

1 Ms. Carolyn Edwards (NE) said that the Nebraska  
2 Conference challenged the United Church of Christ  
3 to select honored laymen as well as honored lay-  
4 women.

5  
6 Ms. Barbara VanAusdall (IS) reported that mem-  
7 bers of the Illinois South Conference were at home  
8 preparing for a trip to Ecuador. She noted that mem-  
9 bers of both the Christian Church (Disciples of  
10 Christ) and the United Church of Christ would go  
11 together to work on a mission project.

12  
13 Ms. Jenna Meisner (OHIO) spoke in favor of open  
14 and affirming. Noting that the issue had torn the  
15 church apart, she asked how people with differing  
16 opinions could be brought together.

17  
18 Mr. Jack Lynes (NH) announced that the New  
19 Hampshire Conference would be celebrating its  
20 200th anniversary on October 28. He asked for  
21 thoughts and prayers on that date.

## 22 23 **5. RESOLUTION: OPPOSITION TO THE** 24 **SIECUS DECLARATION—RESOLUTION 1**

25 Ms. Jaramillo called on Ms. Suzi Townsley  
26 (CONN), Chair for Committee Three, to present  
27 the work of the Committee. Ms. Townsley spoke  
28 of the thoughtful consideration that the Commit-  
29 tee gave to the resolution and the discussion which  
30 led to the Committee's recommendation. She then  
31 moved the resolution, "Opposition to the SIECUS  
32 Declaration—Resolution 1," and indicated the  
33 Committee's recommendation that the resolution  
34 be defeated. She spoke to the recommendation,  
35 sharing words written by members of the Com-  
36 mittee.

37  
38 Russell Mitman (PSE) spoke in favor of the  
39 Committee's call for defeat of the resolution, shar-  
40 ing his respect for the Committee. He yearned for  
41 a time of better discernment. Mr. Lewis (CA.SY)  
42 expressed opposition to the SIECUS declaration  
43 noting that Mr. Thomas did not speak for the Calvin  
44 Synod. Carol Wassmuth (IA) said that many lesbi-  
45 ans had come to her, as a nurse, seeking help in  
46 dealing with the strain created by the way society  
47 treats lesbians and gays. She shared her distress  
48 with people who consider the love between two  
49 people of the same sex perverted. David Runnion-  
50 Bareford, Biblical Witness Fellowship, said that  
51 sinners are in need of being saved; fellowship with  
52 Jesus gives us fellowship with one another. Jeffrey  
53 Brace (PNE) opposed the resolution, but expressed  
54 concern about the conflict and hate. He asked for  
55 greater understanding so that those in the church  
56 might be a community of God and witnesses to  
57 God's love.

58  
59 The resolution, "Opposition to the SIECUS Dec-  
laration—Resolution 1," was defeated.

## **6. RESOLUTION: OPPOSITION TO THE** **SIECUS DECLARATION—RESOLUTION 2**

Ms. Townsley, on behalf of Committee Three, moved  
the resolution, "Opposition to the SIECUS Declara-  
tion—Resolution 2," and reported the Committee's re-  
commendation that the resolution be defeated. She spoke  
to the resolution, again sharing the words of the Com-  
mittee members.

The resolution, "Opposition to the SIECUS Declara-  
tion—Resolution 2," was defeated.

## **7. RESOLUTION: COLOMBIA**

Ms. Jaramillo reviewed the Standing Rules regarding  
how far in advance of a vote delegates were required  
to have relevant materials. She reported a request from  
the Connecticut Conference, the proposer of the reso-  
lution on Colombia, that the issue be addressed while  
a guest from Colombia, who could speak to the resolu-  
tion, would be in Kansas City. Ms. Jaramillo asked the  
delegates if they felt prepared to discuss the resolution  
immediately. Following the delegates affirmation, Ms.  
Jaramillo called upon Ms. Petra Malleis-Sternberg  
(SW), Chair of Committee Twelve, to present the reso-  
lution "Colombia."

Ms. Malleis-Sternberg drew attention to the resolution  
in materials that had been distributed to the delegates  
(yellow packet). She noted the thoughtful consideration  
the Committee gave the resolution and moved the adop-  
tion of the Resolution "Colombia." She then yielded  
her time to Mr. Ricardo Equivia, who spoke to the reso-  
lution through his interpreter, sharing personal infor-  
mation regarding the serious conflict in Colombia and  
the need for the presence of others there to facilitate  
peace.

Others rose to address the resolution. One speaker had  
two children adopted from Colombia. She had seen  
the effects on people who have been displaced, the  
hunger, sick children, and environmental damage. She  
had gone to Congress to tell the story. Charles Wildman  
(CAC) had been hosted by Ricardo Equivia in Colom-  
bia and saw the true poverty outside the populous cit-  
ies. Mr. Chen (CONN) had been in a South Korean  
city in 1980 and experienced a military operation where  
almost 300 people were killed and over 2000 were in-  
jured, including children. Julio Filomeno (RI) had many  
Colombian members in his church. Over two million  
people had been displaced, many had immigrated to  
Rhode Island.

01-GS-23 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-third  
General Synod adopts the resolution, "Colombia."

## **COLOMBIA**

WHEREAS the Psalmist proclaims, "How very good  
and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity"  
(Psalm 133:1);

1 WHEREAS Jesus in the Beatitudes taught his disciples  
2 “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will  
3 be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9);  
4

5 WHEREAS Paul reminds us of our unity in Christ  
6 when he wrote, “For just as the body is one and  
7 has many members, and all the members of the  
8 body, though many, are one body, so it is with  
9 Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12);  
10

11 WHEREAS on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2),  
12 peoples of every nation on earth were present and  
13 the Holy Spirit filled them and they had understand-  
14 ing of one another, testifying to God’s power;  
15

16 WHEREAS we are entrusted with the “ministry  
17 of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18) and are  
18 called to be “ambassadors for Christ” (2  
19 Corinthians 5:20);  
20

21 WHEREAS the Connecticut Conference and the  
22 Central Atlantic Conference at their respective  
23 Annual Meetings in 2000 have passed a resolution  
24 of partnership between their Conferences and the  
25 Mennonite Church in Colombia;  
26

27 WHEREAS Justice and Witness Ministries, and the  
28 Latin American/Caribbean Office of the Common  
29 Global Ministries worked in collaboration with  
30 Witness for Peace to send a diverse, interfaith del-  
31 egation to Colombia from March 11–13, 2001,  
32 which included 20 clergy and lay representatives  
33 of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples  
34 of Christ from around the country;  
35

36 WHEREAS these delegates were told repeatedly  
37 by leaders from all sectors of Colombian society,  
38 including religious peace and justice workers, hu-  
39 man rights advocates, representatives from indig-  
40 enous and Afro-Colombian communities, cam-  
41 pesinos, and members of the business sector,  
42 that the violence in their country is not about a “war  
43 on drugs,” but rather is the result of economic chaos  
44 due to widespread poverty and gross inequities in  
45 the distribution of resources;  
46

47 WHEREAS despite increasing efforts of the U.S.  
48 over the past five years to reduce coca productions  
49 in Latin America primarily through policies of  
50 interdiction and aerial fumigation of crops, which  
51 is causing widespread damage to the environment  
52 in the Colombian rain forest and massive destruc-  
53 tion of edible crops as well, overall coca produc-  
54 tion has continued to increase over this period due  
55 to a consistently increasing demand in the United  
56 States; and  
57

58 WHEREAS international human rights organiza-  
59 tions, as well as the judicial branch of the Colom-  
bian government, have documented that 80% of  
the human rights violations and military violence

being perpetrated in Colombia at this time is due to the  
paramilitary forces, which often act as an extension of  
and in cooperation with the Colombian military forces,  
who are being trained by the United States and who  
are the primary recipients of aid through Plan Colom-  
bia. (Plan Colombia is the U.S. government sponsored  
aid package in the amount of 1.3 billion dollars in fis-  
cal year 2001, of which 80% of this package is for  
military purposes.)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates  
to the Twenty-third General Synod of the United  
Church of Christ urges Wider Church Ministries and  
the Common Global Ministries Board to develop a  
presence in Colombia in cooperation with ecumenical  
partners to work for peace, justice, and human rights;  
and develop a brief study guide for congregations on  
the subject;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church  
of Christ calls upon the National Council of Churches  
and Church World Service to support efforts for peace-  
making in Colombia and assistance to the displaced;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a national United  
Church of Christ delegation, in cooperation with ecu-  
menical partners, visit Colombia before the Twenty-  
fourth General Synod and report to the church their  
findings;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church  
of Christ, in keeping with recommendations from the  
United Church of Christ/Christian Church (Disciples  
of Christ) Witness for Peace March delegation to Co-  
lombia, calls on the members of its churches to urge  
U.S. policymakers to stop all further military aid to  
Colombia, and support a negotiated peace process  
which includes all sectors; to reallocate funds previ-  
ously spent on military aid to be used strictly for hu-  
manitarian purposes; to stop any further aerial fumi-  
gation of coca crops and instead support manual eradi-  
cation, along with subsidizing alternate crop produc-  
tion; and to provide adequate funding for drug con-  
sumption prevention and treatment on request for ad-  
dicts in the U.S. to reduce overall demand;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church  
of Christ actively respond and allocate resources to help  
alleviate the needs of the displaced families and indi-  
viduals in Colombia; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the United Church  
of Christ urges Justice and Witness Ministries to advo-  
cate for humanitarian aid for the displaced in Colom-  
bia; for peacemaking and human rights as our nation's  
priority in relation to Colombia; and for focused atten-  
tion on the relationship between drug usage in the  
United States and the suffering of innocent people in  
Colombia; and further urges Justice and Witness Min-  
istries to advocate for drug education and increased  
drug treatment centers in the United States.

1 Funding for this action will be made in accordance  
2 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies  
3 and the funds available.

#### 5 **8. RESOLUTION: JUVENILE JUSTICE**

6 Ms. Jaramillo recognized Ms. Amarilys Ramos  
7 (PR), the chair of Committee Four, to present the  
8 resolution, "Juvenile Justice." Ms. Ramos noted  
9 changes to the original document which could be  
10 found in the distributed materials (blue packet). She  
11 moved adoption of the resolution as amended in  
12 committee.

14 Douglas Anderson (MASS) proposed an amend-  
15 ment to change "sexual preference" to "sexual  
16 orientation."

18 01-GS-24 VOTED: The Twenty-third General  
19 Synod amends the resolution, "Juvenile Justice,"  
20 to replace the words "sexual preference" with the  
21 words "sexual orientation."

23 Sheila Whetzel (CAC) moved to amend the  
24 resolution by changing the word "orientation" to  
25 "identity."

27 01-GS-25 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-  
28 third General Synod amends the resolution,  
29 "Juvenile Justice," to replace the word "orienta-  
30 tion" with the word "identity."

32 William Abraham (MICH) questioned the vote due  
33 to confusion regarding what sign delegates were  
34 to use when voting. The Assistant Moderator asked  
35 the delegates to vote again and the decision to  
36 amend was affirmed.

38 Ms. Jaramillo called for the vote on the amended  
39 resolution.

41 01-GS-26 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-  
42 third General Synod adopts the resolution "Juve-  
43 nile Justice."

#### 45 **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

47 WHEREAS children and youth are important  
48 members of our families, churches, and communi-  
49 ties;

51 WHEREAS Jesus reached out to the children with  
52 love and compassion when his disciples sought to  
53 send them away;

55 WHEREAS Jesus demonstrated through his min-  
56 istry the importance of caring for offenders and  
57 indicated our responsibility to do the same when he  
58 said, "I was sick and you cared for me; I was in  
59 prison and you visited me";

WHEREAS the criminal justice system in the United  
States has adopted a more punitive approach to juve-  
nile offenders in the last two decades;

WHEREAS in the last six years, forty-three states have  
instituted legislation facilitating the transfer of juve-  
niles to adult court, and all fifty states have laws al-  
lowing juveniles to be tried as adults;

WHEREAS the juvenile justice system of the United  
States arrests, detains, charges, convicts, and penal-  
izes young people in an unfair manner, resulting in dis-  
proportionate numbers of poor youth and youth of color  
represented in the juvenile justice system;

WHEREAS the justice system, including the juvenile  
justice system, has become a repository for people with  
mental illnesses and behavioral disorders, but provides  
little, if any, care appropriate to treating and healing  
such illnesses, especially among young people;

WHEREAS youthful detention has been shown to teach  
skill in crime and deceit rather than educating people  
in high standards for life and ethical solutions to ad-  
dress life problems, and youth engaged in the criminal  
justice system often become enmeshed in such sys-  
tems to their detriment, foregoing education and op-  
portunity to the detriment of us all;

WHEREAS current legislative efforts are being made  
in the United States to legalize the imprisonment of  
children as young as ten years old for the commission  
of felonies, and

WHEREAS the United Nations Subcommittee On the  
Promotion and Protection of Human Rights resolved  
in August 2000 that the execution of people who were  
under the age of eighteen at the time of the crime "is  
contrary to customary international law," and the  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
(article 37(a), 1995) states: "neither capital punishment  
nor life imprisonment without possibility of release  
shall be imposed for offenses committed by persons  
below eighteen years of age," but the United States  
continues to refuse to ratify this convention, and youth  
in the United States who committed crimes before the  
age of eighteen are vulnerable to capital punishment  
or life imprisonment; and

WHEREAS the teachings of Jesus hold us personally  
accountable to care for those who have been victim-  
ized and beaten down, as he illustrated in the story of  
the good Samaritan, and taught us to love all people,  
including those of us who have sinned, as he illustrated  
throughout his ministry;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-  
third General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
expresses its concern for the injustices of the juvenile  
justice system which affect the lives of many young  
people and their families, and thanks those United