THE ISLAND OF HOPE

AN ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

DOSSIER NO. 7

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Island of Hope Statement- Fiji Consultation	4
Youth Voices Against Globalization	17
Serve God Not Mammon Statement	19

INTRODUCTION

The world Council of Churches, The World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Council of European Churches have in 2001 organized consultations on churches' response to economic globalization. These consultations are part of a series which will take place regionally and globally till 2005. The idea is that after all consultations are done, an ecumenical group will be appointed to prepare a message of the churches on economic globalization which will be presented to churches and subsequently to the WCC Assembly in 2006.

This Dossier is composed of statements made by the consultations which were held in Budapest Hungary, June 2001 and Fiji- The Pacific in August 2001.

The Fiji Consultation was preceded by a consultation of Youth on the same subject. The youth statement is included as well.

This 7th dossier is named "The Island of Hope: An Alternative to Economic Globalization", in order to trigger thoughts and actions on alternatives to economic globalization from the islands of the Pacific Region and other regions of the world. A document on the "The Island of Hope" as a concept will be published and shared with the churches.

The dossier is aimed at only availing this information to our readers while inviting comments.

THE ISLAND OF HOPE - AN ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

AS representatives of fifty-one churches, ecumenical and civil society organizations, from twenty-nine countries, we met in Nadi, Fiji from August 12-16 at a Global Conference on Economic Globalization: The Island of Hope. We share the conviction of the Pacific Churches and commit ourselves to this vision as well:

"Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components of the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The Island of Hope is an alternative to the project of economic globalization which entails domination through an unjust economic system." ¹

As we begin the millennium the churches find themselves confronted by the consequences of the process of economic globalization. It has become apparent to many of us that the negative aspects of economic globalization are incompatible with the reign of God and our discipleship with Christ. There is something seriously wrong with an economic system that produces so much suffering and poverty, exploitation of labour and widespread environmental devastation.

cific Island of Fiji at the invitation of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Central to the meeting was the presentation of a document called "The Island of Hope" that will be distributed by the WCC together with this statement. For the Pacific Churches "The Island of Hope" represents life-centred values deeply rooted in Pacific communities, which provide an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity.

This global conference met in the Pa-

Today the ecumenical movement is faced with a profound challenge. This challenge is posed by a competing vision to that of *oikoumene*, the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth². This competing vision is part and parcel of economic globalization. In its negative effects economic globalization becomes an expression of the emerging global system of domination, of one ideology, one political system, one international coalition of the wealthy and the powerful.

The Christian vision of One World is a vision of compassion for the weak and the marginalized. It is a vision of cooperation with all people of goodwill in defense of creation. It is a vision of solidarity with those forced to survive the tidal waves of injustice sweeping across our globe.

² oikoumene is the Greek word for the whole inhabited earth, God's household of life; the word oikos means house or household so that economy is about the ordering of the household and ecology about its logic.

¹ from the Island of Hope : The Pacific Churches Response to Economic Globalization, p.. 13

Churches and many people have come to recognize that this is a "kairos" – a time for resistance and a time for alternatives. It is a time for the churches to offer prophetic guidance and leadership to the world. In order to do this the WCC has been

consulting its member churches around the world to find acceptable alternatives. Other consultations in Bangkok and Budapest helped churches to better

"The Island of Hope" represents life-centred values deeply rooted in Pacific communities, which provide an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity.

understand and challenge not only the logic of economic globalization, but also the underlying paradigm, the major actors, and the loss of sovereignty and democratic control it entails. In Fiji we were inspired by "The Island of Hope" presented to us by the churches of the Pacific Islands.

6

³ *Kairos* is another Greek word for the right moment, a moment of crisis and a chance for something new to begin, when a clear Christian witness is required. The "*kairos* document" was a wake up call in the struggle against apartheid.

VISION

The "Island of Hope" is a fitting expression of the global, ecumenical concept of the Kingdom of God in the Pacific context. Jesus called us into this Kingdom of God. God's inheritance is one of generosity and reciprocity and the sharing of communal resources. It requires hospitality to the stranger and the affirmation of all human beings as sisters and brothers in the family of God.

The values of globalization as the people of the Pacific experience them, stand in stark contrast to the values of the Kingdom taught by Jesus⁴, while the traditional values of the Pacific Island societies are similar to Kingdom values.

We are not saying that the traditional values of Pacific Island societies are identical with the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus. We are all too conscious that negative forces were also at work and traditional ideals were not always lived out in Pacific societies. However, if the best of Pacific's lived traditions are put together, they offer viable alternatives to the destructive ways associated with globalization.

"The Island of Hope" is life-centred, affirming the very soul of the Pacific Islanders. The concepts of **whenua**, **fenua**, **enua**, **vanua**⁵ all mean that the land is the people's identity, life and soul. Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea. The practical outcome of this understanding is communitarian sharing and distribution of resources with the absence of the selfish pursuit of wealth. While Western economics revolve around profit and economic growth,

the traditional economies of the Pacific are concerned with people and the total quality of their lives; caring and concern for others within the extended families and compassion for all people, especially for the sick and elderly are values of the communities; respect, hospitality, generosity, and forgiveness are other marks of the traditional communities. Nobody is excluded.

The land, the sea and people are integral parts of one entity. Subsistence farming, a sustainable agriculture and the sensitivity of the sacredness of the trees and the sea are part of their identity. While traditionally these values operated mainly within the context of the wider family or clan, Jesus challenges us to extend them to all, because we are all members of the family of God.

