

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON

3. The General Synod instructs the Commission to work through a theological statement and definition of the meaning of autonomy at all levels of our U.C.C. church structure as we further pursue the relationship of the local church to the total denomination, and the denomination's relationship to the Consultation on Church Union.

4. The General Synod approves the Commission's intent for the next biennium to "devote its resources and energies to an in-depth study of the nature and mission of the church, taking into account the character, categories, and styles of the contemporary world."

Upon motion duly seconded, it was

69-GS-98 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing report on the Theological Commission.

### *7. Proposal for Action: "Amnesty for War Objectors"*

Moderator Daniels recognized Mr. William L. Parkerson, Chairman of the Report Committee on the Council for Christian Social Action, who introduced the Proposal. Like the two Pronouncements, it had been sent well in advance to delegates, Conferences and churches for study and response. An open hearing was conducted on Sunday, June 29. Mr. Parkerson moved the adoption of the Proposal and there was a second.

Mr. Parkerson presented the Rev. Roger L. Shinn of Union Theological Seminary, New York City, who interpreted the point-of-view of the Report Committee. He said that the committee included members under 30 and over 30, white and black, specialists in theology and law, a pacifist or two, soldiers and career captains in the Army. "We were trying to recognize our differences and then ask whether our Christian faith told us something about the way we should recognize the integrity of young men acting according to their consciences, whether or not we agreed with them," he said. He interpreted the statement as urging us to be responsive churchmen and responsible citizens, and as calling upon the Church to say something in behalf of young men acting according to conscience, regardless of how we feel about them personally.

Dr. Shinn requested that Chaplain Colonel Cloma A. Huffman, a visitor to the General Synod, be granted the privilege of making a statement. The privilege was granted. Chaplain Huffman's statement follows.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator. Before you is a United Church of Christ churchman whom you have endorsed and sent, with his consent, into the U.S. Army as a Regular Army career chaplain. In finding the Director of the Resident Department of the U.S. Army Chaplain School before you who, as a churchman, is wholeheartedly endorsing this proposal on amnesty, you may feel somewhat like the King of Siam in the musical as he sings, "There are times when I almost think that I do not know what I am absolutely sure of."

I urge these bold actions set forth in this resolution because this nation needs, and is strong enough to embrace, both those who have participated in, and those who have opposed, the Vietnam war.

I do this because the time has come in the life of our churches, in the deliberations of this Synod and in the agony of this nation for us to say that in the United Church of Christ, as in all Christian churches, we can and will be both responsive churchmen and responsible citizens.

This is an hour when we can dramatically affirm that the church is big enough to love, and be a place for, men who have served in the armed forces of this

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country, are serving in her armed forces, will serve in those forces; likewise, this is a church big enough to love and make a place for men who have not served in its armies, refuse in conscience to do so in this particular conflict and who, in conscience, have gone to Canada and other countries.

I can personally as a churchman look in the face the 1,800 chaplains and chaplain assistants trained in a year at the U.S. Army Chaplain School where I am assigned and still endorse this resolution for amnesty and pardon, and I believe that I can share something with you which will enable you to approve the resolution and have it make sense to your people at home, both those with sons in Vietnam and those with sons in Canada.

In doing this, I will enrich your understanding of the scandalous particularity of kerygmatic sacrifice, just as Roger Shinn has done in citing specific people among us who have, out of conscience, refused to go to war.

In the last week of March I was in the Pentagon to arrange for a bright, young general officer to join a group of outstanding lecturers at the U.S. Army Chaplain School—men like Roger Shinn, Joseph Fletcher, Father Robert Johann, Father Salmon of Harlem, Franklin Littell and Martin Marty.

While waiting for my appointment, I engaged in the usual small talk with the colonel in the outer office. I asked him how long he had been in his job, when he had returned from Vietnam and what outfit he had commanded. When he identified a certain brigade, I asked him if he knew Bill Feaster. Bill, for those who do not know, is one of the ten Army chaplains killed in Vietnam. He was and is our Bill Feaster.

The colonel responded at once to say that he had been Bill's commanding officer and that he had, in his own arms, carried Bill from the helicopter to the hospital for a wound—serious, yes, but not thought to be so critical as to take his life.

I cannot forget that colonel's words. They are burned into my mind. He said of Bill, "God, how the men loved him—how we needed him!"

And as a responsive churchman and as a responsible citizen, I say to you of this Seventh General Synod that we love, and we need, all of our sons and young men, whether they are in Vietnam, Canada or Sweden or in these United States.

As a final word, Mr. Moderator, as a churchman I tell you that I do not know which of our sons is the prodigal in a faraway country or a prodigal who never left home, but this I do know and affirm: this Church as a father symbol is big enough to look lovingly and longingly for one son and to entreat the other brother to be reconciled with his brother and household. This Church is big enough to grasp the fact that God's arms of love can embrace all of us.

