

## MONDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 25

WHEREAS the death penalty has now been reinstated in thirty-five states resulting in 520 people being confined to death row—132 of whom reside in the Florida State Prison; and

WHEREAS it has been demonstrated that the death penalty is applied discriminately toward Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans; and

WHEREAS ninety percent of men and women on death row could not afford an attorney; and

WHEREAS executions have been resumed recently in Florida; and

WHEREAS we are concerned about possible executions of hundreds of persons in this nation over the next few years; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED: The Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms its opposition to the death penalty, and calls upon the Governor of Florida and other appropriate authorities to cease the authorization of additional executions in Florida, and further calls upon governors of all states to refrain from the authorization of executions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Twelfth General Synod requests its President to continue to try to communicate directly with our brother-in-Christ and UCC member, Robert Graham, Governor of Florida, on our behalf expressing deep pastoral concern and moral anguish over the Governor's role in inspiring the resumption of executions in this country; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED all General Synod delegates and visitors from those states wherein the death penalty currently exists are encouraged to petition their governors and state legislators to reconsider and review those existing statutes which legalize the killing of human beings; and

BE IT ALSO FURTHER RESOLVED the Twelfth General Synod recognize the failure of the Church to affect the moral climate of this nation on this matter where polls indicate a majority of the people both endorse and support capital punishment; and that it enable its instrumentalities and agencies to develop additional resources needed to educate and organize the U.C.C. constituency on this issue; and that the Conferences be encouraged to assist local churches and individual members of the United Church of Christ to engage in serious ethical reflection and prayer-guided action toward the eradication of legalized execution and the creation of a more just and humane society. We will continue to offer our prayers on behalf of our brothers and sisters on death row and those who enact and enforce the laws which legalize killing.

#### 4. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PRONOUNCEMENT ON REVERSING THE ARMS RACE

The Moderator recognized Ms. Carol Bergmann (MO), Chairperson of the Committee on Reversing the Arms Race for the report. Ms. Bergmann moved the adoption of the Pronouncement on Reversing the Arms Race as revised and introduced Mr. Fred Tilinski (MO) a member of the committee to speak to the report. Mr. Tilinski noted the changes in the revised document and commented on the significance of the Arms race.

Mr. James Jackson (IS) was recognized and moved to amend the report by adding a paragraph 8: "Calls upon our government and all governments of the world to work together to reduce the danger of a nuclear holocaust by limiting and eliminating such forms of warfare. In addition, we urge cooperative action to halt the development of chemical or other form of human destruction." It was agreed to include this amendment as a part of the report.

Mr. Allan Hitchcock (CAC) was recognized and moved to amend the report by adding a paragraph 9: "Calls upon our government to establish a national center for research and training in peaceful methods of conflict resolution." A division of the house was called for to determine the vote. The amendment was adopted by a vote of 326 Yes to 268 No and will be included in the report.

The Rev. Alexander Havadtoy (CA Sy) was recognized and moved to amend the report by adding a paragraph 10: "Calls upon the national government to prohibit the sale of high technology to our adversaries which would be used for military purposes." There was discussion and upon being put to a vote the Moderator declared the motion lost.

The Rev. Kendall C. Baker (SW) was recognized and moved to amend the report by adding a paragraph 10: "Calls upon the President of the United Church of Christ to communicate to the President of the United States and to the Congress that the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ is opposed to the reinstatement of Selective Service Registration." It was agreed to include this amendment as a part of the report.

Ms. Laura Gilman (ME) was recognized and moved to amend the report by changing the wording in lines 25-27 to read: "Calls upon the local churches, associations, and conferences to study the ongoing impact of military spending in their communities, to affirm their responsibility and power to question national priorities and to support and engage in dialogue with those who speak in Christian conscience through the withholding of tax monies allocated for military use." There was discussion and upon being put to a vote the Moderator declared the motion lost.

