

The Moderator recognized Todd Maurer (OH) who moved to amend the motion by adding the word "yet" after the word "not" in the second line of the first paragraph in #4. There was discussion and upon being put to a vote, the motion to amend was lost.

The Moderator recognized Nancy Peebles (SOC) who moved to amend the motion by adding a new paragraph C to follow B on the second page to read "recommends to Associations that, since the distinction between orientation and behavior is not always clear, and since homosexual behavior constitutes a major impediment to ordination in the beliefs of many persons and congregations, extreme sensitivity and care be exercised in the examination of such candidates." There was discussion and upon being put to a vote, the motion was lost.

The Moderator recognized Wayne Robinson (MN) who moved to amend the motion by deleting the words "in and of itself" from the sixth line of paragraph 4A. There was discussion and upon being put to a vote, the motion to amend was adopted. A motion to end debate on the motion was adopted, and it was

83 GS 34 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod adopts as amended the report of the Committee on the Report of the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

As members of the Universal Body of Christ and claimed by the Gospel, claimed for mission, claimed to be stewards of God's creation, the Fourteenth General Synod calls for full implementation of the following:

1. The Fourteenth General Synod receives the report of the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality. It directs the Executive Council to forward the report to Associations, Conferences, Instrumentalities, and other national bodies of the United Church of Christ for consideration as they develop plans and programs. The General Synod finds that the overture and resolutions referred to the Task Force have been reviewed and dealt with and therefore dismisses the Task Force with thanks and appreciation for its work.

2. The Fourteenth General Synod urges that attention and support be given to the development of proposals and programs to end sexual violence against men, women and children, regardless of their sexual orientation.

3. The Fourteenth General Synod recognizes that our present knowledge about the bases of sexual orientation and behavior is incomplete, and that psycho-social and ethical issues surrounding the rightfulness or wrongfulness of various forms of sexual expression and embodiment are still being debated within the United Church of Christ.

It is our hope that all persons will be drawn into the life and ministry of the Church. The Fourteenth General Synod recommends that:

A. The Board for Homeland Ministries collect and continue to update information about the nature of human sexuality, including variations in sexual orientation and behavior seeking to provide material ap-

propriate for use with all age groups and making this information available for study by churches.

B. The Board for Homeland Ministries develop resources on human sexuality for use in local churches, Associations and Conferences to facilitate ministry to and with gay/lesbian people (whether they choose to affirm their sexual feelings or attempt to change them), to their families, friends and to all people struggling with issues of sexual identity.

4. The Fourteenth General Synod recognizes that a person's sexual orientation is not a moral issue, but that sexual behavior does have moral significance.

A. The Fourteenth General Synod acknowledges that Associations have the responsibility for ordination and ministerial standing. It therefore recommends to Associations that in considering a candidate's qualifications for ministry, the candidate's sexual orientation should not be grounds for denying the request for ordination.

B. It also advocates that sexual orientation not be a basis for discrimination within the United Church of Christ in the employment of staff or use of volunteers.

## 8. DISPOSITION OF RECOMMENDATIONS RE: 77-GS-64 HUMAN SEXUALITY

Mr. Dietz continued the report of the Committee of the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality and referred the delegates to Advance Materials V to vote 83-3-EC-16 of the Executive Council and moved the adoption of the recommendation of the Executive Council, and it was

83 GS 35 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod expresses appreciation to the Instrumentalities and other national bodies for their reports in response to the Executive Council's action (78-4-EC-86); informs them that these special reports to the Executive Council are no longer necessary; and requests that any further implementation continue to be subject to the policies and reporting procedures of the respective Boards of Directors.

## 9. RESOLUTION ON INSTITUTIONALIZED HOMOPHOBIA IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mr. Dietz continued the Report of the Committee on the report of the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality and referred the delegates to Advance Materials VI, pages 2-3 to the resolution on Homophobia and to the recommendation that the title be changed to Institutionalized Homophobia in the United Church of Christ; that in paragraph 5 in right column, page 2, change the words "made some" to "taken"; in paragraph 6, right column of page 2, change the words "more often" in the second line to "at times," in the third line remove the comma at the end of the line and insert a dash, and a dash at the end of the fourth line after removing the comma; and in line 9 change the word "segments" to "aspects" and replace the resolved paragraph with a new resolved paragraph. It was

83 GS 36 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod adopts the resolution on Institutionalized Homophobia in the United Church of Christ.

