

over 170,000 troops have died in Vietnam. The number of U.S. troops killed in that period was over 12,000 (over 40,000 American troops killed during the war to date).

Since we have been involved in the war, over 572,000 troops have died. Who knows how many civilians? Since 1965 we have dropped over 3,200,000 tons of bombs on Vietnam. The official figures for refugees stand at nearly 2,000,000 (more than 10 percent of the population), but the true number is unknown. We have destroyed over 2,000,000 acres of land in Vietnam by use of chemicals.

An overpowering anguish now unites millions of Americans. We know that many of our fellow churchmen have not expressed publicly their anguish and protest. We urge them to speak out and act now with passion and sincerity. If others have spoken up but have heard no echo of public response, we plead with them now to reaffirm their position. Together our voices can swell into a volume of protest that will compel the whole American public to listen with attention and concern.

We protest this burning issue to the conscience of the General Synod and to every level of the United Church's constituency. Through pulpit and forum, ballot and media, we shall strive to bring increasing pressure to bear upon all who have a key role, whether direct or indirect, in the making of official decisions relating to the war.

Because of our continuing concern, be it resolved that the Seventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ urge the President of the United States of America to declare an early cease-fire in Vietnam and to accelerate withdrawal of United States troops from Vietnam.

The Rev. Frederick R. Trost of Illinois moved to amend by inserting the word "immediate" between the words "accelerate" and "withdrawal" in the last line. Being seconded and put to a vote, the amendment was lost. It was then

69-GS-142 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing statement on Vietnam.

4. Further Action on the Report on the Committee for Racial Justice: Resolution to Abolish Capital Punishment

The Rev. Samuel W. Fogal, Chairman of the Report Subcommittee on the Committee for Racial Justice, introduced a resolution for the abolition of capital punishment, and it was seconded. The resolution reads:

WHEREAS the Committee for Racial Justice, the Council for Christian Social Action, and the UCC Ministers for Racial and Social Justice are unalterably opposed to capital punishment and cannot remain silent regarding its continuance in our society, and

WHEREAS the human agencies of legal justice are fallible and

WHEREAS we are concerned about the disproportionate number of black and poor who occupy death row and, white or black, are victims of an evil which decent people of our society have too long endured and which violates categorically our Judeo-Christian ethic, and

WHEREAS this outdated and barbaric practice has been found to discriminate on the basis of skin color and economic condition, and

WHEREAS the last-minute stay of execution of 17-year-old Marie Hill in the gas chamber of North Carolina reminds us that one of the gross injustices in our judicial system is the retention of this barbaric practice.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ commit itself to join in a nationwide campaign for the abolition of capital punishment and call upon other secular and religious institutions to join in a maximum effort for the abolition of capital punishment in the following:

- a. Enlisting the support of Conferences and of other denominations and agencies and co-operating with existing efforts to abolish capital punishment.
- b. Developing legislative and other political action for the abolition of capital punishment.
- c. Resisting efforts to reinstitute capital punishment in those states where it has been abolished.
- d. Testing the constitutionality of laws permitting capital punishment.
- e. Making available and assisting in the raising of funds to pursue the above.

69-GS-143 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing resolution on the abolition of capital punishment.

5. Executive Council Proposals to Establish Uniformity of Election and Terms of Office on Certain Commissions

The Moderator recognized Mrs. George E. Kahlenberg, Chairman of the Executive Council, who referred to pages 91, 92 and 93 of *Advance Reports* which set forth proposals to the General Synod by the Executive Council intended to bring about uniformity in the methods of election and the terms of office of the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service, the Theological Commission, the Commission on Worship and the Historical Commission. The General Synod Votes to be amended are found on pages 31-33 of "The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ," 1967 green cover edition.

Mrs. Kahlenberg moved, there was a second and it was

69-GS-144 VOTED: To make more uniform the language of the several actions of the General Synod which created and set forth the purposes, duties, and composition of the Commissions named below, and to provide

that no member of these Commissions shall be eligible for election for more than two full terms consecutively,

that vacancies occurring where terms of service have not been completed shall be filled temporarily through the next regular meeting of the General Synod by election by the Executive Council,

and that the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service, the Theological Commission and the Historical Commission, like the Commission on Worship, shall report annually to the Executive Council,

the General Synod amends VOTES 59 GS 31, 61 GS 10, 65 GS 48, and 65 GS 33 in the following manner.

59 GS 31

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND ECUMENICAL STUDY AND SERVICE

by deleting the first paragraph and substituting for it: