Korea concerning the suppression of free speech and the discussion of a new national constitution.⁹

1975: The IAC reported to the 101st GA that it had sent letters to National Christian Council of Korea, President Pak of South Korea, the Korean embassy, the Canadian Embassy in Seoul, and the Korean desk of the Department of External Affairs regarding the suppression of free speech in South Korea and the imprisonment of Korean ministers and students seeking open discussion on the proposed Korean Constitution. The GA asked Canadian government to withhold aid and to not proceed with the sale of a nuclear reactor to South Korea. The GA supplied winter clothing to prisoners. The BWM reported that the NCKK continued to act in affirmation of human rights through a public statement, a hunger strike, fund-raising, prayer vigils, and a petition to the president of Korea for the release of the prisoners.¹⁰

1976: The 102nd GA expressed its distress concerning the imprisonment and intimidation of Koreans to the Government of Korea and the GOC. The GA asked Korean authorities to encourage rather than repress the Christian Church in its role as a responsible agent in shaping the conscience of the government. It also assured the NCKK of its prayers.¹¹

1987: The 113th GA assured the Presbyterian Church of Korea of its support for them in their struggle for democracy and re-unification.^{***} The GA told the GOC of its deep concern and anger over the constant violation of human rights in South Korea, including the use of torture, illegal detention and suppression of information, and urged the GOC to pressure the Korean government to end such practices.^{*} The GA also urged the GOC to allow cultural and academic exchanges with North Korea, to support negotiations that might enable families to be reunited and to encourage international cooperation. The GA affirmed the importance of church involvement in initiatives that seek peace and reunification in the Korean peninsula. It called for prayers that Christians in North and South Korea would speak with one another.¹²

1989: The 115th GA praised the government of South Korea for being open to public discussion on reunification and for taking steps to reduce tension with the South Korea. The GA encouraged the GOC to pursue friendlier relations with North Korea by facilitating academic and cultural exchanges, by supporting the reduction of militarization in the region (e.g. by suspending export of military or nuclear goods to the region and by encouraging the United States to suspend its

** Throughout 2000 and 2001, severe sectarian violence between the Muslim majority and the Hindu/Christian/animist minority resulted in many deaths, including the death of a former PCC adherent.

*** Korea became a unified political entity in the 7th Century. The country was formally annexed by Japan in 1910 and a bitter period of oppression ensued. Korea was liberated in 1945, when an American/Soviet decision split the country in two along the 38th parallel. The Korean War began in 1950 between the two new Koreas. Today, the country remains divided between the socialist North Korea (The Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and the capitalist South Korea (The Republic of Korea).

* A student at Seoul National University died on Jan. 14, 1987, after being tortured and illegally detained at National Police Headquarters.

annual military exercises there as a gesture of good will) and by encouraging a phased withdrawal of foreign troops.** The GA counseled against any GOC support for a Two Koreas policy, which would perpetuate the division of the country. It affirmed support for an ecumenical process of building relationships with North Korea, endorsed the CCC's invitation of a North Korean delegation of Christians to Canada and encouraged congregations to observe an annual day of prayer for the peaceful reunification of Korea. The GA also referred a pilot project to the Administrative Council for a peacemaking program, which would be funded for three years from the contingency fund.¹³

2009: The 135th GA approved a Commissioner's Overture concerning recent events in North Korea. The Moderator wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (to request that the GOC denounce the judicial process that convicted two US journalists), the Government of South Korea (to ensure that the human rights of refugees would be protected and that the principle of non-refoulement would be respected), the Government of North Korea (to cease nuclear testing), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (to express concern for refugees fleeing North Korea).^{14***}

North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

2016: The 142nd GA recommended the Moderator write to the GOC urging the government to work diligently for the release of the Rev. Hyeon Soo Lim. Rev. Lim is a Canadian citizen given a life sentence with hard labour by the Supreme Court of North Korea.¹⁵

Nepal

1990: The 116th GA praised the Government of Nepal for granting amnesty to prisoners serving sentences or awaiting trial for religious activity in accordance with the constitution of Nepal.***
A letter of gratitude was also sent to the United Mission to Nepal.^{16*****}

Philippines

1990: The 116th GA encouraged congregations to become informed on human rights violations in the Philippines and to pray for Christians living there. The GA asked the GOC to encourage the Government of the Philippines to provide better conditions for internal refugees who were fleeing military evacuations. It criticized the persecution and harassment of church workers, non-government organizations, human rights workers and union organizations that were seeking to promote justice. The GA also reminded the Canadian Manufacturing Association to respect the land rights of peasants and to adhere to international standards of environmental protection.¹⁷

1993: The 119th GA sent greetings and prayers of support to the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.¹⁸

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from "India: the weight of tradition", IAC report, 1998*⁴

** Canada has been a member of the United Nations Temporary Commission for Korea since 1947.

*** The principle of non-refoulement prohibits States from returning a refugees or asylum seekers to territories where there is a risk that their lives or freedom would be threatened.

**** Nepal adopted a democratic government in 1990. Although the government continued to prohibit conversions, the new constitution granted more religious freedoms.

***** The United Mission to Nepal is a cooperative effort of 15 Christian development agencies, which operates in Nepal.

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The essence of human rights is to recognize all men and women as human beings, who should be accorded the dignity due to children of God. But India's culture and society have been shaped by the caste system, whose essence is the inherent inequality between people born in different castes.

The dalits (which is the name the outcastes and untouchables have taken for themselves), the tribals, children, women and the poor have the same legal and constitutional rights as any other person in India. However, they are not perceived as equal in the value system of society, and so suffer systematic discrimination.

...

India's constitution proclaims that it is a pluralist society. Yet the Hindu majority has rights which are not extended to people of other faiths. For example, Christians and Muslims in India cannot legally adopt children.

...

The Christian community in Batala, Punjab ... is the centre of the Christian dalit movement. Mass rallies have been called for an end to the constitutionally based discriminations against Christian dalits.... Increasingly, Indian Christians are finding in their faith the courage required to work for justice in this present life.

Excerpts from "Korea", IAC report, 1989

We have long been impressed by the passionate commitment to peace and national reunification of our partners in South Korea. Over the years the struggle to promote reunification has often been carried forward at great personal cost, with many suffering imprisonment and other forms of repression. Until 1988 open discussion of the reunification issue remained illegal in the south. ... Similar feelings and commitments with respect to peace and reunification are evident among North Koreans. They, too, hold the deep conviction that "Korea is one."

¹ A&P 1991, pp. 311-316, 57

² A&P 1993, pp. 254, 38

³ A&P 1980, p. 431

⁴ A&P 1998, pp. 292-295, 33

⁵ A&P 1999, pp. 286-287, 45

⁶ A&P 2011, pp. 288-90, 17

⁷ A&P 2015, pp.297-8, 26-7

⁸ A&P 2000, p. 19

⁹ A&P 1974, p. 285, 80

¹⁰ A&P 1975, pp. 238, 268

¹¹ A&P 1976, p. 41

¹² A&P 1987, pp. 426, 24; 343-344, 33

¹³ A&P 1989, pp. 369-376, 54, 63; 385-386, 64

¹⁴ A&P 2009, p. 40

¹⁵ A&P 2016, pp. 306-314, 23

¹⁶ A&P 1990, pp. 65, 75

¹⁷ A&P 1990, pp. 406, 62

¹⁸ A&P 1993, pp. 252, 38

China

The Church Acts

1974: The 100th GA praised the GOC for increasing of the number of exchange visits and trade and family contacts with China.¹

In 1972, the Canadian Council of Churches initiated the Canada-China Program to facilitate contacts between Canadian and Chinese Christians.

1976: The 102nd GA adopted the BWM's position paper on the New China.^{2*}

1981: The BWM reported renewed contact with Christians in China to the 107th GA. Dr. Theresa Chu was appointed Director of the Canada-China Program of the CCC.³

1986: The Amity Foundation was established to receive and allocate funds from overseas.⁴

1987: Dr. Bernard and Mrs. Ruth Embree were appointed as China Liaison persons.⁵

1988: Mr. George Bullen was appointed to the Nanjing Institute of Technology as an English teacher under the auspices of the Amity Foundation.⁶

1989: The 115th GA approved a letter to the Government of China, condemning the massacre of unarmed civilians by government forces.^{7**}

1990: The 116th GA sent a message of support to the China Christian Council as it sought to witness and serve the people of China following the 1989 massacre.⁸

1994: The 120th GA asked the IAC to investigate the feasibility of addressing Canada's policy concerning trade and human rights in China.⁹

1995: The 121st GA asked the IAC to look into the situation of human rights violations in China and report back with recommendations.¹⁰

1996: The 122nd GA sent greetings to the China Christian Council, expressing support for its faithful work and witness in China. The GA urged the Government of China to peacefully solve regional conflicts. The GA also asked the China Task Group and the IAC to pursue further work on the issues of human rights and trade in China and its implications for The PCC's work through the Canada China Program.¹¹

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from "Our Concern in Regard to the People's Republic of China", BWM report, 1976²

Because God has given us a mission to all people, we cannot be unconcerned about the Chinese who constitute almost one-quarter of the world's population. ... We recall with gratitude our long experience of direct fellowship with the Chinese people until this was broken by political events. ... At the same time we should not forget that the Christian mission came to a China suffering from the humiliating and often brutal domination of China by western nations. ... Protests by the missionaries against injustices and abuses imposed on China by foreign powers were too few and too feeble. In the light of this it is understandable that western Christian missionaries were rejected by the People's Republic of China as cultural tools of western imperialism.

* China became a communist state in 1949, sending the country's democratic government into exile on the island of Formosa (Taiwan). In 1970 the GOC established diplomatic relations with the PRC. Nine years later, communist China was admitted to the United Nations.

** On Jun. 3, 1989, the Government of China sent troops into Tien An-Men Square, where a peaceful protest was underway. The troops open fired and it is estimated that more than 10,000 students were killed or wounded in the encounter.

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¹ A&P 1974, pp. 284-285, 80

² A&P 1976, pp. 202-203, 57

³ A&P 1981, p. 415

⁴ A&P 1986, pp. 477-478

⁵ A&P 1987, p. 433

⁶ A&P 1988, pp. 497-498

⁷ A&P 1989, p. 36

⁸ A&P 1990, pp. 412, 62

⁹ A&P 1994, p. 68

¹⁰ A&P 1995, p. 72

¹¹ A&P 1996, pp. 278-294, 48-49

Japan

The Church Acts

1974: The BWM reported to the 100th GA several examples of social action by the Korean Christian Church in Japan. The Japan National Christian Council supported some of these actions.^{1*}

1975: The Research Action Institute for Koreans in Japan was established to research specific issues of concern to the community and support movements for human rights.²

1978: The BWM reported to the 104th GA that the Korean Christian Church in Japan and the Kyodan (Japanese Christian Church) held a joint symposium on human rights and the legal status of Koreans in Japan.³

1981: The 107th GA received a BWM report regarding the Korean Christian Church in Japan's struggle for the recognition of human rights abuses and discrimination against Koreans in Japan. The matter was taken up both with the UN Human Rights Commission and the American Embassy in response to a State Department report, which commented favorably on the human rights situation in Japan.⁴

1982: The Korean Christian Church in Japan continued to support human rights for Koreans living in Japan. For example, the church protested the systemic rejection of Korean teachers by Japanese institutions. The church also encouraged Koreans to refuse to put their fingerprint on their certificates of alien registration.⁵

1984: The Korean Christian Church in Japan and its Japanese supporters continued to campaign against compulsory fingerprinting. They had almost reached their goal to have 1 million people sign their petition.⁶

1985: The 111th GA supported the campaign against compulsory fingerprinting. It urged the Government of Japan to withdraw all charges laid against those who refused to be fingerprinted and to eliminate the requirement of fingerprinting.⁷

* Actions included (1) protests against an immigration bill which would have given minor officials the power to deport Koreans; (2) protests regarding the arrest and trial of two Korean pastors in Korea for criticizing the government; (3) a hunger strike by 17 young people to protest the Japan/Korean economic aid treaty; (4) protests against the abduction of Korean opposition leader Kim Dae Jung from a Tokyo hotel; and (5) protests by Korean Young People against exploitation.

1986: Rev. Dr. Jack McIntosh refused to be fingerprinted and, as a result, the Government of Japan refused to grant him an extension of his residence permit.* The 112th GA called on the Government of Japan to cease withholding re-entry permits from those who had refused fingerprinting.⁸

1987: The 113th GA urged members to pray for the McIntosh family and to write to the Government of Japan, supporting the elimination of compulsory fingerprinting and the requirement to carry one's alien registration card at all times.^{9**}

1989: The 115th GA urged the GOC to publicly criticize the violation of the human rights of Koreans in Japan.¹⁰

1990: The 116th GA sent a message of support and encouragement to the Korean Christian Church in Japan and to missionaries Jack and Beth McIntosh. It also asked the GOC to express its concern regarding the treatment of non-Japanese citizens residing in Japan, especially those of Korean descent.¹¹

2016: the 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator, expressing The PCC's concern at the increasing xenophobia, hate speech and harassment directed at minorities in Japan, write to 1) the Rev. Byungho Kim, the General Secretary of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, expressing The PCC's support to KCCJ's efforts to combat xenophobia and hate speech; 2) the Prime Minister of Japan and Japan's Ambassador to Canada requesting the Government of Japan reconsider its opposition to legislation that would criminalize both hate speech and hate crimes; and 3) Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing The PCC hope that the Government of Canada will address these matters with the Government of Japan.¹²

¹ A&P 1974, pp. 229-230

² A&P 1975, p. 239

³ A&P 1978, pp. 425-26

⁴ A&P 1981, p. 432

⁵ A&P 1982, p. 461

⁶ A&P 1984, pp. 489-490

⁷ A&P 1985, pp. 436-437, 32

⁸ A&P 1986, pp. 465, 45

⁹ A&P 1987, pp. 427-428, 24

¹⁰ A&P 1989, p. 57

¹¹ A&P 1990, p. 63

¹² A&P 2016, pp. 306-314, 23

* Rev. McIntosh was a BWM appointee to Japan. In 1987, he initiated a court action against the Japanese Ministry of Justice and the Immigration Department for abusing their discretionary powers when dealing with those who had refused to be fingerprinted.

** Fingerprinting was abolished with the revision of the Alien Registration Law in 2000.

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Taiwan

The Church Acts

1972: The 98th GA noted that acceptance of China by the United Nations could have a negative impact on the people of Taiwan. The AG praised the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan for supporting self-determination.¹

1976: The 102nd GA endorsed the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan's appeal, which noted that Bibles written in Taiwanese and other tribal languages had been confiscated by the authorities.²

1978: On August 16, 1977 the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan issued a declaration on human rights, but government authorities confiscated the newsletter containing the. This issue was brought to the attention of the 104th GA.³

1979: The 105th GA learned that an election, planned for Dec. 14, 1978, had been. Church members were denied visas, students were not allowed to participate in church activities and ministers were asked to supply the names of church members.⁴

1980: The 106th GA learned that government oppression of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan had intensified.⁵ The persecution of the church culminated in the arrest of 50 Taiwanese, including Dr. C.M. Kao, general secretary of the PCT. Assembly affirmed its confidence in and support for the PCT and Dr. Kao, called on the Taiwanese authorities to review the situation speedily and "urged the Government of Canada and Canadian groups carrying on trade and commerce with Taiwan to find effective ways to express concern about the denial of basic human rights to many Taiwanese." During Assembly it was learned that a military court in Taiwan had sentenced Dr. Kao to a seven year prison term; GA recorded its distress.^{6*} The GA urged the GOC and Canadians involved in trade with Taiwan to express concern for the denial of human rights to many Taiwanese.⁷

1981: The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan reported that general secretary Dr. Kao had been released on bail. However, five other Christians had been arrested, tried and sentenced.⁸

1982: The 108th GA learned of a religious advisory council in Taiwan, which would advise government authorities on what was and what was not proper religious activity.⁹

1984: The 110th GA learned that Dr. Kao was in the fourth year of his prison term and had spent part of the year on a hunger strike. The strike resulted in the release of fellow prisoner Ms. Lin, an elder whose health was deteriorating.¹⁰

1985: The 111th GA asked the BWM speak with the Government of Taiwan concerning a church property that was being unfairly taxed.¹¹

1987: The 113th GA expressed admiration for the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in its courageous stand on behalf of social justice. The GA also expressed to the Canadian Minister of External Affairs its concern for human rights violations in Taiwan.¹²

* For example, school textbooks openly criticized the church, local churches were harassed, one minister was arrested without warrant, and, in the mountain region, authorities tried to confiscate bibles written in Taiwanese or tribal languages.

