

- 3 . Improve the accessibility and affordability of drug treatment programs and related health services.
4. Reduce the use of incarceration for those involved in minor offenses, but instead offer medical treatment and/or alternatives to incarceration for first-time, non-violent offenders.
- 5 . Invest in young people through increased funding for after-school programs, mentor programs, skills building, job training, and summer employment programs.
6. Place renewed emphasis on economic aid rather than military assistance to other nations; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod urges the federal government to reevaluate international eradication efforts, which have not proven effective. The focus should instead be placed on economic development programs in other nations and decreasing the demand for drugs in the United States; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod calls on all settings of the church, through the leadership of Justice and Witness Ministries in cooperation with the other covenanted, affiliated and associated ministries, conferences, and associations, to:

1. Advocate for the elimination of racial bias in drug sentencing, such as disparate sentencing and mandatory minimums.
2. Advocate for alternatives to incarceration for first-time, nonviolent offenders.
3. Call for adequate funding for health care-based drug treatment programs in every community.
4. Support efforts in every community to treat drug abuse primarily as a public

health problem rather than a law enforcement problem.

- 5 . Support economic development alternatives to the current U.S.-backed Plan Colombia, which primarily invests in militarized campaigns to eradicate coca plants in Colombia and the Andes region through aerial fumigation.

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

16. CALLING ON THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO RENEW THE BATTLE AGAINST RACISM IN ALL ITS GUISES

Committee Twelve Chair McNeil moved the adoption of the resolution “Calling on the United Church of Christ to Renew the Battle Against Racism in All Its Guises.” After a brief discussion the vote was taken.

03-GS-46 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution “Calling on the United Church of Christ to Renew Battle Against Racism in all its Guises.”

RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO RENEW THE BATTLE AGAINST RACISM IN ALL OF ITS GUISES

WHEREAS, the Bible, from its first chapter (Genesis 1:27) to its last book (Revelations 7:9) speaks of one people without reference to race and indeed explicitly stresses our common roots, noting that “from one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth” (Acts: 17:26); and

WHEREAS, racism, particularly subtle racism, which Marian Anderson characterized as a “hair caught in an eyelash,” never seen, but inescapable, is nonetheless practiced and experienced by large segments of our society; and

WHEREAS, the practice of exclusion is sometimes reflected in our churches, which,

having been historically separate, all too often have remained so comfortably white congregations, black congregations, Hispanic, and Asian—congregations in all the colors of the rainbow, but no single one of which can ever be the rainbow; and

WHEREAS, we are instructed in Hebrews 10:24-25 to “consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another...” and

WHEREAS, Paul, the prisoner, did not urge a life of ease and comfort when he framed one of his many pleas for unity: “I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:1-6); and

WHEREAS, churches look for leadership from its ordained pastors and the pastors call on their members to “be imitators of God,” (Ephesians 5:1) and God calls on us all to be “the light of the world,” (Matthew 5:14,16); and

WHEREAS, there are many warnings of the peril of delay in both Old and New Testaments, among them Peter’s: “It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (I Peter 4:17); and finally,

WHEREAS, we have as our authority the powerfully simple answer of Jesus to the query as to the greatest commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-40).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that each attendee shall be encouraged to renew his or her personal battle against racism in its more subtle forms, drawing upon the strength of God and our gathered community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United Churches of Christ affirm and advocate a renewed battle against the divisive effects of racism in society by joining interfaith councils where they exist and act to create such organizations where they are lacking; and through dialogue among such groups and within local churches, the United Church of Christ shall take up the challenge of unity, to truly “be as one” (John 17:20-24); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with Peter’s cautionary note ringing in our ears, (I Peter 4:17) and emulating Mark’s passion for “immediately,” may we hasten back to our individual churches intent on reaching out to communities unlike our own, that we strive to forge new bonds, and foster a keener discernment of the wily, hidden face of racism; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the delegates of this Twenty-fourth General Synod will covenant to speak out the truth in order to re-energize “the tireless efforts and persistent work in their own area of worship, and become co-workers with Christ,” (Martin Luther King, Jr. in *Why We Can’t Wait*) socially marching in the light of God.

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

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Edith Guffey announced that the Montana/Northern Wyoming Conference had raised \$2500 at their table for Our Church’s Wider Mission. The large “com,unity” signs are available for rent through the Proclamation, Identity and Communication Ministry Team. Tapes of sermons will also be made available