Over many years the World Council of Church has articulated criteria to help its members discern the difference between islands of hope and reefs of despair. In the presentation on the Island of Hope we recognize our own ecumenical journey. For example:

- Responsibility one of the oldest traditions of the Christian Church is that power and privilege carries equivalent social responsibility. The most powerful people, churches, nations and corporations bear the most responsibility for addressing the problems of the world. It is also true that we must be accountable for the consequences of our actions.
- Justice The Christian Churches follow Jesus Christ and the Prophetic tradition in demanding a right relationship with God and with our neighbours. This means recognizing and defending the

⁴ cf. Island of Hope document p.12

⁵ This is a common word, only differently pronounced in different Pacific languages.

human rights of all God's children and an equitable sharing of all the world's resources.

- Participation The dignity of every person is compromized without the right to participate in decisions which affect them. The World Council of Churches has consistently supported these historic struggles.
- Sustainability Human technological capacity is struggling with the sin of pride by refusing to acknowledge that only God is without limits. The ecological limits of the globe are being challenged as well as the social limits of human communities.

The Island of Hope challenges us to recognize God's presence in all of the cultures of the world. When we affirm the integrity of local culture, we resist the temptation to stand alone, each on our own island, for as disciples of Christ we are called to stand together.

Our challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalization represents a world of compassion or indifference, a world of solidarity or domination and oppression, an ocean of hope or despair. The Island of Hope challenges us to recognize God's presence in all of the cultures of the world.

- Peace The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Peace, not violence, a Kingdom of Reconciliation not militarism. God can only be glorified when peace on earth is enjoyed by ALL the people of God, especially women and children, minorities and the vulnerable.
- Integrity of Creation The Kingdom of God includes the whole of creation which sighs together in anticipation of the coming reign of Peace.

Our challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalization represents a world of compassion or indifference, a world of solidarity or domination and oppression, an ocean of hope or despair.

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION: MEANING AND LOGIC

Economic globalization has different meanings for different people, groups and communities. Highlighting the basic characteristics, we may define economic globalization as a process of

- transnationalization of capital, most prominently ensuring the mobility of finance capital round the globe, round the clock,
- process of centralization of capital via mergers and acquisitions,
- transnationalization of production, e.g. the sales of foreign affiliates of transnational corporations (TNCs) is over \$14 trillion as against an export trade of just half of it,
- standardization of consumer tastes.
- legitimization of the process by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO).
- unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed "rulers" in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes.

The theoretical rationale of this process is rooted in the assumptions of neo-classical economics. Making no reference to basic needs of the community, this economic paradigm assumes that wants are unlimited, while the means to satisfy them are limited. The most efficient allocation of these scarce resources is secured through setting the prices via the competitive market mechanism. The recurring theme of IMF, World Bank, WTO literature is summed up in the expression "set prices right". Given this organizing principle, earth's resources become raw materials and the global commons, such as the ocean, atmosphere, forests and even individual labour power are subordinated to capital.

Indeed, it legitimizes exclusion and non-participation of the weak and less endowed by its own logic. It rationalizes expansion unto the end of the earth and has coined such widely used phrases like "developed countries", "developing countries", "least developed countries" and so on. The big truth that development of a community is culturally rooted is simply thrown overboard. Now what are the consequences?

THE IMPACT

In the midst of increasing plenty, rapid technological advancement, export-led growth (devaluation, export-zones etc.), we encounter deepening poverty, including unemployment ("jobless" growth), intolerable inequality, destruction of life-support systems and continuing exclusion and marginalization. The number of absolute poor in South Asia has doubled in less than three decades. Although poverty has decreased in East Asia, the number of absolute poor is around 278 million, bigger than the size of USA's population.

Africa and its people exemplify the worst case of exclusion and deprivation. Environmental degradation additional puts pressure on poor communities. Africa has a large refugee population in distress. The situation is further aggravated by the HIV/Aids pandemic. The number of people who earn less than one dollar per day is over 1.5 billion of which 70% are women.

People in the industrial countries also increasingly become victims of economic globalization. The rate of unemployed people, poor people, street children is also growing in highly industrialized countries. In the field of employment, the key words under economic globalization regime are informalization, casualization and feminization of labour. Typical is the case of garment industry where mostly women (90%) are working under very exploitative conditions. This industry can be found wherever wages are low, including Fiji.

While developing countries sink deeper and deeper into debt, the value of finance capital transactions delinked from production in a year is over 600 trillion dollars per annum. This game continues merrily although the East Asia crisis is still not yet over, and Argentine, Turkey,

> Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Indonesia are today facing acute foreign exchange crisis and debt problems. This is to be seen along with the fact that the estimated reverse flow of resources to the North by way of debt repayment, royalties, brain drain, adverse terms of trade is over \$500 billion.

> Under the rules of WTO regime, but with the whip of sanctions held before them, the

developing countries face food insecurity, depressing agricultural prices and marginalization of small farmer categories. Subsidies to inputs, operating costs, preferential user charges, public distribution system are "actionable categories", under the WTO Agreements. The interests of developing countries, which are home to the vast majority of known species and

People in the industrial countries also increasingly become victims of economic globalization. The rate of unemployed people, poor people, street children is also growing in highly industrialized countries. In the field of employment, the key words under economic globalization regime are informalization, casualization and feminization of labour. Typical is the case of garment industry where mostly women (90%) are working under very exploitative conditions. This industry can be found wherever wages are low, including Fiji.

thus very rich in their biodiversity, cannot be served under the regime of the Agreement on Trade Related Property Rights (TRIPs). As it is today, TRIPs can serve only corporate interests such as biotech industries and corporate plant breeders.

