

is a desirable goal, there is no proof that inflation is caused primarily by government spending on social programs, but also by many other factors including high energy costs, lower productivity, obsolete equipment and plants, and military spending.

The delegates to the Thirteenth General Synod express to the President and Congress of the United States our strong objection to proposed decreases which go beyond attempts to reduce fraud and abuse in the Medicaid, Food Stamp, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, and other programs that have provided assistance to the poor and near-poor; and express to them our strong objection to proposed increases in expenditures for armaments and defense material; and defense material; and

The delegates to the Thirteenth General Synod project a vision of American society in which the economy serves the needs of the poor as well as the affluent, in which the federal government along with the private sector is committed to serve the general welfare and to uphold the right to adequate nutrition, educational opportunity, justice in the legal system, and the earning of a living; and

The President of the United Church of Christ and each of its members be advised to communicate this resolution by personal letter to the President of the United States and to each member of Congress.

Local churches, Associations, Conferences and National bodies of the United Church of Christ, take seriously the necessity to respond to situations of need resulting from these proposed changes in the Federal Budget, including direct assistance and political action at all levels.

6. RESOLUTION ON PEACE AND THE RESOLVING OF CONFLICT

Mr. Fortt moved the adoption of the Resolution on Peace and the Resolving of Conflict and called on Betty Cooke (WIS) to speak to the resolution. She referred to Advance Materials II, page 111, and indicated that no changes were recommended in the original resolution and urged the adoption of the resolution.

There was discussion, and it was

81-GS-65 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution on Peace and the Resolving of Conflict.

RESOLUTION ON PEACE AND THE RESOLVING OF CONFLICT

Summary

This resolution defines the points of greatest concern in matters of peace and resolution of conflict and calls on all Christians, particularly those in the United Church of Christ, to study these problems and to engage in their solution in such ways as will enlighten our communities and give weight to the views of the Church in the councils of humankind and of nations.

Background

Throughout history there have been wars. Within the Christian community, conscience has dictated views

ranging from absolute pacifism to peace-through-strength and even to support of aggressive wars seen as righteous or necessary to national survival. The time is at hand when the Christian's prophetic voice must be louder and clearer and our leadership stronger in new ways of peace.

New nations have emerged in revolution and turmoil, old conflicts between political systems and ideologies persist, much of the world is in poverty and disorder. The old norms of morality and national and international law are everywhere being challenged. In many areas, the gap between rich and poor grows, the agricultural economy is not supporting burgeoning population, natural resources are being depleted, and economic and political systems are in disarray. We must address these problems for in them grow the roots of an era of violence and incessant conflict.

At the same time, the unacceptability of nuclear warfare, the instability of nuclear warfare, the instability of a nuclear balance of terror, and with technical advances and proliferation of nuclear weapons, the unreliability of a nuclear deterrent, all compel us to work toward agreements to prevent arms escalation and, then, toward orderly and balanced arms reduction.

There is a compelling urgency to build informed consensus within the church on the nature and substance of problems which may erupt into war and the means to prevent this. Therefore, it is proposed that congregations of the United Church of Christ, with other churches, come to grips with these issues, committing ourselves to studying the problems in all their complexity and seeking realistic solutions, promoting discussion and constructive action among our members and a style of living in our communities which will serve as a light to the nation. We should support efforts toward peace through the political institutions of our country and international organizations, pressing for international agreements for progressive arms limitation which, as means for peaceful resolution of conflicts are found, can lead to a general reduction in arms with all of its concomitant social and economic benefits.

In short, facing violence throughout the world, Christians must fervently seek better ways to resolve conflicts than by force of arms and its probable escalation to nuclear annihilation.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Throughout the Old and New Testaments the lack of peace among the people of God is the occasion for divine anger and sorrow.

