

### XIII, WEDNESDAY EVENING

67-GS-214 VOTED: To adopt item 8 (as originally numbered)

67-GS-215 VOTED: To adopt item 9 (as originally numbered)

67-GS-216 VOTED: To adopt item 10 (as originally numbered)

In connection with consideration of item 11, the Budget Committee, as a matter of information, read the recommendations they would be presenting to the General Synod regarding the budget for the Committee on Racial Justice Now. It was

67-GS-217 VOTED: To delete item 11 (as originally numbered)

#### **13. Reconsideration of Resolution on Justice and Peace in Vietnam**

Because the General Synod had voted to reconsider the resolution it had passed On Justice and Peace in Vietnam, this resolution was presented to the delegates again.

Many suggestions for amendment were made, but failed to gain adequate support.

67-GS-218 VOTED: To amend line 94 by deleting the word "cessation" and substituting the words "most serious reappraisal."

67-GS-219 VOTED: To close debate on the resolution On Justice and Peace in Vietnam.

67-GS-220 VOTED: To adopt the resolution On Justice and Peace in Vietnam, as follows:

God judges and will judge the guilt of men and nations for the tragedy of war in Vietnam. Colonial powers will be judged for their oppression of the people of Vietnam. Judgment will reckon with those who seek to impose their will through terror and violence and who seek to establish tyranny under the guise of "wars of liberation." But judgment will also fall upon those who, professing the high purposes of freedom and self-determination, frustrate these very purposes through destructive and cruel means.

It is the troubled opinion of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ that all parties are increasingly resorting to military means which retard the possibilities for genuine progress and peace in Vietnam, which obscure the fundamental needs of the people of Vietnam, and which conceal the issues at stake in the present strife. The mind of America is not unanimous in this opinion. The views of church members themselves are divided. But we cannot permit the ambiguity of guilt or the diversity of opinions to silence our speaking to our government and to the citizens of our own nation, particularly the members of the United Church of Christ. Our democratic traditions allow it; our faith and moral commitments demand it.

We are mindful that the General Synod of 1965 supported "the position of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the effect that only political and diplomatic methods of negotiation and discussion can find a peaceful solution" to the Vietnam war and that "means must be found within or outside the United Nations of shifting the quest for a solution away from the field of battle to the conference room." This conviction and this hope have been overtaken by the events of the past two years:

There has been an expansion of military force and violence on all sides. United States action has steadily escalated through a series of military and political steps, each one apparently considered by the Administration to

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be prudent in its own limitations yet altogether leading to a much wider and costlier war.

There have been hundreds of thousands of casualties among the armed forces of all belligerents and the civilian population of Vietnam.

There has been an increasing apprehension over the risk of nuclear war.

There has been a deterioration in the prospects for a more thoroughgoing East-West detente.

There has been a serious gap between the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United States government, and other belligerents over the Secretary-General's initiatives in the pursuit of peace.

There has been a sacrifice of some of this nation's greatest assets, including much of its esteem as a humane and peaceloving people, its credibility as between aims and actions, and its will to achieve social justice at home and abroad.

In sorrow and in moral anguish, we seek now to give voice to the church's witness to justice and peace in the present situation.

We believe that there has been an unrewarding and increasing preoccupation with military assaults upon North Vietnam. There is no meaningful prospect for solving the most basic Vietnamese problems through the pursuit of military victory in the North.

We continue to support a negotiated settlement of the war consonant with justice and security for the people of Vietnam. Where formal negotiations may not prove feasible, we believe that deliberate acts of restraint and renunciation may serve to mitigate the violence on both sides and to encourage the beginnings of a minimal trust without which no political settlement can succeed. With regard to the governments and the United Nations we must affirm that "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind" is surely an important guide to national policy.

We must not raise false hopes concerning an early end to revolutionary struggle and violent warfare in Vietnam. While remaining open to every promise of resolution of the conflict, we must resist the temptation to believe that the war can be ended quickly through massive military attacks, or through any single act of deescalation, or through every reported "peace feeler." The tragic truth in Vietnam is that there may be many months if not years of relentless conflict no matter what policy choices are made by the United States government.

Yet our acknowledgement of the possibility of a protracted struggle must not serve to make us complacent with regard to military means. We must constantly keep the use of violence under moral scrutiny. We must reject and condemn any indiscriminate resort to weapons such as napalm and fragmentation bombs which have so frequently led to the killing and maiming of civilians and the destruction of their homes.

We affirm the profound yearning of the Vietnamese people on all sides of the present conflict to achieve peaceful development within the framework of regional cooperation and security in Southeast Asia. We must be prepared to give effective support to generous United States participation in regional economic assistance.

We cannot expect Vietnamese political institutions to pattern themselves upon our own governmental experience in the United States. Nevertheless, we must recognize and encourage those tendencies within Vietnamese political life which promise a larger measure of civic freedom, popular representation, and the rule of law.

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In the light of these concerns, we urge the following actions for the sake of justice and peace in Vietnam:

I. We urge the most serious reappraisal of United States air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam and the more resolute pursuit of political development, economic justice, and social reconstruction in South Vietnam.

II. At the same time we call upon the governments of North Vietnam and the United States to cease their dispatch of further forces to South Vietnam and to manifest a readiness to participate in a political settlement of the war, including a responsiveness to the initiatives of the United Nations secretary-general and of other governments.

III. We call upon all parties to permit the International Red Cross or the International Control Commission to make inspection of the treatment of prisoners and to make arrangements for the exchange of prisoners.

IV. We appeal for immediate planning and adequate implementation providing for a program of economic and social reconstruction for all of Southeast Asia, including both South and North Vietnam, in accordance with the president's proposed one-billion dollar project for establishment of a Mekong Valley Authority.

Finally, in the spirit of the "Appeal to the Churches Concerning Vietnam" adopted by the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches on December 9, 1966, we commend to every pastor and every congregation of the United Church of Christ the following actions as an expression of their willingness to make "the struggle for justice and peace" a genuine priority in our common life:

1. Congregational study, discussion, and action concerning the issues which we have set forth in this resolution.

2. Pastoral concern for and regular communication with men and women serving in the Armed Forces and civilian services in Vietnam and elsewhere overseas.

3. Pastoral concern for and regular communication with those who have chosen to witness as conscientious objectors.

4. Programs in which the issues of Christian conscience in relation to war and peace, the draft, and military service may be lifted up for the young people of our congregations who are faced with personal decisions in these matters.

5. Generous and sacrificial contributions to the Vietnam Christian Service program and to other ministries of service and healing to the Vietnamese people on all sides of the conflict.

6. Continual and special prayers and worship in which justice, compassion, and peace in Vietnam and the United States are the central concern.

7. Congregational involvement in interfaith and community-wide action in support of every genuine possibility for lifting from the long-suffering Vietnamese people the scourge of war which has been their sorrow for many generations.

#### **14. Closing Prayer**

The following closing prayer was offered by Mr. William R. Pelster of St. Louis, Missouri.

"O Thou whose chosen dwelling is in the heart that longs for Thy presence and humbly seeks Thy face. As we retreat into the night for much needed rest; deepen within us the sense of shame and sorrow for the wrongs