Through their voting power and control USA⁶ and other G7⁷ countries manage the IMF and WB and the economic and financial management in a substantial measure. The US dollar remains the effective reserve currency and international media of exchange. Being the unchallenged super power backed by military and support of G-7, USA is virtually the policeman of the world and controls the empire of finance capital. The impact of economic globalization cannot be evaluated independently of policies of this super power.

All these have to be seen and understood in the background of the crisis of governance the nation-states of the world encounter today. While they have to roll back their intervention in favour of the private sector, which includes even cutting expenditure on vital areas like education, health or social security, or abdicating responsibility in terms of public utilities and governing them efficiently the people of the developing world face their moment of truth.

Youth in particular are affected by the negative impacts of economic globalization.

The lack of new jobs hurts the young first. The loss of jobs make the young vulnerable to violence, drugs and even suicide. Social and environmental deterioration is the struggle for upcoming generations and threatens their future. If youth lose their hope, then the whole society will suffer.

Women are the most victims of globalization in the North *and* in the South because they do most of the unpaid work in the informal sector and the hardest and lowest work in the formal sector. Women often accept any job to help their families to survive. This is misused by the TNCs to undermine efforts regarding the implementation of social standards in their own operations.

The devastating social effects are accompanied by destruction of the natural environment. The United States, the single largest polluter alone accounts for 25 % of world's total carbon emissions. Global warming is a threat to communities all around the world. People in Africa experience changing rainfall patterns with droughts on the one hand and devastating floods on the other. The Pacific islands are especially vulnerable. They contribute only 0,6% to the greenhouse gas emissions, yet they will sink, if people in other parts of the world and especially in the most polluting countries in the North do not act. The US government, however, and corporations active in mining, car production and the energy sector, work actively against even modest measures to decrease greenhouse gas emission proposed by the Kyoto protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁶ Armed with Super 301 and Special 301, the USA puts itself virtually above WTO or other international regulatory mechanism.

⁷ USA, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy.

MAKING A CHOICE

"Serve God not Mammon" (cf. Mt 6:24) was the title of the message of the Budapest consultation of Churches in Central and Eastern Europe in June 2001. The ethics of economic globalization are ethics of competition and domination, which favours individualism and fosters consumerism at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of the community of life. The ethics of "The Island of

Hope" are based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing caring, and based on justice. Its valreflect ues

The ethics of "The Island of Hope" is based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God's care for creation and Christ's teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor.

God's care for creation and Christ's teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor.

Following Christ, we must make a choice. We oppose the ethics of economic globalization and join others who do the same. This choice is costly. It requires us to share what we have. It demands of us a commitment to give up what binds us to the system that exploits and enslaves our sisters and brothers (Mk 10: 17-31). It leads into conflict and perhaps into persecution (Mk 10:32-34). Making this choice is a question of life and death.

We are obliged to chose between serving God or Mammon, power or people. Everyone, politicians and business people included, are responsible for the consequences of their actions. We will be held accountable by the people who suffer the consequences. We have a chance to turn around (Mt 6:12.13). We also hear the promise of the Gospel that choosing life will create an alternative and truly ecumenical community of sharing and solidarity (Mt 14:13-21; Acts 2:41-47) in response to the prayer "that all may be one as we are one" (Joh 17:11).

The project of economic globalization pretends with religious fervour that

economic growth, free flow of capital and the allocation of resources and goods through the market mechanism serve the common

good. But the market as an instrument is amoral and does not automatically lead to more justice and quality of life. It rather aggravates existing inequality and unequal distribution of power and leads to massive exclusion and environmental destruction. This is the reason why resistance and alternatives become essential and urgent.

The movement to struggle against economic globalization is growing. There are many positive examples for action taken by people in North and South. This movement is confronted with the powerful forces of economic globalization that are promoted by global media, massive advertisement for consumer goods and even military presence and interventions. The existing alternatives, however, motivate and inspire the movement to continue its struggle.

ALTERNATIVES

Churches and communities are defending, affirming and announcing that solidarity and love among human beings are central values in life. These values, although they are not priced at the Market, have the strength of God. Solidarity with the Pacific churches and people promoting "The Island of Hope" is an expression of our common struggle and our common search for alternatives to face economic globalization. "The Island of Hope" and the alternatives inspired by it resonate all around the world:

From Africa we heard about the concept of "UBUNTU"; going back into ourselves and the knowledge of our communities, to find solutions to problems, through sharing traditional values of inclusiveness, sense of community, reconciliation, participation, dialogue, partnership, hospitality and fellowship.

UBUNTU inspires work for a people-centred economy, that provides food security, the exchange of goods and services, especially by women.

Participants from Asia showed us the concepts of "gotong-royong" (togetherness), in Indonesia, "bayanihan" (collective living), in the Phillipines, "panchasila" (five principles of peaceful living), in India, "daedong yundae" (great solidarity), in Korea, against the culture of domination, competition and individualism, taught by economic globalization. Asia's richness has secured the food and basic needs of the developed countries, leaving people to share the leftovers among themselves. Asia has a potential but neglected and exploited domestic economy that needs to be recovered, protected and maximized.

