

SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 23

(Pima Indian Reservation, Arizona), wife of Mr. George Russell Gillette, was killed in an automobile accident, June 21, 1973. Mr. Gillette is a board member of the Council for American Indian Ministry from the Ft. Berthold Reservation, New Town, North Dakota. Elaine had driven her husband to the Minot, North Dakota airport for his departure to General Synod. She was killed as she returned home. The

Council for American Indian Ministry joins with the General Synod in extending Christian concern to the Gillette and Anton families.

The General Synod observed a moment of silence in memory of Elaine Anton Gillette.

The General Synod was declared to be in recess at 1:05 p.m.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING, JUNE 23

Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening until 8:45 p.m. the 40 small groups continued work on the development of recommendations for action related to the issues. Each small

group will propose one recommendation for General Synod adoption.

SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 23

The Ninth General Synod was called into special session by Moderator David G. Colwell at 9:00 p.m. Saturday, June 23, 1973, to consider one item of business.

1. Plight of Farm Workers in Coachella Valley, California

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Kenneth B. Smith, chairman of the business committee. Mr. Smith stated that although the General Synod had authorized the President of the Church to appoint a delegation to visit Coachella Valley, Cal., the business committee had discovered there was considerable interest on the part of many delegates and visitors in participating in this witness on behalf of the farm workers in Southern California. In view of this wide interest and the complexity of the issue, the business committee decided that the ultimate decision should be made by all the delegates of the General Synod.

On behalf of the business committee, Mr. Smith moved the adoption of the following resolution:

"The Ninth General Synod takes note of the plight of the farm workers in Coachella Valley, Cal., and of the crisis that has arisen as a result of violence there. As its response to the crisis, the General Synod affirms:

1. the right of farm workers to organize;
2. free and supervised elections; and
3. non-violence as a means for achieving these ends. Further, the General Synod as a sign of its commitment to these affirmations sends a delegation to the Coachella Valley to give physical and visible witness to this commitment.
4. If a plane is chartered to implement #3 above, the delegation shall (a) be selected through Conferences and through the President's office from among both delegates and visitors, and (b) each pilgrim shall sign a waiver of claim in case of any injury caused by activity in the vicinity of Coachella Valley.

"The Ninth General Synod directs the Executive Council to underwrite the cost of the trip. Delegates, visitors, Conferences, Instrumentalities and those on the pilgrimage are urged to subscribe to the cost of the trip.

"Those who make the pilgrimage must be at least 21 years old and will commit themselves to discipline as exercised by the designated leadership and spokespersons."

The motion was seconded and for approximately two hours there was extended discussion on the many aspects and implications of the resolution.

The Rev. Malcolm C. Bertram, Syosset, N.Y., active in a ministry to farm workers read two telegrams from Cesar Chavez describing the events which took place in the Coachella Valley on Saturday morning, June 23. In response to requests for information, the Rev. John R. Moyer, New York, N.Y., Secretary for Special Programs, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and Mr. David Kaler, Tucson, Ariz., National Farm Workers Ministry and the Farm Workers Union addressed the General Synod. Mr. Moyer spoke of the ongoing ministry of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to the farm workers in Southern California. Mr. Kaler spoke of the plight of the farm workers and the call for support which Cesar Chavez had sent to the major Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious organizations of the United States.

The Rev. Richard C. Norberg and the Rev. Fred P. Register, Conference Ministers of the Northern and Southern California Conferences, spoke of the pain this issue had brought to their Conferences but they supported the pilgrimage to Coachella Valley. Mr. Norberg suggested the General Synod might consider some way of approaching the teamsters union officials in St. Louis to express concern for the plight of farm workers.

In the course of the discussion a number of motions to amend the original resolution and substitute motions were made and seconded. In each instance when put to a vote the motion was defeated.

The General Synod returned to consideration of the original resolution. It was

73-GS-17 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the resolution on the plight of farm workers in Coachella Valley, Cal., recommended by the business committee.

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Bennie Whiten, Jr. (N.Y.) who moved, and after a second, it was

73-GS-18 VOTED: The General Synod designates the offering at the Sunday afternoon, June 24, service of worship to help meet the costs of the General Synod's witness among farm workers or, if such costs are met by other means, the offering be used to help relieve the suffering of those engaged in the struggle for human rights and dignity among farm workers.

The Moderator recognized Mr. Gary E. Mistlin (Cal.N.) who moved, and after a second, it was

73-GS-19 VOTED: The General Synod requests the business committee to appoint a committee to organize a