The violence done to human hearts and communities at war within and between themselves appears to be Jahweh's primary concern. Prophets and priests who do not minister out of the same concern are called to account:

"They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace!'" (Jeremiah 6:14)

As the Son of God, Jesus embodies this divine empathy and concern. From the moment of His birth to

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the hour of His leaving, Jesus is the bearer of peace in the eyes of the people and according to His own intentions. (Luke 2:14; John 14:27). He, too, agonizes over the pain of His people's division and violence.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not!" (Matthew 23:37)

The peace of God is not naive or superficial disguising of conflict. Throughout, the Bible acknowledges the myriad forms of differences, disagreement and sin in the human community. The making of peace is a continual task of forgiveness and reconciliation of the diverse claims of justice, freedom and order in the human community and in the self. The healing of hurt or a wrong begins not in defensiveness or condemnation but in releasing and being released from the burden of fear and guilt and by a willingness to trust. Peace is a process of settling disagreements in justice; adapting, adjusting and accepting differences. The people of God are one with themselves and their Lord, only if they are so reconciled with their sisters and brothers.

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24).

As people of God, members and believers in the body of Christ, we, too, are angered and sorrowed by the lack of peace in our world. We are moved to be makers of peace in the spirit of God and called to the work of reconciliation by our belief in Jesus Christ. We invite others who share in this heritage of faith to join us.

"God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself . . . and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

The Thirteenth General Synod adopts as a statement of policy the following and commends it to the churches and members of the United Church of Christ:

OBEDIENT to the Commandment to love one another;

MINDFUL of our belief that all of us are brothers and sisters and of our covenant to struggle for peace and justice;

RECALLING that throughout history there have been Christians who have abhorred war and who have sought the ways of peace and that this responsibility is now ours;

RECOGNIZING that much violence in the world is related to the age-old conflicts among religious communities;

CONCERNED that economic, social and political conditions in the world are creating many situations which may result in disorder, destruction and armed conflict;

AWARE that such conflict may escalate to the use of nuclear weapons and global war;

BELIEVING that a deterrent effect of nuclear arms is

lessened as sophistication of weapons makes nations unsure that they can anticipate, detect and effectively counter a nuclear strike;

The Thirteenth General Synod

CALLS UPON all Christians and particularly the members of the United Church of Christ to gather within their churches for a disciplined study of the causes of conflict and of peaceful action to prevent or resolve it.

SEEKS to build, in our Christian communities, new foundations for our nation's dedication to peace.

SUPPORTS efforts toward peace through the political institutions of our country and international organizations, particularly those efforts directed toward international agreement for progressive arms limitation called for by the Twelfth General Synod and which, as a means for peaceful resolution of conflicts are found, can lead to general reduction of arms with all of its concomitant social and economic benefits.

NOTES with satisfaction that a National Commission was established to study proposals for the National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution, recommended by the Twelfth General Synod; and we ask that the President of the United Church of Christ and congregations and individual members of this church inform the President of the United States and members of the Congress that we consider the establishment of this Academy a matter of high priority.

STRIVES to prevent the worldwide increase and spread of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

RECOGNIZES the need, in the world's present circumstances, for defense forces well-chosen, well-equipped, well-trained, well-led and well-rewarded. However, we call for the most careful deliberation and public consensus that there is a compelling necessity before major steps are taken toward national mobilization or toward the introduction of new weapons systems which may, by their uncertain intent and unpredictable use, be provocative rather than deterrent.

CALLS upon the local congregations, conferences and instrumentalities to provide leadership in efforts toward reconciliation among religious communities in conflict.

URGES a new awareness of the social, economic and political problems which may give rise to conflict and to responsible action to solve them, in the name of our Lord Jesus and in the spirit of love which He taught and exemplified.

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS ON THE MEANING OF MINISTRY

The Moderator reminded the General Synod that consideration of the amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws on the Meaning of Ministry had been terminated on a call for the order of the Day near the end of the Wednesday morning, July 1 session. At that time the motion before the General Synod was the main motion which had been amended to include the changes recommended by the Committee on Amendments and is now before the General Synod. There was