Sharing and attending to one's another needs is a central element in the lives of the Pacific people as stated in "The Island of Hope". Cooperation and partnership recognizing mutual

Subsistence economy is still important for the life of the people and merits much more attention and support compared to the destructive effects of the monetarized economy and the spirit of competition that accompanies it.

interdependence is an alternative to economic globalization based on individualism and dominance. Subsistence economy is still important for the life of the people and merits much more attention and support compared to the destructive effects of the monetarized economy and the spirit of competition that accompanies it.

Western European and Canadian participants underlined the importance of sharing and interdependence in churches' networks worldwide. Examples were presented of people active in advocacy campaigns and developing alternatives to the consumerist lifestyle, e.g. fair trade and ecological products, or more ecological transport systems. Highlighted were also alternative forms of financial investments like oikocredit and others, which are supported by people in industrialized countries.

The group from Central and Eastern Europe pointed to the importance of protecting the spiritual heritage of the countries in the region, caring for family as a basic unit of society and encouraging the value of sharing. Participants from Latin America and the Caribbean reminded us about communal values shared by their Indigenous cultures. Building on their teachings, poor and unemployed develop alternatives such as bartering systems, communal-collective labour, and the sharing of food. They practice economies of solidarity.

We were also reminded of the vital contributions of women's networks that oppose male domination entrenched in economic oppression. We heard of the enormous experience of Indigenous Peoples communities all around the world that live alternatives of collective labour, bartering and sharing of food and shelter as values opposed to privatecorporate neo-liberalism. We also want ex-

The economy is to serve and not to dominate

the society. The concrete shape needs to be

different according to the social, cultural, en-

vironmental and historical conditions of socie-

ties and their value systems. In each situation

political framework and intervention is neces-

find the right balance between state, commu-

nal and private initiatives, between local and

global orientation, production and consump-

it has uniquely to be decided, which kind of

sary to make the economy function, how to

press our appreciation for the important contributions of the youth participants in our meeting and for the document of the youth consultation on "The Island of Hope" that preceded our consultation.

Youth celebrates the joy of dreaming and acting

passionately to overcome selfishness and isolation, deadly values brought up by economic globalization.

tion.

The rich sharing between the regions shows that there are many different forms of life in community and economies helping people to survive and live in dignity. Christianity had to learn the hard way that the good news of the Gospel has to be contextualized in order to be meaningful for God's people in their diversity. The same applies to the economy. The economy is to serve and not to dominate the society. The concrete shape needs to be different according to the social, cultural, environmental and historical conditions of societies and their value systems. In each situation it has uniquely to be decided, which kind of political framework and intervention is

necessary to make the economy function, how to find the right balance between state, communal and private initiatives, between local and global orientation, production and consumption.

Given the formidable challenges thrown up by economic globalization, alternative strategies have to be envisaged on three levels: long term, medium term and short term.

Campaign to restructure global institutions based on a global constituent assembly from which a peoples' assembly and new financial architecture will be created.

Keeping the vision of a just society and world order as against the corporate utopia now under way, the following measures were discussed during the meeting:

Vital issues like global accumulation without responsibility, transparency and accountability to the global community, drug trafficking and money laundering, rampant sex tourism including child prostitution, globalization of crime, global gambling and speculation, unjust international division of labour, widening inequality of income should engage the agenda of any UN assembly.

The dominant technological paradigm that keeps people redundant must yield to one that absorbs more labour and less pollution. This is the value of a new world order which will encompass the following medium term measures:

work for local self government and participatory governance;

- implement a code of conduct for TNCs;
- > introduce a tax on incoming finance capital and a fund to provide for better health for all

"The Island of Hope", as we experienced it during these days, calls the churches and the ecumenical organizations to:

- > Strengthen and continue the process of clarification, critique and work on proposing alternatives to economic globalization.
- ➤ Work on a theology of reconstruction and deconstruction that promotes communities of life and wholeness, which affirm human dignity and build confidence.
- > Be fully involved in the struggles of the people, specially churches that are rooted in communities where the poor and the deprived live.
- > Support regions in their own efforts and outcomes and the exchange among them..
- > Call on the churches to provide opportunities for young people to be educated on the implications and effects of a globalized economy so that young people can strengthen their faith, values and dreams and bring them to reality.
- > Call on the youth of the world to participate and be active on initiatives by churches and the ecumenical movement. Their gifts as youth are needed in the struggle for justice and abundant life
- ➤ Make sure that the Decade to Overcome Violence addresses the economic root causes of violence in its many forms.
- > Co-operate with social movements, such as World Social Forum, Focus on Global South, Third World Network, Jubilee South and others.
- > Encourage the development of traditional economies. Subsistence economies, for instance, need to be re-evaluated and seen as partial alternatives to globalizationespecially in developing countries. Subproduction sistence ensures self-

- sufficiency, sustainability, food security, livelihood for many and it is important that the existence of a dual economy (cash/subsistence) be acknowledged and applauded. The cash economy alone does not have to dominate the world.
- > Organize encounters with International Financial Institution's and the World Trade Organization not focusing on how to make the prevailing economic model work, but how to make it different.
- Work for radical changes in the current economic system that:
- > Put people first.
- > Restore national and people's control over development.
- > End protectionism in the world's richest countries.
- > Give priority to the poor.
- Make multinationals accountable and transparent to civil society
- > Make international organizations (IMF, World Bank, WTO) subject to democratic decision-making.
- ➤ Build democratic space for genuine de-
- > Regulate financial transactions with instruments that avoid flying capitals or speculation, such as currency transaction
- ➤ Help in the enforcing of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. Every country is responsible on reducing air pollution.
- > Learn from the experience of the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) and work towards an Exxon boycott⁸ as a method of the work on Climate Change.

