

is killed with a nicked blade, yet animal welfare laws exempt "standard agricultural practices" in nearly every state. The federal Humane Slaughter Act, which requires that animals be rendered unconscious prior to slaughter, is poorly enforced (*Washington Post* [June 13, 2001]) and excludes poultry. Consequently modern slaughter often causes animals terror and pain (Gail Eisnitz, *Slaughterhouse* [1997]). Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful (Matthew 5:7), yet several widely used techniques designed to increase productivity cause animal suffering, including painful procedures without anesthesia, highly stressful crowding, frustration of animals" basic behavioral needs, and miserable conditions en route to slaughter, but we should also acknowledge that animal husbandry practices vary widely, and members of some species of farmed animals tend to be treated much better than others.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages pastors and congregations of every local church to explore the ways in which one's dietary choices can be valid and meaningful expressions of Christian witness, particularly on Ecojustice Sabbath (early April); and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on Local Church Ministries to develop educational curricula for Sunday school, adult education, and institutions of higher learning that

- 1) explore the relationship between dietary choices and our health, world hunger, the environment, the welfare of those working in animal agriculture, and animal well-being;
- 2) encourage reflection on how people can promote reforms in animal husbandry, such as identifying farmers who abide by more humane animal husbandry standards; and
- 3) provide responsible nutritional advice. (Several pastors and lay members have

already offered to voluntarily work on preparing these curricula, and these people plan to develop curricula appropriate for different age levels that provide factual information and then encourage reflection and discussion by asking questions. These curricula will then be presented to Local Church Ministries for revision and approval.)

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

#### **7. DISASTER RELIEF AND UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS**

Assistant Moderator Wassmuth called on Mr. Ito for introduction of the third resolution "Disaster Relief and Undocumented Persons." Mr Ito moved its adoption.

03-GS-49 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution "Disaster Relief and Undocumented Persons"

#### **DISASTER RELIEF AND UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS**

Purpose and Expected Outcome:

To inform the wider church concerning the growing likelihood that "paperless" persons affected by disasters may be re-victimized by deportation by the United States government if they seek assistance and to increase our vigilance, support and advocacy on behalf of these brothers and sisters.

Text of the Resolution:

In May, 2003, violent storms and tornadoes ripped through many states including: Kansas, Oklahoma, Southern Illinois, Tennessee, Indiana and Missouri. Over two hundred seventy-six tornadoes touched down in Missouri alone and seventy-six of one hundred three counties were declared federal disaster areas. These regions are still reeling from the devastation, but amidst the mud and debris, God is still speaking.

Through the efforts of the affected Conferences and the National Disaster Ministries Office, members of the United Church of Christ

continue to respond to the unmet needs of those harmed by the storms. Disaster response in the United Church of Christ is often performed in concert with many ecumenical interfaith, secular and governmental partners. In particular, the United States government plays a critical role in federally-declared disasters.

In every disaster, some of the greatest unmet needs are among undocumented or “paperless” people that are excluded from the benefits of governmental assistance. The United Church of Christ and other faith-based disaster responders are often their only source for relief. A concern has arisen while responding to the May storms, that our “paperless” sisters and brothers were re-victimized by governmental deportations triggered by the visibility brought to them by seeking relief as victims of disaster.

In order to continue to work in partnership with government agencies, disaster responders from the faith community need to be assured that all information gathered by federal agencies during disaster response is treated with appropriate confidentiality and is used solely for the purposes of relief and recovery.

All settings of the United Church of Christ are urged to remain vigilant advocates for undocumented and “paperless” persons as they engage in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response in partnership with governmental agencies.

**8. AFFIRMING THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF COMMISSIONED MINISTRY AS AN AUTHORIZED MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ms. Wassmuth called on Ms. Amarilys Ramos (PR), chairperson of Committee Four for introduction of the resolution “Affirming the Essential Role of Commissioned Ministry as an Authorized Ministry of the United Church of Christ.” Ms Ramos moved its adoption.

03-GS-50 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution “Affirming the Essential role of Commissioned Ministry as an Authorized Ministry of the United Church of Christ.”

**AFFIRMING THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF COMMISSIONED MINISTRY AS AN AUTHORIZED MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

WHEREAS, in the letter to the Church at Ephesus we are told “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the Body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12); and

WHEREAS, in Paul’s first letter to the Church at Corinth he says, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7); and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United Church of Christ “recognizes that God calls the whole Church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and society” (Article VI, paragraph 20); and

WHEREAS, “The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required by the church (*Constitution and Bylaws*, Article VI, section 21); and

WHEREAS, “Commissioning is the act whereby the United Church of Christ, through an Association, in cooperation with a person and a local church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to a specific church-related ministry which is recognized by that Association, but not requiring ordination or licensing” (*Constitution and Bylaws*, Article VI, paragraph 27); and

WHEREAS, professionals in the areas of Christian education, parish nursing, church music, church administration, worship and the arts, parish visitation, spiritual direction, and other church ministries serve in positions in our