1990: The 116th GA sent supported Mr. Yih-sheh Leo, who had been arrested in Taiwan and charged with preparing to illegally overthrow the government. The GOC was urged to do everything in its power to secure his release.¹³

1995: The 121st GA sent greetings to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, expressing support for the right of the Taiwanese people to advocate independence and to determine their own future.¹⁴

1996: The 122nd GA sent greetings to the PCT and affirmed its position on Taiwan.¹⁵

The Church Reflects

Recommendation re: Taiwan adopted by the 106th GA, 1980⁷

The 106th GA:

1. expresses its concern for all the people of Taiwan in that the rights of free elections and the determination of their own future destiny through participatory democracy have not been realized, and especially for those who have been persecuted for their activities in the pursuit of these goals;
2. expresses its confidence in the integrity and leadership of Dr. C.M. Kao, general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, who is well known throughout the Christian world as a committed pastor who follows in his daily life the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that his disciples should minister to those in need, not counting the risks or costs to their own safety or security;
3. expresses its respect for and solidarity with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and its leadership for its innovative evangelistic outreach, its devotion to the life of Christian discipleship, and its courageous non-violent affirmation of the God-given rights of all the people in Taiwan;
4. expresses its assurance to the families of those detained of its profound concern for their welfare and continuing prayer for their daily undergirding by Almighty God;
5. expresses its hope that these cases may be speedily reviewed by those in positions of authority and responsibility in the Government of the Republic of China, in eager anticipation that Dr. Kao and the others may be released to return to their homes and positions of leadership.
6. urges the GOC and Canadian groups carrying on trade and commerce with Taiwan to find immediately effective ways to express Canada's concern that basic human rights are being denied to large groups of people in Taiwan.

Excerpt from "Statement on Taiwan", BWM report 1987¹²

Based on our [Taiwanese] understanding of biblical truth, we strongly believe that humanity is created by God, in God's image, and possesses inviolable human dignity and free will which is bestowed by God. Any legislation must be in accordance with the principles of justice, freedom, love and truth; and be ... accepted by the people.

Therefore we solemnly assert that the pace of complete dissolution of martial law and the restoration of all basic human rights guaranteed by our constitution should be quickened; and request the [Taiwanese] authorities immediately cease the drafting of the "National Security Law".

"Proposed PCC Policy on Taiwan" (as adopted by the 122nd GA), IAC report, 1996¹⁵

1. The PCC has a long-standing valued relationship with both the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) and the China Christian Council (CCC)....

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2. The PCC takes very seriously the biblical mandate to do justice, which involves advocacy and action in solidarity with those whose basic human rights are denied.
3. The PCC upholds the right of populations ... to determine for themselves the political and social systems under which they will live.
4. The PCT is committed to the principle of self-determination for the people of Taiwan and is working hard to achieve independent status for Taiwan in the family of nations.... The push for Taiwan's independence brings the PCT hard up against the CCC's position (and the People's Republic of China's position) that Taiwan always has been and always will be a part of China....As for the ecclesiastical question of whether churches in Taiwan are independent members of ecumenical bodies, the CCC clearly affirmed that principle at the Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) when it accepted membership in the WCC along with the PCT....
5. Increasing pressure from the PCT to garner support from both overseas churches and governments for Taiwan independence has led to a rather sharp and rigid response from the CCC...We have never officially endorsed political independence for Taiwan, but we have consistently upheld the right of the people of Taiwan to freedom of speech including the right to advocate independence.

¹ A&P 1972, p. 202

² A&P 1976, pp. 464-468, 37

³ A&P 1978, p. 427

⁴ A&P 1979, p. 417

⁵ A&P 1980, p. 427

⁶ A&P 1980, p. 108

⁷ A&P 1980, pp. 474, 52-53

⁸ A&P 1981, p. 430

⁹ A&P 1982, p. 467

¹⁰ A&P 1984, p. 499

¹¹ A&P 1985, p. 41

¹² A&P 1987, pp. 425-426, 24

¹³ A&P 1990, pp. 557, 38

¹⁴ A&P 1995, p. 72

¹⁵ A&P 1996, pp. 290-294, 48-49

Europe

The Church Acts

1988: The 114th GA supported the Hungarian Reformed Church, which was faced with having to settle refugees who were fleeing persecution in Romania.* The GA asked PWS&D to publicize the plight of the refugees in Hungary. It also asked congregations to pray for those suffering persecution in Romania and those living as refugees in Hungary.¹

1989: The 115th GA asked the GOC to protest the repressive policies of the Romanian government, to urge the Romanian government to reconstitute an autonomous Hungarian province, and to discuss with signatories of the Paris Peace Treaty the human rights of minorities in Romania. Also, PWS&D was asked to monitor the needs of Hungarian churches as they cared for refugees from Romania.²

* In two months, 20,000 refugees crossed the border into Hungary.

1990: The 116th GA expressing gratitude to God for the emergence of several nations from totalitarian oppression into growing political and religious liberty. ** The GA encouraged the GOC to support the principle of self-determination for the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Committee to Advise with the Moderator was asked to consider the possibility of the Moderator visiting eastern European reformed churches.³

1991: The 117th GA urged congregations to strengthen ties with Christians in central and Eastern Europe and assured the churches in these states that they were prayed for. The GA praised the GOC for supporting the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It also asked the GOC to express concern regarding the security and freedom of ethnic and religious minorities in Romania.⁴

2016: the 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to Bishop Rev. Sandor Zán Fabian of the Reformed Church of sub-Carpathian Ukraine and the Bishop István Szabó of the Reformed Church in Hungary expressing the church's concern at the ongoing discrimination against the Roma and encouraging the Reformed Church of Sub-Carpathian Ukraine and the Reformed Church in Hungary in their mission and ministry with the Roma.⁵

¹ A&P 1988, pp. 529, 59

² A&P 1989, pp. 376-378, 63-64

³ A&P 1990, p. 62

⁴ A&P 1991, pp. 308-311, 57

⁵ A&P 2016, pp. 306-314, 23

** Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania all moved toward democratic systems of government.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

Peacemaking

Also see **Book 5, Middle East, The Church Acts, 2009**

The Church Speaks

- Christians are called to be active participants in the process of peace-making.¹
- Canada should maintain a peacekeeping role in international affairs and focus attention on seeking the welfare of all people on earth as way of achieving world peace.¹¹
- There can be no peace without justice.² God's peace cannot be separated from God's righteousness, justice and steadfast love.³
- A military solution in itself is no solution to international conflict.²
- The PCC endorses the Canadian Council of Churches document "The Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect" while recognizing the questions addressed concerning the use of last resort (military intervention) and the potential for abuse of the R2P doctrine (See The Church Acts, 2008).⁶
- As a witness to God's reign the church must address the well-organized roots of violence, deal with the world powers-that-be that bear a special responsibility for all aspects of social justice and seek out men and women of good will who are working for the cause of peace and need well-organized support.³
- Ethnic or cultural distinctions must enrich the church not divide it. The church must condemn idolatrous nationalism in its many forms and be an effective witness of God's kingdom of shalom.¹²
- Economic advocacy is a non-violent action that may contribute to peaceful change.¹⁵

The Church Acts

1991: The 117th GA mandated the International Affairs Committee to prepare a statement on peacemaking and develop appropriate worship and education resources on peacemaking including establishment of an annual peace Sunday. The GOC was asked to consider ways to achieve a better balance between funding for peace-making research and military research.²

1992-94: The 118th GA (1992) adopted the statement "Theology of Peacemaking"* as a starting point for creating a definitive statement on peacemaking, asking members, congregations and church courts for comments. Assembly Council was mandated to produce an action program on peace-making within the church, including appropriate materials for study and action.³ The 120th GA (1994) adopted a revised statement prepared by the LMA.⁴

2000: The 127th GA sent a letter to the GOC asking what specific actions it was planning to take to implement the Agenda for Action agreed to at the International Conference on War-Affected Children.^{5**}

2008: "The Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect"*** document was endorsed, while recognizing questions concerning the use of last resort (military intervention) and the

* This statement was also referred to the Committee on Church Doctrine which submitted comments to the 119th GA. (A&P 1993, pp. 225, 63)

** The International Conference on War Affected Children was held in Winnipeg in September 2000 to develop a plan of action for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. The needs of these children had been highlighted in a United Nations' study, published in 1996, on the impact of armed conflict on children.

*** The "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) is a doctrine that outlines guidelines for intervention by the international community in a state's internal affairs when it is unwilling or unable to protect its citizens from avoidable catastrophe. Under current international law, a state cannot intervene in the internal affairs of another state. The central principles of R2P include prevention, protection, and rebuilding. Military intervention, the most extreme element in protection, is a last resort. As of June 2007 it had no standing in international law.

potential to abuse the R2P doctrine. The PCC affirms the importance of prevention and rebuilding in the responsibility to protect, as well as the peaceful intervention options for protection. The PCC acknowledges that the more complex and controversial option of military intervention as a last resort may be warranted in extreme situations where all peaceful measures have been attempted and have failed to protect vulnerable citizens. The PCC is not bound by a decision on intervention made by other members of the Canadian Council of Churches. The Presbyterian Church in Canada retains its own judgement and the right to support, oppose or withhold comment on a situation where military intervention is used.^{6,7}

2013: The Moderator of the 139th GA wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to congratulate the GOC for voting in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty* and to urge the GOC to sign the Treaty and submit the Treaty to Parliament for ratification by December 31, 2013. Church members were invited to write similar letters to their MPs.⁸

2017: The 143rd General Assembly recommended that the Moderator write to the Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, encouraging the Government of Canada to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty before the third conference of the parties meets in September 2017.⁹

The 143rd General Assembly asked the Moderator to write to Coptic Pope Tawadros and the Coptic Orthodox Church, and to the congregations of Reformed sisters and brothers in Egypt and Northeastern Africa assuring them that The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds the Reformed congregations, Coptic Orthodox Church, and all the peoples of Egypt and Northeast Africa in its prayers and that we are reminded of our unity in Christ by their ongoing witness to the gospel of Christ. Congregations were encouraged to engage with the International Affairs Committee and the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee in order to constructively work towards peaceful coexistence throughout the world and in our own neighbourhoods.¹⁰

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Theological Reflection on Peacemaking” IAC report, 1988¹¹

The Biblical view of peace is summed up in the Hebrew word “shalom”. “Shalom” is wholeness, blessing, rest, harmony. “Shalom” involves the relationship between humans and God and the relationships among humans and with the whole creation. In the covenant that God establishes with his people, the inter-connectedness of life is made clear. The turmoil of any part of creation injures the harmony of the whole. Peace involves justice and care for the natural world as well as a laying down of arms.

The view of salvation proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets includes this vision of shalom, which will be established for all the earth on the day of new creation, the great Day of the Lord. The prophet Micah says: “What the Lord requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.” (Micah 6:8 GNB) His vision of peace in chapter 4 describes a day when all nations will be united in a world commonwealth under God’s rule. God will be judge among the nations and settle disputes and injustices which come from domination of one nation over another. Then comes the call for disarmament in which the implements of war will give way to the tools of well-being, of creation rather than destruction. War will be no more. Even the arts of war will no longer be taught to the rising generation. This is a most powerful vision of a world at peace.

* The wording of the Arms Trade Treaty was approved on April 2, 2013 by a majority vote by members of the United Nations General Assembly. The Treaty sets universal standards for the cross-border transfer of weapons. Countries that do not ratify the Treaty are not obliged to follow it.

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For Christians, doing justice, showing love, and working for peace are central to the mission of God's people. Our concern for peace and disarmament is based on God's intention for the world made known in Scripture - that God's shalom should be experienced by the whole of creation. The Apostle Paul looks forward to the day when "the creation itself would ... be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21) Our hope is in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ - for in those events we see life emerge victorious in the ultimate battle for death. The creation of a new humanity has begun in Christ and we see in him God's purpose to bring all things in the universe together in Christ, to effect the harmony of the whole universe.

Excerpts from "Biblical Reflection" and "Peacemaking", IAC report, 1991 ²

In 1954 with World War II and the horror of totalitarian tyranny fresh in the public mind, the church adopted a Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation which became part of our subordinate standards. Much has changed since then. The concept of individual states with sovereign power and bounded by "lines in the sand" no longer is adequate to serve the complex relationships of the world community. Nevertheless, we commend the Declaration to the church, convinced that it sets forth the nature—and the limits—of civil authority, and the church's relationship to it under Christ, in terms that are relevant to the present crisis.* Specifically it insists:

"The righteousness of God, which came to decisive triumph in the death and resurrection of Christ, is the sole foundation of national justice, development and destiny." Thus, there can be no peace without justice.

While the civil authority has "the right and duty of using force under the law against internal disorder and external aggression", its primary purpose is to "promote the well-being of all its citizens and curb license, discord and destitution". "The church must remember that the weapons of her warfare are finally not of this world." In a world "beset by sin there can be no just war—and certainly no holy one." A military solution itself is no solution.

The church "promotes righteousness and peace" as "she engages in special works of Christian love". This is the gold standard by which all our actions are judged, and to which all Christians must bear witness in private and public life, until Christ comes again "for the healing of the nations". The law of Christ is the law of love.

...

It is clear that the making of war is a failure in the human system of discourse. Our general practice is that when all else fails in conflict resolution, make war! The gospel message, however, is to 'seek peace and pursue it'. The statement is simple and profound, but extremely difficult to follow. There are countless obstacles to seeking and pursuing peace, in any given situation of conflict. The pathways to peace and justice are not well traveled, indeed, they are not even well marked. The Christian gospel has a crucial role to play in marking the way.

...

The true state of peace is something far more profound than simply the absence of war. The state of peace has a wide spectrum. At one end is the 'peaceful' state existing under the 'rule of law'. At the other end is the 'peaceful' state existing under the 'rule of trust and understanding'. Peace under the rule of law frequently fails to satisfy the peace of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is only a peace established and maintained by the rule of force. The force may be that of an external agency, such as the peace of Rome at the time of Christ during the subjugation of the conquered

* The report was written during the 1991 Persian Gulf War against Iraq.

Jewish people. On the other hand it may be the force of a local society itself, such as a majority of the people living in the community. This is typically the democratic ‘peace’ with which we are familiar. But even in this situation, the justice of the gospel is not necessarily the order of the day. Majorities typically oppress minorities; occasionally minorities oppress majorities. Thus, justice is not guaranteed by peace under the rule of law.

...

Peace under the rule of law is a greater expression of justice than war. However, the ideal state of peace would be one in which peace was clearly enjoyed by all without any rule of force. For this to be obtained would require an enormous shift in human understanding, from the rule of the powerful, either democratically established or otherwise, to a situation in which everyone agrees to live together peacefully. In this state, the military would not be needed, nor would security forces, not even police.

...

Such idealism is easily dismissed as just that—just idealism, but our tradition of the gospel says we live in hope—a hope that carries us forward in the love of God and the grace of Christ. It is reasonable for us to express hope for true peace—for peace so profound that it does not require the rule of law (and the force implied by that law). Truly in so hoping, we are searching for an ideal that seems totally unreachable. Yet we must have hope.

...

[T]he challenge to the churches ... for making significant progress in the direction of true peace-making is formidable. The time is right, however, after the Persian Gulf war and during continual conflicts in Africa, Asia and Central America involving millions of deaths. Realistic theological assessments must be made for peace-making on a truly global scale. The failure to attempt such an assessment would be to concede an apparent irrelevancy of the gospel of peace, the very foundation of the life and witness of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Excerpts from “Theology of Peace-making”, IAC report, 1992 ³

The Gospel of Peace

Peace-makers, God’s children (Matt. 5:9), cannot rest content with mere co-existence, a balance-of-power armistice or even a charter of rights and freedoms that exalts personal or group independence. Christ’s peace is a social peace that builds, not private or corporate domains in control of their own destinies, but communities where consensus in the Spirit rather than majority rule is the governing principle (Matt. 18:19, 20), where those who seem to be of least importance may well be the most important (Matt. 18:1-4), and where the true Messiah is not ashamed to wash tired, dirty feet (Jn. 13:12-17). Only as every member of the community is loved and respected and free to exercise his/her gifts in the social organism can God’s shalom be served (Eph. 4:1-16). The depth and power of Christ’s peace-making ministry has its source in the love that brought Christ to his cross and calls all would-be peace-makers to cross-bearing (Mk. 8:34; 10:42-45), the love that reveals Christ’s reconciling purpose for the entire creation, making peace by the blood of that cross (Col. 1:20).

Peace and the Reign of God

The gospel of peace cannot be restricted to matters of personal devotion to God or relationships within the community of believers. The drama of war and peace is also played out on the world stage: in halls of justice, legislative assemblies, corporation boardrooms, and wherever vicious global competition drives the race for economic and political power. Jesus’ peace mission reached its climax before the Jewish Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate, and the early Church was compelled to confront the power structures of Jewish and Roman society. As a witness to God’s reign the Church must address the well-organized roots of violence, deal with the world powers-

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that-be that bear a special responsibility for all aspects of social justice and seek out men and women of good will who are working for the cause of peace and need well-organized support.

...

A Modest Beginning

The committee proposes as a modest beginning, some gospel guidelines and discussion questions as people seek to hear and answer God's call to peace-making.

The ways of war are rooted in conquest and the will to win is at all costs: to build empires created and ruled by force. The ways of peace are rooted in good will and the desire to serve, to build communities created and ruled by love.

Are there neighbours we know, or can search out, who are being abused by little Caesars and need our understanding and support, as perhaps we need theirs? Is it possible that we ourselves sometimes act like little Caesars?

Our social order is functioning on the basis of an undeclared state of war where natural and human resources are developed to generate profits for the few who control contending economic and political powers. The cause of peace can only be served when resources are developed to meet human need and to serve the well-being of all life, shalom.

For instance, what can we do to help the farmer in Canada and throughout the world? After all, everybody needs food. And town and country need to live together in mutual support. Can rural and urban churches help each other here?

The pursuit of unlimited growth in Gross National Product, capital, material possessions, power and glory is a systematic recipe for war, oppression and environmental destruction. Peace-builders, however, are content to share resources for the common good, seeking only to grow in grace and social usefulness, a recipe for harmony and ecological sanity.