⁸ Especially youth supported this initiative to boycott Exxon Mobil by a number of Environmental NGOs, see www.stopesso.com

AFFIRMATION OF THE ISLAND OF HOPE

The Pacific Islander delegates have called the churches and ecumenical organizations to be in solidarity and participate in the pro-

phetic voice of the Island of Hope. They have began to work for an alternative to economic globalization with the small Pacific Islands coming together in solidarity. World-wide partnership in solidarity, which is a reflection of the triune God's partnership, will set free unthinkable potential and positive transformation in the world.

The representatives of different regions brought together by the WCC have received

the Pacific Churches' response to economic globalization: Island of Hope. They expressed their thanksgiving and our solidarity with the people and churches in the Pacific. The document on the Island of Hope will be sent to churches and ecumenical organizations all around the world together with this report.

The sharing of stories and values of the Pacific not only inspired all of us together but challenged everybody to accompany the Pacific people in their struggle against injustice. This meeting has helped all of us to better understand the struggle of the people in the Pacific region and also to see how well Pacific values resonate in other parts of the world. We want to assure the people of the Pacific that their struggle is our struggle and their concern is our concern.

Encourage the development of traditional economies. Subsistence economies, for instance, need to be reevaluated and seen as partial alternatives to globalization–especially in developing countries. Subsistence production ensures self–sufficiency, sustainability, food security, livelihood for many and it is important that the existence of a dual economy (cash/subsistence) be acknowledged and applauded. The cash economy alone does not have to dominate the world.

YOUTHFUL VOICES AGAINST GLOBALIZATION

Participants from thirty countries are meeting in Nadi, Fiji, this week to discuss alternatives to economic globalization. The meeting is being organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) with the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and is the third in a series of regional and global consultations on this topic. Below, Bob Scott of the WCC Public Information team reports on a meeting of young people that preceded the consultation.

"Never before has it been so important for young people to search for alternatives to the current dynamics of globalization. It is our future that is being threatened." That was the view of a large group of young people meeting in Nadi, Fiji this week. Brought together by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Pacific Conference of Churches

(PCC), they came from fifteen Pacific island states and were joined by other young people from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

"Never before has it been so important for young people to search for alternatives to the current dynamics of globalization. It is our future that is being threatened."

In their four-day meeting, the young people identified four major areas of concern: global warming, information technology, culture, and the economy.

Participants from the Pacific said that the emission of greenhouse gases, mainly from countries in Europe and the USA, has drastic consequences in their region. A rise in temperature from 1.5 to 6 degrees centigrade will have a devastating effect on the already-fragile ecosystems of the Pacific. If the sea level rises by 80 centimeters, islands that now are only 3 meters above sea level will be threatened with extinction. Already some island people have had to be relocated refugees not from war but from ecological greed. "Is this a form of racism? The people in Northern countries don't care what hap-

pens to us as long as they get what they want. Do they believe their lifestyle is more important than ours?" asks 21-year-old Betero Bebia from Kiribati.

As young people, the group acknowledged the exciting possibilities of expanding technologies and recognized the significance of instant access to research results, online

training and studies. But the positive aspects of communications development are balanced by a darker side: the volume of financial transactions

and speculation now possible due to the new technologies leaves their fragile economies even more vulnerable. "As our world expands through technology, so does our vulnerability," judges Fonofonosefulu Margaret-Marie Maene from American Samoa.

The young people were also clear about the pernicious influence of pornographic sites on the Internet, reaching into young minds and corrupting carefully nurtured values.

Every visitor to any Pacific island is immediately struck by the strength of Pacific culture in song, dance and hospitality. That is the side of the culture tourists see and enjoy. Proud of their culture, the Pacific participants are feeling the increasing influence of western lifestyles and consumerism. Says

Makoni Pulu from Tonga, who is a member of the PCC staff, "People in the West understand that poor people are those who have no resources. But because our culture of communal sharing is so strong, for us the poor person is the one who has no family or friends."

The group recognized the benefits that tourism has brought to their region, especially employment opportunities. "But on the other hand, tourism is robbing the people of the Pacific of income generated in our own is-

lands, because so much of the tourist industry is owned by foreign companies," says 18-year-old Davina Hosking from the Cook Islands (Raratonga).

"The economic wealth of our islands is being enjoyed by people who have no home here, no stake in what happens to us as people, and who may one

day abandon us. How can we trust them?" asks 25-year-old Richard Tatwin from Vanuatu.

A strong and positive vision emerged from the exchange. "Let Christ be the Island of Hope!" the young people said. They called for more intentional education about the effects of globalization, for living out the values of equality, justice, peace and respect for diversity, for the vision of life set out by Jesus Christ, in which each person treats his/her neighbor as he/she would wish to be treated.

What alternatives did the group propose? A return to cooperation and not competition, linking young Pacific people with other

young people worldwide to work for the adoption of international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, a transformation of education systems to preserve and promote Pacific values and cultures despite the impact of globalization.

