

WHEREAS, Christian Zionism, aligned with the minority Jewish settler group, takes positions on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that are contrary to the position of the Israeli government and of the most Israelis, opposing a two-state solution and supporting transfer of all Arabs out of Palestine; and

WHEREAS, influential members of the current U.S. government endorse Christian Zionist positions as a basis for U. S. foreign policy; and

WHEREAS, the Just Peace Pronouncement that was adopted by the General Synod in 1985, as well as updates and similar proclamations of other denominations and like-minded groups, has received insufficient publicity within our denomination, in the mass media, and among U.S. government officials.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the diversity of biblical perspectives on the question of a Jewish homeland, but affirms that all such perspectives should be grounded in the message of justice and peace taught by Jesus and the biblical prophets; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ will write a letter to the President of the United States, other leaders in our government, and the leaders of the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, informing them that this General Synod asks all parties to agree unconditionally to abide by the Geneva Conventions and to accept the Road Map to Peace as originally proposed; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ will, in consultation with the appropriate ministries, develop a plan to communicate the theological and political ramifications of Christian Zionism. Elements of this plan should include:

1. Issuing to all churches in the United Church of Christ a pastoral letter on Christian Zionism and the ongoing

conflict in Israel and Palestine and that this letter be available on the United Church of Christ website.

2. Informing current government officials of Christian alternatives to Christian Zionism.
3. Continuing to develop the United Church of Christ educational program about the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine and include material that enables Christians to respond with a biblical basis to the tenets of Christian Zionism. The objective of this educational program should be that members of the United Church of Christ will be encouraged to become more active on this issue.
4. Cooperating with other denominations and like-minded groups to promote alternatives to Christian Zionism in the mass media.

Considering the human suffering and the political urgency of the on-going conflict, we would hope the first elements of this plan could be implemented by fall 2003.

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

## **20. IN HONOR OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE**

Moderator Lewis introduced Ms. Karli Purscell (NE) who introduced the resolution "In Honor of Senator Paul Wellstone" and moved its adoption as amended by the Committee.

Rev. David Greenhaw (MOMS), President of Eden Seminary, questioned the theological implication of honoring Senator Wellstone, rather we should honor Jesus Christ.

An amendment was proposed, but ruled out of order as it was made after the vote was called on the resolution.

Ms. Bernice Powell Jackson moved to postpone action on the resolution until the next plenary.

03-GS-24 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod postpones action on the resolution "In Honor of Senator Paul Wellstone" until the next Plenary.

The order of the day was called.

## **21. INTRODUCTION OF CANDIDATE FOR WIDER CHURCH MINISTRIES**

Moderator Lewis referred delegates to biographical information on Ms. Olivia Masih White, candidate for the position of Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministers.

Mr. Lewis introduced Rev. Rodney Franklin, Chair of the Board of Directors of WCM, who introduced Ms. Olivia Masih White as the nominee for the position of Executive Minister for Wider Church Ministries.

Ms. White described herself as a third generation Christian born in Jabalpur, India and a graduate of missionary schools. She gave credit to her parents for nurturing her in the Christian faith, providing her the opportunity to attend missionary boarding schools and setting an example by their commitment to the church. Their values built the foundation of her faith journey. They passed away some twenty-five years ago and she wished they could see her now. They would be proud.

Ms. White attended Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. She often boasted that she is very ecumenical: raised as an Anglican, taught in a Roman Catholic girls school in India, studied in a Methodist seminary, worked two summers in a Presbyterian Church in New York and married a member of the United Church of Christ.

Ms. White believed that God has been leading her each step of the way, guiding her and preparing her to accept this new challenge.

During her interview for this position, Ms. White lifted up four major challenges: finance, ecumenism, interfaith connections, and the

concerted effort to become truly a multicultural and multiracial, open and affirming church for all of God's children.

## **22. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Moderator Lewis called on Ms. Edith Guffey for announcements.

## **23. RECESS**

Moderator Lewis declared the Third Plenary of the Twenty-fourth General Synod to be complete.

**The Rev. Canon Naim Ateek, Palestinian Christian serving in Palestine and Israel, was the keynote speaker for the Sunday Community Celebration. The theme for the worship service was "Embrace Justice."**

### **Sunday Evening, July 13, 2003 Fourth Plenary Session**

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Moderator Carol Wassmuth called the fourth plenary of the Twenty-fourth General Synod to order at 7:30 p.m. She opened with a personal story describing "Minnesota Nice" with an appreciation for the grace and kindness of the host conference at this General Synod.

