

TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 26

79-GS-61 VOTED: The Twelfth General Synod affirms the membership of the United Church of Christ in and support of the World Council of Churches.

20. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Moderator recognized Secretary Evans for the announcements.

21. SECTION REPORTS CONTINUED

The Moderator recognized the Rev. John Bracke, Chairperson of the Agenda Committee, who indicated the

order in which the Sections would be reporting in the afternoon.

22. WORSHIP

The Moderator recognized the Chaplain who led the General Synod in Worship.

23. RECESS

The Moderator declared the General Synod in recess at 12:05 P.M. until 1:30 P.M.

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND WORSHIP

The General Synod was called to order at 1:30 P.M. by the Assistant Moderator, Dorothy Shimer, who called on Moderator Milton Hurst to lead the Synod in Worship.

2. BIBLE STUDY

The Moderator recognized Dr. Walter Brueggemann to lead the General Synod in Bible Study. Dr. Brueggemann referred the delegates to the Bibles Studies, number 10, page 25, which had been mailed to the delegates in the first General Synod mailing and to I Corinthians 15:3-8, 56-58 indicating that he wanted to talk about "going home."

... "In this Synod I sense that Someone powerful beyond us has been at work here, healing. I sense that fractured as we are we have done some covenant keeping. I sense that flawed as our discernment is, we have together discerned something of the mind of Christ. I sense that we have drawn courage and energy for faithfulness out of our being together here. I sense that our ears have been at work as much as our tongues . . . but now we must go home very soon."

"How would you like to go home? All of us have high callings out of this meeting, and burdens. How you go home depends on who you are, for some in this Synod have won some things and some have lost some things . . . The text from I Corinthians 15 suggests that those who think they have won something should not go home with the triumphs and those who think they have lost something should not go home chagrined, because together we may all affirm that our actions here are all penultimate. Our actions here are less than decisive. They are all short of life and death for Satan has not fallen from the sky and the new age has not come. All of our actions and the ways we resonate with them must be kept in perspective" . . . and he read from I Corinthians 15:3-11, 56-58 . . . saying "the text is to ground our future not in ourselves, not in our mechanizations, not in our competence, but in this One who will have His way, we know not how . . ." At the conclusion of the Bible study there was standing applause of appreciation to Dr. Brueggemann.

3. REPORT OF SECTION E—REPRESENTING THE CONCERNS OF THE WOMEN SEMINARIANS

The Moderator recognized the Rev. W. Orin Whitaker (CT). Chairperson, for the report of Section E. Mr. Whitaker referred the delegates to the Section report. He moved the adoption of the Overture: Representing the Con-

cerns of the Women Seminarians and called on the Rev. Gordon Forbes (MN) to speak to the Overture.

Mr. Forbes said that the Overture seeks to raise to our awareness some concerns and needs that face UCC women seminarians in UCC related seminaries and other seminaries that serve our Church involving the need for more full time women faculty members in the seminaries and the need for evaluating and enriching curriculum so as to integrate the perspectives of women in the curriculum, and he urged the delegates to approve the Overture.

The Rev. Max Stackhouse (MA) was recognized and moved to amend the Overture by referring it with approval to the Coordinating Center for Women already voted by the Twelfth General Synod. There was discussion and upon being put to a vote the Moderator declared the motion lost.

The Rev. George E. Peters (VT) was recognized and moved to amend the Overture by deleting in paragraph 5 the phrase "and to alter any negative attitudes" and "toward" and substituting the following "and to all for the elimination of negative attitudes in local churches, search committees, and Conference and Association placement staff which inhibit the placement of women." There was discussion and it was agreed to accept this change in paragraph 5 of the Overture.

The Rev. Gretchen Sterrett (MO) was recognized and moved to amend the Overture by adding the word "men" in the fourth paragraph in the 13th and 18th lines, at the beginning of each sentence in those lines. There was discussion and upon being put to a vote the Moderator declared the motion adopted. It was

79-GS-62 VOTED: The Twelfth General Synod adopts the Overture: Representing the Concerns of the Women Seminarians as amended.

Overture: Representing the Concerns of The Women Seminarians

Summary: The intent of the overture is to gain awareness and support of General Synod to deal with the crisis the seminaries are facing in their attempts to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing number of women in seminary, the meager percent of full time women faculty members and the attendant economic and educational conflicts, curriculum perspective, and placement issues surrounding women in ministry.

Background: Previous actions by General Synod supporting this are: 1973-GS-41: Statement on Women in

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Church and Society; 73-GS-63: Statement on Theological Education; 75-GS-46: Proposal on Women in Church and Society; 77-GS-79; Pronouncement on Racism and Sexism; Training Women for Ministry Project: particularly designed for Andover Newton Theological Seminary between the years of 1974-78, sponsored by the Office for Church Life and Leadership.

