

coverage of the Act;

WHEREAS, a Resolution on the Extension of the Voting Rights Act was adopted by the Council for Christian Social Action in March 1970 and commended the increase in voter registration and black elected officials in the states and counties under coverage of the Act;

WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act is considered one of the most effective civil rights bills ever passed resulting in significant improvement in voter registration and numbers of black elected officials;

WHEREAS, before 1965, the registration rates for blacks were very low especially as compared to white registration rates, ranging from 7% (in Mississippi) to 37% (in South Carolina); by 1976 Bureau of the Census data showed substantial increases with black registration rates at least 47% and several states above 60% of eligible black voters registered;

WHEREAS, prior to 1965, the number of minority elected officials in the six states was less than 100; in 1968, 156 blacks had been elected; in 1974, 963 blacks held public office in these states; and by July 1980, the number had increased to 2,042;

WHEREAS, black registration rates as well as rates for Hispanics, American Indians and Alaskan Natives continue to be lower than white registration rates in the same localities, and recognizing that minorities must continue to struggle to retain one of the most fundamental rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, the right to vote, because of persistent revolt to barriers which would deny full political participation by minorities;

WHEREAS, these barriers have changed from literacy tests and poll taxes to other forms of voter discrimination such as redistricting or gerrymandering, discriminatory annexations, at-large elections and other voter "dilution" practices;

WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act amended in 1975 is due to expire August 6, 1982;

The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1981 as a protection to the voting gains of Blacks and Hispanics and to protect minorities in the political arena against the continued use of devices which would discourage minority political participation; and

That the vital pre-clearance provisions of Section 5 which requires certain states and local governments or covered jurisdictions to submit proposed changes in voting or election procedures to the U.S. Department of Justice be kept intact; and

That the minority language provisions and voting assistance in languages other than English be continued to protect Mexican-American and other language minority groups against severe discriminatory practices particularly in the southwest and western parts of our country; and

The United Church of Christ, its members, instrumentalities and other bodies be united in a com-

mitment to the Voting Rights Act and communicate to members of Congress that the legislation be extended long enough to cover redistricting up until the next decennial census in 1990.

#### 8. RESOLUTION ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

Mr. Wilson continued the report of Section D and called on Hollis Wilson (CAL.S), Chairperson of the small group that considered the resolution on Self-Determination for Puerto Rico, who moved the adoption of the resolution. It was agreed to delete the third paragraph from the first page and to place a period after relationships in the 4th paragraph. It was

81-GS-52 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts as revised the Resolution on Self-Determination for Puerto Rico.

#### RESOLUTION ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

##### *A Theological Perspective*

The Exodus, which was the freedom of slaves from bondage, is the root of Biblical Theology. This is a theme carried into the Babylonian captivity and is the basis for the hope which brought Israel back to the promised land. In the leadership of the Christ he begins his mission with the hope of freeing the captives as he uses the words of Isaiah as his rootage. He said he fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy in his ministry. This ministry was one of proclaiming "release to the captives" and the "setting of liberty those who are oppressed."

Today as followers of Christ we are commissioned to work for freedom of the oppressed wherever they are found.

This conclusion is based on the following facts concerning American-Puerto Rican relationships.

##### *Background*

Puerto Rico was a colony of Spain from 1508 to 1898. For a short time in 1898, the Spanish crown granted the island an autonomous charter with limited self-government. This autonomy ended when Puerto Rico was invaded by the U.S. Army in July, 1898 and as a result of the Spanish-American War, the island was ceded by Spain to the United States according to the Treaty of Paris, which legally ended the war. The destiny of the Puerto Rican people was to be decided by the Congress of the United States.

Since that historical event, the final political solution of the island has not been settled with the exception of the granting of U.S. citizenship to Puerto Rico in 1917, the power to elect its own governor in 1948 and the creation of the present status of Commonwealth in 1952. All attempts to improve political relations with the federal government have been turned down or refused by U.S. Congress.

In 1967, the Puerto Rican people voted in a special plebiscite to decide on a final status. Sixty-seven per cent (67%) voted for Commonwealth, 32% for Statehood, and .6% for independence. Congress paid little

attention to the expressed will of the Puerto Rican people. Public opinion on the final political status continues to be divided. Two large groups favor commonwealth and statehood, respectively. A small group favors independence. At the last election on November, 1980, those two parties favoring commonwealth and statehood came out of the polls almost even, with 47% of the votes each. The two independent parties cast 6% of the 1.6 million votes.

