

## **Points of Convergence in Bioethics Among Christians and Muslims**

**The following general principles may serve as a basis for the preparation of an international instrument on bioethics. They were presented at the Ninth Session of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO, which met in November 2002, and were the subject of a thorough discussion. It is with this in mind that I present them today for publication hoping thereby to stimulate further discussion.**

**We all agree that in the field of biological and technological research, as well as application and practice, the following principles ought to be adhered to:**

### **I. General Principles:**

- 1. That human life and dignity should be respected in matters of biological and technological research, application and practice.**
- 2. That man, as God's vice-regent on earth and the noblest of his creation, should seek to respect nature, protect it from abuse, and preserve its equilibrium.**
- 3. That all research as well as application should aim at promoting life and the family institution, and encourage the practices leading thereto, and consequently, all research or practices which may endanger life and the family institutions must be prohibited.**
- 4. That the benefits of biological and technological research should be equitably distributed among all the people of the world so that these benefits might serve to improve their quality of life.**

### **II. More specifically:**

- 1. That organ transplant among human beings is an approved practice provided it is not in any way subjected to commercial exploitation, and that the life of the donor or the receiver of an organ is not seriously endangered by the transplant. The human body is not a property, which one may dispose of as such.**

- 2. That abortion is an approved practice only when it is applied to save life.**
- 3. That a sexual intercourse, which cannot lead to procreation, is a perversion and must be strictly prohibited.**
- 4. Because life is a gift from God, man cannot dispose of his life, let alone the life of others, as he pleases; rather, it is man's obligation to preserve life and act as a custodian thereof.**
- 5. That contraception and artificial insemination ought to seek the well-being of individuals and of human societies at large, and may be resorted to only with this aim in mind.**
- 6. In the use of animals for research purposes, the life of animals must be protected against abuse, and the pain inflicted on them during experimentation must be minimized.**
- 7. Experimentation and research in the field of biology must neither aim nor achieve to substitute the natural method of procreation. Such methods, if discovered, must not be resorted to if they, in any way, jeopardize family life.**
- 8. Cloning must be limited to organs that may be beneficial to man, or help cure disease and disabilities. The cloning of the whole human being must be prohibited, because it disrupts family life and opens possibilities of procreation contrary to the ways of nature. The cloning of animals may, however, be permitted only if it helps to improve the quality of life in human societies.**
- 9. The genes of every individual are his own. No one has the right to dispose of the genes of an individual or to disclose their composition (DNA) or any other information, pertaining thereto, without the written consent of the individual concerned.**

**Hisham Nashabe**