

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