The meeting ended with a call for an economic boycott. The young people were disturbed to hear that international oil companies like Exxon have cast doubt on the findings of the scientific body of the Climate Change Convention that CO2 emissions do

indeed aggravate global warming. The young participants see this as a life and death issue. They called on churches to initiate a boycott of Exxon and will ask the WCC to follow through on this.

"SERVE GOD, NOT MAMMON"

Message from the joint consultation on globalization in Central and Eastern Europe: responses to the ecological, economic and social consequences, June, 24-28, 2001, Budapest

47 representatives of churches from Central and Eastern Europe, along with resource persons, met June 24-28 in Budapest, Hungary. They were from Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, including a presenter delegated by the Council of the European Bishops' Conferences. In addition, 30 guests and staff persons of regional and international ecumenical and civil organizations from around the world were present. All these came to Budapest at the invitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the WARC European Area Committee. Also accompanying the process was the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The consultation is part of the joint process on globalization of these organizations that grew out of the call of the WARC General Council in 1997 in Debrecen, Hungary for "covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth (Processus Confessionis)" and the recommendations on globalization made by the General Assembly of the World Council Churches 1998 in Harare. It is the second in a series of regional meetings that began with a symposium in Bangkok and will continue with meetings of churches in the Pacific, Western Europe, Latin America, Africa and North America. The consultation was graciously supported and hosted by the Reformed Church in Hungary, and was held at the Reformed Theological College (Raday) of Budapest.

TO BE MORE VIGILANT

About a decade ago, we, the people and churches in Central and Eastern Europe rejoiced as we realized we were free. It was as if a deep shadow had passed by and that full daylight had returned.

As we review the past ten years, it becomes clear that the magnitude and content of the problems encountered have been grossly underestimated by both governments and churches. As we listen to reports from those whose suffering is most severe, we conclude that not all their difficulties arise directly out of what happened more than ten years ago. This suggests the need to be more vigilant in our journey with the women and men of Central and Eastern Europe.

The countries in the region enjoy great cultural and religious diversity. We heard that, according to the data available, some of them show economic growth, increasing employment and environmental improvements. In the region as a whole, however, rising unemployment and the falling value of pensions and wages has plunged millions of women and men into poverty. UNDP statistics report (cf. United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS, New York 1999; http://www.undp.org/rbec/publications), that:

- 1989 about 14 million people in the former communistic block lived on less than four dollars a day. By the mid–nineties that number had risen to 147 million people.
- At the same time, and in sharp contrast, there has developed a new fea-

ture, that of excessive wealth for a small minority.

- Life expectancy fell significantly in some of the countries.
- Health care, schooling and education standards declined.
- Commerce based criminality grew rapidly.

This ideological emphasis on privatization at any price, has undermined existing infrastructures. Minimizing the role of the state, it left the poor without adequate protection and support and opened the door to criminal and speculative activities. Irresponsible owners who had no interest in the fate of either companies or employees bought out many of the newly privatized enterprises and banks.

SEARCH FOR EXPLANATIONS

In relation to these facts, we felt a moral duty to search more diligently for additional explanations for the prevailing mood of disappointment and the sense of betrayal. Working in groups, the consultation examined the ecological, cultural, economic and social effects of globalization on the region. The groups produced reports containing the analysis, evaluation and proposals for alternative action that are reflected in this message. They identified two main reasons behind the present difficulties in the region.

First was the way in which the challenge of the transformation of society was handled by most authorities after 1989. Where Communism had relied on unrestricted state planning, politicians and leaders now embraced the unrestrained market-mechanism as the path to a better future. They did not recognize that a market without social, cultural, and institutional frameworks would rend the very fabric of society. External loans and financial assistance were made conditional on privatization, liberalization and deregulation of the market in the name of economic growth. This neo-liberal "shock therapy", requiring a shrinking role for the state, simply disabled existing social provisions for ordinary women and men.

Second was the dynamic released by the new global information and communication technologies and the phenomenal expansion of new "global" markets. This is often referred to as "globalization". In fact, "globalization" is a more complex term. Where it refers to growing possibilities for genuine co-operation between nations and peoples with opportunities for communication and common action, it has positive connotations. Our consultation, for in-

stance, benefited greatly from the participation of Christians from many continents.

It has a negative sense where it refers to the dominance exercized by an ideology legitimizing and promoting the unrestrained activities of players in the global markets, and the unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed "rulers" in the economy, the media and other spheres of life. The unregulated flow of capital becomes the arbiter of the economic goodness or badness of all human or political actions. In our consultation we made a clear distinction between this neo-liberal project, which some call "globalism", and the historic process of "globalization" already referred to. It is driven by powerful economic self interest. It commercializes human and institutional relationships and the very sources of life – earth, water, air – and even the human body itself. The ideology, power structures and practices this project involves account for dramatic changes in the economies and societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Its immediate effect is to put pressure on governments at all levels to cut social, medical, educational and environmental expenditure in order to be "attractive" to "global" capital. Women and other vulnerable groups are the most affected by such policies.

This ideological emphasis on privatization at any price, has undermined existing infrastructures. Minimizing the role of the state, it left the poor without adequate protection and support and opened the door to criminal and speculative activities. Irresponsible owners who had no interest in the fate of either companies or employees bought out many of the newly privatized enterprises and banks. Alternative paths to ownership were hardly considered, nor was the idea that ownership brings social obligations.