Rationale: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28 R.S.V.). Paul asserts with this passage that in Christ, all people are one. Yet Paul's writings concerning women have often been interpreted without critical examination of the historical context nor the particular situation which he was addressing. This has led to interpretations of these Biblical texts, which often have been used to support the patriarchal hierarchy in the church. These interpretations are explicitly oppressive to women as well as demeaning. Yet in the risen Christ, a new age of relationship is inaugurated. The resurrection has abolished the age-old patriarchal laws, ushering in a new order of oneness in Christ. Sexism does not belong to this new age, nor does it belong in the theological seminaries which train ministers of Christ's church.

Three pressing situations face our United Church of Christ and seminaries today: 1) There is an unprecedented number of U.C.C. women enrolled in the 14 U.C.C. related seminaries with intentions of ordination. Thirty five percent of U.C.C. seminarians are women.* The U.C.C. and the seminaries cannot remain unaffected by this development; 2) There is only a small percentage of women attaining the rank of full professor in these 14 seminaries. Please see the Report of the Advisory Commission on Women, pages 19-24 for statistics; 3) There is a need to continue to improve strategies for the placement of women clergy. These facts reflect the need for a sincere examination of the traditional seminary education, which in the past has been designed for a homogeneous male population. It is important for seminaries to faithfully enable women seminarians to fully respond to their call to the Christian ministry by aiding the development of their potentials, skills, and perspectives. Men and women faculty who are sensitive to the issues involving women seminarians are key to enabling our seminaries to respond to this increasing need in theological education. In particular, women faculty members will provide models which will enhance the positive self-concept of women seminarians and their role as women in the professional ministry. Presently, women seminarians are being taught by male-dominated faculties. Men and women faculty members can provide the resources and insights which will enable the restructuring of the theological perspectives, faculty attitudes, curriculum approaches, and language usage as the seminaries move toward the elimination of their institutional sexism.

We are not advocating token representation, but qualified, competent women faculty who are concerned with the dynamics of women's issues. These women faculty members will serve as models for all students, clarify the merging roles of women in the ministry, and engage in advocating attitudinal and curriculum alterations, which are theologically sound as well as responsive to the needs of training women for the ministry.

This concern is raised for the whole body of theological students and their preparation for the ministry. The U.C.C. related theological seminaries need to be educating the upcoming leaders of our Church to be sensitive to the cultural and theological reality which is openly confronting the traditional roles and mind set of both men and women. The women in the faculties and the attitudes toward curriculum development need to reflect this serious pastoral concern. Institutional sexism cannot be altered or eliminated by increased representation of women faculties and/or policy alterations; however, these are vital steps in moving seminaries and churches toward meeting the emerging issues related to women, especially women in ministry.

The General Synod requests: (not necessarily in order of priority)

1. An updated, in depth analysis by the Affirmative Action Officer of the implementation and effectiveness of the Affirmative Action strategy of vote 75-GS-46 in the employment of women with full faculty privileges in the 14 U.C.C. related seminaries to be reviewed by the Executive Council;
2. A critical review of the above analysis with each seminary and work to improve the effectiveness of their Affirmative Action strategies in the employment of women on faculties;
3. Inclusive language guidelines be implemented in all 14 U.C.C. related seminaries in keeping with the intent of General Synod vote 73-GS-41
4. A review of the total curricula of the U.C.C. seminaries as they reflect or plan to reflect the rapidly emerging issues surrounding women, sexism, and their implications for the Church;
5. The national agencies, seminaries, Conferences, Associations, and local churches to develop strategies to assist in the placement of women in ministry, and to call for the elimination of negative attitudes in local churches, search committees, and Conference and Association placement staff which inhibit the placement of women;
6. The General Synod delegates and the Executive Council and its members to be sensitive to the situation facing women seminarians and women in ministry, and to become advocates for the elimination of the culturally blatant and the more subtle forms of institutional sexism presently exhibited in U.C.C. seminaries.

*Statistics are from the Office of Church Life and Leadership

4. OVERTURE: HEALING MINISTRY

Mr. Whitaker referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section II, pages 131-133, and to the recommendation of the Section. He moved the adoption of the Overture: Healing Ministry as revised and called on Mrs. Frances Stiles (NY) to speak to the Overture. Mrs. Stiles indicated that the resolves section emphasis and the action is on education and resources, so that within our Church there can be an emphasis on responsible healing ministry.

The Rev. David W. Emmons (CT) was recognized and moved to amend the Overture by deleting in the second sentence of the second paragraph the words "one may have faith in Jesus Christ or" and substituting the words "faith