THEREFORE, The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

1. Supports the self-determination of the Puerto Rican people on their political status,
2. Urges the United States Congress to accept the decision of the Puerto Rican people in the exercise of self-determination,
3. Uses its resources to sensitize the churches of the United Church of Christ to this issue,
4. Urges the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Office of Church In Society to implement this focus nationally, in consultation with the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico.

**9. REPORT OF SECTION E — RESOLUTION ON LEVEL OF PENSION DUES**

The Moderator recognized Mr. Loren Cope (OHIO), Chairperson of Section E for the report. Mr. Cope referred to Advance Materials II, page 26, to the action of the Executive Council recommendation on the level of dues contributions to the Pension Funds. Mr. Cope moved the adoption of the resolution on the Level of Pension Dues as revised by the Section.

The Moderator recognized Dr. John Ordway, Executive Vice-President of the Pension Boards, to explain the need for increasing the level of dues contribution. Dr. Ordway said that this matter had been brought up at the Twelfth General Synod which requested the Executive Council to review this matter. The Council asked the Pension Boards to study the matter and make a recommendation. The Pension Boards has had a concern for some time for the continuing need for ministers to have post-retirement increases in their annuity benefits and felt that while the 11% level of pension dues was adequate in terms of the present, it was not adequate to provide for post-retirement increases. Therefore it was recommended that the pension dues be increased to 14% so that individuals who do retire can elect an option that would provide for post-retirement increases and would give some protection against the cost of living when required to live on a retirement annuity. Dr. Ordway said that the Family Protection Plan requires that participants contribute a minimum of 11% dues to the Pension Funds for participation and there is no expectation that this will be changed. The 14% level of dues payment is a recommended amount to provide ministers who retire to keep ahead of inflation, but it is not compulsory nor will persons be removed from the Fund if they do not contribute at the 14% level. Dr. Ordway also reported that other denominational funds are currently at the

12%-18% level.

There was extended discussion, and it was

81-GS-53 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts the revised Resolution on Level of Pension Dues.

**LEVEL OF PENSION DUES**

The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts 14% effective immediately as the recommended level at which dues contribution payments from churches or other United Church of Christ employers should be made to the Pension Board for Retirement Benefits of the Employees.

The intention of this recommendation would be achieved by smaller periodic increases which are expected to reach the 14% level by 1985.

The General Synod calls upon the Executive Council to consult with the Pension Boards, Council of Conference Executives, Office for Church Life & Leadership and Stewardship Council on implementation of this recommended increase; and review the present parsonage allowance minimum recommendation and relationship of Pension/Benefit recommendations to OCWM: Basic Support giving.

**10. RESOLUTION ON SUPPLEMENTATION ON SMALL ANNUITIES OF CLERGY AND/OR SPOUSES IN SPECIAL CATEGORIES AND IMPROVED PENSION BOARDS RELATIONSHIPS**

Mr. Cope continued the report of Section E and referred to Advance Materials II, pages 120-122, to the original resolution and indicated that the first two pages were kept intact. He pointed out the changes in the resolved section and moved the adoption of the revised Resolution on Supplementation on Small Annuities of Clergy and/or Spouses in Special Categories and Improved Pension Boards Relationships. It was

81-GS-54 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts as revised the Resolution on Supplementation on Small Annuities of Clergy and/or Spouses in Special Categories and Improved Pension Boards Relationships.

**RESOLUTION ON SUPPLEMENTATION ON SMALL ANNUITIES OF CLERGY AND/OR SPOUSES IN SPECIAL CATEGORIES AND IMPROVED PENSION BOARDS RELATIONSHIPS**

*Biblical and Theological Perspective*

Caring for those who have cared for the church is a responsibility we cannot neglect. Jesus said: "The one who receives a prophet because that person is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and those who receive a righteous person because they are righteous shall receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives to one of these even a cup of cold water because they are a disciple, truly, I say to you, that person shall not lose his/her reward." Matthew 10:41-42 (paraphrase) And again Christ said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives anyone whom I send receives me. And the one who receives me receives the one who sent me." John 13:20 (paraphrase)

The Apostle Paul complimented the generosity of