...

A social system that gives priority to aggressive individualism and private rights on the one hand, or to a domineering authority group on the other hand, has a manifest destiny leading to anarchy, dictatorship or perpetual conflict. Peace-makers, however, give priority, not to competitiveness, but to co-operation and mutuality. They live by interdependence and govern themselves by consensus.

Rugged individualism is not the only social mode and certainly not a Christian one. Should the Church promote some sort of declaration of interdependence? How can we re-learn the obvious gospel truth that we are one family and one body in Christ?

Justice in a militant society is essentially retributive justice, whereby all elements are brutalized, violence is systematically entrenched, and age-old feuds are perpetuated. However, true peace, and Christians must insist on this, comes only when justice is tempered by mercy, and forgiveness and reconciliation are offered and accepted.

Where do we need to seek forgiveness and offer restitution? To abused children, women, Aboriginal peoples, prisoners, refugees or to that one person we don't want to think about? Can we move towards restorative justice?

A world where all people fight for their rights will surely only perpetuate wrongs. The people who live for peace seek only the right to develop and share the gifts the Creator has given them, to find enrichment in the abundant life Jesus Christ came to offer us.

How can we discern the undeveloped gifts of neighbours near and far who want to contribute to the rich variety and shalom of all creatures great and small in God's world?

*Excerpts from “Nationalism and Self-Determination”, IAC report 1993*¹²

Although the courage and hope present in the struggles of aboriginal peoples for justice show the virtues of pride in one’s ethnic or cultural identity, the tragic crises in former Yugoslavia and the Horn of Africa remind us of the dangers of defining our identity at the expense of others.

When nationalism simply involves shared affinity, it can be a positive force, providing individuals with the sense of self-respect and security that encourages them to live in virtue and peace. But when nationalism involves feelings of superiority, prejudice, fear or greed, it can become an idolatrous and destructive force.

Nationalism and self-determination are thus ambiguous principles that can work for good or evil. For Christians, the scriptural teaching is clear. Our human identity is subordinate to our ultimate identity as the rebellious children of God. Our pride in ourselves, our nation, our ancestry or our faith must be subordinate to our love of God and neighbour. In Christ “there is neither Greek nor Jew” (Galatians 3:28); ethnic or cultural distinctions must enrich the Church not divide it.

We may often feel tensions between feelings of loyalty to nation and loyalty to the church, which is itself a “holy nation” (1Peter 2:9). The church must condemn idolatrous nationalism in its many forms and be an effective witness of God’s kingdom of shalom, in which “nation shall not lift up sword against nation.” (Micah 4:3)

*Excerpts from “Theology of Peace-making”, 1994*⁴

As Christians and Canadians, we are committed to the task of peace-making in our families, and in the local, national and international community. Fundamentally, we understand that peaceful co-existence is based upon treating people as equal in the eyes of God.

The task of seeking peace includes examining the root causes of conflict, poverty, disease, tyranny and environmental disasters. We are called to consider how the sinful desire for ever-increasing wealth and dominion over others has produced a bitter harvest which disrupts true peace for everyone. Thus we are called to seek justice in all areas of our common life – economic, political, social, etc. – in order that the conditions that make for peace are established everywhere. How can the pursuit of genuine peace be distinguished from the activities that destroy it? Above all, how can we witness and minister in the name of the God of peace in our time and place in God’s world?

The God of peace

In the Bible, peace, (the Hebrew *shalom* with its Greek equivalent *eirene*), embodies a wide variety of meanings. These include wholeness, well-being, prosperity, security and freedom from war, oppression and injustice. It is founded on mutual relationships of harmony, respect and good will between individuals, families, communities and nations. It includes humankind’s stewardship for all forms of life. ... The source of peace is God, who alone is able to offer a relationship rooted and grounded in never-failing justice, mercy and steadfast love (Ex. 34: 6, 7).

In Joshua 6, there is an account of the Israelites being led by Joshua to overthrow the city of Jericho. ... When the walls fall, the soldiers devote to destruction “by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep and donkeys.” (6:21)

This idea of a holy war, when God chooses sides in a conflict, is a disturbing message in Hebrew Scripture. It is one way that Israel remembers gaining freedom from slavery in Egypt and conquering the land of Canaan.

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There is a dissonance in the orchestra of scripture between the non-violent resistance of the Hebrew mid-wives (Ex. 1:17) and the killing of all the people and animals of Jericho. Jesus speaks against aggressive malicious anger, against violent retaliation, and for loving one's enemies (Matt. 5:21-26, 38-48). This message is very different from Joshua's speech to his soldiers encouraging the destruction of the whole city. (Josh. 6:7)

Scriptural warrants for armed conflict are to be interpreted with the same reservations Jesus brings to divorce. (Mk. 10:1-12). There may be warrants for divorce in scripture, but it is not the way God would have us act toward others. God did not create us to wage war on one another. "We affirm that God is at work when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war and work for peace with justice." (Living Faith 8.5.3) Rather God made us to be stewards of creation (Gen. 1:26-27) and to come together as many different nationalities and learn from God (Isa. 2:2-3).

...

The Prince of Peace

The message that peace is not a possession to be jealously guarded, but is God's gift to be shared with the world creates severe earth-tremors. The proclamation of peace on earth was exciting good news to some, especially the poor and the marginalized, like Mary, Jesus' mother (Lk. 1:46-55). To others, especially people of privilege and power, like King Herod, it posed a deadly threat (Matt. 2:2).

These contrasting responses continue in the story of Jesus' life as recorded in the gospels. Jesus scandalizes the morally upright by his strong identification with marginalized people in his society (Mk. 2:15-17). He has compassion for children, the poor and oppressed, the sick and the handicapped.

...

Jesus challenges the assumption of the rich that accumulating wealth for themselves is a right and sensible thing to do. He points out that all people, including the wealthy, are vulnerable to death and answerable to God for their actions (Lk. 12:16-20).

...

Is it any wonder that many members of the power-elite recognize Jesus as their enemy? His leadership threatens a system which gives success to those motivated by greed and/or the desire to dominate others. For the sake of maintaining the religious and civil system, this Jesus must die! (Jn. 11:50)

...

Can war be just?

The practice of humans sanctioning a holy war is dangerous. It is too easy for arrogance and propaganda to influence our judgment about whether God "wants" us to wage this war. It is too tempting to believe that if we win, then we are on the side that is right. At the same time, "we know that nations have fought in self-defence and that war, at times, may be unavoidable." (Living Faith 8.5.2)

...

The theory of just war assumes a premise of reluctance toward entering into conflict. It assumes a deep desire for resolution and lasting peace. It also assumes that ordinary citizens of "the enemy" should not be killed and that those we fight against should still be thought of as human beings. ... In practice, the wars of humankind are founded on principles which contradict the just war theory.

...

We do not live in a perfect world, but in one where human fallibility leads to injustice and conflict. It is incumbent on us to support defenders against aggressor states when all attempts at peacemaking fail. However, we do so in sorrow, acknowledging the fallenness of creation. This

means that the church cannot participate in the justification of human warfare as good and holy. Nor can Augustine's teachings be used to justify war where "collateral damage" is a code word for children, women and men being killed, injured and sentenced to years of poverty, disability and disease. God does not glorify our wars, nor allow us to freely take joy and satisfaction from defeating our enemy. The loss to our world of human and natural resources is too great. Consider the loss which comes from destroying a society's ability to transport and communicate, from defoliating farms and forests, and from burning oil fields. All these destroy the well being of our descendants!

...

Working towards peace

God calls Christians to work for a just, peaceful society in the here and now. This means recognizing the reality of human conflict and demonstrating the effectiveness of non-violent action.

...

Non-violent actions which create positive change are being taken in the modern world. For example, in the Philippines, both the Protestant and Catholic churches have had a long history of non-violent teaching. Under the leadership of those committed to non-violence, half a million people were trained on how to protect a democratic electoral process. From this movement came the peaceful demonstrations which eventually brought down the Marcos regime.

...

Non-violent action also takes seriously our church's confession that "the weapons of [the church's] warfare are finally not of this world."

Being peacemakers

As Christians we pray for peace to the prince of peace (Living Faith 8.3). Those who follow Jesus are called to radical commitment to seek justice and peace for all people. Jesus does not promise that following him will lead to being well-liked and respected in the community. Rather, being a disciple of Jesus can lead to division even in families (Mt. 10:34-38), as people choose sides or feel threatened by Christ's teachings. Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow him. This is not just an individual commitment. It is one we make with many other people of faith who long with all their hearts to see God's reign come on earth as it is in heaven.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God. (Mt. 5:9)

Excerpts from "Seeking Shalom in Times of Transition", IAC report, 2001¹³

Peace, shalom in Hebrew, is a very rich word. The variations in meaning cover a page and a half in a standard Hebrew dictionary. It can mean anything from the end of a war to a bribe; but the root meaning has to do with wholeness, completeness. The real flavour of the word becomes apparent when we look at the other ideas that go along with peace.

Peace and Prosperity

Those who know peace enjoy the good things of the earth.

For there shall be a sowing of peace and prosperity,
the vine shall yield its fruit,
the ground shall give its increase,
the heavens shall give their dew,
and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

Zechariah 8:12, see also Psalm 37:10-11, and Psalm 147:14

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Peace and Security

Peace can mean the end or the avoiding of strife, as when Joshua made peace with the people of Gibeon (Joshua 9:15). ... Isaiah, looking forward to the restoration of Israel, imagines a time of rest:

My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Isaiah 32:18 cf. Isaiah 57:18-21, Jeremiah 14:19

Peace and Righteousness

But the idea most associated with peace is righteousness (*tsedeq* or *tsedeqah*):

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field;
and the effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness quietness and trust forever.

Isaiah 32:16-17 see also 48:18, 57:21, 60:17, 59:8 48:22

A classic example is Psalm 72, a royal psalm, an ode composed, apparently, for a coronation or similar event. It sets out the psalmist's expectations of how a ruler should behave.

Give the sovereign your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal heir!
May your ruler judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice!
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness!
May your ruler defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor!

Psalm 72:1-4, see also 12-14,

...

A peaceful society is, above all, a just society. Church leaders in the early part of the last century, inspired by the message of the social gospel, determined to establish "God's dominion" in Canada. It was a noble vision, much of which has been realized. ... But the social gospel movement died of its own naiveté. It believed, or at least significant sections of its leadership believed, that the reign of God could be brought in by human effort. Unfortunately human nature was more intractable than they imagined. Psalm 72 is more realistic, "Give the sovereign your justice, O God." The ideal society it envisages will not be a gift of the ruler, but of God through the ruler.

Peace and Salvation

This connection is clearest in the apocalyptic passages, which talk about a radically transformed world:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

Isaiah 11:6, cf. Ezekiel 34:25

Real peace involves a revolution, not just in human affairs, but in the nature of our relation to God and to creation. Serious social change is more than humanity can accomplish on its own. But with God all things are possible.

...

This kind of world is in God's hand. It is the consequence of his salvation. In the New Testament, the reconciliation of heaven and earth happened in Christ:

For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Christ to reconcile all things to God, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of Christ's cross. Colossians 1:20

Peace with God

Salvation brings a peace of mind that endures in spite of trouble and conflict, opposition, danger and persecution, because there is peace with God:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:27

Or as Paul put it,

Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1

Christians, therefore, are in a unique position. Because our peace with God is assured, we are released from bondage to fear and free to work for peace on earth.

Peace and Transitions

Times of transition are times of uncertainty. And uncertainty breeds fear and conflict. In the desert of Sinai, former slaves, who knew only relationships of power and oppression, nearly overwhelmed Moses as they brought disputes to him for settlement. It is Jethro, his father-in-law, who shows Moses how to build a peaceful society:

You should represent the people before God and bring their cases to God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able leaders among the people, those who fear God, are trustworthy and hate dishonest gain. Let them sit as judges for the people . . . and all these people will go to their home in peace. Exodus 18: 19-23

In this report we look at significant transitions in Eastern Europe, Nigeria and Guatemala. . . Globally, the international community is beginning to turn its attention to the plight of children affected by war. The initiatives of the United Nation's *Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World* and of the World Council of Churches' *Decade to Overcome Violence* are signs of hope that call for the participation of the church at all levels.

...

Alia, a 17-year-old participant in the UNICEF-supported Youth Forum and Future Search Conference in Jordan held in 1999 said, "We need to concentrate on dreams and solutions, not problems."

So, let us dream. What would a culture of peace look like?

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In a culture of peace:

Children would live to fulfill the potential of their birth.

Children would be free from torture and abuse and be able to play and laugh in a safe environment.

Children would be raised in nurturing homes.

Children would go to bed with full and nourished stomachs.

Children would be peacemakers who know the tools and skills of mediation as a first response to conflict.

This is the transition to shalom that is required not just in areas of current conflict, but in every country and community on the face of the earth. Shall we not, as those called to be peacemakers in Christ's name, join in the work of making this dream come to pass?

Excerpts from “God is our refuge: security in an insecure world”, IAC report, 2003¹⁴

Human security draws attention to people as well as states, the people in whom God takes a special interest. As such, the concept of human security provides a basis for living in a caring global community in which Christians can find an echo of the promise of shalom.

...

State Security: A Traditional View of Security

The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 created in Europe (and eventually throughout the world) the idea of state sovereignty. Key to this idea is the inviolability of the internal power and territorial integrity of states. The perceived threat to the security of a state was armed insurrection or military invasion by other states. The response to such threats or invasions was military defence.

The security of peoples within state boundaries was part and parcel of the inviolability of the state's sovereignty. The people were deemed secure to the extent that the state of which they were subjects or citizens maintained its security in the face of both external and internal threats. The state ran its internal affairs as its leaders saw fit, and there was nothing anyone else ought or could do about it. This idea remained more or less intact through the changes of later centuries which came to base the legitimacy of the state on the consent of the governed.

...

There has always been a conflict between idealism and realism in international politics. Realism says that it is up to every state to take care of itself. The emphasis is on sovereignty and the reliance on military might as a guarantor of security. There has also been, however, a vision of building international security on the basis of common interests and co-operation within a framework of respect for human rights and international law. Multilateral institutions such the UN are the products of such idealism.

...

In many countries, the promotion of state security, particularly when it is used as a cloak for regime security, jeopardizes the security of citizens and communities.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the state security perspective is irrelevant. Whether they act in their own interests or in the interests of the world community, states remain important actors. A good government is a requisite condition for the promotion and maintenance of security. In that sense, the new level of concern for security in Western countries is legitimate. What is in debate is how far security measures should go; in other words, do these measures pose a threat to the security of individuals and communities within those states?

...

Human Security: A New Perspective on Security

The 1994 human development report of the UN Development Program (UNDP) defined human security as “safety from constant threats of hunger, disease, crime, and repression. It also means

protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of our daily lives—whether in our homes, our jobs, in our communities or in our environments.”

...

Human security has been called a “people-centered security” or “security with a human face.” Current and former United Nations officials have offered several guiding principles.

Peace and reconciliation. “A first essential element [of human security] is the possibility of all citizens to live in peace and security within their own borders. This implies the capacity of states and citizens to prevent and resolve conflicts through peaceful and non-violent means and, after the conflict is over, the ability to effectively carry out reconciliation efforts.” (Sadako Ogata, former commissioner of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.)

More than the absence of war. “Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.” (Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General).

Human freedom, present and future. “Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security.” (Kofi Annan).

Basic needs. Human security “in its most simple expression, [means] all those things that men and women everywhere in the world cherish most: enough food for the family; adequate shelter; good health; schooling for the children; protection from violence whether inflicted by man or by nature; and a state which does not oppress its citizens but rules with their consent.” (Louise Frechette, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General)

...

Human security is aimed at helping the weakest and marginalized groups of humanity. The need for “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” does not apply to all individuals, communities and peoples alike. The subjects of human security are those (primarily women and children) who are most in need of protection from threats to their lives or livelihoods. These are found preponderantly, though not exclusively, in developing nations. Three critical security issues for these nations are environmental degradation, international trade and development assistance, and the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. These issues are explored in the next sections of this report.

...

Security and Vulnerability

No individual or community is completely free from threats to security. In fact, problems like poverty, homelessness, the disintegration of families, are present in rich countries, too. The tragedy of September 11,2001 has also brought home to us that, while an immensely powerful state like the United States may be more than capable of protecting its sovereignty, its citizens are not necessarily safe from threats to their security.

Security, in the traditional sense of state security, did not involve a Christian perspective. Security, in the broader sense of human security, does embrace the activity of churches and groups in the development field. But a full-fledged Christian dimension to the concept of security has yet to take shape. The KISP document,* *Vulnerability and Security*, challenges us to do just that. An important new concept in this paper is the re-valuing of vulnerability, not as the opposite of security, but as a potential basis for security.

* KISP is an acronym for the Commission on International Affairs in the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations.

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All are vulnerable: “The need to protect people against violence and atrocities, but also disaster, calamity and privation, originates in the fundamental vulnerability with which everyone is born. It has not been possible to eliminate this vulnerability.”

Vulnerability is a basis for humane interaction: “Vulnerability...represents a unique capacity for susceptibility and compassion that enables people to fulfill their ethical responsibility for their fellow human beings, their community and their surroundings.”

Vulnerability is not equally distributed: “The relationships that call us to be responsible for others are generally asymmetrical; it is not a matter here of give and take. ... It is the other person’s vulnerability, pure and simple, that challenges my willingness to act out of mercy and justice.”