JUSTICE TO THE POOR

This confusion about "globalization" is often used as an alibi, not only by important international agencies, such as the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank, but also a growing number of national governments. They demand harsh sacrifices of ordinary women and men. They do this despite reliable evidence that economic growth fails to promote human development unless there is

It is vitally important for Christians to

recognize that dependence upon this

to invest his or her faith in Mammon.

neo-liberal ideology has deeply spiritual

implications. It compels every participant

- adequate support for the poor, unemployed, and other vulnerable groups;
- environmental protection;
- transparency and accountability in government, and
- effective participation by civil society (including labor unions).

Given this situation, our meeting arrived at the unequivocal conclusion:

No authority inside or outside the region should ever escape its responsibility to do to justice to the poor and the needy by claiming the unavoidability of the requirements of globalization.

Policies justified in this way are contrary to both scientific findings and the core of Christian faith. They have to stop unconditionally and immediately. For, as it is stated so well in the recent Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church:

"...the danger of differences that may emerge between people's will and international organization's decisions should not be underestimated. These organizations may become instruments for the unfair dominion of strong over weak countries, rich over poor, the technologically and informationally developed over the rest. They may also practice double standards, by

> applying international law in interest of the more influential states. All this compels the Orthodox Church to call the powers that be, both on national and international levels. to utter

responsibility". (cf. The Foundations of the Social Concept of the ROC, http://www.russian-orthodox-hurch.org.ru/sd00e.htm)

It is vitally important for Christians to recognize that dependence upon this neoliberal ideology has deeply spiritual implications. It compels every participant to invest his or her faith in Mammon. The question for us is a simple one, in whom do we put our trust and in whom do we believe. Faith in the God of life sets us free from domination by Mammon. This is not only a domain where churches can speak, but should speak. This faith, translated into appropriate actions, is the ground of hope against that despair which, until now, so characterizes the present situation – and not just in this region.

SERVE PEOPLE, NOT POWER

A CALL TO GOVERNMENTS AND TO THE WIDER PUBLIC IN THE REGION

G lobalization dramatically transforms the nature of power. Democratically elected governments and their delegates in international organizations lose power to increasingly influential international bureaucracies, transnational corporations, media-owners and actors in the field of

financial "global" capital. We challenge these power structures, urging them become to transparent, more accountable and representative. The peoples of the world need to seize control of global political and economic proc-Democracy esses. should be reinstated

in the new forms of decision-making, at local, national and international levels.

Many political and economic processes require some kind of regulation at the international level. The need for international agreements, however, should not be employed by the state at the expense of the necessary protection of vulnerable people.

Economic globalization in its present form threatens values such as justice, charity, peace and sobriety which are rooted in Christian traditions. It replaces them with the values of unrestrained consumerism and increasing commercialization of society. Education, health care, arts, sports, the media, the environment

and even safety are increasingly dominated by financial considerations. The culture of economic rivalry is usurping the culture of social co-operation with adverse consequences for weak and vulnerable people.

Many political and economic processes require some kind of regulation at the international level. The need for international agreements, however, should not be employed by the state at the expense of the necessary protection of vulnerable people.

The guiding idea for all our recommendations is the Biblical motif of Jubilee (Lev 25, Dt 15,Neh 5,Jes 61, Luc 4). All people are entitled to the basic resources of life and the public provision that enables them to live in the household (oikonomia) of

God's creation. Economies ought always to be household-orientated.

This insight leads us to the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Global finance should not be allowed the decisive role in national and regional economies, rendering them over-dependent on foreign direct investment and speculative capital. We strongly recommend that governments strive for the development of their home-economy, with special attention to the role of medium and small businesses, and warn them against prioritizing export-orientation at their expense.

- ➤ Local economic initiatives need to be supported. This requires the strengthening of local governments.
- ➤ Public authorities at all levels should insist on the maintenance of adequate social support for the poor and strong environmental standards and resist international financial pressure to eliminate them.

We ask governments to support the international actions of those governments and civil organizations which, in order to democratize the international monetary system, seek to regulate the flow of speculative international capital. We ask the same support, especially from the rich industrialized countries, for international efforts (like in Rio and Kyoto) in favour of the environment.

Nations seeking entry to the European Union should equip their electorate to make informed decisions through accurate and transparent evaluation of the impact on social security and other vital interests of their citizens.

➤ Governments should safeguard cultural values, the dignity and rights of

all women and men, and their unhindered development.

Public resources, which from a Christian perspective are designed to serve the common good, should not be recklessly privatized, whether in the name of ideology or under pressure from external donors.

➤ We ask governments to serve their people so that they live in dignity. Power is not an end in itself.

CHOOSE LIFE, NOT DEATH

A CALL TO CHURCHES

Today we are confronted by the domination of the idols of competition, consumption and comfort. The Christian understanding of oikonomia, of the world as God's household, embraces relations between peo-

ple and God, social harmony and peaceful coexistence of human beings with the whole of God's creation. This urges churches and Christians to show the world the example of living according to the principles of cooperation, interdependence and

In challenging economic globalization the church is confronted with Jesus' words, "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt. 6:24). Will the churches have the courage to engage with the "values" of a profit-orientated way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the "private" sphere? This is the question our churches must answer... or lose their very soul!

compassion deeply rooted in the Trinitarian basis of our faith. We ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of discernment by which to read the signs of our time and to "distinguish the spirits".

