



# The United Church of Canada General Council

## GC38 Nuclear Weapons (2003N782)

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Commanded as Christians to love our neighbours and our enemies and to be good stewards of the Earth;

Noting that the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of July 8, 1996, reviewed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and decided unanimously that there exists an obligation on states to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiation leading to nuclear disarmament;

Concerned that the world's states have failed to begin negotiation for the elimination of the 20,000 nuclear weapons in their possession;

Further concerned to note recent decisions by the U.S. Government to develop smaller nuclear weapons which could make nuclear weapons more useable and allow them to be portrayed as being militarily and morally equal to conventional (non-nuclear) weapons;

Alarmed to note the recent U.S. policy which would allow use of nuclear weapons in response to attacks by chemical and biological weapons, which response would constitute a breach of international humanitarian law;

Noting that the “reductions” of nuclear weapons claimed under the Moscow Treaty involve only the storage, and not the dismantling, of nuclear weapons, thus allowing the reappearance of the original number of nuclear weapons should the political situation change;

Distressed to note NATO’s stated intention to retain nuclear weapons and concerned this is serving to encourage other states to acquire nuclear weapons;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 38th General Council of The United Church of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to:

- a. Significantly increase funding to government and non-governmental groups in Canada for political, diplomatic, educational and technical efforts to support the call for a prohibition on nuclear weapons;
- b. Provide strong support for, and to offer to host, the international conference on reducing nuclear dangers proposed by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan at which all states would be invited to participate in defining strategies for actions to be taken to reduce the nuclear risk; and,
- c. Urgently and publicly communicate to all its NATO partners the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons and the immediate need for compliance by all NATO member states with the obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons.

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