

## CHAPTER 3

### WORLD METHODIST CONFERENCE

The World Methodist Conference meeting in Seoul in 2006 adopted the following Resolutions and Statements:

#### 3.1 RESOLUTION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

The World Methodist Conference

##### **I Recognising**

- a) John Wesley's abhorrence of what he called the "horrid trade" of slavery;
- b) That the commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Act for the abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807 will provide unprecedented opportunities to acknowledge our histories and tell anew a Christian story of creation and redemption.

##### **II Acknowledging**

- c) The progress made to release women, men and children from the dehumanizing and shameful practices of slavery;
- d) That the process of emancipation of all people from all expressions of enslavement is scandalously unfinished work, and;
- e) The substantial work currently being undertaken in their campaign by the "Set All Free" project to the Churches together in England (CTE) and other agencies around the world.

##### **III Resolves**

- f) To all the churches to campaign for the recognition of African slavery as a crime against humanity and for appropriate public policies that will seek social and racial reconciliation.
- g) To encourage and where possible resource member churches of the World Methodist Conference to protest against human trafficking and all other manifestations of slavery across the world;
- h) To call on their Government and Institutions to give the highest priority to enabling legislation to bring an end to the causes practices and outcomes of slavery;
- i) To explore what further work can be undertaken as a global body to help tackle the evil of slavery in its many forms including cultural and economic.

#### 3.2 THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

##### **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

##### **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education

##### **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

**Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

- Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five

**Goal 5: Improve maternal health**

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

**Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

**Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

**Goal 8: Development a global partnership for development**

- Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction-internationally
- Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction
- Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term
- In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technology.

### **3.3 RESOLUTIONS ON NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION**

Whereas: The World Methodist Council meeting in Seoul, Korea celebrates the reconciling yearnings and efforts of people worldwide recognizing the mutual responsibilities associated with living in peace as a world family; and,

Whereas: That for more than fifty (50) years, the international community has struggled to make the acquisition and development of nuclear weapons more difficult and less desirable, resulting in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which provides the current framework for cooperation in such efforts; and,

Whereas: While respecting the sovereignty and security concerns of individual nations, we are concerned that recent statements from some leaders in Iran and the increasing isolation do not foster a climate of trust and cooperation within the world family; and,

Whereas: We are profoundly concerned by the reports of a global clandestine market trading in weapon technologies and nuclear materials from various arsenals;,

Whereas: The United Nations Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are the proper vehicles for both negotiations on the development and the monitoring of nuclear materials therefore all nations should be dissuaded from acting unilaterally in such matters.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the World Methodist Conference:

1. Calls on the international community to meet their collective obligations to pursue a peaceful resolution to the current impasse.
2. Affirms our vision of the immediate reduction and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.
3. Urges all nations to become a party to and comply with the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
4. Calls on our member churches to earnestly pray for and fervently work to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and the safe management of fissile material.

### **3.4 YOUTH COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS FOR 2006 WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL**

#### **Resolution 1: Committee Name**

**The Youth** Committee name shall be changed to “Youth and Young Adults Committee” to more accurately reflect the language used throughout the world to describe individuals aged 18-35 years.

#### **Resolution 2: Membership of the Youth Committee**

In the past, there has been a verbal understanding that members of the Youth Committee should be under 25 years of age when they begin their term. The Youth Committee asks that this understanding of Youth Committee membership be changed to meet the realities and understandings of youth work throughout the world.

Members of the Youth Committee should now be under 30 years of age when they begin their term, with the hope that several members are under 25 years so that they might be able to serve more than one term on the Committee.

Membership of the Youth Committee must include representation from all regions of the world.

The Chairperson (and any other of the Committee), as well as the four at-large youth members, must have significant church experience with youth and young adult organizing on national or regional levels.

### 3.5 SOCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

#### *Declaration of purpose*

The existence of a Social and International Affairs Committee (SIAC) within the World Methodist Council (WMC) is entirely consistent with Wesleyan mission praxis. Within such mission framework no dualism exists between evangelism and social responsibility. John Wesley provides our model: vibrant evangelist and itinerant open-air preacher, who proclaimed the Gospel in a manner that inspired and caused people to embrace social causes in the name of Jesus Christ. Secular historians attest to the fact that Wesley's influence and the consequent evangelical revival, among other factors, spared Britain the horror of a bloody revolution similar to France's.