In challenging economic globalization the church is confronted with Jesus' words, "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt. 6:24). Will the churches have the courage to engage with the "values" of a profit-orientated way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the "private" sphere? This is the question our churches must answer... or lose their very soul!

The message of the Gospel and our traditions teach us neither to be acquiescent to the dominant powers of this world, nor to seek refuge from our responsibilities in private expressions of faith. Christian communities should radiate love, joy and peace, attracting others to a new way of life. We urge the

churches to raise their prophetic voice so that changes are made for the benefit every person in every part of the world. Our mission is to transform life around us and to respond to the needs of all human beings, especially those who are suffering, oppressed and marginalized. In doing so, we proclaim Christ.

Churches need to engage in a serious way with the following questions:

• Which processes in international politics and the economy are caused by the intrinsic development of

trade, information flow, cultural exchange etc. and which are the result of "forced global transformation" aimed at securing the dominance of the richest countries, as well as economic and political groups?

- What are the positive aspects of increasing international cooperation which can be employed for advancing the Christian mission in word and deed?
- How can Christian values, traditions and cultures be preserved and thrive in the context of globalization?

The global economy and global power needs to be called to account by a global civil society equipped for broad social advocacy. The negative social consequences of globalization must be counterbalanced by effective attention to the needs of the poor, the vulnerable and the powerless. International Christian organizations can provide a basis for coopera-

tion open to and responsive to others, including research bodies, trade unions, environmental movements, and communities of followers of world faiths.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We call upon churches:

- To resist socially counterproductive policies, especially social and tax dumping and to preserve the dignity of labour.
- To support economic and cultural alternatives to homogenization, including small businesses, local credit and savings mechanisms, independent information exchange systems, with efforts to protect and revitalize national cultures and identities, through mutual tolerance and dialogue.
- To encourage a process of "localization", by having regard for to the expectations, traditions and lifestyles of people in their own place and supporting their initiatives.
- To increase their efforts in the fields of charitable service and social advocacy.
- To raise awareness that integration is accompanied by growing ethnic and religious tension in some parts of the world and separation in others; and to investigate the roots of these conflict situations, which lie not only in these specific regions, but also in the field of international politics and economy.
- To remember that they are founded on families and therefore need them to be strong. The family crises caused by forced industrialization and now by globalization require a rediscovery of moral values, the ties between the generations, respect for parenthood and the place of women in families and society.
- To make the care of the environment a major priority for Christian reflection and social action. It is the "sustainable society" and "sustainable communities"

rather than economics, which matter. The European Christian Environmental Network is a useful contact.

We urge **the churches in the region** to increase public awareness about globalization and its consequences for their population. People need to be informed about the nature of decisions made by their governments in relation to international institutions, and must be able to influence those decisions. Churches can empower the voice of ordinary people by raising their concerns with the authorities.

Churches and ecumenical groups in the region are encouraged to use the expertise and linkages of church related organizations with expertise on economic issues, such as the Centre for Networking, Training and Development being jointly established by European Contact Group, the Work and Economy Network, and the Ecumenical Academy in Prague.

We ask churches in our region to respond more actively to WCC's invitation to reflect on globalization and to search for alternatives to it; to CEC's process on the role of churches in European integration and also to WARC's Debrecen call for a committed process of recognition, education and confession regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction (*processus confessionis*).

We call **the churches in the West** to resist the destructive forces of economic globalization and to be advocates for global social justice.

We ask the churches and the people in the West to influence public opinion and to persuade decision-makers in politics, economy and other sectors of society to stop the exploitation and exclusion of the majority of the population of the world and the destruction of the earth by the "golden billion" – the population of Western industrialized countries.

We ask the churches to help their members to rediscover the traditional Christian values of self-restraint and asceticism (simplicity of lifestyle), and to propagate these values in their societies as a way of counteracting individualism and consumerism, and as an alternative foundation for economic and social development.

We strongly support the Message to the Churches in the North from the participants of the Symposium on the Consequences of Economic Globalization (Bangkok, Thailand, November 12-15, 1999) that was shared at our meeting.

We assure the churches in the global South of our solidarity. Our part of Europe bears a considerable measure of responsibility for many developments, with both good and bad consequences, in Southern countries.

Today our peoples share many similar problems and challenges, and we need each other to find solutions. In the spirit of ecumenical partnership, we call the WCC and other ecumenical organizations to support coop-

eration and networking between churches in Central and Eastern Europe and churches in the global South, in particular, through consultations on globalization.

Global networking between Christians and others on the issues of globalization is urgently needed, especially from parish to parish, from one group of researchers to another, e.g., from a Reformed radio in Hungary to a Catholic newspaper in Indonesia and a Moslem TV studio in Kazakhstan. **Ecumenical and interfaith organizations** will play the key role in this network building. We should not let the spirit of this world separate us. The difficult reality we are facing requires a response which we can only make together.

We acknowledge the work done by Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, as well as international Christian organizations, which have studied the problems of globalization and have acted in this regard. The process started by the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches must be encouraged, continued and broadened.

We commit ourselves to establishing an effective follow-up process to this consultation in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

We ask the churches to help their members to rediscover the traditional Christian values of self-restraint and asceticism (simplicity of life-style), and to propagate these values in their societies as a way of counteracting individualism and consumerism, and as an alternative foundation for economic and social development.