

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

the people of the Church of Macedonia and urged like generosity upon the other churches of his acquaintance in the outpouring of their gifts to relieve the suffering of the saints in Jerusalem. To the Church at Corinth he wrote: "We want you to know about the grace of God which as been shown in the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." II Corinthians 8:1-5 (R.S.V.)

The writer of I John saw the necessity of caring concern for persons in need. To this writer, such care and compassion was as natural as prayer and an expected response from any who called Christ Lord. He wrote: ". . . if anyone has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need, yet closes the heart against that person, how does God's love abide in him or her? Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth." I John 3:17-18 (paraphrase)

Caring and sharing is a vital part of the Christian faith. It is a characteristic of behavior to which individuals are called to respond out of love. It is no less a characteristic of behavior for the whole church to emulate. Through our benevolent giving we seek to make it possible for selected persons to be free from temporal concerns while they deliver God's message of hope throughout the world. We share in love the burden and the joy experienced by those who go out to congregations, to mission stations, to the streets and by-ways with the words of Christ in their hearts and on their lips. The corporate covenant we have with God helps each of us to participate in God's beloved work.

There are times, however, when those who are called and those who are sent as pastors and teachers can no longer continue in the effort. They come to the end of their busy careers for well deserved rest in retirement.

Through our caring and sharing, and through the frugality of one's own life style, most of those who have labored long receive substantive support for their twilight days. Such funds, managed through the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, provide some security above the level of poverty.

Affirmation

We affirm and commend the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ for their conscientious endeavors on behalf of the clergy and their families who are a part of our denominational community. In no way do members of the staff of our Pension Boards ignore their responsibility to attend to the needs of annuitants within the guidelines approved by General Synod. Sweeping changes in supplementation of small annuities, as well as more liberal consideration of economic needs of annuitants, were approved by the Eleventh General Synod meeting in Washington, D.C., July 1-5, 1977. Since that meeting, the Executive Council

has maintained a responsible oversight on the rising cost of living and has adjusted the minimum income level of annuitants for supplementation purposes accordingly. We also applaud and affirm these actions of the Executive Council.

A Major Concern

It is never an easy matter to adopt rules and regulations in the area of clergy retirement income which will meet the needs of all participants. We do not have the ability to calculate every variable nor do we have economic resources sufficient to adequately cover every individual need. The guidelines adopted by the Eleventh General Synod and subsequent adjustments by the Executive Council have proven to be very reasonable for the general population of clergy and spouses who meet the requirement of thirty (30) years dues paying membership. For most annuitants supplementation is granted to such annuitants who are over age sixty-five (65) and whose total pension and Social Security income is less than the minimum established by the Executive Council. When a participant dies having completed thirty (30) years of dues paying membership, the spouse is entitled to a supplementation if required, to bring that total income to two thirds (66.6%) of the established minimum level of the participant.

There are at least two financial need areas sometimes encountered by clergy and clergy families for which the Pension Boards cannot provide supplementation because of the thirty (30) years dues paying membership rule or the assumed benefits of Social Security. These needs arise through no fault of the participant or the participant's family, and, when assistance with supplementation cannot be given, the participant and/or family suffer tremendous economic depression. The situations are:

1. A clergy person who suffers a disability which prevents employment before completing thirty (30) years of dues paying services.
2. A clergy person who dies before completing the thirty (30) years dues paying services.

In order that these unfortunate circumstances can be relieved through the resources of the entire family of the United Church of Christ, the following resolution is adopted by the Thirteenth General Synod for implementation.

THEREFORE the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ directs:

1. The thirty (30) years dues paying membership rule which prohibits the payment of supplementation when not met, be suspended if a participant dies or becomes disabled prior to the completion of thirty (30) years of dues paying membership, and that supplementation to the established minimum income level be granted to the participant and/or spouse on the basis of the number of years that the participant would have completed had he/she continued participation to age sixty-five (65) or in the event of a disabled pastor who recovers prior to age

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- sixty-five (65), calculation will be made to the date of recovery.
2. The Executive Council and the Finance and Budget Committee place in the payment schedule to the Pension Boards an amount from Basic Support to our Christian World Mission a sum sufficient to care for these needs as determined by a committee appointed by the Executive Council.

The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges

1. The Pension Boards to broaden lines of communication with Conferences, local congregations, contributors and annuitants, in order to make programs and policies more widely known and understood. We suggest that this could be done by a) having denominational publications (such as *A.D.* and *Keeping You Posted*) solicit information from the Pension Boards and share such information through these publications; b) provide for Pension Boards staff to be invited to share information on policies and programs with the Council of Conference Ministers and other gatherings of Conference staff personnel; c) invite Pension Boards staff to address Annual Conference meetings and to visit with participants and annuitants.
2. The personnel of the Pension Boards to become more sensitive to the internal workings of local congregations, especially as they relate to the development of annual budgets. Estimated changes in health insurance premiums, and changes in general policies should be communicated to local congregations by mid-year.

11. RESOLUTION ON GENERAL SYNOD EXPENSE

Mr. Cope continued the report of Section E and referred to Advance Materials III, page 3. Mr. Cope moved the adoption of the revised Resolution on General Synod Expense.

The Moderator recognized Allen Myrick (OHIO) who moved to refer the resolution to the Executive Council to be considered along with the other factors in the study of General Synod expenses. It was

81-GS-55 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod refers the Resolution on General Synod expense to the Executive Council to be considered along with other

factors in the Executive Council's Study of General Synod expenses.

RESOLUTION ON GENERAL SYNOD EXPENSE

WHEREAS, paragraph 168 of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ states that "expenses of meetings of the General Synod including the travel expenses of voting delegates shall be borne by the General Synod"; and

WHEREAS, the present payment schedule for General Synod travel reimbursement is based by action of the Executive Council upon an arbitrary rate of 7¢ per mile; and

WHEREAS, current high fuel costs have produced a situation in which travel expenses, whether by highway or by air can in no way be satisfied by a 7¢ per mile reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences that are at considerable distances from the location of the General Synod become penalized; and

WHEREAS, this puts an unequal financial burden on the conferences and/or the individual delegates involved; and

WHEREAS, this may affect the selection and number of delegates from a given Conference;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ honor the covenantal relationship of the denomination and the General Synod delegates and asks the Executive Council to take immediate steps to find a way to pay an equitable and fair portion of the travel expenses of voting delegates to the Fourteenth General Synod and in the future.

Subsequent to this Vote the General Synod reconsidered the resolution on General Synod Expense and in Vote 81-GS-62 adopted the resolution.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Moderator recognized Secretary Evans for the announcements.

13. RECESS

The Moderator declared the General Synod in recess until Wednesday morning, July 1, at 8:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 1

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WORSHIP

The General Synod was called to order at 8:30 a.m., by the Moderator, the Rev. Nathanael M. Guptill.

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Ann Asper Wilson who led the Synod in worship with prayer given by the Rev. Jody Parson, co-pastor, College Community UCC, Fresno, Calif.

2. BIBLE STUDY

The Moderator recognized Dr. Paul L. Hammer to lead the General Synod in Bible study. Dr. Hammer referred to the 10th study in the Bible Studies' document, indicating his remarks would be directed around Acts 2 and the theme "The Church That Celebrates A Table." He used a diagram projected on a screen to illus-