The invulnerable human being is inhuman: “It is human to be vulnerable. [The dream of invulnerability] can take the form of a dehumanization of the community and society. [It] is often used to build up and support hostile images, and ... promote fast “final” —which often means violent—solutions to conflicts.” “An invulnerable person would not be able to recognize the ethical challenge that arises from another person’s vulnerability. Fundamentally speaking, the invulnerable person would no longer be human.”

Vulnerability and the right to protection. “The point is not to say that we must accept violations against human vulnerability. ... It is human vulnerability that entitles us to protection and defence against atrocities. ... But the vital point is that this protection defends people’s right to be able to continue to live as vulnerable human beings. We must not remove vulnerability, but defend it.”

Security to be vulnerable. “The vulnerable human being is entitled to protection ... so that he/she can continue to be vulnerable and therefore human. A vulnerable, i.e. an open and democratic society needs protection in order to continue to be vulnerable and therefore open and democratic.”

A Christian view of security, according to KISP, must embody two important points: One is to take the perspective of the victim, insisting on their rights and dignity. “The Christian God is first and foremost the God of victims: God is the one who bends down to release an oppressed people, the God who is proclaimed as good news for the poor, the God who identifies with the downcast and despised right into death.”

The second is to articulate the spirit of reconciliation and peace. “The churches’ work for peace is built on the prophetic words about the rights of the weakest, as well as on the evangelical mission of reconciliation and love of one’s enemy.” “When confronted by the great international challenges of our times, the churches must above all maintain that recognition that the other party is like oneself—vulnerable and infinitely valuable in God’s eyes—is also a solid foundation in questions of security.”

Conclusion

The scriptures provide a view of human security that is not based upon state sovereignty and military might, but rather upon confidence and trust in God.

...

Our security is in God as our refuge and our strength, even in the midst of conflict and uncertainty. He is our help and our shield, our hope and deliverance, our stronghold and refuge. It is that security in God that allows us to accept that vulnerability is the unavoidable human condition. Our vulnerability connects us to the rest of humanity and is the basis for ethical capacity and responsibility to others. In this ethical perspective the main purpose of security

measures is not to remove, but to uphold and defend the paradoxical value of human vulnerability.

Excerpts from “The Things that Make for Peace”, IAC report, 2008 ¹⁵

God’s new creation

As we consider issues of peace and conflict, justice and injustice throughout the world and in this report particularly the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, we hold before us the vision proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah of the new heavens and new earth that God is creating (Isaiah 65:17-25). God promises that:

- no more will there be weeping or distress in Jerusalem, for God is about to create it as a joy, and its people as a delight;
- no more will children die in their infancy, for someone who lives to be a hundred will be thought of as young;
- no more shall homes be built for some invading people to inhabit or crops planted for them to eat, for those who build the homes shall live in them and those who plant will enjoy the produce;
- no more shall people labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for their offspring will be blessed by God – and their descendants as well.¹

It is a vision of hope and peace. Sadly, humankind too often rejects the vision and fails to live up to the promise.

God calls us to banish fear and live in peace

As [Jesus] came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!” (Luke 19:41)

Christ, the Prince of Peace, calls his followers to seek peace in the world. (Living Faith, 8.5.3)

Among the things that prevent peace is fear. Trappist monk Thomas Merton said, “The root of war is fear.”² Fear builds walls of hostility. Fear excludes, hoards, destroys. Fear leads to prejudice, injustice and oppression. Fear obscures the humanity of others.

What then can break down the walls of fear? What are the things that make for peace?

The prophet Micah imagines a day when swords will be beaten into ploughshares, when resources will be used for life-giving activities, when nations shall not learn war any more, when all peoples shall sit under their own vines and fig trees and “no one shall make them afraid” (Micah 4:3-4). When everyone is free and has enough to live, there is no need for fear, no need for war.

God calls us to work for justice for all peoples, especially the vulnerable

God wills that all people would live without fear, and with the security of being able to enjoy the fruit of their labour and the provision of their land. Security of land and labour are central to the prophetic call to justice (Isaiah 65:17-25). God responds to the needs of the most vulnerable. God lays on the people the responsibility to minister to the needs of hungry, homeless, naked and oppressed people (Isaiah 58:6-12). Jesus claims this mission for himself as he begins his ministry

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

(Luke 4:18-19), and invites people to new life shaped by compassionate love, which casts out fear (I John 4:18).

God calls us to love our neighbours and to extend hospitality to strangers

...The report of the International Affairs Committee to the 118th General Assembly (1992) states that: "...peace can never be achieved without first achieving justice. If there is justice for the underprivileged, the poor, the oppressed, the dispossessed and the forgotten of God's people, then there will be peace. Otherwise, strife and wars will continue" (A&P 1992, p. 328). God calls us to do justice, not just for ourselves and those close to us, but for the stranger and for all nations (Micah 6:8). God claims the world and its people as creations of the divine hand (Psalm 24:1), and declares an unconditional and redemptive love for the entire world (John 3:16). God's servant bears witness to the order of compassionate justice established at the heart of creation (Isaiah 42:1-5). God's people fulfill God's purpose when they hunger and thirst for justice and when they make peace (Matthew 5:6, 9). The call to justice, found throughout the Hebrew scriptures (Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8), is expressed in the commands to love our neighbours and to extend hospitality to strangers (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). The love of neighbour is deliberately extended even to foreigners (Luke 10:25-37) and the New Testament scriptures present hospitality to strangers as a particular virtue (Luke 14:7-14, Hebrews 13:1). "Justice [is standing] with our neighbours." (Living Faith 8.4.6).

The Psalmist invites God's people to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and to seek its good (Psalm 122:6, 9). As we grieve the division and conflict, the fear and hostility between Israelis and Palestinians, we indeed pray for peace and seek the good of all the inhabitants of this holy land. "We affirm that God is at work when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war and work for peace with justice" (Living Faith 8.5.3). As God's people, we yearn and work toward the day when God's shalom will embrace all people and "no one shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:4).

¹ A&P 1987, pp. 343-344, 33

² A&P 1991, pp. 299-331, 56-57

³ A&P 1992, pp. 323-331, 41

⁴ A&P 1994, pp. 358-359, 29

⁵ A&P 2000, pp. 319-320, 19

⁶ A&P 2007, pp. 284-289

⁷ A&P 2008, pp. 281-2, 25

⁸ A&P 2013, pp. 289-290, 24

⁹ A&P 2017, 20, 309

¹⁰ A&P 2017, 47

¹¹ A&P 1988, pp 360-364, 35

¹² A&P 1993, pp. 248-251, 38

¹³ A&P 2001, pp. 310-312, 20

¹⁴ A&P 2003, pp. 298-309, 15

¹⁵ A&P 2008, pp. 273-4

PROTEST, VIOLENCE AND CIVIL STRIFE

Protest, Violence and Civil Strife

The Church Speaks

- Love is always sensitive to need.... We cannot be too strongly urged to be aware of the self-interest that could remain unconcerned in the face of need, brutality, neglect, torture, corruption and abuse of power, that could allow policy to be dictated by prejudice, that would preserve the status quo for the sake of affluence, authority, tradition or “peace” no matter at what cost to another.⁴
- We believe in the right and duty to protest for truth and against evil.¹
- Only under dire circumstances may revolution be considered but, under such circumstances, it may be our duty.⁴
- We believe that those in places of power and responsibility who reject or neglect the just aspirations of others and thereby provoke them to physical violence are themselves guilty of violence against human personhood.¹
- [I]n ... situations where the political and social structures preclude the achievement of justice except by seemingly inevitable violent means, our church ought to give a sympathetic hearing to the pleas of people oppressed by such dire circumstances and render whatever seems to be appropriate aid.⁴
- The PCC may respond to appeals for humanitarian assistance from revolutionary groups provided it is prepared in specific terms to defend both the justice of the cause and the means by which it is being pursued.⁷
- Individuals and congregations may disassociate themselves from such actions in support of humanitarian assistance directed to revolutionary movements without prejudice to other activities of the agency making the grant. However, they are urged to use this right sparingly and only after careful consideration with the responsible agency of The PCC.⁷

The Church Acts

1969: The 95th GA adopted the statement “The Right and Duty of Protest” and called on presbyteries and congregations to give serious study to the complex questions of protest and dissent, non-violent protest and the nature of violence. The ESA was mandated to continue its study of these matters.¹

1972: The 98th GA approved support for the Program to Combat Racism (PCR), established by the WCC in 1969 and through which anti-racism grants were made “to the victims of oppressive regimes...for social, medical, educational and general relief activity” and mandated that a financial contribution be made to the program through the Committee on Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Relief. GA also requested that the CCD do a study on the theology of revolution.²

1974: The 100th GA re-affirmed support for the WCC’s Program to Combat Racism³ and commended the “Comment on the ‘Theology of Violence’” and its appended bibliography to presbyteries and sessions for study.⁴

1979: The 105th GA established a special committee to respond to numerous overtures regarding the church’s support of the WCC Program to Combat Racism. It adopted the recommendations of the special committee to re-affirm PCC support for the WCC and the PCR, but with the proviso that grants to the PCR consist only of funds specifically designated as such and only with the guarantee that no grants be given to groups involved in murder and terrorism.⁵ The recommendations of Inter-Church Aid and the IAC to study the whole question of the church’s historical position on war, violence and civil disobedience were also approved.⁶

Protest and Violence

When is protest legitimate? When is violence legitimate either as a form of protest or in resistance to protest? These questions provoked much discussion of protest movements from the late 1960s into the 1980s. Some events which form the background to these discussions included:

- a) police or military violence against peaceful protestors (e.g. the fatal shooting of four anti-war demonstrators by state militia at Kent State University, 1970).
- b) violent and illegal acts against peaceful protestors (e.g. the murder of three civil rights workers in Mississippi, 1964).
- c) violence used as a method of protest (e.g. the kidnapping of British ambassador James Cross and the kidnapping-murder of Quebec cabinet minister Pierre Laporte by the Front pour la Libération Québécoise (FLQ) 1970).
- d) revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence (e.g. the Cuban revolution 1969, the military coup in Chile 1973).

What is the role of the church when the aim of a movement meets with approval, but the means to attain it do not? This question was at the heart of the controversy over the Program to Combat Racism (PCR) established by the World Council of Churches in 1969 and supported by Inter-church Aid/PWS&D.

The PCR was a threefold program of a) research, b) projects and c) the Special Fund. The Special Fund provided grants to be used for humanitarian aid to victims of racism, such as refugees and internally displaced people in southern Africa. Some of these relief funds were funneled through anti-apartheid groups in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, South Africa and other southern African states who were engaged in military action against white-only governments. Two articles published in Reader's Digest in 1972 accused the PCR of sponsoring armed rebellion and terrorism and generated considerable concern and discussion at the 98th GA.* The controversy over the PCR erupted again when The Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe, a recipient of a PCR grant, shot down a civilian plane and massacred the 18 white passengers. This led to considerable controversy at both the 1979 meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC and at the 105th GA.**

* A&P 1972, pp. 456, 459, 462, 31, 93

** A&P 1979, pp. 346-348

1980-1981: The 106th GA (1980) received a statement on the church and social violence prepared by the IAC. It approved permitting agencies of the church to respond to appeals for humanitarian assistance from revolutionary movements provided that The PCC is prepared "to defend both the justice of the cause and the means by which it is being pursued." The IAC was mandated to consult with the BCL and the BWM in preparing additional material on the subject of revolutionary and other violence.⁷ The IAC reported to the 107th GA (1981) that a play "On the Eve of Revolution"^{*}, together with discussion questions and the IAC statement on the church and social violence, was circulated in the BCL mailing. Responses from presbyteries reflected "the continuing division of opinion within the church."⁸

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from "The Right and Duty of Protest", ESA report, 1969*¹

Protest is a major phenomenon of our time. We who belong to the family of *protestant* churches believe in the right and duty to protest for truth and against evil.

* This play is available in the Archives.

PROTEST, VIOLENCE AND CIVIL STRIFE

...
We believe that physical violence is neither a proper expression of protest, nor a proper response to protest.

We believe that those in places of power and responsibility who reject or neglect the just aspirations of others and thereby provoke them to physical violence are themselves guilty of violence against human personhood.

In its Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation*, our church recognizes that there may be occasions when the only remedy for tyranny, whether political, economic or ecclesiastical, is rebellion. In such circumstances all Christians are obliged to be obedient to Christ, to be agents of reconciliation, "bearing public witness to the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ and to the freedom of all men in him."⁹

*Excerpts from Comment on the "Theology of Violence" CCD report, 1974*⁴

Our proper starting point is to reiterate that which is clearly perceptible and commonly held in the church: that love, and especially neighbour-love, is the sole essential characteristic of the Christian ethic. Love is the characteristic nature of the attitude, teaching, life and death of Jesus; it is the word which defines the revealed nature of God and His purposes for man; and it is thus the definitive word for the claim and measure of morality.

There are certain implications of this love which should be considered:

First, this love is seen as leaving no room for ill-will and indeed as continuing even in the face of violence.

Second, this love treats sinful man as precious and having dignity, both in himself and in his community. ... We understand ourselves to be called to recognize and uphold the worth of each individual, and to desire and demand for him freedom to seek his own fulfillment in his community.

Third, if this love is real, it will express itself in goodwill for others and that goodwill demands, at the very least justice. Justice is not a gracious gift which we may bestow on another; it is a demand, a minimum. ... In pursuit of justice God is frequently represented as revolutionary, agitating and overturning until His purpose is accomplished.

God's call for justice among men is a persistent demand throughout scripture, taking precedence over religious observance. ... Justice is a minimum; only then can we speak of grace. "Love can only do more, it can never do less, than justice requires".** ... We cannot be too strongly urged to be aware of the self-interest that could remain unconcerned in the face of need, brutality, neglect, torture, corruption and abuse of power, that could allow policy to be dictated by prejudice, that would preserve the status quo for the sake of affluence, authority, tradition or "peace" no matter at what cost to another. Love is always sensitive to need.

At some times and in some circumstances, violent revolution is no more than a response to prior violence, and is indeed more in the nature of self-defence. ... Bishop Pike suggests that only under dire circumstances may revolution be considered but under such circumstances, it may be our duty. "The disruption of the established order with the consequence of turmoil and violence and the unpredictable evils that always arise out of a new order are generally likely to be so great

* The Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation is a subordinate standard adopted in 1954 setting out the relationship between Church and Nation in a secular state. It replaces the article in the Westminster Confession of Faith on the role of the Civil Magistrate which was written for a theocratic state.

** E. Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, p. 129

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that the issue must be a grave one indeed to justify even a serious consideration of organized rebellion. But where the very instruments of orderly protest have been denied and where evil has entrenched itself and has gained control of the usual organs through which a protest could be registered, then conspiracy toward a rebellion is not only permissible but might well be required for fulfillment of Christian vocation. This may even be a witness to the ultimate nature of God over against the pretensions of any other authority.”*

It is untenable that we should condemn the counter-violence of freedom fighters if we are not far more adamant in our abhorrence of the systematic and sustained violence which they may be resisting. We need also to be honestly aware if we look differently upon violence depending upon the political or racial identity of the perpetrators. We must become aware of ambiguities in our actions, too. It may be for example, that while we withhold aid from one party as members of the Church, as citizens of the nation, we are actively aiding and abetting the other, even the oppressor.

In a world of grays, love may not permit us any easy expression of our concern; we may be called upon to agonize. ... However, one alternative has never been acceptable to the people of Christ: to wash our hands of responsibility.

*Excerpts from “The Church and Social Violence” IAC report, 1980*⁷

Historically the Church has accepted violence as an unfortunate necessity in a just cause. But justice is not something that can be defined in advance. Justice has to be worked out as the response of love in any given situation.

Revolutionary violence usually develops in response to institutional violence. It is now generally recognized that violence is not restricted to those who would change things; it is also widely used by established governments. ... Christians who accept that violence may be an unfortunate necessity have the further responsibility of deciding when it is legitimate and when it is not.

It is often difficult to amass sufficient reliable information to make a decision, especially as our chief sources in the public press are not without bias. Nor are we ourselves detached observers. ... Because our own presuppositions colour our judgment, we must examine ourselves as well as the issues before we decide.

Decide we must. Not to decide is to support by default the government in power. Inaction places no obstacles in the path of the natural advantages possessed by the powers that be. But while decision is unavoidable, it is entirely probable that Christians, equally diligent in examining their prejudices, and equally diligent in amassing information may come to different conclusions.

¹ A&P 1969, pp. 311,36, 60

² A&P 1972, pp. 269-270, 59, 62

³ A&P 1974, pp. 284, 285, 45

⁴ A&P 1974, pp. 393-395, 50

⁵ A&P 1979, pp. 54-55, 57

⁶ A&P 1979, pp. 479, 59-60, 480, 36

⁷ A&P 1980, pp. 339-341, 54, 63

⁸ A&P 1981, p. 370

⁹ Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation, para. 6

* Rev. James Pike, *Doing the Truth*, p. 123

PROTEST, VIOLENCE AND CIVIL STRIFE

The Church Acts

Africa, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Vietnam

(see separate articles on civil strife in Central America, Rwanda and [former] Yugoslavia)

Africa

1976: The 102nd GA asked the GOC to strengthen its position that foreign powers not should not become involved in military action in Africa. It also asked the Canadian government to promote negotiated, peaceful settlements in Africa.^{1*}

Northern Ireland

1990: The 116th GA condemned the use of violence and any justification for it in Northern Ireland, welcomed all efforts to find a just political settlement, which would recognize the rights of both the Protestant and Catholic communities and the equality of all citizens under the law. Also welcomed were the efforts of peacemakers in Northern Ireland and attempts to break down personal barriers and foster reconciliation.²

In 1921 Ireland was divided with the majority of the population in the newly-independent and largely Catholic Republic of Ireland while the six counties of the largely Protestant region of Ulster remained part of the United Kingdom. In the 1960s the Catholic minority of Northern Ireland began a campaign of civil disobedience to protest anti-Catholic discrimination, which degenerated into campaigns of violent terrorism and counter-terrorism still not resolved in 1990.