It is for this reason, then, that I hope some delegate may be moved to add to our brief resolution still another 29 words which are on this piece of paper.

The Rev. Judson E. Fiebiger, Iowa Conference delegate, moved to amend the Proposal by adding: "We urge these bold actions because this nation needs, and is strong enough to embrace, both those who have engaged in the Vietnam conflict and those who have opposed it." There was a second and the amendment was adopted by vote.

There was extended debate, pro and con, on the main motion as amended.

Mr. D. D. Meyer of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, believing that this was not the proper time to adopt the Proposal, moved to table it until the next General Synod. Being seconded and put to a vote, the motion to table was lost.

Mr. Cyrus V. Giddings of Illinois moved the previous question. There was a second and the motion prevailed. On the main motion, a division of the

house was requested. With 426 favoring, 100 opposing, and 7 abstaining, it was

69-GS-99 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the Proposal for Action: "Amnesty for War Objectors."

**The full text of the Proposal is included in the Appendix.**

### **8. Action on a Proposed Resolution: "Gun Control"**

Moderator Daniels recognized Dr. Lewis I. Maddocks, Executive Director of the Council for Christian Social Action, who described the process of study and response by which the resolution was developed. Like the Pronouncements and the Proposal for Action, it had been widely distributed and studied, the responses tabulated and analyzed, and had been the the subject of an open hearing conducted by the Report Committee on Sunday, June 29.

Mr. Parkerson moved that the resolution as proposed be adopted, and there was a second.

Minor amendments were offered by Mr. William W. Welch, Jr., of Massachusetts, the Rev. Edward H. Hastings of Washington-North Idaho, and Mr. Earl Cranston of Montana. These were adopted, and as thus amended, it was

69-GS-100 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the resolution on "Gun Control."

**The full text of the resolution is included in the Appendix.**

### **9. Reconsideration and Amendment of a Previous Action on the "Crisis in the Nation"**

The Moderator recognized Mrs. George E. Kahlenberg who, on behalf of the Executive Council, moved that the action taken on Monday afternoon in VOTE 69-GS-76 be reconsidered in order to propose an amendment. There was unanimous consent to reconsider.

Mrs. Kahlenberg then moved to amend the action as follows:

"in paragraph b. by adding at the end of its first sentence the following words, 'with a minimum guarantee of \$500,000.'

and in paragraph c. by adding at the end the following words, 'with a minimum guarantee of \$600,000.'"

The motion to amend was seconded.

During debate, Mr. Stanley F. Dole of Michigan proposed a substitute for the Executive Council's amendment. It would have guaranteed to the Commission for Racial Justice \$1,000,000 annually in 1970 and 1971, with a recommendation to the Board for Homeland Ministries and the American Missionary Association that any deficiency in receipts by the Commission below \$1,000,000 per annum be made up from funds functioning as endowment held by the American Missionary Association. With a second and being put to a vote, the substitute amendment was lost.

The Rev. Howard E. Spragg, Executive Vice President of the Board for Homeland Ministries, indicated that in view of the demands on the Executive Council and the mood of this General Synod, the Board for Homeland Ministries had taken cognizance of the effect which the proposals for the Commission on Racial Justice would have on the Board and on the American Missionary Association

## AMNESTY FOR WAR OBJECTORS

A Proposal for Action adopted by the Seventh General Synod

July 1, 1969

"A proposal is a recommendation for action in a specific situation in application of a pronouncement previously agreed upon by the General Synod."  
(67 GS 175)

In the interests of reconciliation and the binding up of wounds, for the sake of our freedoms and to show our high respect for conscience, in the best tradition of a strong and secure democracy, and in the name of Christian love—  
We urge the President to grant the earliest possible general amnesty and pardon for those who for actions witnessing to their beliefs have been incarcerated, deprived of the rights of citizenship, or driven into exile during the course of the nation's great agony in the Vietnam war.

We urge these bold actions because this nation needs, and is strong enough to embrace both those who have engaged in the Vietnam conflict and those who have opposed it.

(69 GS 99)

## GUN CONTROL

A Resolution adopted by the Seventh General Synod

July 1, 1969

WHEREAS our Christian faith, as well as humane and civic loyalties, constrains us to cherish and to preserve life, to protect the innocent and helpless against assault, to remove needless temptation from potential assassins, and to delegate use of lethal weapons only to legitimate authority for protective or sporting purposes;

Unrestricted personal firearms, which may have played a necessary role in securing the early American frontier, have no such legitimate place in an urbanized nation with public police protection;

The U. S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Second Amendment ("the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed") is to be understood only in relation to "the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia" and not to unregulated private access to firearms;

The United States, one of the few major nations to permit an almost wholly unregulated proliferation of firearms, sustains each year thousands of civilian gun casualties, assaults and armed robberies, with highest rates in those states with the least gun control; and