

Special Recognition to:

Trinity UCC, Chicago for their strong, continuous support of the Justice and Witness Ministries Scholarship Program

Ms. Verna Uthman, for her many years of voluntarily tracking United Nations activities and programs on behalf of the United Church of Christ

From Local Church Ministries:

The Antoinette Brown Award to Ruth C. Duck and LaVerne McCain

Gill Excellence in Teaching Awards to Marge Bluhm, Curtis Johnson, Margaret Mills, Janet Scott and Carol Wilson

God is Still speaking Awards to Caroline Bail, Margaret Borrelli and Kathryn Ketchum

Recognition of Outstanding Contributions to Church Development to

Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference

The Pilgrim Press Mayflower Awards to

Barbara J. Essex, Leanne McCall Tigert and Timothy Brown, and F. Russell Mitman

United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries Award

Hugh V. Nash

United Church of Christ Mental Illness Network Dell Award to Joyce and Bob Dell

and All Honored Laywomen

From Wider Church Ministries:

Individual Awards of Affirmation to Dr. Zakaria Ngelow and the Rev. Shengjie Cao.

The delegates expressed their appreciation with a standing ovation.

Ms. Guffey offered a prayer of gratitude for their service and faithfulness.

17. THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Moderator Nate Lewis called on Rev. Charles Buck (HI) Chairperson of Committee Thirteen who reported on the three items of business from that committee.

Rev. Buck indicated that the three resolutions received by the Committee were similar in intent and therefore recommended that they be considered in a consolidated resolution entitled "The United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America."

On behalf of the Committee, Rev. Buck moved that the Twenty-fourth General Synod adopt the resolution "The United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America."

Rev. Mark Mendes (MASS) moved to amend the resolution after the second LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED to delete "that we support..." and the rest of that paragraph, and insert in lieu, "we encourage congregations to remain in dialogue with the Boy Scouts of America so that our prophetic vision might continue to challenge entrenched attitudes and change hearts."

The amended was seconded.

Ms Anna Magis-Agosta (CPC) rose to a Point of Personal Privilege urging the delegates to postpone action on this resolution as many of the youth delegates were not present. This resolution had originally not been scheduled for this time.

Ms. Katelyn MacRae (ME) moved to postpone debate until Plenary Four. The motion was seconded.

03-GS-21 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod postpones debate on the resolution "The United Church of Christ and the Boy scouts of America" until Plenary Four.

18. U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Moderator Lewis called on Rev. Beth Hyde (RM), Chairperson for Committee Three, who introduced and moved the adoption of the resolution "U.S. Policy in the Middle East" as amended by Committee.

03-GS-22 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution "U.S. Policy in the Middle East" as amended.

U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MINDFUL of all previous resolutions and statements regarding the Middle East expressed by the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) separately and collectively through the Common Global Ministries Board and the affirmation the denominations have made of the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence; and

WHEREAS, the United States has executed foreign policy in the Middle East in ways that are inconsistent, specially through selective reference to U.N. resolutions, and that have grave implications for the nations and peoples of the Middle East and thus threaten to compromise responsible U.S. leadership; and

WHEREAS, the United States is the only global power in a position to be a primary and effective broker of peace and justice in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, the war against terrorism is vague rhetoric that has been used by the United States and other nations to subdue disparate adversaries, be the militant groups such as al-Q'aida or nation states such as Iraq; and

WHEREAS, the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far and away the leading cause of hostility in the Middle East and has had devastating effects on the people of the entire region; and

WHEREAS, Israelis and Palestinians have suffered injury and death as a result of acts of violence perpetrated by both parties to the conflict, and the occupation of Palestinian lands is violent and begets violence; and

WHEREAS, in March 2003 against the expressed opposition of many people and nations of the world, the United States waged a

war against Iraq with the stated aim of disarming Iraq and effecting regime change; and

WHEREAS, the church, and particularly the United Church of Christ, is called by its head, Jesus Christ, to be reconcilers, peacemakers, and advocates for justice.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ

1. Calls on the U.S. government to base its Middle East policy on principles of human rights and human justice and to refrain from narrowly acting with U.S. economic interests in mind.
2. Calls for a consistent and coherent approach to U.S. policy in the Middle East, including, but not limited to, the issues of weapons proliferation and enforcement of U.N. resolutions in a principled way.
3. Expresses voices of opposition to unprovoked U.S. military action such as that waged against Iraq and to the continuation of sanctions, preferring the pursuit of diplomatic means to resolve the differences between governments, including the issues of no-fly zones, weapons proliferation, and human rights.
4. Urges the U.S. government to reorient its long-term policy with regard to Iraq and other Middle Eastern states, including ending U.S.-led punishment of the Iraqi people through sanctions and war, so that a healing of the relationship between the states might promote integration of Iraq into the community of nations.
5. Calls upon the U.S. government to support relief and reconstruction efforts generously but cede such authority to the United Nations, allowing non-governmental organizations full and unconditional access to provide relief in

Iraq, and to work diligently to mend broken fences with countries of the region and the world in order to reduce feelings of animosity and distrust; and

6. Calls on the U.S. government to direct its attention to and actively commit to work fairly and creatively for peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis and most urgently to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, a good-faith step required by international law that would go a long way toward establishing trust, stability, and an end to violence between Palestinians and Israelis and in the Middle East as a region.
7. Calls upon the churches of the United Church of Christ to appreciate the connections we have with Christians in the Middle East through partnerships and mission relationships, and strengthen those connections through engagement in healing the brokenness and distrust created by war and national isolationism, and by contributing to relief and reconstruction appeals through One Great Hour of Sharing, and further to engage in activities that promote bridge-building between churches in the United States and churches in the Middle East and people of Middle Eastern heritage here in this country.
8. Communicate these concerns and positions to the fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council and the leaders of the United States government.

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

19. AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE TO CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Rev. Hyde introduced the next resolution “An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism” and moved its adoption.

03-GS-23 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution “An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism.”

AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE TO CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has affirmed its support for a secure state of Israel in a previous Synod resolution [“The Israeli-Palestine Conflict” (1987)], and the existence of Israel as a Jewish state is important; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has also condemned anti-Jewish positions in previous resolutions [“Anti-Semitism” (2001), and “Relationship between UCC and the Jewish Community” (1987)]; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has affirmed its concern about the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine, and the importance of justice for both Israelis and Palestinians in the resolutions: “Bringing Justice and Peace to the Middle East” (1999); “Jerusalem City of Life” (1997) and “Palestine/Israel” (1997); and

WHEREAS, as a result of Israeli settlements, access roads, and military control areas, Palestinians have been constrained in smaller and smaller densely populated, non-contiguous areas; and

WHEREAS, many innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians have been killed in the struggle for this land; and

WHEREAS, Israel has a very large peace movement that opposes the occupation of Palestine; and

WHEREAS, in polling data, a majority of Israelis express a desire for negotiations with Palestinians, a two-state solution, and evacuation of settlements in the context of a peace accord; and

WHEREAS, Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority have accepted provisions of the Road Map to Peace; and