Sri Lanka

1990: The 116th GA called on the GOC to work for international mediation of the conflict in Sri Lanka and to refrain from the involuntary repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees.^{3**}

Vietnam

1966-73: The 92nd GA (1966) called for an immediate cease-fire and plans for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. It asked that humanitarian aid be sent to both north and south Vietnam and asked the GOC to seek to secure the release of three missionaries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance who had been taken prisoner by the Viet Cong.^{4***} The 93rd GA (1967) also called for peace negotiations and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary General of the UN.⁵ The 94th GA (1968) gave thanks for the beginning of peace negotiations⁶ and the 99th GA (1973) for the end of the war, while re-affirming support for humanitarian aid and any peacekeeping role Canada might play.⁷

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from "Northern Ireland", IAC Report, 1990*²

Two things are necessary if there is to be any prospect of peace in Northern Ireland: 1. a secure political framework which guarantees the civil and political rights of both communities, and 2. a change of heart among the members of both communities.

* At this time the US and the USSR were providing military support to opposing sides in a number of African conflicts such as the civil wars in Ethiopia and Angola.

** This conflict pitted the Sinhalese majority against the Tamil minority in the north. Conflict began in 1983 with a Tamil demand for an independent state.

*** Militias in South Vietnam which supported re-unification of Vietnam under the communist government of North Vietnam. North Vietnam's own forces were known as the Viet Minh.

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1. The Protestant community has to have the guarantee that the status of Northern Ireland will not be changed without their consent; the Catholic community has to be given a share of governmental power to guarantee their rights as citizens. This clearly will require some modification of majority rule.

2. Political agreements cannot be reached, and will in any case not work, unless there is a radical change in the dominant attitudes of the two communities towards the other. One of the sad ironies in the situation is that a large proportion of both communities are professing Christians and that the isolationism of both communities is practiced in the name of protecting Christian truth.

¹ A&P 1976, p. 258, 38

² A&P 1990, pp. 407-410, 62

³ A&P 1990, pp. 402, 62

⁴ A&P 1966, pp. 339, 81, 99

⁵ A&P 1967, pp. 69-70, 93-94, 99, 103

⁶ A&P 1968, p. 73

⁷ A&P 1973, pp. 305, 51

The Church Acts

Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua)

Central America in the 1980s

In 1979, a revolutionary movement, the Sandinistas, overthrew the Nicaraguan dictatorship and, in elections held the following year, became the governing party in Nicaragua, engaging in a significant program of social reform. Similar movements were active in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The US administration provided economic and military assistance both to the Nicaraguan forces opposed to the new government (the “contras”) and to the governments of other Central American countries who opposed not only armed revolutionary movements, but also civil society movements committed to peaceful change, democracy and human rights.

1982: The 108th GA affirmed its belief that the violations of human rights in Central and South America were rooted in human sin, expressed in social injustice and complicated by east-west tensions, and urged the GOC to pursue a Central and South American policy that would work toward alleviating social injustice, restoring human rights and easing east-west tensions.¹

1983: The 109th GA declared its belief that foreign intervention in Central America, at the level practiced by the United States, for example, only makes a bad situation worse, inhibiting rather than encouraging the growth of just societies. GA encouraged the GOC to dissociate itself from any military action in the region and to support an early start on negotiations[to end the civil war] between the Government of El Salvador and its opponents as an appropriate means of reaching a just and lasting and peace in that country. GA also noted the growing problems of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico and instructed it agencies to give serious consideration to requests for action from sister churches in Mexico. The initiative of the Presbytery of Montreal in sending a delegation to Central America was commended and comparable action by other presbyteries was recommended.²

PROTEST, VIOLENCE AND CIVIL STRIFE

1985: The 111th GA commended the GOC for its support of the Contadora process* and asked that it offer to become a signatory of the treaty; it also called for aid to El Salvador be restricted to non-government projects, for the GOC to press for changes in US policy on Central America,** and for a generous and humanitarian response to refugees from Central America.³

Esquipulas I, signed in 1986 and its companion, Esquipulas II signed August 7, 1987, under the leadership of President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, set out a process to establish a firm and lasting peace in Central America. It set out obligations for all the signatories (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) to adhere to simultaneously in order to bring an end to the civil strife in the region, and called for complete cessation of military aid from outside the region. The US government of the time was averse to the provisions for non-interference and cessation of military aid to the region.

1986: The 112th GA expressed its concern to President Jose Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador over recent political detentions, and urged individual commissioners to do likewise. GA also called on Presbyterians to pray for those who “in response to their faith in God risk

criticism, arrest and other penalties in order to be faithful”, to give refuge to those fleeing oppression, to be aware of situations which provoke people to flee their homelands and to “be faithful to the demands of the Lord for compassion, justice and peace.” The GOC was

encouraged to establish an embassy in Nicaragua and to encourage the U.S., Cuba and Soviet Union to terminate their military involvement in Nicaragua.⁴

*Violence in **El Salvador** reached a peak after the unsuccessful offensive of the rebels on the capital city, San Salvador, in 1989, which led to government bombing of the suburbs and severe reprisals against those deemed “subversive”. Among the victims were six Jesuit priests at the Universidad Centroamericana in San Salvador who were murdered together with their cook and her daughter.*

1988: The 114th GA sent letters of solidarity to Christian partners in El Salvador*** expressing prayers for their safety and support for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the poor. It called on the GOC to distance itself from the U.S. policy of

providing arms assistance to the military struggle, to continue constructive efforts for peace and a negotiated end to the conflict in El Salvador. GA also urged the GOC to direct aid to El Salvador and Nicaragua through non-governmental agencies (NGOs) including the churches, and to increase aid to Nicaragua. It commended Canadian support of the Esquipulas II Accord and asked it to seek, by every means possible, a change in U.S. policy on Nicaragua in the direction of a negotiated settlement and non-interference. Additional motions to urge Nicaraguan support for a negotiated settlement in El Salvador and condemning any interventionist policy of the Soviet Union were also adopted. Appreciation was expressed to PCC overseas staff in Central America and presbyteries were urged to organize awareness tours to the region.⁵

* The Contadora process was a diplomatic initiative which sought to stabilize the situation in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras through a purely Latin American diplomatic effort supported by Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama who served as mediators in the negotiations. (Costa Rica, a democracy, did not face internal dissension, but part of its territory was occupied by Nicaraguan contra forces.)

** PCC church partners in Central America named as minimum changes: 1. the cessation of military and economic support for the regime in El Salvador, 2. the withdrawal of support for the covert war being waged against Nicaragua, 3. a commitment to negotiated rather than military solutions in both El Salvador and Nicaragua and 4. the implementation of active measures of support for the Contadora process.

*** Pastor Pedro Morataya of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Bishop Medardo Gomez of the Lutheran Church and Archbishop Rivera y Dumas of the Catholic Church.

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1990: The 116th GA urged members of The PCC to broaden their understanding of the issues leading to civil strife in Central America, and sent prayers for protection and condolences in regard to the murder of church workers to Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Salvador and to Catholic church leaders in El Salvador and a message of support and solidarity to the churches of El Salvador “at this time of increased oppression” as they sought to minister to the poor and displaced and contribute to a process of bringing about a negotiated settlement to the conflict and a just peace. It called on the GOC and its consular officials to support all peaceful efforts by Central Americans to achieve self-determination and justice, to consider prayerfully applications to enter Canada, especially from El Salvador, to assist Nicaraguan efforts to rebuild its economy, and to press for substantial assistance to Nicaragua from the US government, including the disbanding of contra forces.⁶

In the 1990 elections a new government was chosen in Nicaragua, peacefully replacing the Sandinista government which had been elected in 1980. The US government had promised to assist in postwar rebuilding and to disband the contras.

1991: The 117th GA encouraged continued study and prayer support for the people of Central America, and strengthening of working relations with church partners through additional support for non-governmental organizations, delegations, guided tours and related approaches. The GOC was informed of GA’s distress at the continued repression of religious communities in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and requested to increase aid for economic and social development through non-government organizations.⁷

1992: The 118th GA commended the GOC for steps taken to bring gross and systematic abusers of human rights to account in Guatemala and for participation in and support of a UN observer mission in El Salvador. GA asked the GOC to take further steps in the countries of Central America such as:⁸

- challenging the impunity enjoyed by the military in Guatemala by suspending bi-lateral aid and directing aid through Canadian and Guatemalan NGOs,
- urging the Honduran government to respect international labour laws to which it is signatory,
- urging the U.S. government to reverse its aid-reduction decision and accept full responsibility for post-invasion reparations,
- communicating concern for a worsening human rights situation in Costa Rica to the Costa Rican government,
- continuing to monitor the human rights situation in El Salvador, encouraging the Salvadoran government to implement the provisions of the peace accords and pressing the US government to transfer its military aid funds to a peace fund,
- increasing material support to Nicaragua to aid in the task of post-war rebuilding,
- maintaining an open door to Central American refugees whose fears remain legitimate, and
- linking aid and development money with human rights performances.

1996: The 122nd GA commended the GOC for its support of the Democratic Development Fund, urged the GOC to consider extending it; and to continue its pressure on the Guatemalan government to honour its signature on various human rights accords. The GOC was asked to continue its practice of funding two political officers in its embassy in Guatemala City, one of whom has specific responsibilities for monitoring the human rights situation. Canadian

PROTEST, VIOLENCE AND CIVIL STRIFE

Presbyterians were encouraged to deepen their knowledge of Guatemala and pray for our church partners in Guatemala, given the deteriorating human rights situation.^{9*}

The Church Reflects

*Excerpt from “Central America”, IAC report, 1985*³

The wars now being waged in Central America, especially in El Salvador and Nicaragua, are causing untold pain and suffering ... The overwhelming desire of the people is for peace, but not peace at any price. They also want some measure of justice, which requires basic changes in systems that have kept the poor in grinding poverty while the rich have multiplied their wealth.

*Excerpts from “Nicaragua”, IAC report, 1988*⁵

The costs of the continuing military struggle in Nicaragua are extremely high. Between 1980 and April 23 1987, the death toll was set at 40,027. In the polemical atmosphere which surrounds discussion of the contra enterprise in the U.S. media, the tragic daily cost of the ongoing armed struggle in terms of human lives is generally passed over.

...

Yet there are fragile signs of hope. ... [T]he recent ceasefire agreement between the government of Nicaragua and the leaders of the contra forces have the clear potential of resulting in a permanent peace agreement.

These hopeful, yet fragile signs, make this a most critical moment in the history of Nicaragua, and the whole of Central America. At such a critical time, it is extremely important that external governments take positive steps to ensure the success of a political solution. The constantly repeated request of our Christian partners in Nicaragua is that we use our influence to press for a change in U.S. policy.

¹ A&P 1982, pp. 375, 76

² A&P 1983, pp. 374, 79

³ A&P 1985, pp. 347-348, 33

⁴ A&P 1986, pp. 370-373, 56

⁵ A&P 1988, pp. 364-366, 35, 51

⁶ A&P 1990, pp. 392-394, 62, 557, 38

⁷ A&P 1991, pp. 324-328, 57

⁸ A&P 1992, pp. 344-356, 42

⁹ A&P 1996, pp. 292-294, 49

* A decade after a return to civilian rule, Guatemala's military still exerted a strong influence that protected military officers from criminal prosecution on human rights charges; political harassment, kidnappings, torture and assassinations were still common. A minister of the Kakchiquel Presbytery had been kidnapped, tortured and killed in July 1995. His successor narrowly escaped a kidnapping. For a time, The PCC provided his widow with accompaniment by a Canadian volunteer to assure her safety.

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

The Church Acts

Rwanda

1994: The 120th GA urged congregations to pray for the end of the killing in Rwanda and to donate generously to the PWS&D appeal for emergency relief and rehabilitation for Rwandan refugees.¹

The Rwandan Genocide

The population of Rwanda, though of one language and culture, is composed of two ethnic groups: Hutu and Tutsi. The minority Tutsi enjoyed higher status and the favour of colonial administrations. After independence in 1959, the Hutu majority controlled the government. As friction between the groups intensified, expatriate Tutsi formed a rebel army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front and invaded Rwanda in 1990. In 1993, an agreement in principle was reached to share power. Negotiations were held in neighbouring Burundi in April 1994 to develop the terms of the agreement. On April 6, as Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana was returning to Rwanda, his plane was shot down. A few hours later, senior Hutu leaders organized a genocidal attack on the Tutsi and on moderate Hutu supporters of the peace plan.

United Nations peacekeeping forces had already been assigned to Rwanda in October 1993 to supervise the Hutu-Tutsi peace accords. Their commander, Canadian Major-General Romeo d'Allaire was aware that massive arms shipments were coming into the country and requested several times that the UN contingent be increased to forestall further violence, but the Security Council refused. In the early days of the genocide, 1,000 French, Belgian and Italian troops were flown into Kigali, the Rwandan capital, to oversee the evacuation of foreigners from the country. American nationals were also evacuated. D'Allaire asked that these soldiers be joined to his 2500 troops. But they were returned to their normal duties. Belgium withdrew its UN contingent of 400 soldiers on April 19 and a few days later, the UN reduced d'Allaire's unit to a skeleton force of 270.

When the killings began, the Rwandan Patriotic Army also renewed its civil war with the Hutu government and was eventually able to take control of the situation and stop the killing in July, 1994. By that time over 800,000 were dead and millions had fled to Tanzania, Kenya and the Congo. Rwanda is currently governed by Tutsi leader, Paul Kagame.

The Church Reflects

Excerpt from “Structural Adjustment Programs”, IAC report, 1995²

Portraying the Rwandan war solely as tribalism ignores ... the war's economic and post-colonial factors.. . .Although remaining very poor [after independence in 1959], Rwanda was able to feed itself from subsistence agriculture while exporting coffee, tea and minerals. ... Retail prices [for coffee] in the 1980s were still twenty times that paid to African farmers. After the [international] coffee agreement began to collapse in 1987 because of pressure from multinational traders, coffee prices dropped by as much as 50 percent in the summer of 1989. When famine began, so much land had been devoted to coffee that it was extremely hard to switch back to food production. ... The government borrowed to meet daily expenses and in 1989 accepted structural adjustment. ... Outright civil war began in the fall of 1990. Six weeks later, the structural adjustment program devalued the Rwandan franc by 50 percent. Intended to make coffee exports more competitive, the devaluation triggered massive inflation and a rapid increase in economic hardship and uncertainty. School enrollments dropped dramatically when fees were introduced even at the primary level. With cuts to health budgets, malaria increased by 21 percent simply because clinics had no drugs.

PROTEST, VIOLENCE AND CIVIL STRIFE

Despite escalating domestic retail prices, structural adjustment had frozen farm coffee prices since 1989 to try to boost exports. But low prices forced farmers to tear out coffee trees in the hope of making more profitable use of the land. Yet while structural adjustment phased out farm subsidies, it also lifted restrictions on grain imports so the local market was flooded with cheap, often subsidized, grain from northern agribusiness.

Then, just when the Rwandan military wanted to expand, the IMF loaned the government several million dollars of hard currency. Much of that loan purchased weaponry from Egypt, France, South Africa and Eastern Europe. With these loans and devaluation, the foreign debt rose by 34 percent between 1989 and 1992.

The international financial institutions did not cause the Rwandan war, but they made a bad situation worse. They forced a country on the brink of war into destitution and then, albeit inadvertently, provided the cash to make the war even bloodier. As a World Bank statement remarked at the time, “non-economic variables” were not taken into account in their recommendations to the government.

¹ A&P 1994, p. 45

² A&P 1995, pp. 250-262, 33

The Church Acts

Yugoslavia/former Yugoslavia

1991 saw the collapse of central government in Yugoslavia and the breakup of the republic established in 1946 into component parts. Slovenia separated relatively peacefully. Croatia also became independent but there was conflict between Croats and Serbs living in Croatia. Bosnia-Herzegovina, with a population including Slavic Muslims, Serbians and Croats was hardest hit by internal dissension. Montenegro remained allied with Serbia in a reduced Yugoslavian union. The autonomous region of Vojvodina, with its largely Hungarian population, was absorbed into Serbia, while Serbs in the region of Kosovo felt threatened by the rising nationalism of the majority population of Albanian Muslims. Serbia sent military forces to support Serbian minorities in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In an effort to end the violence, the European Union imposed economic sanctions on all the republics and by March 1992 a contingent of UN peacekeeping troops arrived in the area. Canada contributed 1200 troops to the UN mission.