The Evangelical Revival gave rise to a new social conscience born in transformed minds and hearts. The effects upon society were dramatic and measurable prison reform, health services, improved working conditions in factories and mines, education accessible to the poor, abolishment of slavery and the slave-trade, abstinence etc – a new passion for social justice. In this process of social conversation, Wesley was pre-eminent. 'For Wesley was both a preacher of the gospel and a social righteousness..... The man who restored to a nation its soul'. The integral vision that defined "works of mercy" and 'works of piety' as indivisible parts of the Christian mission imperative expressed the holistic understanding of Christian mission in the Wesleyan tradition that should continue to shape our own thinking and actions.

The World Methodist Council should thus function in a manner that demonstrably gives expression to mission that combines both personal and social holiness. SIAC, Youth, World Evangelism, Education and Stewardship Committees should not be viewed as distinct items of business on the agenda. Taken together they constitute the fullness of our mission in the world.

SIAC expresses the Wesleyan conviction that the ministry of Jesus proclaimed and inaugurated a radically new and different social dispensation, with values and ethics that challenge the prevailing status quo. The Charter in Luke 4, encapsulating the direct action of the Holy Spirit and the prophetic thread discernible throughout the Scriptures, constantly challenges the church to strengthen its endeavours to pursue justice, remove the causes of human need and transform social structures. The doctrines of creation and redemption, the ethics of God's Kingdom and the mission of love leave us with no other alternative.

In the globalising world environment, the incumbency upon us to work co-operatively in union with each other in respect of social action and transformation has become increasingly vital. It is precisely the transcendence of parochial, national interests in the cause of mutual concern and action that gives credibility to the mission of the church. The World Methodist Council seeks to be a forum that listens carefully in order to speak authoritatively, compassionately, intelligently and faithfully into situations throughout the world whenever poverty, persecution, deprivation, injustice, oppression and marginalisation are inflicted on human beings. The plight of the poor, the demons of racism, discrimination and sexism, the HIV/AIDS catastrophe, the struggles of the landless, the revenge of war violence, the scourge of disease, the persecution of minorities, brutalisation of the environment and the spectre of ecological disaster and the curse of corruption all demands that we strengthen our commitment to join faithful, fruitful and prophetic ministry.

The purpose and objectives of SIAC are to strengthen the prophetic voice of World Methodism as an intrinsic counterpart to the vibrant preacher message so that the fullest dimensions of salvation in Christ may be manifested.

SIAC also endeavours to serve as a spur to evoke deepened conscience and sensitivity within the discourse and activities of the WMC seeking to ensure that the social responses and international actions of the WMC are well researched, bearing the hallmark of theological integrity.

Some of these components include:

- **AWARENESS** of social issues and matters of international concern
- **ADVISORY** body to the Council and Officers
- **ADVOCACY** in respect of particular issues/causes
- **ACTION** where such may be appropriate
- **ACTIVE** participation in international forums
- **APPRAISAL** of social injustice through the promotion of research
- **ASSOCIATION** with similar structures/committees within other world communions e.g. Lutheran World Federation
- **ACCESS** for voiceless or disenfranchised peoples
- **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** of churches and members who are involved in ministries that have had a transforming and healing impact on particular situations of brokenness or injustice
- **AFFIRMATION** of affected people throughout the world in the midst of their struggle for peace and justice

The kingdom of God comes not only when individuals repent and turn to Christ also when society is transformed in accordance with God's revealed moral and moral and social standards. SIAC affirms deeply the importance of personal conversion and growth in discipleship. However, our conviction is that the Kingdom purposes of God are fuller. The Good News, that the Kingdom has arrived, is also about society and the harmony of the whole created order. It is our hope and quest that the growth of the Kingdom will advance in both the personal and social dimensions of life. The two cannot be separated; the Good News is about the transformation of all aspects of creation and life in accordance with the purposes expressed in the Scriptures.

