

Ms. Gilliam, on behalf of Committee Fourteen, accepted it as a friendly amendment and recommended it be included as recommendation number five.

Assistant Moderator Smith, upon the advice of the parliamentarian, ruled the amendment out of order as Rev. Miller was not a voting delegate.

Ms. Taneta McCaw (CONN) offered a friendly amendment "that the national office add a one time special offering entitled "Fifty for Fifty Years," and the monies be used to fund the next General Synod to give us more time to study this issue.

Ms. Gilliam, on behalf of Committee Fourteen, accepted it as a friendly amendment and recommended it be included as recommendation number five.

Rev. Elizabeth Nordbeck from the Executive Council commented that "50 for 50" suggests the General Synod in 2007 not in 2005.

Assistant Moderator Smith called the order of the day and asked delegates if they were ready to vote.

03-GS-34 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod votes not to approve the bylaw amendment proposal to change the frequency of General Synod meetings from biennial to four years, as amended, with the following recommendations:

1. That Executive Council will lead a church-wide engagement in further study, dialogue and understanding to address the financial and other implications of this action by the year 2005.
2. That the General Synod express heartfelt appreciation to the Committee on Form, Function and Frequency of the General Synod for its courage and hard work in making its proposal and promoting a much-needed discussion.

3. That the Executive Council will appoint a committee to create a new vision of the function and form of General Synod to promote the ministry and mission of the United Church of Christ by the year 2005.

4. That the Twenty-fourth General Synod challenge every member, local church, association, conference and Covenanted Ministries with the responsibility to give every future General Synod spiritual and financial support.

5. That the national office add a one-time special offering entitled "Fifty for Fifty Years," with the monies received to be used to fund the next General Synod to give us more time to study this issue.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Nate Lewis called on Ms. Edith Guffey for announcements.

Rev. Wayne Sautter (PW) asked who was paying for the Our Church's Wider Mission video presentation and if it would be mailed to congregations free of charge. He then offered to buy two copies at ten dollars each. Ms. Guffey replied she would be happy to make them available to Rev. Sautter for that amount.

10. CONTINUATION OF THE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – DIRECT RESOLUTION THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST - THIRTY YEARS OF FAITHFUL ACCOMPANIMENT WITH FARM WORKERS

Moderator Lewis called on Rev. Liz Aguilar for the continuation of the Executive Council's report.

Ms. Aguilar, on behalf of the Office of General Ministries, moved that the Twenty-fourth General Synod, adopt the resolution entitled "The United Church of Christ - Thirty Years of Faithful Accompaniment With Farm Workers." Ms. Aguilar yielded her time to Ms. Bernice Powell Jackson who spoke to the resolution.

03-GS-35 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution entitled "The United Church of Christ - Thirty Years of Faithful Accompaniment With Farm Workers."

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST --
THIRTY YEARS OF FAITHFUL
ACCOMPANIMENT WITH FARM
WORKERS**

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ, through the former United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the commitment of Executive Vice President Dr. Howard Spragg and Secretary for Special Programs John Moyer, was one of the founding members in 1971 of the National Farm Worker Ministry, an interfaith organization, whose purpose is to support farm workers as they organize for justice and empowerment and equality; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, thirty years ago this July, the United Church of Christ through its Ninth General Synod demonstrated exceptional courage, support, and commitment to farm worker organizations when it chartered a plane and sent ninety-five General Synod delegates to help prevent violence on the picket lines during the United Farm Worker strike in Coachella, California; and

WHEREAS, the experience of the delegates who went to Coachella and the testimony they offered on return only deepened the commitment of the United Church of Christ to farm worker self-determination and their nonviolent struggle to organize; and

WHEREAS, the leadership of the United Church of Christ through its Presidents Robert Moss, Avery Post, Paul Sherry, and John Thomas and the ongoing support of the Justice and Witness Ministries have affirmed that commitment through continued assignment of staff and resources to the National Farm Worker Ministry and through their prophetic witness and voice both within the denomination and the larger church; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ, in refusing to allow itself to be paralyzed by the

fear of controversy, has consistently been one of the first denominations to endorse the farm workers' organizing campaigns and consumer boycotts such as the grapes and lettuce, Campbell's, Norpac, Mt. Olive, and Taco Bell boycotts; and

