

**11-GS-24 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to elect Mr. W. Mark Clark to a four year term as the Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ.

Following a standing ovation from the delegates and visitors, Ms. Aurand invited Ms. Linda Jaramillo and Mr. Geoffrey Black, as well as the outgoing members of the collegiums to join the newly elected members of the Collegium on the stage. Outgoing Collegium members offered a prayer for the new members.

**5. PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE BYLAWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ON THE FREQUENCY OF THE MEETINGS OF GENERAL SYNOD**

Moderator Robertson called upon Mr. Rick Fluechtling, Chairperson of Committee Thirteen to present the Proposed Bylaw Revision regarding the Frequency of General Synod.

Mr. Fluechtling moved the adoption of the resolution “Proposed Change to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ on the Frequency of the Meetings of General Synod,” as amended. The Committee’s amendment is to strike the word “biennially” and insert in its place the phrase “every three or four years” effective after General Synod Twenty-nine in 2013. Mr. Fluechtling added that the Committee was unable to support the Bylaw change at this time and requested that a working group created by the Executive Council to fully study all aspects and options, as well as the reallocation of financial resources, with a report to General Synod Twenty-nine in Long Beach, CA. He indicated the Committee recommends the defeat of the motion.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Bethany Joy Lang (MICH) called the question and the motion was seconded.

**11-GS-25 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to end debate on the resolution “Proposed Change to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ on the Frequency of the Meetings of General Synod,” as amended.”

**11-GS-26 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to defeat the motion to adopt the resolution “Proposed Change to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ on the Frequency of the Meetings of General Synod,” as amended (see appendix P).

**6. A CALL FOR REFLECTION AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Moderator Robertson called upon Ms. Melissa Gardner McBride, Chairperson of Committee Eight to present action from that Committee.

Ms. McBride moved the adoption of the resolution “A Call for Reflection and Advocacy on Behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo” and spoke to the resolution.

Mr. Robertson reminded delegates that this motion requires a two-thirds majority vote.

A brief discussion followed.

**11-GS-27 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to adopt the resolution “A Call for Reflection and Advocacy on Behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”

**A CALL FOR REFLECTION AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF  
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

**WHEREAS**, throughout the past two centuries, for the United Church of Christ, global presence and witness have been the core of God's mission through the church; and

**WHEREAS**, the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo (CDCC), in what today is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly known as Zaire, was founded in 1889 in relation to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, and is an ecumenical partner today of the United Church of Christ through our Common Global Ministries; and

**WHEREAS**, the 62 protestant denominations united under the ecumenical umbrella of the Church of Christ in the Congo have consistently decried the brutal and unmitigated exploitation of the Congo's immense resources; and

**WHEREAS**, since the advent of Congolese independence on June 30, 1960, the continued greed of global corporations for precious and strategic raw materials from the Congo and failure of the international community to respond to the documented human rights abuses of Congolese victims has led to the failure of the Congo state; and

**WHEREAS**, the series of invasions of the Congo by proxy states Rwanda and Uganda that commenced in 1996 have facilitated unfettered access to Congolese natural resources by international corporations and their collaborators in the Congo; have not only undermined democratic advancements, but have also cost the lives of an estimated 6,000,000 Congolese; have subjected up to a half million Congolese women and girls to rape, including sexual mutilation by multiple armies from Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi; and have increased dramatically the incidence for HIV/AIDS among women and girls, thus creating a health time bomb with dire consequences for the Congo; and

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 1,250 Congolese reportedly perish daily in Eastern Congo as a direct or indirect result of the militarization of mines by elite networks of militia-supported by business interests in the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and the industrialized world, at the detriment of Congolese socio-economic development and liberation (Global Witness report, 2003/2004); and

**WHEREAS**, these criminal behaviors are orchestrated and maintained by those seeking to profit from unfettered access to Congolese strategic natural resources (notably coltan, cobalt, tungsten, cassiterite, in addition to diamonds, gold, copper, uranium, oil, timber), in order to benefit mostly private wealth in industrialized nations, yet subjugating the Congolese people, despite the wealth of their natural resources, to poverty, suffering, slave labor, and human trafficking; and

**WHEREAS**, the international community, including the United Nations, has not adequately responded to these documented crimes against humanity, thus demonstrating a double standard in

the application of international justice because of financial greed and disregard for the value of Congolese people,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages its members, congregations, and various settings to pray, reflect and advocate on behalf of sisters and brothers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that congregations will be encouraged to recognize "Congo Week," the third week in October, in their respective annual worship calendars as a week of commemoration for the millions of victims of the scramble for Congo's resources and a stand for justice in solidarity with the people of the Congo; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that congregations working with Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ carry out advocacy and education across the globe for the Congo, with governments, the United Nations, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations, and with multinational corporations, until Congolese security and sovereignty is obtained. Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made available in accordance with the overall mandates of the Covenanted Ministries called upon and the funds available.

#### **FUNDING**

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

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Justice and Witness Ministries is requested to work with Wider Church Ministries to implement this resolution.

#### **7. IN SUPPORT OF THE RELEASE OF PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

Moderator Robertson called upon Ms. Barbara Ferguson-Kamara, Chairperson of Committee Four, for that Committee's presentation.

Ms. Ferguson-Kamara moved adoption of the resolution "In Support of the Release of Puerto Rican Political Prisoners," as amended.

**11-GS-28 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod grants voice to Ms. Marilyn Pagan Banks and Ms. Lisa Torres to speak to the resolution.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Bethany Joy Lang (MICH) called the question and the motion was seconded.

**11-GS-29 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to close debate on the resolution "In Support of the Release of Puerto Rican Political Prisoners."

Mr. Robertson reminded delegates that this motion requires a 2/3 majority vote.