1992: The 118th GA commended the GOC for its support of the Red Cross relief effort in Yugoslavia and for taking part in peace-keeping in Yugoslavia.¹

1993: The 119th GA commended the GOC for its support of the international peacekeeping operation in former Yugoslavia and asked that governmental involvement in relief efforts and refugee re-settlement be increased.² Messages of encouragement and support were sent to members of The PCC currently serving or preparing to serve in UN peacekeeping missions.³

1999: The IAC report to 125th GA noted the letter sent by the Canadian Council of Churches (and signed by the Moderator of the 124th GA on behalf of The PCC), expressing grave reservations in regard to the military intervention in Kosovo by members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴

The Church Reflects

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

*Excerpt from “Central and Eastern Europe”, IAC report, 1991*⁵

A major threat to the stability of the new societies is the revival in almost all of the countries of ethnic and religious divisions. Central and eastern Europe is a vast area with a long and incredibly complex history. It is the part of Europe across which many conquering armies have swept and which has been the most ravaged by wars, two in this century alone. As a result the population is an extraordinarily complex mix of different ethnic groups. The modern political boundaries, which were determined by bargaining among the great powers after World War I and modified after World War II, often do not correspond with the ethnic mix of the population. Many of these groups see themselves as distinct nations and seek self-determination. Repressed under communist rule, these nationalist aspirations have quickly re-emerged.

Pride in one’s ethnic heritage is a natural human emotion. In eastern Europe ... the sense of group identity, of nationhood, has been kept alive during periods of oppression by religious faith, often in the form of allegiance to a particular church. Particularly at times of upheaval and renewal, the revival of nationalist feelings is to be expected.

Nationalism, however, by its very nature, is a divisive emotion, opposed, often antagonistic to those who do not belong to the group. ... The area has a long history of the oppression of one nationality by others and there are pressures to right ancient wrongs.

...

The enormous changes in eastern Europe present new opportunities and challenges for the churches. ... [They] may have an important public role to play. Because of their good nationalist credentials, the churches are in a position to play an important mediating and reconciling role in the midst of the divisions of the newly emerging eastern Europe. This is a situation where a genuine ecumenism might be an important influence for peace and justice.

¹ A&P 1992, pp. 341-356, 42

² A&P 1993, pp. 249-250, 38

³ A&P 1993, p. 62

⁴ A&P 1999, p. 290

⁵ A&P 1991, pp. 308-311, 57

*Middle East***The Church Speaks**

- We support deep-level solutions of Middle East problems which take full account of the needs and rights of all the peoples and nations involved with particular reference to the plight of Palestinian refugees.¹
- The beginning of a path to peace lies in a process of mutual recognition whereby the Government of Israel recognizes that the long-bereft Palestinian people have rights to territory and freedom, while at the same time the Palestinians recognize the legitimacy of the state of Israel and foreswear violence and threats of violence against it.⁴
- The PCC affirms the policy approved by the Board of Directors of KAIROS opposing a general boycott of Israeli products and of sanctions against Israel.¹⁶
- The 138th GA (2012), with an acknowledgement of the complexity of issues faced by the people of the Middle East and, in particular, by the people of Israel and the Palestinian territories, affirm the right of the State of Israel and the people of Palestine to exist in peace and security while [rejecting] Christian Zionism as a doctrinal stance inconsistent with Reformed doctrine and its emphasis on one covenant of grace for all peoples, and acknowledges the message of Palestinian sisters and brothers in Christ that Christian Zionism poses a significant obstacle to a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.²⁰

The Church Acts

1967-1978: The 93rd GA (1967) adopted a statement on the Middle East prepared by the IAC.¹ The 98th GA (1972), in the wake of a massacre of 15 Christian pilgrims and 9 Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv, mandated the IAC to communicate with the governments of Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Israel concerning maintaining safe passage for pilgrims of all faiths.² The 104th GA (1978) encouraged Canadian government to take a strong position in any Middle East peace negotiations “having regard to ... justice for Palestinians and security for Israel.”³

1983-1987: The 109th GA (1983) called for the withdrawal of all outside military forces from Lebanon and the pursuit of peace in the Middle East through acceptance of Israel’s right to security and recognized boundaries and the Palestinians’ right to a homeland within a clearly defined territory.⁴ The 110th GA (1984) re-affirmed its position for a peaceful settlement between Israel and the Palestinians and its call to withdraw all outside military forces from Lebanon.

It encouraged Canadian participation in UN efforts to bring peace to the region, including a

In 1983 Lebanon was gripped in a civil war complicated by the involvement of foreign troops, notably Israeli forces and militias with the backing of Syria. The Israelis effectively controlled the Golan Heights (part of Syria) and south Lebanon. The international community was shocked when two Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon were overrun by Israeli forces and hundreds of Palestinian civilians massacred.

Also complicating Middle East relations was the 1979 overthrow of the Shah of Iran by followers of Ayatollah Khomeini who established a conservative Islamic theocracy in Iran. In 1980, tensions between Iran and Iraq over a long-standing border dispute erupted into war. The U.S. government, worried about the anti-Americanism of the Iranian regime, supported Iraq militarily during the eight years of this war.

possible peacekeeping force.⁵ The 113th GA (1987) commended the BWM for its support of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and the Middle East School of Theology. It called on Canadian Presbyterians traveling to Israel to be aware of the political significance of the travel arrangements they made, of the people and places they visited and urged them to make a point of attending church and visiting Christian institutions while in Israel.⁶

BOOK FIVE — WORLD

1988-1989: The 114th GA (1988) urged the GOC to call for an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations with reference to the right of the Palestinians for a national homeland. Prayers were also offered for Rev. Terry Waite and his family.^{7*} The 115th GA (1989) re-affirmed the need for a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the UN Security Council resolutions to be negotiated through a UN sponsored peace conference and called on the GOC to support convening such a conference. It asked congregations and presbyteries to support and facilitate efforts to build greater awareness among the churches, dialogue between Jewish and Arab communities in Canada, and dialogue among Christians, Jews and Muslims, both locally and nationally.⁸

1990: The 116th GA endorsed a position paper on the Middle East drafted by the Canadian Council of Churches and commended it to congregations as a helpful resource (See The Church Reflects, below). GA also re-affirmed the need for a comprehensive settlement recognizing the needs of both Israelis and Palestinians, based on UN Security council resolutions and gave strong support to UN sponsored peace conference, asking the GOC to do likewise. Messages of support were sent to the Near East Council of Churches. Presbyterians traveling to the Middle East were encouraged to contact the travel service of the MECC and take the time and opportunity to meet with Arab Christians.⁹

The first Gulf War, 1990

Iraq emerged from its victory over Iran in 1988 militarily strong but economically weak. In August 1990, Iraq invaded the small oil-rich sheikdom of Kuwait, citing as justification Iraq's historic claim to Kuwait and its accusation that Kuwait was enriching itself at Iraqi expense by engaging in slant-drilling along the Kuwait-Iraq border, illegally acquiring a portion of Iraq's oil.*

The United Nations condemned the invasion and imposed a trade embargo calling on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. In November 1990, the Security Council authorized the use of military force against Iraq if it did not withdraw by January 15, 1991. On January 16, UN forces led by the US launched a bombing attack on Iraq. Heavy bombardment continued for 6 weeks as Iraqi forces withdrew from Kuwait and most of Iraq's infrastructure was destroyed. Ground forces were deployed from February 24 to complete the destruction of the Iraqi army and its equipment. Although it was heavily bombed, no attempt was made to seize Baghdad and the active phase of the war ended February 27, 1991. A strict trade embargo continued, and "no-fly" zones were established in northern and southern Iraq to shield the Shi'ite (south) and Kurdish (north) communities from retaliation attacks by the Hussein regime.

**Kuwait was separated from Iraq by British decision as Middle East boundaries were set after World War One.*

1991-1992: The 117th GA (1991) commended the CCC study on the Middle East as a means of raising awareness about the churches in the Middle East and the critical issues faced in the region, adopted a statement on peace in the Middle East (see below), re-affirmed support for an international peace conference for the Middle East and offered prayers for the churches and people of the Middle East. It also asked the GOC to implement steps to limit arms sales to the Middle East.¹⁰ 1992: The 118th GA (1992) asked that partnership between The PCC and the MECC be strengthened and that congregations be encouraged to take initiatives to build dialogue

* Rev. Terry Waite, envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Middle East, had been instrumental in securing the release of several hostages held by Islamic groups. In 1987, he was himself kidnapped by Islamic Jihad in Beirut and held for 1,763 days. He was released in November 1991.

with Jews and Muslims in their communities in order to strengthen inter-faith understanding and enhance a common commitment to peace in the Middle East.¹¹

1993-1999: The 119th GA (1993) sent greetings to the MECC and asked the GOC to press for the lifting of non-military sanctions against Iraq.¹² The 120th GA (1994) sent a message of support to the MECC and its Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees.¹³ The 125th GA (1999) urged the GOC to use its position on the United Nations Security Council to show leadership in searching for creative initiatives aimed at ending the impasse over Iraq.^{14*}

CCC Statement on Middle East

Peace in the Middle East must, ultimately, be grounded in a spirit of inter-faith understanding and dialogue among Muslims, Christians and Jews. Characterizations of the recent Gulf conflict as a 'religious war', a 'just war' or a war between the Christian west and the Muslim east have greatly damaged relations among these three religious communities, which nevertheless continue to share so much in common, rooted as they are in the same geographic region and in one God. We further deplore the recent alarming increase in anti-semitic and anti-Arab acts and remarks in Canadian society. Churches must work together with Muslims and Jews to overcome such ugly currents in our society and to replace caricatures of hatred with a spirit of human community and mutual respect. We must therefore commit ourselves to refuse any effort to divide Christians, Muslims and Jews, whose faiths originated in the Middle East, and to join with them in a renewed spirit of dialogue, prayer and common endeavours to realize an inclusive peace for all in the Middle East, rooted in tolerance and mutual respect.

2002: The 128th GA affirmed its support of GOC efforts to participate actively in negotiations for a just and lasting peace settlement in the Middle East on the basis of four critical components and sent greetings to our partners in the region. GA also called on the GOC, as a member of the United Nations, to speak against the application of sanctions, to seek a political solution towards the current Iraqi regime, and to voice opposition to a strategy of offensive military action against Iraq.^{15**}

2008: The Moderator of the 134th GA wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs encouraging the Government of Canada to play a more active role in promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The Moderator extended greetings and assured Presbyterian partners in Israel and Palestine of our ongoing prayers and concern. The work of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine was reaffirmed and highlighted as an opportunity for individuals wishing to deepen their understanding of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Presbyterians were encouraged to promote the purchase and distribution of products and services from the Occupied Palestinian Territories through organizations such as the Zatoun organization, Holy Land Handicraft Co-operative Society, Holy Land Artisans, and the Alternative Tourism Group from Ramallah, both

* Severe economic sanctions remained in force in Iraq after the end of the Persian Gulf conflict of 1991. Churches and aid agencies were deeply concerned over rising levels of malnutrition and illness among the people of Iraq as the political stalemate continued.

** Military action was feared in light of a) the inclusion of Iraq in a 3-nation "axis of evil" in the January 2002 State of the Union address by President Bush to the US Congress, b) statements of concern about Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction by President Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in March 2002, and c) several references by top US officials and advisors on the necessity of regime change in Iraq. These fears were realized when the US and UK launched an invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003. Baghdad was secured April 9, 2003 and Saddam Hussein captured December 14, 2003. An Iraqi-led Governing Council was established in July 2003 and current plans are to turn over full authority to an Iraqi government June 30, 2004.

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to assist the Palestinian people, and as a means of promoting awareness of the situation of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories.¹⁶

2009: The Moderator of the 135th GA wrote to General Electric* to inquire about the use of the Apache helicopters in the Occupied Territories, and to express concern about the apparent use of the Apache helicopters in attacks in densely populated civilian areas in Gaza on January 7, 2009, as reported to B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. The Moderator wrote to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade requesting information on steps that have been taken to stimulate trade between Canada and territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority (the West Bank and East Jerusalem) and urging the Government of Canada to: 1) introduce a certification of origin to ensure that products produced in territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are excluded from the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA)**; and 2) ensure that neither Israeli nor any Canadian policy impedes trade relationships between Canada and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Congregations and individuals visiting the Holy Land were encouraged to consider taking tours sponsored by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem, Holy Land Living Stones Pilgrimage (The Holy Land and Christian Ecumenical Foundation), or The Society for Biblical Studies as an opportunity for reflection and study, and to visit with partners in Israel and Palestine.¹⁷

The PCC recognized the State of Israel's sixtieth (60th) anniversary and its attempts to foster democracy in the Middle East, while recognizing with contrition the Church universal's long history of anti-Semitism and seeking greater understanding in the future.¹⁸

2011: The 137th GA approved the response of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to the document "KAIROS Palestine: a moment of truth – faith, hope, and love – a confession of faith and call to action from Palestinian Christians".¹⁹

The 137th GA recommended that:

- Courts of the church study the KAIROS Palestine Document and supporting documents and to deepen their understanding of the situation of Christians in Israel-Palestine;
- That Presbyterians be encouraged to continue our solidarity with Palestinian Christians, in the ways mentioned [in the report] in response to the invitation to "Come and see";

* Information was compiled on defense and communication technology corporations doing business in Israel. In 2008, The Presbyterian Church in Canada held shares in one of the listed corporations, General Electric. See A&P 2009, p. 293. In 2012 The Presbyterian Church held shares in two companies: General Electric and Caterpillar. See A&P 2013 pp. 278-286, 22, 24.

** The Canadian government has a long-standing policy of support for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 242 and 338. These resolutions include: 1) The withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from territories occupied in 1967, and the recognition by all the states in the region of Israel's right to exist; 2) The right of all states, including Israel and the Arab states, to live in peace with secure and recognized borders; and 3) The implementation of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including the right of establishing a sovereign Palestinian state. While the second principle explicitly requires all the states in the region to recognize Israel's right to a secure existence, the third affirms that the Palestinians have the right to determine their own future, including the establishment of a sovereign state.

The Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) came into effect in 1997. The CIFTA includes goods produced in Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. This appears to be at variance with Canada's stated support of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. In its free trade agreement with Israel, the European Union no longer grants preferential treatment to goods originating from Israeli settlements in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or the Golan Heights. The PCC recommended to the Government of Canada that a similar clause be included in the CIFTA. See A&P 2009, p.295 and A&P 2013, p. 284.

- That Presbyterians be encouraged to reflect on the situation of the Palestinian Christian community in the season of Advent in 2011, as our focus is upon the Saviour’s incarnation in the land, which came to be known as Palestine, among ordinary people;
- That the Moderator write to the Prime Minister of Canada, raising the concerns of Palestinian Christians named in the “Moment of Truth” document, and encouraging the GOC to use its offices to seek ways to end the occupation and to establish a just and lasting peace in Israel-Palestine according to United Nations resolutions;
- Arrangements to be made for the Moderator to visit Palestine/Israel in response to the invitation from Palestinian Christians to “come and see.”

2012: The GA instructed the IAC to consider ways of giving practical effect to the Assembly’s motion concerning the rejection of Christian Zionism, and report back with recommendations to the 139th GA.²⁰

The GA recommended that commissioners of the Assembly return home committed to praying for peace in Syria, and committed to urging their congregations to pray for peace in Syria.²¹

2013: The Moderator of the 139th GA wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs inquiring what measures Canada takes to persuade Israel to lift restrictions that it may place on the movement of people and goods that hamper economic development in the West Bank and to the Minister of International Trade inquiring if the Canadian government is willing to request that Israel renegotiate relevant sections of the Canada Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) so that goods include a certificate of origin and that goods from the settlements are excluded from beneficial tariff treatment under the CIFTA.*²²

The Moderator wrote to General Electric and Caterpillar requesting information on their respective policies to ensure their products are not used in situations where human rights are violated.²²

The Moderator wrote to the Commissioner of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to inquire if CRA policies permit Canadian charities to issue tax receipts for donations that support projects in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank.²²

In response to an additional motion from the 138th GA (2012) the International Affairs Committee suggested ways courts of the church could practically respond to the decision of the 138th GA to reject Christian Zionism.²³

2014: An additional motion adopted by the 139th GA requested that a summary be compiled of GA statements regarding the State of Israel’s right to exist within secure borders and of actions implementing these decisions. The PCC has affirmed its support for the right of the State of Israel’s to exist within secure borders in 1978, 1983, 1984, 1989, 1990, 2002, 2008 and 2009.²⁴

Impact of Conflict on Christians in Syria
Until the war began in 2011, Syria was one of the last remaining strongholds for Christianity in the Middle East. Before the conflict there were approximately 1.8 million Christians in Syria, about 10% of the population. Hundreds of thousands of Christians have been displaced by the conflict. Syria and the Middle East is the cradle of the Christian faith and this community faces mortal danger.

* This would not exclude goods produced in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank from entering the Canadian market.