## **2. SPEAK OUT!**

Ms. Wassmuth welcomed the Speak Out! participants

1. Sheryl Cross (Parish Nurse Network/MOMS) urged participants not to let the stress of Synod get to them. She suggested using the massage therapists who could be found in Health and Wellness Booth 15-16. She also urged donating blood in room 101H of the convention center.
2. Melanie Lawrence (MI) reported there is good news regarding Benton Harbor, Michigan. Benton Harbor and its sister city, St. Joseph, have formed a cooperative union to address the issues of race in the two cities.

settings of the church to urge the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America to adopt a membership policy that does not discriminate based on sexual orientation, and that allows for the reactivation of membership of persons who were previously excluded solely on that basis; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that we prayerfully refer this issue to the local churches, Associations, Conferences, General Synod, and other settings of the United Church of Christ for study, discernment, and advocacy.

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

**6. IN HONOR OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE**

Moderator Nate Lewis called upon Karli Purscell, Chair of Committee Eleven, who then moved the adoption of the resolution “In Honor of Senator Paul Wellstone.”

A motion to amend the resolution was made by Matthew Wooster (OH) to delete the paragraph beginning LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED on page two. The amendment was seconded.

03-GS-26 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod accepts the amendment to delete the paragraph beginning LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED.

03-GS-27 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution as amended, “In Honor of Senator Paul Wellstone.”

**IN HONOR OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE**

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has declared itself a just peace church, and many local churches have declared themselves just peace churches; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ acknowledges the void, in his absence, of an

equivalent impassioned, tireless advocate for the moral missions that Senator Wellstone represented; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone spoke tirelessly and passionately, again and again, over and over, on the Senate floor for actions and issues related directly to the lives of those with little or no voice in this democracy and who are often left out of our society time and time again; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone was a role model for the United Church of Christ’s vision that the basis of true democracy is grassroots participation of citizens from the local level working to impact national issues of peace and justice; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone and the United Church of Christ share the belief that grassroots democracy is the best policy for this country; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone was continually accessible for gatherings with the United Church of Christ on peace and justice concerns. Wellstone was a key participant in the debate as to where politics should be going, forever upholding high standards for the moral obligations of politicians as public servants; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone pressed for campaign finances reform so that our country would become a true democracy; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone and his wife Sheila, were recognized as national leaders on domestic violence and fought fervently to educate the populace and diminish the occurrence of domestic violence in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in fall 2002 Senator Wellstone voted against giving the President of the United States authorization to declare war on the country of Iraq; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone fought to enact into law measures to improve the living conditions of hundreds of thousands of

American veterans and was an unremitting advocate for the rights of the disabled; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone fought to protect the environment through brownfield cleanup, as well as conservation and renewable-energy measures and incentives for farmers, ranchers, and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, Senator Wellstone fought for worker-safety rights, increased worker training, and citizen health care security.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its great appreciation for the outstanding contributions of Senator Paul Wellstone to peace and social justice and for the leadership he provided to legislation that fulfilled our denomination's commitment to living out God's vision of shalom; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ direct President and General Minister John Thomas to communicate this action to Senator Wellstone's family.

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

## **7. AMERICAN INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS**

Moderator Lewis called upon Karli Purscell, Chair of Committee Eleven, who moved the adoption of the resolution "American Indian Boarding Schools" as amended by the Committee. She asked that Ms. Sammy Toineeta, minister for native American relations, be granted "voice without vote." This was granted by consensus of the body. Ms. Toineeta pointed out that the policy which required American Indians to be educated in boarding schools began in 1868 and is still in effect. There are currently ten thousand American Indian children in boarding schools which allow teachers free reign with discipline. The children have no rights in these schools.

An amendment to change the word "reparation" to "reconciliation" was defeated.

03-GS-28 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution, "American Indian Boarding Schools" as amended by the Committee.

## **AMERICAN INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, United States President Grant in 1869 awarded separate divisions of Indian Territory to the church denominations for missionization of the Indians in order to facilitate westward expansion and settlement of this country; and

WHEREAS, the American Missionary Association and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions commissioned missionaries who were zealous in their beliefs that the Indians had no religion and no souls and were therefore ripe for conversion to Christianity; and

WHEREAS, in the decade following 1869 the Christian denominations began to establish boarding schools with the underlying policy to "kill the Indian and save the man," and one such boarding school was the Hampton Institute, which opened its doors to Indian students in 1878; and

WHEREAS, the boarding school was of paramount significance in the attempted genocide of an entire people, and the mandatory placement of Indian children in the boarding schools resulted in the loss of hundreds of languages, spiritual beliefs, traditional practices, and the destruction of healthy family life; and

WHEREAS, the American Indian people have not fully recovered from the devastating boarding school era; however, the Indian nations in the United States are beginning to find their way back to their cultural life ways and are beginning to heal the wounds of the past; and

WHEREAS, the consideration of reparations is required due to the extent of the harm