As John Wesley expressed it: 'there is no holiness but social holiness'  
"England Before and After Wesley"; Bready, Wesley

### **3.6 STATEMENT ON IRAQ**

Meeting in Oslo, Norway, host country of the Nobel Peace Prize, and under compulsion of the teachings of Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council (WMC), believing that with sufficient resolve and determination from all sides honourable means for ensuring stability and defusing the potential for bloodshed can be found:

Called upon all Methodist communities in the 132 countries represented within the Council to continue praying and working, using every means at their disposal, for peaceful resolution of the situation in Iraq.

In furtherance hereof, requests the President and General Secretary of the WMC and leaders and members of all Methodist churches to contact the Office of the Security Council Affairs Division, United National (United National Headquarters, First Ave. 46<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10017) to urge the Security Council to remain firm on the following principles;

1. That the Republic of Iraq comply with **U.N. Security Council Resolution 687** and any further Security Council Resolution that may be adopted in this regard. In the event of non-compliance the United Nations should be the sole and final arbitrator to determine consequential actions.
2. that since the United States has taken pre-emptive action and did not comply with the U.N. Charter of June 1945 which states that a Sovereign Nation may not go to war unless the Security Council, “has taken measures to maintain International Peace and Security”, and,
  - since the stated purpose of this pre-emptive action to decrease terrorism and to uncover weapons of mass destruction has not yet been accomplished
  - in light of the moral and spiritual ramifications of this war on the tens of thousands of innocent families who have lost loved ones.
  - In light of decades to come which will be required for recovery
  - In light of the impact on local and global economies

We urge our member churches in the USA and UK to communicate with their President, Congressional Representatives and/or Prime Minister and other Coalition Partner Leaders and the Leaders of Palestine and Israel calling for a ceasefire and immediate pursuit of diplomatic measures towards an end of war until a resolution of conflicts has been achieved.

**The Methodist Peace Prize, awarded annually by the World Methodist Council to individuals or organizations that have acted significantly in peacemaking express the conviction of the people called Methodist that the way of peace is the way of our Lord.**

### **3.7 STATEMENT ON REUNIFICATION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

We join with our Christian brothers and sisters in Korea who have addressed the issue of the reunification of their Nation.

We applaud the historic summit that occurred between the North and the South Leaders, President Kim Dae Jung and Chairman Kim Jong – II pledged to work toward Korean reunification. We also commend the changes that have occurred since those talks such as reunion of separated families, ministerial level talks and other economic and social, cultural and sports exchanges including transportation through the demilitarized zone.

We call upon the member churches to engage in prayer of patience and to seek peace and reconciliation of the Korean people.

“Come now, Reunify”.

“Come now, Reunify”.

### **3.8 STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST**

Meeting in Oslo, Norway, host country of the Nobel Peace Prize, and under compulsion of teachings of Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council (WMC), believing that with sufficient resolve and determination from all sides honourable means for ensuring stability and defusing potential for bloodshed can be found:

- 1) The World Methodist Council affirms its statement which calls upon the governments Israel and Palestine to comply with all United Nations Resolutions pertaining to the Region and to cease violent acts and seek resolutions of their differences through peaceful means.
- 2) The World Methodist Council in view of the most recent escalation of violence in the Region further calls upon the United Nations to send peacekeeping missions to the regions of the countries bordering Lebanon and Egypt which will aid in bringing about stability in the Region.
- 3) The World Methodist Council calls upon its member churches to continue praying and working for a peaceful resolution of the issues involving Palestine and Israel.
- 4) The World Methodist Council directs that this statement be forwarded to the Governments of Israel and Palestine and also the appropriate authority of United Nations.

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### **3.9 STATEMENT REPUDIATING THE USE OF TORTURE**

The World Methodist Council Governments calls upon the President of the United States of America and other Coalition Governments to repudiate without equivocation all acts of torture as defined under the Geneva Convention against torture and other cruel and inhumane or degrading treatment or punish of persons apprehended as prisoners of war, and that the United States of America and other Coalition Governments refuse to send prisoners of war of enemy combatants to Nations that use torture in the interrogation of prisoners, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States of America, and to the Heads of the Coalition Governments.