

# The Impact of Cybernetics on Life" Political Economy and Ethics of Convergent Technologies

Statement from the workshop organized by the WACC and the Advanced Institute for the Study of Life (AISL) June 2003, Jirisan Plaza Hotel, Seoul, Korea:

There is a growing awareness that the convergence of technologies results in control over people and life in different regions of the world. People have begun to speak of empire and its impact on their lives as they observe the leading role of the USA in the construction of hegemony in the service of corporate and financial interests.



The development and application of digital technologies and communication networks, e.g. in communications and media, surveillance, genetic engineering, nano-technology, and the military, furthers convergence. It also facilitates and extends control over people and life.

The binary code of cybernetics provides a unifying language and logic for this process. This reductionist approach of modern development and science to life inevitably contributes to the destruction of communities and the web of life.

In response to this situation we, the participants in this workshop, affirm a relational understanding of life, emphasising the inter-relatedness and interdependence of different forms of life in one earth community.

For this reason we resist the extension of the market into new areas through the informationalisation of life and the patenting of life forms. Nevertheless, we recognize the very creative use of the internet by groups and movements in networking and organizing their struggles for peace and justice.



We commend the WACC and AISL for bringing us together to address and explore these questions that are fundamental to the analysis and interpretation of the present world situation. We affirm the values held up by WACC's Christian principles of communication: the role of community, participation, support for

cultures, emphasis on liberation and prophetic witness by communicators.

The location of the workshop close to the Buddhist monasteries at the slopes of the sacred mountain Jirisan was very appropriate to the subject of our discussion. It is a sign of hope that different faith communities and people in their struggle for life and community can find common ground in their gratitude and respect for life.

Key recommendations from the workshop included the following:

- that the global studies programme convene a task force to accompany the follow-up to this workshop and the future study process; the task force should include representatives from the

WCC, WARC, LWF, AISL and other ecumenical partners.

- that in recognition of the global importance of these issues a workshop on Science, IT and Faith be held in Africa.
- that material from this workshop and bible studies relevant to the theme be made available for the use by the wider public.