

WHEREAS the communities living near chemical weapons stockpile sites in Utah, Oregon, Alabama and Arkansas are already overburdened with contamination from nuclear weapons testing and storage, industrial processes that have dumped high levels of dioxins, PCBs and heavy metals into the air, soil and water;

WHEREAS the United States Army and state governments' preferred weapons disposal technology for those stockpiles is incineration, despite the fact that safer technologies are being use elsewhere;

WHEREAS the risks associated with incineration – including toxic smokestack emissions and unsafe worker conditions – are not acceptable if they are avoidable;

WHEREAS preventing the use of safer technologies in disproportionately impacted communities in Utah, Oregon, Alabama and Arkansas violates the Principles of Environmental Justice.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourage state and local governments to continue seeking safe disposal of proscribed chemicals and chemical weapons in their regions, and calls on the Department of the Army and the Department of Defense to suspend the incineration of chemical weapons, and begin immediately to replace hazardous incinerators with safer non-incineration technology.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and the Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ in consultation with the appropriate conference ministers express the Twenty-fourth General Synod's opposition to the use of incineration technology in Calhoun, County, Alabama and other communities designated as incineration sites, by contacting the appropriate governmental agencies and representatives.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT we prayerfully request the United States Department of Defense implement a decision-making

dialogue that allows citizens living near all chemical weapons stockpile sites direct involvement in the process of choosing an acceptable technology to replace the incinerators.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests that Justice and Witness Ministries recommend specific actions and encourage local congregations, associations and conferences to follow up on these actions in support of this resolution.

10. TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH HOUSE

Chairperson Krinshaw, speaking for Committee Sixteen, after moving the adoption of the resolution "Transforming the Church House," recommended a "No" vote.

After some discussion, Rev. Robert Lee (VT) moved a substitute motion to refer the resolution "Transforming the Church House" to the Executive Council for consideration by the Affirmative Action Formulation Committee and the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee, and that the Executive Council report its findings to the Twenty-fifth General Synod and that all employee terminations continue to be vigorously reviewed by the Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiative Minister to ensure that the rights of each individual are respected and upheld.

03-GS-43 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod refers the resolution, "Transforming Church House" to the Executive Council for consideration by the Affirmative Action Formulation Committee and the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee, and that the Executive Council report its findings to the Twenty-fifth General Synod and that all employee terminations continue to be vigorously reviewed by the Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiative Minister to ensure that the rights of each individual are respected and upheld.

TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH HOUSE

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is committed to justice, affirmative action, and equal opportunity for all; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ General Synods have passed resolutions and pronouncements encouraging all settings of the church to act on behalf of justice and fairness for all; and

WHEREAS, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has declared the national setting of the church to be an affirmative action employer; and

WHEREAS, this resolution is to help our beloved denomination move from the church house model, which is perceived as the secular corporate model, to God's house, which is perceived as a place where justice, affirmative action, and equal opportunity employment is the justice culture; and

WHEREAS, this resolution is to help find ways in which the perceived reduction in force and voluntary resignations of staff is no longer disproportionately borne by people of color; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is called on to show compassion to our national church staff and to equalize the racial percentage of workforce reductions; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is called on, through the Office of the General Minister and President, that any termination or downsizing of positions due to budgetary shortfalls shall come only as an absolute last resort, resulting only after alternative avenues are exhausted, which shall include all classes of positions sharing equally and proportionately the burden of budgetary shortfalls.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Minister for Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiatives should be administratively and programmatically responsible to the Executive Committee of the Executive Council through the chairperson of the Executive Council.

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

11. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Christopher Grundy, David Holden, and Andrew Loftus from the sound crew led the General Synod in a time of community building.

12. SEEKING THE MIND OF CHRIST ON ISSUES OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN PUBLIC POLICY

Committee Nine Chair, Angel Toro (LCM), thanked the trainers of the committee chairs, the youth leaders, recorders, timekeepers, technical support persons and Office of General Ministries staff for their work. He then moved the adoption of the resolution "Seeking the Mind of Christ on Issues of Peace and Justice in Public Policy." Mr. Toro reported the Committee recommended the resolution be defeated, indicating there was lack of clarity. Committee members yearned to dialogue with the presenters, but were frustrated and disadvantaged because the presenters were not present for the duration of the discussion. Many issues, therefore, could not be addressed.

During discussion Wendy Vanderheart (MA), a member of the Committee reported the Committee members anguished over the resolution, finding that the proponent vacated the hearing shortly after the initial presentation.

After discussion, the vote was taken and the resolution "Seeking the Mind of Christ on Issues of Peace and Justice in Public Policy" was defeated.

13. INTEGRITY IN DIVERSITY

Committee Nine Chair Toro continued by moving the adoption of the next resolution "Integrity in Diversity." The committee recommended defeat of the resolution. Again, the presenter was not present for the entirety of discussion. A significant number of Committee members wanted to work in a spirit of reconciliation. Valid points were made in the resolution, but there was inadequate feedback from the presenters. Committee members acknowledged that theological diversity should be welcome in our church.