## INSTITUTIONALIZED HOMOPHOBIA IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHEREAS, social institutions have historically embodied the prevailing prejudices and more of their age; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has been called on in the past to assess the extent to which its structures and instrumentalities reflect the prevailing values (e.g., racism and sexism); and

WHEREAS, homophobia (defined as the irrational fear of same-gender feelings, identification, and/or social-sexual expression which can be either conscious or subconscious) prevails in our culture and society; and

WHEREAS, lesbians, gay men, and bi-sexual persons suffer from institutionalized homophobia through isolation, devaluation, and discrimination to such an extent that they lead lives that are either hidden or ridiculed within the institutional church; and

WHEREAS, such treatment fosters emotional strain, alienation, a lack of self-worth, and in some cases a life where suicide appears to be the only option; and

WHEREAS, these same persons have gifts of ministry and faith to offer the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, some Conferences, local churches, Associations and national Instrumentalities have taken steps in addressing institutionalized homophobia; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has at times demonstrated to lesbians, gay men, bi-sexual persons—lay and clergy—that they are not persons of equal worth in the life of the church by turning these persons away from access to jobs, decision-making processes, and other aspects of institutional life which are available with little constraint to those who are heterosexual;

THEREFORE, the Fourteenth General Synod denounces institutionalized expressions of homophobia in all its forms, and calls upon all levels of the United Church of Christ to expose, to address, and in the light of the Gospel, to transform institutionalized homophobia.

#### **10. RESOLUTION ON HOMOPHOBIA AS IT AFFECTS PEACEMAKING**

Mr. Dietz continued the Report of the Committee on the report of the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality and referred the delegates to the recommendation concerning Homophobia As It Affects Peace Making. He indicated that it was the judgment of the Committee that this matter properly belonged to the Committee on Peace but because there was not time to return it to the General Synod for referring, this committee considered the resolution and prepared a recommendation. Mr. Dietz moved its adoption. There was discussion, and upon being put to a vote, the motion was lost. The Moderator indicated that time had expired and continuation of the Committee report would occur later in the agenda.

#### **11. WORSHIP REFLECTION**

The Moderator called on the Rev. Sarah Bentley who led the General Synod in worship reflection.

#### **12. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED PRONOUNCEMENT ON TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS WASTE**

Assistant Moderator Schroer assumed the chair and called on the Rev. George Matthews (CAC), Chairperson for the report of the Committee on Toxic and Hazardous Waste. Mr. Matthews moved the adoption of the Pronouncement on Toxic and Hazardous Waste as revised and indicated the

changes in the document. It was

83 GS 37 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod adopts as revised the Pronouncement on Toxic and Hazardous Waste.

### **TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS WASTE**

#### **I. Summary**

A growing concern has focused the attention of many of our United Church of Christ members and congregations on the issue of toxic and hazardous waste and its destructive effect on the well-being of individuals and their communities. This pronouncement is a call to the Church to expand its education and active involvement in the ecological needs of God's earth and the empowerment needs of our sisters and brothers who live in potentially life-threatening situations.

#### **II. Background:**

The North Carolina/Virginia field office of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ has been involved in an effort to assist the local predominantly Black and poor community of Afton, North Carolina, which was subjected to the construction of a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in its midst.

A four-year study conducted by the Warren County Citizens concerned about PCB's led the citizens of Warren County, North Carolina, to the conclusion that the trucking of PCB-contaminated soil to a state-constructed landfill in the Afton community was an arbitrary and unjustified act. The burial of toxic waste at the site posed a real threat to human existence. It appeared that the site had been chosen on the basis of racial, economic and political criteria instead of on sound and responsible scientific and ecological criteria.

The citizens of Warren County, North Carolina, perceived the danger and pursued every available legal course to seek redress of their situation. After every possible due process of law had been exhausted, the citizens resorted to nonviolent civil disobedience.

The community sees the dump as a symbol of discrimination and as an example of the kind of injustice that civil rights legislation, the U.S. Constitution, and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights are supposed to prevent.

It is necessary to store toxic and hazardous waste generated during industrial production and other waste already dangerously uncontained, where other feasible means of disposal do not exist. On the other hand, these facilities can adversely impact the affected communities if incorrectly designed, sited or operated; and may cause undue sacrifice. Even if correctly designed, sited and operated, an injustice may be perceived. Therefore, every siting has the potential for discrimination against the affected community.

#### **III. Biblical, Theological and Ethical Rationale**

God gave humankind dominion over all living things and responsibility for the stewardship of the earth. We read in Genesis:

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth