

03-GS-08 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod receives the reports of the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team and the Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans Implementation Committee and thanks them for the important work they are doing on behalf of the entire church. The General Synod recommends the extension of the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team through the 2003-2005 biennium and the extension of the Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans Implementation Committee until 2007 be referred to the Executive Council for consideration and action.

Rev. Lee explained the purpose of the Committee of Reference and moved the adoption of the Report of the Committee as presented. He reviewed four items and recommended the following:

Resolution: "Calling for a Boycott of World Bank Bonds" does not meet the Standing Rules requirements regarding timeliness and will be returned to the delegates who submitted it.

Resolution: "The Nation's Crisis: The Church's Mandate" does not meet the Standing Rules requirements regarding timeliness and format and will be returned to the delegates who submitted it.

Resolution: "Disaster Relief and Undocumented Persons" will be referred to a committee of the General Synod.

Resolution: "Emergency Resolution of Support for the Citizens of Calhoun County will be referred to a committee of the General Synod.

03-GS-09 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod accepts the Committee of Reference Report.

The Committee of Reference was thanked for its hard work.

9. REPORT ON RIOTS IN BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN

Moderator Nate Lewis introduced Rev. Russ Baker, pastor of First Congregational Church, Benton Harbor. Rev. Baker spoke regarding the

riots which occurred several weeks ago in Benton Harbor. He called on the General Synod "to join his church in ending the victimization and abuse in cities like Benton Harbor and to assist in transforming the soul of this neglected community."

10. CELEBRATION OF THE REMOVAL OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY FROM VIEQUEZ, PUERTO RICO

As a church historically committed to justice, the culmination of the work of many that has resulted in the removal of the American Military from the Island of Vieques was cause for celebration. Rev. Luis Rosario, Conference Minister of Puerto Rico, led the General Synod in that celebration.

11. RESOLUTION: AFFIRMATION OF KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT WITH THE UNION OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES (UEK) IN GERMANY

Moderator Nate Lewis called upon Rev. Brian Cope of the Executive Council. Rev. Cope referred delegates to the resolution as printed. He then moved adoption of the resolution and yielded the remaining time to Rev. Russell Mitman, Conference Minister of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, who spoke to the resolution noting how the relationship has touched many lives. The Evangelical Churches of the Union (EKU) has recently reorganized into the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK).

A delegate from Wisconsin affirmed this relationship, but voiced a concern that more representation from the local churches is needed.

03-GS-10 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution "Affirmation of *Kirchengemeinschaft* with the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) in Germany."

AFFIRMATION OF KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT WITH THE UNION OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES (UEK) IN GERMANY

WHEREAS the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU) in 2002 celebrated one hundred eighty-five years of witness and ministry; and

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Church of the Union have enjoyed more than two decades of a relationship of *Kirchengemeinschaft*, affirmed by the ECU in 1980 and by the United Church of Christ in 1981 (Thirteenth General Synod), a common expression of the message of reconciliation specially inherent in united and uniting churches; and

WHEREAS the members of the Evangelical Church of the Union voted at its penultimate Synod in June 2002 both to disband the ECU as an institution and to join fully in the newly-formed wider ecumenical German union of churches, the Union of Evangelical Churches; and

WHEREAS the current international situation begs for the affirmation of life-giving partnerships – relationships that build bridges rather than create barriers to human community;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the General Synod of the United Church of Christ celebrates its existing relationships with the churches of the former Evangelical Church of the Union and affirm the continuation of those relationships as the Union of Evangelical Churches comes into being; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ welcomes the opportunity to engage in full communion with an expanded community of churches; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ expresses its firm commitment to the healing message of Christ, drawing attention to the lesson of history that people – especially through the Church – from “enemy” countries can overcome hatred and engage in building deep human relations.

Rev. Mitman called on Rev. Reinhard Richter to speak to the General Synod. He brought greetings from the UEK in Germany and stated that four hundred thousand Christians in Germany have now celebrated the formation of the Union of Evangelical Churches. He noted the importance of this in a society which he felt

was moving away from using the Gospels. Rev. Richter thanked the General Synod for allowing him to participate.

12. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Moderator Nate Lewis called upon Bill Pindar and Valerie Tutson who led delegates and visitors in a time of community building.

13. ADDRESS BY JOSE MALAYANG

Assistant Moderator Chris Smith welcomed Rev. José Malayang, Executive Minister for Local Church Ministries. Rev. Malayang addressed the General Synod on the theme of resourcing and supporting the work of the local church and its pastors and lay persons in proclaiming the gospel to the entire world. Rev. Malayang referred to past pronouncements of the United Church of Christ regarding open and affirming, multicultural/multiracial, and new/renewing churches and noted it is “Not right, not yet!”

14. NEW CHURCH PRESENTATION

Assistant Moderator Smith introduced Rev. David Schoen, Minister and Team Leader of the Evangelism Team in Local Church Ministries. Rev. Schoen briefly described several of the new churches and led the General Synod in a recognition and celebration of the seventy-four new congregations to the United Church of Christ since the Twenty-third General Synod.

15. RECOGNITION OF NEW AND RETIRING CONFERENCE MINISTERS

Assistant Moderator Chris Smith introduced Rev. Russell Mitman, Conference Minister of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. Rev. Mitman introduced Conference Ministers who had begun their ministry as a conference minister since the last General Synod, and those Conference Ministers who had retired since the last General Synod.

Conference Ministers who began ministry since the last General Synod:

The Rev. Wade Schemmel,

Northern Plains Conference

The Rev. Stephanie Haines,

Pacific Northwest Conference