WHEREAS, countless staff, ministers, congregations, and individual members have acted on those endorsements, demonstrating their solidarity with farm workers by standing on picket lines, visiting supermarkets, writing letters, and witnessing from the pulpit; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ continues to be on the forefront of the farm worker struggle through its support for current organizing efforts by the United Farm Workers (UFW), the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW); and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has celebrated the victories brought about through organizing and the changes it has made in thousands of workers' lives; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ recognizes that the struggle remains difficult and that there are hundreds of thousands of farm workers who continue to work under abusive conditions without access to just wages, medical care, safe and sanitary working conditions, or decent housing and who fear being fired or deported if they complain.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the United Church of Christ offers its gratitude for Cesar Chavez, on this tenth anniversary of his death, and to Dolores Huerta, valiant cofounder of the United Farm Workers, for offering the church the opportunity to put its faith into action and to serve with them in the struggle, and to other leaders in the movement who continue to do so, such as Arturo Rodriguez, President, UFW; Baldemar Velasquez, President, FLOC; Ramon Ramirez, President, PCUN; and Lucas Benitez, co-director, CIW; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United Church of Christ offers its gratitude to Olgha Sierra Sandman and others within the church who had the vision, foresight, and courage to put themselves on the front lines with the farm workers and to urge others to follow; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United Church of Christ affirms its intent to continue partnering with the National Farm Worker Ministry and pledges its ongoing commitment to justice for all farm workers. *Si se Puede!*

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

11. RECESS

Mr. Lewis called the Fifth Plenary of the Twenty-fourth General Synod complete, and invited delegates to celebrate the anniversary of one of the most remarkable events in the life of the United Church of Christ, the flight to Coachella by ninety-five General Synod delegates and visitors of the Ninth General Synod, held in St. Louis in June of 1973. Recess was called at 11:46 am.

CELEBRATION OF THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO COACHELLA

A procession supporting farm workers moved to the stage accompanied by music and flags. The delegates stood in solidarity clapping to the music. Guests and honored people (approximately forty persons) were on stage.

Rev. John Thomas invited the Rev. Avery Post and the Rev. Paul Sherry to the stage as he also reminded delegates of the participation of the Rev. Joe Evans who was not in attendance at this celebration, and the memory of the Rev. Robert Moss. Rev. Thomas also invited all the Nineteenth General Synod alumni to wave their hands.

Ms. Virginia Nesmith, Executive Director of the National Farm Worker Ministry, thanked the United Church of Christ for always being the denomination that can be counted on for support.

Mr. Baldemar Velazquez, President of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, thanked the United Church of Christ for its support.

Mr. Ramon Ramirez, President of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN) also thanked United Church of Christ for its support, especially the delegates from the Pacific Northwest.

Mr. Lucas Benitez, Co-director of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, thanked the United Church of Christ for support of farm workers.

Ms. Dolores Huerta, Co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America shared that those who supported the farm workers in the pilgrimage to Coachella in 1973 risked death or injury and lifted up the improvements in benefits to farm workers over the past thirty years.

John Thomas commended all for their solidarity and urged commitment in the years to come. He offered blessings to each on the stage for the struggle and witness, and for being prophets in our midst.

**MONDAY EVENING, JULY 14, 2003
Sixth Plenary Session**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Assistant Moderator Carol Wassmuth called the sixth plenary of the Twenty-fourth General Synod to order at 7:35 pm.

2. SPEAK OUT!

Assistant Moderator Wassmuth called upon the participants for the Speak Out!

1. Cally Rogers Witte (SW) and 100% of her conference delegates were inspired by budget conversations and contributed to Our Church's Wider Mission budget, and invited other delegates to do the same.