There was no further discussion on the main motion, and it was

79-GS-33 VOTED: The Twelfth General Synod adopts the Pronouncement on Reversing the Arms Race as amended:

#### THE PRONOUNCEMENT ON REVERSING THE ARMS RACE

*We as Christians affirm our faith that*

God's will and way for the whole human family are shown in Scripture, tradition, and right reason; that as covenanted people of God, we are called by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to a ministry of reconciliation, "for he is our peace who has made us one" (Ephesians 2);

As we say in our Statement of Faith, God calls us to be "servants in the service of others" and "to proclaim the good news to all the world and resist the powers of evil"; and

"God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ" and "promises to all who trust . . . courage in the struggle for justice and peace"

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and "the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing."  
(from Robert Moss' revision of the Statement of Faith)

*We as concerned citizens recognize:*

There is a threat to the whole human family, in the spreading danger of nuclear war; and as Christians we have a particular responsibility to resist this power of evil;

Our government uses our taxes to accumulate a stockpile of nuclear weapons with a fire power equivalent to more than 600,000 Hiroshima bombs, enough to destroy every major city in the world, and has deployed them ready to strike anywhere on the globe;

Billions are being spent for arms, while people's basic needs, such as food, housing, health care and education, are underfunded, that to be able to kill and be killed many times over in the name of defense is an evil waste of world resources;

There can be no security in arms alone and there can be no sure defense in the event of a nuclear strike and its inevitable retaliation; that millions of men, women and children will perish; that the export of nuclear technology increases the likelihood of weapons proliferation and the dangers that human fallibility can cause fatal accidents, affecting all people;

Massive arms sales overseas increase the threat of war;

Behind the weapons are personnel, and there is mounting pressure to reinstate a Selective Service registration, and yet the "only justification for military conscription is an emergency that requires the exceptional mobilization of the nation's resources and manpower . . ." (from General Synod VII)

It is still possible for our government to take the lead in turning nations toward reversing the arms race by:

placing priority on reversing the arms race in funding, in political strategy at home and abroad, and in the education of our people;

taking independent initiatives toward disarmament and challenging other nations to do the same;

limiting further the sale of weapons and high technology which could be used for military purposes to other nations;

funding nationwide efforts at conversion from wartime to peace-time economy, thereby decreasing both inflation and unemployment and increasing jobs that serve human needs;

approving weapons limitation treaties, such as SALT II, that contribute to a lessening of the arms race, to necessary security and to human rights around the world;

resisting efforts to reinstate a Selective Service registration or draft;

studying the feasibility of a national center for research and training on peaceful methods of conflict resolution.

**THEREFORE**, knowing that our government will take these steps only with massive citizen concern, initiative and action to counter the power of the military-industrial complex,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

1. Calls upon the President, Executive Council, the Office of Communication and all other appropriate United Church of Christ agencies to publicize this pronouncement and the wider issues of military spending, Selective Service registration, and economic conversion through denominational publications, oral presentations, personal contact and the public news media, and to urge study and related action by other church bodies, such as the World and National Council of Churches;
2. Calls upon the Office for Church In Society and the Office of Communication to make available the resource materials of national organizations working on these issues, such as Clergy and Laity Concerned, Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, Council on Economic Priorities, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Mobilization for Survival, SANE, Union of Concerned Scientists, and Women Strike for Peace;
3. Calls upon the Executive Council to make available funding for additional staff to work in Congress, in our churches and with other religious groups on arms reduction through the Office for Church In Society;
4. Calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to continue support for conversion projects aimed at reversing the arms race and maintaining community-based jobs;
5. Calls upon IMPACT, the interreligious legislative network, sponsored in part by UCBHM, UCBWM and OCIS, to take this as a priority issue, and to make known relevant legislation to the people of our churches so that they may take informed, constructive action to support our legislative representatives at local, state and national levels, in any moves in the direction of reversing the arms race;
6. Calls upon local churches, associations and Conferences to study the ongoing impact of military spending in their communities, and to affirm their responsibility and power to question national priorities; and
7. Calls upon each individual in the United Church of Christ to become personally committed to pray for peace, to study the methods of peacemaking and to act through citizen involvement for urging ratification of SALT II as a current example of weapons limitation treaties for reducing the military budget and for reversing the arms race.
8. Calls upon our government and all governments of the world to work together to reduce the danger of a nuclear holocaust by limiting and eliminating such forms of warfare. In addition, we urge cooperative action to halt the development of chemical or other form of human destruction.
9. Calls upon our government to establish a national center for research and training in peaceful methods of conflict resolution.
10. Calls upon the President of the United Church of Christ to communicate to the President of the United States and to the Congress that the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ is opposed to the reinstatement of Selective Service Registration.