

talities and agencies of the United Church of Christ, and requests the Office for Church Life and Leadership to submit a progress report to the Eleventh General Synod.

**6. PRONOUNCEMENT ON CIVIL LIBERTIES WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION RELATED TO AFFECTIONAL OR SEXUAL PREFERENCE**

The Moderator recognized Mr. Bredeweg. On behalf of the business committee Mr. Bredeweg referred the delegates to the proposed pronouncement on Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional or Sexual Preference as submitted by Christine Keff, delegate, Southern California Conference, together with an Overture from the Philadelphia Association of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, a petition from the Penn Central Conference, and a resolution from the Central Atlantic Conference, and moved their adoption. The motion was seconded. Mr. Skinner was recognized and moved an amended pronouncement on Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional or Sexual Preference. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Wesley Burwell (NH) was recognized and moved to amend the amended pronouncement by deleting in line 111 the phrase "usually as a matter of emotional, psychological, and often physical survival"; beginning in line 112 the phrase "are denied the joy and fulfillment of sharing the meaning in their lives with their families, employers, associates, and many of their friends in society and in the Church. They"; beginning in line 140 the phrase "we are concerned with each other's mental, emotional, and physical health, degree of self-acceptance—the essential first step toward acceptance of others, freedom from ignorance and fear and prejudice, spiritual and personal growth. We revere the inherent right of the individual to exercise free will in the making of moral and ethical decisions as well as the freedom of conscience in the living of life which respects the rights of others"; the beginning in line 161 the phrase "they said with Peter and the apostles, 'we ought to obey God rather than men' (ACTS 5: 29b)." The four deletions were proposed in subsequent motions and when put to a vote were adopted.

The Moderator recognized Robert Bayler (IL) who moved to amend the motion to strike all the language in the amended pronouncement from lines 79-174 and to insert the following:

"WHEREAS the United Church of Christ affirms the equality of all persons before God and under the Constitution of the United States, and

"WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has historically been a stronger affirmer of equal justice and protection for all under the law."

The motion was seconded and there was extended discussion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion was lost.

The Moderator recognized Robert Meier (MA) who moved to amend the motion to delete the lines 94-98 and substitute "most directly affected are those whose affectional or sexual preference is predominantly toward persons of the same gender. Also affected are those found to have had at one time or another an adult-same-gender sexual experience." The motion was seconded. Upon being put to a vote the motion was lost.

The Moderator recognized William Schroeder (CAC) who moved to amend the motion to insert a phrase in line 82 "neither to condemn nor condone, but," so the sentence would read: "The purpose of this pronouncement is neither

to condemn nor condone, but is to make a statement on civil liberties." The motion was seconded. Upon being put to a vote, the motion was lost.

The Moderator recognized Alberta Bertelson (IL) who moved to postpone indefinitely the pronouncement on Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional or Sexual Preference as amended. The motion was seconded. Upon being put to a vote, the motion was lost.

It was

75-GS-67 VOTED: The General Synod adopts as amended the Pronouncement on Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional or Sexual Preference by a standing vote: 546 - Yes; 135 - No.

**PRONOUNCEMENT ON CIVIL LIBERTIES WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION RELATED TO AFFECTIONAL OR SEXUAL PREFERENCE**

The purpose of this pronouncement is to make a statement on civil liberties. It is not within the province of this pronouncement to make an ethical judgment about same-gender relationships. However, this pronouncement may well serve to further dialogue that will clarify the ethical issues involved in human sexuality.

There is, in the United States, a significant minority of persons whose civil liberties, and whose right to equal protection under the law, are systematically and routinely violated. Discrimination related to affectional or sexual preference in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other civil liberties, has inflicted an incalculable burden of fear into the lives of persons in society and in the church whose affectional or sexual preference is toward persons of the same gender.

Most directly affected are the 10% of the population whose affectional or sexual preference, according to the research of Alfred Kinsey, is predominantly toward persons of the same gender. Also affected is the one-third of the American population which Kinsey found to have had at one time or another an adult same-gender sexual experience. Public revelation of even a single experience often results in the presumption that a person is same-gender-oriented and thus subject to social sanctions including violations of her or his civil liberties. Even the civil liberties of persons whose affectional or sexual preference is a well-guarded secret are vulnerable. Inquiry by private investigatory agencies into the personal life of the individual is often a pre-requisite for employment. Draft records, insurance investigations, arrest records (even when charges have been dismissed or the defendant acquitted), and investigations instigated on the basis of anonymous accusation or rumor, all provide an employer, landlord, and other persons information used to justify discrimination.