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2015: The 141st GA recommended that congregations pray for all people being persecuted and for their persecutors, that they have a change of heart; and pray for an end to violence in Syria. The 141st GA that the Moderator write to the General Secretary of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon and the Minister of the National Evangelical Church in Beirut to express The PCC's prayers for an end to the conflict in Syria.²⁵

2017: The GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Prime Minister of Israel encouraging the Government of Israel to meet its obligations under international conventions and Israel's laws to protect the civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of its Palestinian citizens and to address racial discrimination.²⁶

The Forgotten Palestinians

20% of Israel's population are Arab Israelis or Palestinian Israelis (these are Palestinians living in Israel proper, and not in Gaza or the West Bank). A majority are Muslim and some are Christian or Druze. Many have family connections to Palestinians living in the West Bank, or Gaza, or in refugee camps in other countries in the Middle East. The Palestinian population of Israel inhabits 3.5% of land in Israel and has access to 2.3% of Israeli water resources. The remaining 96.5% of the land and the remaining water resources are owned by, or reserved for, Jewish citizens (Adalah, p. 31). Many policies of the State of Israel discriminate against non-Jewish citizens of Israel. For example, since the overwhelming majority of Palestinians are exempted from military service, they are effectively excluded from most of the better paying jobs in Israel, and from social benefits that are restricted to, or enhanced for those, who have completed military service.

Adalah: *The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, The Inequality Report: The Palestinian Arab Community in Israel, Haifa, March, 2011, adalah.org.*

Pappe, Ilan, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2011.*

The Church Reflects

Excerpts from "Christians in Israel", IAC report, 1987⁶

Palestinian Christians are eager to be discovered as native Christians, as carriers of the torch of Jesus Christ through the ages, as descendants of the apostles. ... The flood of tourists who visit the Holy Land do not usually have the chance to meet Palestinians and seldom realize the dynamics of their predicament.

...

Arab Christians are angered by western Christian theology which uses [the] Old Testament covenant (applicable politically as it may have been in an ancient and different societal context) to justify current Israeli politics and military expansion. Palestinians feel that the West has considered the Jewish people as the "chosen" and the Palestinian as "refugees", a social problem to be handled by social workers. (excerpted from a report by Ghassan Rubeiz, Middle East Secretary, WCC)

Excerpt from "Middle East", IAC report, 1988⁷

No worthwhile purpose could be served in trying to determine the historical rights and wrongs involved. The Jewish right to a homeland on the one hand, and the Palestinian outrage at their expulsion from their homes on the other are both understandable and right, but they are irreconcilable.

Meanwhile two generations have come and gone and no solution is in sight. The rise and spread of militant fundamentalism both in Islam and in Judaism has increased violence on both sides to dangerous proportions; terrorist attacks originating in the Middle East have now spread beyond the region, so that no area in the world is safe from possible onslaught.

*Excerpts from CCC position paper endorsed by 116th GA, IAC report, 1990*⁹

1. As Christians we have common roots with the Jewish people. Since the Christian Church emerged with an identity distinct from Judaism, however, our relationship with the continuing Jewish community has not been a happy one. We recognize the great suffering that Christian anti-Judaism has caused to the Jewish community and we recognize our Christian culpability in the events that have led to the present crisis.

2. As Christians we have a common heritage with, and a long history of relationship to Islam. As is the case with Judaism, Christian relationships with Islamic communities often have not been happy. We recognize that Islamic communities in the Middle East still remember the violence and injustice inflicted by Western Christians in the Crusades.

3. As Christian churches, we have close relations with churches in the Middle East itself. Our Orthodox members are closely related to the Orthodox churches in the region. The Maronites in Lebanon and other groups in the area are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Many of our Protestant and Anglican members have counterparts in the Middle East. The Council itself is in close contact with the Middle East Council of Churches. Because of these relationships, we have gained an appreciation for the enduring witness of the churches of the Middle East.

4. The region itself holds a special significance for us. With Muslims and Jews, we have special memories of the area. The biblical stories, the very events upon which the Christian tradition is founded, are connected to the very places which are now the scene of this conflict.

We lament the sad paradox that the region which is the birthplace of the three Abrahamic faiths, faiths that speak of a God of justice, mercy and peace, is today the scene of so much human anguish. The peoples of the Middle East have long suffered from hardships caused by war, repression, terrorism, and civil strife. At least four distinct conflicts can be identified, and each of these, though inter-related to some degree, grows from its own deep-rooted history of injustice which has given rise to suspicion and alienation. Periods of peace are experienced only as the absence of active hostilities; there is as yet no sign of a regional peace settlement which would permit the various peoples and differing faith groups to live together in harmony. The Middle East remains a challenge to peacemakers and all those who seek justice.

...

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

A major conflict in the region is that between Israel and the Arab states, which has at its core the painful struggle between Israelis and Palestinians over one land. This is a conflict between two rights: on the one hand, the rights of the Jewish people to a recognized homeland with safe and secure borders, and on the other, the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including the right of establishing a sovereign Palestinian homeland. Neither people can claim its human and political rights at the expense of the other. Forty years of war and reprisals have surely shown that the only real and lasting solution will come, not from military strength, but from a negotiated solution based on justice and a shared recognition of the rights and aspirations of both parties.

Since December, 1987, the *intifada* of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation has altered the shape of the conflict. Young Palestinians have illustrated the depth of their despair in the

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present tragic situation, and given irrefutable proof of the sacrifices they are willing to make for their cause.

We are grieved both by the suffering of the Palestinian people whose human rights are being daily violated by the Israeli authorities, and by the dilemma in which the Israeli people now find themselves. The policy the present government of Israel believes essential for the security of the country stands in sharp contradiction to its founding principles. We applaud the efforts of peace groups in the area, particularly among Jews and Palestinians in Israel who have struggled, against great odds, to build bridges of understanding in the interest of reconciliation, justice and peace for both communities.

We affirm that a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must recognize the rights and concerns of both parties. A resolution of this core issue is a key to resolving the wider conflict between Israel and the Arab states.

We therefore affirm that the basis for a peaceful settlement is found in UN Security Resolutions 242 and 338, with revisions which would take into account changes which have occurred since 1967. The principles found in these resolutions would ensure:

1. the withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from territories occupied in 1967, and the recognition by all the states in the region of Israel's right to exist.
2. the right of all states, including Israel and the Arab states, to live in peace with secure and recognized borders.
3. the implementation of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including the right of establishing a sovereign Palestinian state.

While the second principle explicitly requires all the states in the region to recognize Israel's right to a secure existence, the third affirms that the Palestinians have the right to determine their own future, including the establishment of a sovereign state.

We affirm that this conflict cannot be resolved through force, but only through peaceful means. We strongly support the call for a UN-sponsored peace conference as envisioned by UN General Assembly Resolutions 38/58C and 43/176. Negotiations within this framework should include all those parties most intimately involved: Israel, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the neighboring Arab states. Any negotiations to resolve this conflict must involve the superpowers: the active support of the United States and the Soviet Union is vital if such negotiations are to succeed. In this light, we welcome indications of improving relationships between the Soviet Union and Israel.

...

A role for churches in Canada

We uphold in our prayers the churches of the Middle East as they continue to respond to new challenges in the midst of grave difficulties. We pray for the healing of the wounds among the nations of the region, and affirm the efforts of all people of good will who continue the work of reconciliation and peacemaking.

Our government would be enabled to make stronger and more constructive initiatives in the region if it was responding to better informed and articulate public opinion. The churches can assist by raising the level of public awareness about the area. In particular they should undertake to build greater awareness among their people concerning the two conflicting rights in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, coupling a recognition of the urgency and justice of the Palestinian cause, with a parallel recognition of the urgency of Israel's right to a peaceful and secure existence. In addition, an understanding of the external forces which have exacerbated Lebanon's conflicts

could lead to a greater compassion for the suffering of its people and willingness to assist in the task of reconstruction.

We also affirm the importance of dialogue between the faith groups in Canada. As the process of dialogue strengthens the ties of trust and understanding among Christians, Jews and Muslims in this country, we may begin to share with each other our differing perspectives on the Middle East. Our hope and prayer is that each party in such a dialogue will receive an open hearing from the others, and, through listening to the others, find its own understanding enriched.

*Excerpts from “The Middle East”, IAC report, 1991*¹⁰

With regard to the Gulf War, the churches needed to ask a number of questions of themselves and of their governments as the world slipped into a conflict of monumental proportions. We need to ask some basic questions about the conflict itself:

a) Who was the enemy? If it was Saddam Hussein, then why did the nations arrayed against Iraq provide Saddam with the tools of oppression and aggression that enabled him to move the way he did against Kuwait, and his own people?

b) What were we for in this conflict? What or whom did we support? If it was respect for national sovereignty etc., then why have we sat back while Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza, while Turkey occupied northern Cyprus, while Morocco occupied Western Sahara, while Israel occupied south Lebanon, while Syria occupied northern and eastern Lebanon?

c) Who were the victims in this conflict? First and foremost, they were the same as those who were going into the conflict: the ones who had the least to lose, the people of the Middle East themselves. Did we have their interests, their future, their faces in mind? The ones who had the least to lose were those who already suffered from economic disparities, lack of human rights, lack of political freedoms in the region, and the indebted third world countries as a whole where oil costs (paid in hard currency) have soared. It was these people who were watching trillions of dollars being soaked up in useless wars.

d) Who were the winners in this conflict? ‘Nobody’ is the answer—except maybe the arms merchants. War has no winners. Witness the victory over Germany in 1945 translated into forty years of potential ‘mutually assured destruction’, with the division of the world into two heavily armed camps. This Persian Gulf war is yielding a legacy of bitterness and instability, rekindling and heightening the suspicion, misunderstanding, and historical animosity reaching back to the Crusades and beyond, on a racial (Arab) and inter-faith (Muslim, Eastern Christian) level. Another way to look at the issue of victims and winners is to rephrase the question and ask “Whose side was God on in this war?” The answer must be on the side of those who suffer, on all sides. The deepest solidarity in this conflict will be the solidarity of the victims, and especially the dead and wounded, of all sides.

...

Finally, as Christians, we have to ask ourselves what we are doing to bring about peace and reconciliation. What are we saying to our government? How are we taking a stand that is at once prophetic and pastoral, in the midst of hype, stereotypes and military jingoism? Where is God’s peace in this confused and misleading time, and how can we contribute to its realization in the interest of the people of the Middle East—Muslim, Christian and Jew—and of us all?

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*Excerpt from “The Middle East-Palestine” IAC report, 2002*¹⁵

We believe the following are critical components of a just resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

- Israelis must be convinced that the Palestinians and their Arab neighbours recognize the rights of Israel to exist within secure borders.
- Palestinians must be convinced that Israel accepts the establishment of a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. This means that Israel must end its occupation of these territories. No new settlements can be built, and existing settlements must be dismantled or otherwise disposed of according to the terms of a negotiated settlement.
- An international peacekeeping force, agreed to by both Israel and the Palestinian authority must oversee the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and provide security for both sides until a peace agreement can be fully implemented.
- An arrangement must be negotiated by which Jerusalem can be shared by the two peoples and the three faiths for whom it is a holy city.
- Israel must commit itself to address the issue of the right of return for Palestinian refugees. In addition, the Palestinians, the Arab countries and the world community must demonstrate flexibility and willingness to address the needs of a refugee population which has been in limbo for three generations.

*Excerpt from “The Things that Make for Peace,” response to Overture No. 6 (2007) re economic advocacy and peace in Israel and Palestine, IAC report, 2009*¹⁷

God creates and loves all peoples, regardless of nationality or creed, and wants justice and peace for all (Micah 4:3-4, Isaiah 45:22-23) because the earth is the Lord’s (Isaiah 45:18).

This love of God for all stands against all ideologies that carry messages of a nationalism rooted in hatred and of religious exclusiveness. God’s unconditional love revealed in Jesus calls humanity to live with mutual respect and harmony with neighbours (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 7:12). God draws us into working for peace and for justice for all, especially the oppressed and vulnerable (Micah 6:8, Luke 4:17-21). Peace is impossible without justice.

“The Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation” (1954) calls the church to “denounce and resist every form of tyranny” (section 6). Living Faith (8.5.2) declares, “We know that nations have fought in self-defence and that war, at times, may be unavoidable. But the tragic evil that comes with war, the slaughter of men, women and children must rouse us to work for peace.” With this in mind, this report moves from lament to action in challenging the powerful through whatever peaceful means are available to us, and in challenging all of us to work for peace.

God’s vision of peace with justice moves us beyond oppression, insecurity and injustice in the Middle East. We are called to be agents of peace, not for reasons of personal or national security, but because of our new nature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). We claim Jesus’ mission as our own...We yearn and work toward the day when God’s peace will embrace all people, especially the ones who cry to God for justice...

*Excerpts from “Christian Zionism – Implications for Peace and Justice Between the Jewish and Palestinian Peoples”, IAC report, 2012*²⁰

At the heart of Christian Zionism is the belief that the modern State of Israel is divinely ordained and scripturally determined to have a central role in ushering in the end of history. The precondition of Christ's return is that Jews (who have been chosen to do God's work) must return to Palestine in fulfillment of biblical prophecies. They must establish their state in the whole of Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel), including Jerusalem, which has been given by God to Jews exclusively as an eternal inheritance. The Jewish temple must be rebuilt in order to usher in the second coming of Christ.

Accordingly, since Christian Zionists believe that the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the extension of Israel's boundaries in 1967 are a divine fulfillment of promises to the patriarchs and a precursor to the immediate second coming of Christ, they endeavour to actively participate in bringing what they believe are God's plans to completion by supporting the extension of Israel's boundaries and settlements. They also encourage people to reject any peace process between Israel and Palestinians and the establishment of a Palestinian state because they believe these actions would be contrary to God's will. In this light, all aspirations of the Palestinian people to their own country in parts of the "Holy Land" must be rejected. Christian Zionists also tend to ignore the presence and undervalue the significance of Christian Palestinians.

The working groups of the Committee on Church Doctrine and the International Affairs Committee agreed that this interpretation is at variance with the teaching of Scripture concerning both the general resurrection and judgment. In Reformed theology as expressed in the subordinate standards of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Westminster Confession of Faith and Living Faith, the kingdom of God is not primarily an earthly reign bounded by time, race or geography but is Good News centred in the person and work of Jesus Christ and is directed to all people everywhere. Reformed Christians generally believe that the 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20 are symbolic. Furthermore, the events related to and the time of Christ's return, are the sole purview of God. The day of Jesus' return is unknown to us and cannot be influenced through human effort. In the meantime, efforts among all peoples to express love, peace and justice in the world are the clear mandate of those who would follow Jesus faithfully.

Nevertheless, many Christians, especially in the United States, accept the premises of Christian Zionism and believe that the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and Israel's capture of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 as a fulfillment of prophecy. In recent decades, Christian Zionists have supported the settler movement and its Jewish theological supporters, both in Israel and the West as the working out of the Divine Plan, leading to the Second Coming. They play a significant role in influencing public opinion and, certainly in the United States, government policy towards Israel.

Given the implications Christian Zionism has for Palestinians, it is important to hear what leaders in the Palestinian Christian community have said about Christian Zionism and what this means for peace with justice. This is in keeping with the longstanding practice of the International Affairs Committee of listening to church partners on the ground.

The Voice of Palestinian Christians

The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism was released on August 22, 2006. The following points are taken from the Declaration. For the full statement, see Jerusalem testament: Palestinian Christians Speak, Melanie A. May, 1988-2008, pp. 123-124.

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- Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel...
- We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupt the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation.
- We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. In turn they are called to honor the dignity of every human being and to respect their inalienable rights...
- The establishment of the illegal settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall on confiscated Palestinian land undermine the viability of a Palestinian state as well as peace and security in the entire region.
- We call upon Christians in churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism.
- We affirm that Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice, and security.

The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism concludes with the following passage from scripture:

- “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19).

The Declaration was signed by:

- Patriarch Michael Sabbah, Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem;
- Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem;
- Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East; and
- Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

...

Conclusion

We rarely hear the voices of courageous Israeli Jews and Palestinians (Christian and Muslim) deeply committed to peace with justice and two states living side by side in peace. These prophetic voices are marginalized in this drama. They strive to maintain a hopeful prophetic presence when there seems to be so little hope. These are voices that need to be heard.

Regrettably, Christian Zionist organizations have not demonstrated a commitment to supporting and working for peace with justice between Israelis and Palestinians. The present and future consequences of the policies advocated by Christian Zionist organizations are potentially disastrous, not only for Palestinians but also for the Jewish population of Israel itself. The only solution to this conflict that serves the long term interests of both peoples is an honourable peace, a peace that provides security and justice for both peoples.

¹ A&P 1967, pp. 70-71, 103

² A&P 1972, pp. 61-62

³ A&P 1978, pp. 335, 36

⁴ A&P 1983, pp. 374, 79

⁵ A&P 1984, pp. 389-390, 38

⁶ A&P 1987, pp. 340-341, 33

⁷ A&P 1988, pp. 366-367, 51

⁸ A&P 1989, pp. 367-369, 63

⁹ A&P 1990, pp. 395-400, 62-63

- ¹⁰ A&P 1991, pp. 301-304, 308, 56-57
- ¹¹ A&P 1992, pp. 341-356, 42
- ¹² A&P 1993, pp. 252-253, 38
- ¹³ A&P 1994, pp. 314, 68
- ¹⁴ A&P 1999, pp. 285-286, 45
- ¹⁵ A&P 2002, pp. 279-281, 16-17
- ¹⁶ A&P 2008, pp. 271-281, 18
- ¹⁷ A&P 2009, pp. 288-299, 18
- ¹⁸ A&P 2009, p. 40
- ¹⁹ A&P 2011, pp. 268-271, 31, 34
- ²⁰ A&P 2012, pp. 289-292, 35
- ²¹ A&P 2012, pp. 35
- ²² A&P 2013, pp. 278-286, 22, 24
- ²³ A&P 2013, pp. 286-288, 24
- ²⁴ A&P 2014, pp. 290-291, 22
- ²⁵ A&P 2015, pp. 294-309, 26
- ²⁶ A&P 2017, pp. 20, 298-301

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Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament

The Church Speaks

- In the face of the dangers which confront our world and our country, Presbyterians are urged to commit themselves before God to work for peace, to pray for peace, and to be a peacemaker in the fullest possible way.⁷
- No nation, including our own, has the right before God to resort to nuclear weapons, either offensively or defensively.⁷
- We condemn the proliferation of nuclear weapons and encourage all to use whatever means possible, appropriate to the Gospel, to end their production and prevent their use.⁵
- Canada should declare itself a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.¹⁰
- Research and development of biological weapons should cease and present stocks of such weapons destroyed.¹
- The production, sale and use of all landmines should be banned under a UN convention, and initiatives on rehabilitation offered to victims of landmines.¹⁵
- In order to reduce the contribution of trade in small arms to fueling and prolonging conflict, international criteria should be established in which nations
 - adopt global transfer principles or criteria that would prevent the shipment of small arms to countries at war or where there are serious human rights violations, or to countries in which such arms are likely to undermine security and development efforts.
 - agree to strengthen and harmonize national regulations on small arms that would include prohibiting possession of semi-automatic and automatic rifles, machine guns and all light weapons by those other than authorized entities.
 - include small arms as part of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to promote greater transparency.
 - ensure that the small arms issue remains a priority in Canadian foreign policy and is integrated into wider conflict prevention, poverty reduction and security policy programming.¹⁷

The Church Acts

Nuclear Weapons

1960: The 86th GA urged the GOC to use its influence in international affairs to: a) stop the testing of nuclear weapons, b) bring a halt to the production of nuclear weapons under conditions of international inspection and control, c) press toward the prohibition of nuclear warfare, and d) accelerate international co-operation in the development of atomic power for peaceful purposes.²

1963: The ESA reported to the 89th GA that after two years of study and consultation it was unable to develop a consensus on a response to a 1961 overture from the Presbytery of Victoria calling for a statement on modern nuclear weapons. “Rather than present to the Assembly a statement reduced to a minimal agreement, we wish to share this tension with the church and thus to stimulate discussion on a wider scale.”³

1978: The 104th GA set aside time to pray for the UN Special Session on Disarmament,* and sent assurances of support to the UN and a commendation to the prime minister of Canada for his

* The United Nations Special Session on Disarmament was meeting the same week as General Assembly.

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strong presentations to the UN and to NATO. * A public review of Canadian military procurement and sales was called for and study of Canada's role in disarmament and the role of world peace by Parliament and congregations.⁴

1982: The 108th GA adopted "Commitment to Life in a Nuclear Age" (See, The Church Reflects, below) and commended it to congregations for study and action. The statement was also sent to the prime minister, the leaders of opposition parties, the premiers of the provinces, the secretary-general of the United Nations and the ambassadors of the Soviet Union and the United States. GA also expressed its strong opposition to the testing of cruise missiles in Canada, prayed for the 2nd UN Special Session on Disarmament being held concurrently in New York City.⁵ A statement with recommendations prepared by the IAC was commended to congregations for study and comment prior to consideration by the 109th (1983) GA.⁶

1983: The 109th GA adopted a revision of the 1982 IAC statement and recommendations, including an endorsement of a "strategy of suffocation"^{**}, a contribution of 0.1% of the annual arms budget to positive disarmament measures,^{***} and use of GOC influence within NATO and NORAD to move away from the brink of world destruction and toward alternative measures for seeking world security such as multilateral disarmament and strengthening UN peacekeeping capabilities. A Day of Prayer for Peace was set for October 23, 1983.⁷

1984: The 110th GA commended the parliamentary leaders of Canada for their peace initiatives, especially in their attempts to mobilize middle powers, both east and west, to use their influence in moderating the current military climate. It urged the GOC to persist in overtures to nuclear superpowers requesting more reliance on diplomatic negotiation rather than on military aggressiveness.⁸

1985: The BCL drew the attention of the 111th GA to the problems of relying on the manufacture and sale of conventional armaments to Third World nations as a means of stimulating the economy, noting that: "It is not a question of defence, but the moral question of using armaments as a means of creating jobs." Study resources were available for interested congregations and individuals. Also on the subject of nuclear weapons, GA called on the GOC to renounce the policy of general deterrence, and to urge NATO to renounce 'first' use, to cease arming with counterforce weapons for preemptive attack, and to abandon military strategies contingent upon the use of nuclear weapons. It also called upon the GOC to plan for functioning in a world free of nuclear threat posturing and to provide leadership in seeking global nuclear disarmament and peace. In addition it called on the GOC to decline the invitation of the U.S. government to participate in the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") research program as a dangerous new stage of the arms spiral, but instead to commit Canadian technology to the verification of disarmament agreements.^{****} Individuals and Sessions were encouraged to pray for divine

* North Atlantic Treaty Organization: a military alliance of the US, Canada and nations of western Europe. NORAD is a bilateral defensive agreement between Canada and the US to co-ordinate continental defence, especially against air and missile attacks.

** The "strategy of suffocation" consisted of working toward a comprehensive test ban on the development of new nuclear weapons, agreement to stop the flight testing of new strategic delivery vehicles, phasing out the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and an agreement to limit and reduce military spending on new strategic nuclear weapons systems.

*** A suggestion of former UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim.

**** For definitions of "strict" deterrence vs. "general" deterrence see The Church Reflects, below. Counterforce weapons are targeted at the weapons of the enemy: e.g. a missile aimed at a missile to prevent its launch or to destroy it en route to its target. In 1985 the GOC was considering an invitation from the US to participate in creating a space-based counterforce system, the Strategic Defense Initiative, dubbed "Star Wars" by the media.

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guidance for those responsible for disarmament matters, to discuss the issues and to engage in local community groups for education and advocacy.⁹

1988: The 114th GA recommended congregations study the Project Ploughshares document “Peacebuilding: The Church Response to Canadian Defence Policy”^{*} and endorsed peacemaking as a primary concern, giving the IAC a mandate to explore ways of implementing a peacemaking program across the whole church. It called on the GOC to declare Canada a nuclear-weapons free zone^{**} and indicated its opposition to the proposal to purchase nuclear-powered submarines.¹⁰

A nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) is a specified region in which countries commit themselves not to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons. Three such zones exist today (Latin America, South Pacific, Southeast Asia), and two others have been negotiated (Africa, Central Asia)

1998: The 124th GA asked congregations and presbyteries to study the 1982 document “Commitment to Peace in a Nuclear Age” along with resources from Project Ploughshares, to meet with Members of Parliament urging Canadian support for negotiations toward a UN Nuclear Convention and a change in NATO defence policy, and to write to the prime minister, minister of foreign affairs and leaders of the opposition along the same lines. GA called on the GOC to work with other nations to initiate immediately and conclude by the year 2000, a convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of nuclear weapons.^{11****}

2004: The 130th GA called on the Moderator to write to the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence recommending Canada not participate in the Ballistic Missile Defence system.¹²

Armed aggression

1985: The 111th GA appealed to the GOC to speak strongly through its diplomatic contacts against invasion of the territory of others (such as the recent invasion of Afghanistan by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.)¹³

1990: The 116th GA urged the GOC to encourage the U.S. administration to accept responsibility for the damages caused by its invasion of Panama^{****} and make reparations giving priority to the needs of the poor.¹⁴

Landmines

1995: The 121st GA commended the Defence Department and the Canadian contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations for their assistance with mine clearing operations, especially in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and the former Yugoslavia, encouraged the GOC to support and assist the establishment and enforcement of a world-wide UN convention banning the production, sale, and

* The GOC had issued a White Paper on Defence in 1987. The Project Ploughshares document was a response to the White Paper. An open letter from several church leaders to the Prime Minister severely criticized the White Paper as a “lapse into alarmist, anti-Soviet cold war rhetoric [which is] counter-productive to the pursuit of international reconciliation.” (cited in IAC report)

** In the 1980s, many municipalities in the US and Canada declared themselves NWFZ. Also some countries (e.g. New Zealand, 1984) did so unilaterally.

*** Concern over potential use of nuclear weapons was heightened in 1998 by the tests conducted by both India and Pakistan.

**** After a long period of dispute with General Manuel Noriega, president of Panama, who had already been indicted by US grand juries on charges of drug trafficking, the US invaded Panama in December 1989, arrested Noriega and brought him to trial. The bombing of Panama during the invasion caused widespread death and destruction.

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use of all landmines and urged the GOC to undertake further initiatives in rehabilitating the victims of landmines.¹⁵

Arms trade

1995: The 121st GA sent greetings to the South African Council of Churches and the South African Catholic Bishops Conference expressing support for their call for a moratorium on all arms imports and exports in South Africa and requested the GOC to urge the South African government to cease the export of arms to participants in regional African conflicts.¹⁶

Sanctions imposed on South Africa during apartheid curtailed its participation in the international arms trade. But the apartheid government developed its own state-owned and supported industry, ARMSCOR. ARMSCOR became the world's 10th largest manufacturer of arms and thrived on supplying regional African conflicts, including a \$6 billion sale of arms to the former government of Rwanda in 1994.*

The post-apartheid government of South Africa was under pressure to show progress on the Reconstruction and Development Program. President Nelson Mandela's endorsement of the arms industry as a source of employment and revenue left many fearful that the need for foreign investment in industries such as ARMSCOR would prevail over more humane and forward-looking economic strategies.

** Armaments Corporation of South Africa*

2006: The 132nd GA commended the GOC for its leadership to date on efforts to control the proliferation and misuse of small arms and requested it work with like-minded states at the 2006 UN Review of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects.¹⁷

2015: The 141st GA recommended that the Moderator write to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Defence regarding the sale of light armed vehicles to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia requesting assurances that Saudi Arabia will not use the vehicles against civilians engaged in peaceful activities.* The 141st GA recommended that the Moderator write to members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs encouraging the Committee to hold public hearings to examine Canada's export controls of weapons and military equipment as the last study was done in 1991.¹⁸

2016: The 142nd GA recommended that the Moderator write to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting information on how the GOC will ensure that military equipment sold to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will not be used against civilians engaged in peaceful protest activities in Saudi Arabia or in other countries, and requesting that the most recent report on human rights in Saudi Arabia be made public.¹⁹

The Church Reflects

*Excerpts from "Commitment to Life in a Nuclear Age", BCL report, 1982*⁵

We confess our guilt in the sins of our age symbolized by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the irresponsible use and marketing of nuclear technology. The threat of nuclear confrontation and of nuclear accidents frightens us. We confess our despair at our apparent

* The crown corporation Commercial Corporation of Canada helped broker a \$15 billion contract for the sale of light armed vehicles to Saudi Arabia by the London Ontario-based General Dynamics Land Systems Canada. The sale was widely covered in the Canadian media in early 2015 with reports that Saudi Arabian blogger Raif Badawi, a champion of free speech, had received a 10 year sentence and 1,000 lashes for insulting Islam. As of July 2015, Badawi had received 50 lashes but subsequent floggings were postponed.

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helplessness in stemming the tide of this destructive force. Yet, in our guilt, fear and despair as God's people, we hold to the hope and the forgiveness of the gospel of grace. Through the cross and resurrection, Jesus Christ has overcome the evil and destructive forces of this world. As God's people, therefore, we are ... empowered through Christ to stand against the forces of destruction. We are moved to share in Christ's concern for the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, Giver of Life, we condemn the proliferation of nuclear weapons and encourage all to use whatever means possible appropriate to the Gospel to end their production and prevent their use.

*Excerpts from "Disarmament and Peace", IAC report, 1983*⁷

The whole world and humanity in particular have been created by God our Father for his own glory, and is the object of his redeeming love. ... [D]ue to the recent escalation of weapons capable of destroying all or much of earthly life and all of civilized life, the world Christ died to save is threatened with a nuclear holocaust. ... [M]illions of the world's poor are facing starvation and death by disease because of the diversion of billions of dollars for destruction which could be used for development. ... [I]t is the calling of the church, the body of Christ, to serve as a "steward of creation", and its members as ministers of reconciliation.

*Excerpts from "Nuclear Disarmament and Peacemaking", IAC report, 1985*⁹

Several churches have recently discussed the ethics of strict deterrence, but a more timely issue is the ethics of general deterrence. For strict deterrence, a nation maintains a minimum adequate arsenal to deter an adversary from attacking it with nuclear arms. The intent of strict deterrence is the avoidance of nuclear attack. General deterrence threatens resort to nuclear retaliation in response to a perceived threat to national interest. A nuclear arsenal is an instrument for projecting national power through threat-posturing and potential brinkmanship. The intent of general deterrence is hegemony of international dominance. ... Counter-force weaponry is used by the initiator of the exchange to minimize the retaliatory potential of its victim. Under strict deterrence, balanced multilateral disarmament could proceed indefinitely. However, a reliance on perceived arms superiority for hegemony militates against sincere arms reduction.

The burden of defending general deterrence is to find issues of national influence, short of avoiding extinction, which justify the endangerment of a billion lives, and which are soluble through nuclear intimidation. Inasmuch as the most recent cycles of the arms race have involved counterforce weapons, a rejection of general deterrence on ethical grounds implies a rejection of these weapons systems.

"Star Wars" is a deceptively enticing logical extension of counterforce. In a counterforce exchange, weapons are aimed at other weapons and casualties are a secondary effect. ... A world with starving people and limited resources can ill afford to expend hundreds of billions of dollars launching a Maginot line into space, especially when the accompanying arms race makes the world less safe. ... One of the most compelling objections is the exploitation of an idolatry of technology as deliverer.

*Excerpt from "An Escalating Nuclear Threat", IAC report, 1998*¹¹

The recent tests in South Asia are an example of what the world will continue to look like if the western nuclear powers continue to state that nuclear weapons are necessary for NATO security. ... The development of more nuclear weapons not only puts scarce resources into an arms buildup, but also has severe environmental implications affecting not only India and Pakistan, but the planet. ... At present, NATO is in the midst of a strategic review and pressure from the Canadian public could be influential. Churches and other groups in civil society have both a moral responsibility and considerable capacity to become directly involved in the prevention of war.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND DISARMAMENT

*Excerpts from “The World-wide Campaign to ban landmines”, IAC report, 1995*¹⁵

An estimated 85-100 million “anti-personnel” mines have been left in the aftermath of war or are still being used in 60 countries around the world. They turn productive, arable land into a wasteland and remain lethal long after a war has ended. Landmines indiscriminately kill soldiers, rural workers, children and animals. Victims are ten times more likely to be civilian than military. Landmines depopulate large areas and disrupt economic life.

...

The cost of clearing landmines varies from \$300 to \$1,000 US dollars each, and because they can be spread randomly from aircraft or can be fired from weapons, their placement is difficult to map. Increasingly, sophisticated mines are not easily detected, and only a manual search with minesweepers guarantees clearance. Poorer countries simply cannot afford such dangerous and costly work.

*Excerpt from “God is Our Refuge—Security in an Insecure World—Part Two”, IAC report, 2004*²⁰

The rationale for ever more deadly weapons speak of strength and power. But this power still comes up short as measured by God’s plan and intention for justice. Military might cannot eliminate our vulnerability. But in the Body of Christ the barriers of hostility which separate humanity are broken down (Ephesians 2:14-16) and we find that true peace which is founded on God’s justice. ... We are called to a new and clearer understanding of how God provides for a reign of justice and peace. We are called to proclaim this vision to our leaders and mandate them to seek security for all in fulfilling God’s purpose for rule: to establish justice and bring peace. For today, as well as then, security does not rest in the might of arms, but in God, who is our refuge.

*Excerpt from “Defence and Security” IAC report 2004*²¹

The most immediate threats to the security of people around the world come in the form of unmet basic needs, denial of human rights, political and economic exclusion, social disintegration, and the related escalation of criminal and political violence. While Canadian values will always encourage efforts toward international peace and security out of a deeply held sense of common humanity, Canadians also recognize that their long-term security depends on a stable, prosperous, rules-based international order. Furthermore, as a country with extraordinary levels of prosperity and security at home, Canada has the opportunity and responsibility to make a contribution towards building international peace and security. This contribution must be made in co-operation with others through the United Nations and other global and regional institutions and coalitions.

¹ A&P 1989, pp. 347-348, 69

² A&P 1960, pp. 304, 50

³ A&P 1963, pp. 318-319, 56

⁴ A&P 1978, pp. 335-336, 35

⁵ A&P 1982, pp. 316-317, 58, 85

⁶ A&P 1982, pp. 372-374, 53, 76

⁷ A&P 1983, pp. 372-374, 44, 78

⁸ A&P 1984, pp. 389, 38

⁹ A&P 1985, pp. 327, 348-350, 33-35

¹⁰ A&P 1988, pp. 361-363, 35

¹¹ A&P 1998, pp. 299-300, 33

¹² A&P 2004, pp. 316, 15

¹³ A&P 1985, p. 35

¹⁴ A&P 1990, pp. 392-394, 62

¹⁵ A&P 1995, pp. 263, 33

¹⁶ A&P 1995, pp. 263-264, 33

¹⁷ A&P 2006, pp. 286, 21

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¹⁸ A&P 2015, pp. 305-6, 27

¹⁹ A&P 2016, pp. 313-4, 23

²⁰ A&P, 2004, p. 311

²¹ A&P, 2004, p.314