

1 **3. CALL TO ORDER**

2 Moderators Dick Harter and Paul Rivera jointly
3 called the fourth plenary of the Twenty Third Gen-
4 eral Synod and the General Assembly to order at
5 8:52 a.m.

7 **4. SPEAK OUT!**

8 Moderator Rivera informed delegates that Speak
9 Out! would again include five United Church
10 of Christ speakers and five Disciples of Christ
11 speakers.

12
13 The five speakers from the United Church of Christ
14 were:

15 Ms. Betty Jane Bailey (CAC) spoke on the crisis
16 in the Middle East and the ethnic cleansing in Pal-
17 estine;

18
19 Ms. Kimberly Mather (CONN), speaking on be-
20 half of the Conference Youth, expressed strong op-
21 position to those who might consider AIDS a pun-
22 ishment for “the sin of homosexuality”;

23
24 The Rev. Mary J. Fairley (IL) reported on the ac-
25 tion of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Con-
26 ference, declaring the Rev. Sterling Cary the first
27 African American Conference Minister *Emeritus*;

28
29 Ms. Mary Alice Butkofsky (PC) spoke in support
30 of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
31 (TANF) and the Decade to End Poverty; and

32
33 Mr. William Ingraham (MICH), who talked about
34 efforts to raise money to support lesbian, gay, bi-
35 sexual, and transgender issues by pledging money
36 based on the time that the Outside Protestors are
37 there.

38
39 Speakers from the Christian Church (Disciples of
40 Christ) addressed the Middle East, Disciples Men,
41 the Young Adult Fellowship, and homosexuality.

42
43 **5. RECOMMENDATION TO THE CHURCHES**
44 **FOR A NEW RELATIONSHIP—CHURCHES**
45 **UNITING IN CHRIST**

46 Moderators Dick Harter and Paul Rivera reviewed
47 the procedures for conducting business in a joint
48 session of the General Synod/Assembly. There
49 would be separate discussion times for the United
50 Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Dis-
51 ciples of Christ) and, following the discussions,
52 separate votes would be taken.

53
54
55 Mr. Harter identified the next item of business as
56 “Churches Uniting in Christ.” He gave an over-
57 view of the issue and called on John Thomas and
58 Dick Hamm to introduce Ecumenical Guests who
59 supported the adoption of this resolution:

The Rev. Kevin Calloway, African Methodist Epis-
copal Church

Ms. Frieda Moss, African Methodist Episcopal
Zion Church
The Rev. Ross Stuckey, Episcopal Church (U.S.A.)
The Rev. Gerald Brown, International Council of
Community Churches
Ms. Dorothy Barnard, Presbyterian Church
Bishop Fritz Mutti, United Methodist Church

Before proceeding to the discussion of the resolution,
Moderator Harter thanked the Committee Process
Facilitators and asked all of the Committee Chairs to
rise and be recognized. Mr. Harter then called on the
Rev. Dennis Frische-Mouri (IK), Chair of Committee
One, to present the recommended action on behalf of
Committee One. The Rev. Frische-Mouri moved that
the Twenty-third General Synod adopt the “Recom-
mendation to the Churches for a New Relationship—
Churches Uniting in Christ.” The Rev. Frische-Mouri
spoke to the motion and there was additional discus-
sion from the floor.

In accordance with the procedures agreed to, the Chris-
tian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Assembly
then held extensive discussion on this item.

Following discussion, Mr. Harter called for the Gen-
eral Synod vote.

01-GS-13 VOTED: The Twenty-third General Synod
adopts the resolution, “Recommendation to the
Churches for a New Partnership—Churches Uniting
in Christ, Consultation on Church Union.”

**Recommendation to the Churches for a New
Relationship—Churches Uniting in Christ**

The Executive Committee of the Consultation on
Church Union (COCU), acting on the mandate given
by the Consultation's Eighteenth Plenary (St. Louis,
January, 1999)

(1) commends to the member churches the following
proposal for a new relationship among them to be called
Churches Uniting in Christ, and

(2) requests that they approve this proposal in their
appropriate decision-making bodies in order that they
together may inaugurate Churches Uniting in Christ
through public declaration and liturgical celebration
during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in the
year 2002.

This proposal for inauguration of Churches Uniting in
Christ is excerpted from the full report of the Eigh-
teenth Plenary. It is also dependent on, and intended to
be fully consistent with, COCU's other foundational
documents: *COCU Consensus* (CC) and *Churches in
Covenant Communion* (CCC). These texts, in turn, are
deeply indebted to work done in other parts of the ecu-
menical movement, especially the World Council of
Churches' text *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*.

1 Entering into Churches Uniting in Christ means
2 that the participating churches will express their
3 relationship with one another through the follow-
4 ing visible marks:

5
6 1. Mutual recognition of each other as authentic
7 expressions of the one church of Jesus Christ. Spe-
8 cifically this means that the participating churches
9 will publicly recognize the following in one an-
10 other:

11 faith in one God who through Word and in the Spirit
12 creates, redeems, and sanctifies;

13 commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and as the
14 incarnate and risen Lord;

15 faithfulness to the Holy Scripture, which testifies
16 to tradition and to which tradition testifies
17 as containing all things necessary for our
18 salvation, as well as being the rule and ulti-
19 mate standard of faith;

20 commitment to faithful participation in the two
21 sacraments ordained by Jesus Christ, Baptism
22 and the Lord's Supper;

23 commitment to the evangelical and prophetic
24 mission of God and to God's reign of justice
25 and peace; and

26 grateful acceptance of the ministry that the Holy
27 Spirit has manifestly given to the churches.

28
29 2. Mutual recognition of members in one Baptism.
30 This also implies a recognition of the ministry that
31 all believers share in the common priesthood and
32 from which God calls those members who will be
33 ordained.

34
35 3. Mutual recognition that each affirms the apos-
36 tolic faith of Scripture and tradition that is ex-
37 pressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and
38 that each seeks to give witness to the apostolic faith
39 in its life and mission.

40
41 4. Provision for celebration of the Eucharist to-
42 gether with intentional regularity. This recognizes
43 that the sacrament is at the heart of the church's
44 life. Shared celebration of the Lord's Supper is a
45 sign of unity in Christ. As Christians gather in all
46 their diversity at one table of the Lord, they give
47 evidence that their communion is with Christ and
48 that they are in communion with one another in
49 Christ. When Christians are unable or unwilling to
50 partake together of the one Eucharist, they witness
51 against themselves and give a visible demonstra-
52 tion of the brokenness of Christ's body and the
53 human community.

54
55 5. Engagement together in Christ's mission on a
56 regular and intentional basis, especially a shared
57 mission to combat racism. The church engages in
58 Christ's mission through worship, proclamation of
59 the gospel, evangelism, education, and action that
embodies God's justice, peace, and love. The com-
mitment made by the members of Churches

Uniting in Christ includes all of these so that hearts
and minds may be changed. The participating churches
will also recognize, however, a particular and emphatic
call to "erase racism" by challenging the system of
white privilege that has so distorted life in this society
and in the churches themselves. Indeed, this call is a
hallmark of the new relationship.

6. Intentional commitment to promote unity with
wholeness and to oppose all marginalization and ex-
clusion in church and society based on such things as
race, age, gender, forms of disability, sexual orienta-
tion, and class.

7. Appropriate structures of accountability and appro-
priate means for consultation and decision-making.
While some provision must be made for effecting the
marks of the new relationship and for holding the
churches mutually accountable to the commitments
they have made, the structures developed for these
purposes should be flexible and adapted to local cir-
cumstances. Apart from ongoing structures, the mem-
bers of Churches Uniting in Christ may want to as-
semble from time to time in order to consider pressing
issues and to bear witness together on matters of com-
mon concern.

8. An ongoing process of theological dialogue. Such
dialogue will specifically attempt:

to clarify theological issues identified by the members
of Churches Uniting in Christ in order to strengthen
their shared witness to the apostolic faith.

to deepen the participating churches' understanding of
racism in order to make an even more compelling case
against it.

to provide a foundation for the mutual recognition and
reconciliation of ordained ministry by the members of
Churches Uniting in Christ by the year 2007.

As we undertake the dialogue regarding ministerial
recognition and reconciliation, the following para-
graphs will serve as the framework and starting point
for our discussions.

Mutual *recognition* of ordained ministry means "that
the participating churches will publicly recognize that
one another's ordained ministries are given by God as
instruments of God's grace, that these ministries seek
to be faithful to Jesus Christ, and that these ministries
possess not only the inward call of the Spirit by also
Christ's commission through this body, the church" (St.
Louis Plenary Report, para. 43). Mutual *reconciliation*,
following and building on such recognition, means ad-
ditionally that "the ordained ministries of each
covenanting church become one ministry of Jesus
Christ in relation to all" such that "the ministry of one
may function, whenever invited, as a ministry to all"
(CCC, ch. 4, para. 21).

1 Chapter 7 of the *COCU Consensus* makes clear
2 the intention of COCU members to adopt the three-
3 fold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon as
4 part of the process of ministerial reconciliation “in
5 ways appropriate to the differing traditions of the
6 uniting churches and to future needs of their com-
7 mon mission” (CC, ch. 7, para. 44). The text notes
8 that the churches may use different nomenclature
9 (para. 42), but the three-fold ordering must be suf-
10 ficiently evident that the ministries of the churches
11 are fully inter-changeable.

12
13 The *COCU Consensus and Churches in Covenant*
14 *Communion* also affirm that a reconciled ministry
15 shall include bishops who “stand in continuity with
16 the historic ministry of bishops as that ministry has
17 been maintained through the ages” (CC, ch. 7, para.
18 48). This historic succession is understood as one
19 sign of the apostolicity the churches confess. The
20 churches thus seek to be reconciled in such a way
21 that the wider Christian world can understand their
22 relationship to be what is commonly known as full
23 communion.

24
25 The documents insist that “uniformity among sev-
26 eral church polities is not essential to covenant
27 communion” (CCC, ch. 4, para. 19) and that it is
28 the responsibility of each of the participating
29 churches “to determine how its present categories
30 of ordained ministry relate to the historic catego-
31 ries [of the three-fold ministry] set forth in the
32 *COCO Consensus*, chapter 7” (para. 28). The pur-
33 pose of dialogue would be to explore how much
34 diversity is possible consistent with the framework
35 for reconciliation set forth in the COCU documents.
36 This is particularly important since, in an earlier
37 phase of the consultation, it was anticipated that
38 “the ordering of ministry outlined in chapter 7 will
39 first begin to appear concretely in the councils of
40 oversight [later called covenanting councils]”
41 (“Note on the Function of Chapter 7,” first edi-
42 tion). Since covenanting councils *per se* are not
43 envisioned as part of Churches Uniting in Christ,
44 this will obviously need to be reconsidered.

45
46 The reconciled ministry we seek should also:

- 47 • embody a commitment to justice, peace, and
48 the integrity of creation;
- 49
- 50 • be a demonstrable renunciation of the sins of
51 racism and sexism;
- 52
- 53 • provide adequate means for preaching and
54 teaching the gospel, presiding over the liturgi-
55 cal and sacramental life of the congregations,
56 and assembling, equipping, and watching over
57 the community (CC, ch. 7, para. 31);
- 58
- 59 • recognize and value the ministry of layper-
sons, including the full equality of both
women and men;

- enable the church to carry out its mission of
service and witness.

The relationship expressed through the visible marks of Churches Uniting in Christ will not be structural consolidation but a unity in diversity among churches that, though many, will understand themselves to be one community in Christ. From the moment of inauguration, the life of these churches will be visibly intertwined as never before. From the moment of inauguration, their relationship, with God’s help, will not be one of friendly coexistence and consultation but of binding community that actively embodies the love of Christ that ties them to one another.

The commitment of the churches to these marks of relationship and to the ongoing process of theological dialogue will enable the churches to inaugurate Churches Uniting in Christ while yet confessing that their work is not completed. The Executive Committee is confident that, guided by the Holy Spirit, the churches will be able to respond to God’s call

- to witness more credibly to the apostolic faith
- to oppose the sin of racism
- to move toward the day when their ordained ministries are mutually recognized and reconciled in a relationship of full communion

It is the strong hope of the Executive Committee that the reconciliation of ministry can be accomplished by the time of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2007.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CONSULTATION ON CHURCH UNION, OCTOBER 19, 1999

Moderator Rivera called for the General Assembly vote and the Business Item was adopted.

Dick Hamm and John Thomas led the Synod/Assembly in prayer.

6. RESOLUTION: REPARATIONS FOR SLAVERY

Moderator Rivera and Ms. Smith introduced the next action, “Reparations for Slavery,” which would be considered by both churches.

The Disciples of Christ General Assembly held extensive discussion on the issue.

Moderator Harter called on David Cavanaugh (CA NV, S), Chair of Committee Two, to present the recommended action of the Committee. Mr. Cavanaugh noted that the Committee had made amendments to the resolution; these were contained in the red packet distributed to delegates. He then moved that the Twenty-third General Synod adopt the Resolution “A Call for Study on Reparations for Slavery” as amended. Mr. Cavanaugh called on the Rev. Ann Marie Coleman