**Discrimination Causes Suffering**

A constant fear of losing one's job and home, and the economic and social consequences of such a loss, creates suffering in human life. Living as presumed heterosexuals, same-gender-oriented women and men, are intimidated into silence, forced into lives of duplicity and deception, by the hostility of the majority society. Such duplicity and deception, and their current alienation, sometimes evolving to isolation and depression and culminating in suicide, are necessarily detrimental to the growth of the individual and to the growth of interpersonal relationships. Today, same-gender-oriented persons, our sisters and brothers in human community and in Christian community, are struggling to

free themselves from the fear which the reality of discrimination, particularly in employment and in housing, has inflicted upon them. Such persons are taking a moral stance against discrimination and the violence that it does to human dignity. They seek to secure protection for their full civil liberties and equal protection under the law. The church must bear a measure of responsibility for the suffering visited upon same-gender-oriented persons since often the traditional Judeo-Christian attitude toward same-gender relationship has been used as a primary justification for denial and violation of civil liberties and the perpetuation of discrimination against such persons.

**The Religious Perspective**

Christian love for God and our neighbor in God impels us to cherish the life and liberty of all women and men. We proclaim a unity under God which transcends our division, and find in Christ our measure for being human.

As Christians, we seek to personify the liberating Gospel of Jesus the Christ and to follow his example in our relationships with others. This means that we try to have love and respect for each other—for individual well-being, quality of life, personality, dignity, and self-actualisation.

The Christian churches have a long tradition of concern for human justice and civil liberties. From the days of the Hebrew prophets, we have been charged to pursue justice for all who are oppressed. In its most faithful moments the church has been recalled to the words of Amos: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies . . . But let justice roll down like the waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5: 21, 24). Insofar as the church has been concerned for social justice, it also necessarily has been concerned for civil liberties. Historically, branches of the Protestant churches have been the most significant single influence in the rise of concern for basic civil rights in the Western world. The tradition of the United Church of Christ is a particularly rich heritage of such concern. First suffering the denial of liberty at the hands of both civil and ecclesiastical authorities in the Old World, our ancestors claimed these rights for themselves in the New World. Realizing that the rights of none were secure until the rights of all were secure, our ancestors-in-faith gradually extended their civil liberty concern to the whole of society.

In faithfulness to that biblical and historic mandate, we hold that, as a child of God, every person is endowed with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside. Denial and violation of the civil liberties of the individual and her or his right to equal protection under the law defames that worth and dignity and is, therefore, morally wrong. Our Christian faith requires that we respond to the injustice in our society manifested in the denial and violation of the civil liberties of persons whose affectional or sexual preference is toward persons of the same gender.

**Affirmation of Civil Liberties**

Therefore, without considering in this document the rightness or wrongness of same-gender relationships, but recognizing that a person's affectional or sexual preference is not legitimate grounds on which to deny her or his civil liberties, the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ proclaims the Christian conviction that all persons are entitled to full civil liberties and equal protection under the law.

Further, the Tenth General Synod declares its support for the enactment of legislation at the federal, state, and local

levels of government that would guarantee the liberties of all persons without discrimination related to affectional or sexual preferences.

Further, the Tenth General Synod calls upon the congregations, Associations, Conferences, and Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to work for the enactment of such legislation at the federal, state, and local levels of government, and authorizes the Secretary of the United Church of Christ to commend this Pronouncement to the Conferences for distribution by them to their respective state legislators and representatives in the Congress of the United States.

**7. RESOLUTION ON GENERAL AMNESTY**

The Moderator recognized Mr. Bredeweg. On behalf of the business committee Mr. Bredeweg moved the adoption of the Resolution on General Amnesty submitted as new business. The motion was seconded. Mr. Skinner was recognized and moved to amend the motion to adopt an alternative resolution on General Amnesty. The motion was seconded.

The Moderator recognized John Osner (CAL.N) who moved to amend the motion to adopt an alternative resolution on General Amnesty to insert the word "unconditional" in three places before the word "amnesty." The motion was seconded. Upon being put to a vote, the motion was lost.

It was

75-GS-68 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the alternative resolution on General Amnesty:

*Whereas* Jesus Christ calls the church to the ministry of reconciliation, and the healing power of His Gospel embraces all sorts and conditions of persons; and

*Whereas* the involvement of the United States in military action in Indochina is now ended, and

*Whereas* the nation aches for a binding of the wounds which have torn us apart as a result of the war, and

*Whereas* the Presidential clemency program, which hoped to accomplish reconciliation and healing has, in fact, attracted fewer than 20% of the persons eligible;

Therefore, the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, calls upon President Gerald R. Ford to declare an amnesty for draft resisters and non-registrants, military absentees, and civilian war protesters who have participated in non-violent resistance;

That those veterans with other than honorable discharges, if given for non-violent offenses, be granted amnesty and an honorable discharge in order to have a fair chance to rebuild their lives to the fullest;

That such an amnesty apply to those persons whose offenses were committed during the Indochina conflict;

That President Robert V. Moss is requested immediately to communicate this resolution to the President of the United States, and to petition the Congress to enact legislation implementing the substance of this resolution.

This concluded the report of Division C.

**8. RECOGNITION OF THE REV. JACK E. YATES, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH**

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Harry W. Bredeweg, chairperson of the Executive Council, who invited the Rev. Jack E. Yates to the podium. He indicated that Mr. Yates had resigned his position as Executive Assistant to the