

all people of God (the laos). "Ministry" is defined as service to others in the name of Christ through the use of one's gifts in response to the Holy Spirit. It embraces an understanding of ministry that can find expression and be carried on within, through and beyond the programs and activities of the institutional church. It seeks to draw out the fuller range of implications for the life and mission of the United Church of Christ stemming from the Pronouncement.

THE CALL TO ACTION

WHEREAS, the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ has adopted the Pronouncement entitled "Empowering the Laity for Ministry" and,

WHEREAS, that Pronouncement includes a "Statement of Christian Conviction" which calls upon the United Church of Christ and all its related institutions to "at once" begin examining many fundamental issues related to ministry,

THEREFORE, the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

1. Calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership to commission a major theological study for use by local congregations. The study shall address:
 - a. The biblical and historical foundation for affirming the ministry of the laity and its theological implications,
 - b. The doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers as interpreted by its present day ecclesiastical and mission significance,
 - c. Those forces which enable and block empowering of the ministry of the laity within the life of the Church. This shall include, but not be limited to, problems related to language, traditional doctrine, polity, practice, and structure within the life and work of the United Church of Christ.
2. Calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership in consultation with the Division of Christian Education of the Board for Homeland Ministries and the Association of the United Church Educators and other instrumentalities as appropriate to develop resources and consultative services which shall assist local congregations in:
 - a. Educational programs and consciousness-raising events,
 - b. The use of materials to help laity identify their God-given gifts for ministry,
 - c. Helping laity identify and claim specific calls to ministry,
 - d. Assisting laity to design, plan, develop and execute their ministries.
 - e. Providing a means of recognizing, supporting, and then being accountable for the ministries undertaken, and
3. Calls upon local and regional structures of the United Church of Christ to commit themselves to enable the whole people of God to be in ministry and to communicate such needs and resources as they have for doing so to the appropriate national judicatories.
4. Calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership and all UCC related Theological Schools to offer opportunities to laity for study and reflection which would help to inform their ministries and to develop their skills and effectiveness.
5. Calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership to examine thoroughly current issues of clergy-crisis, burn-out among church leadership, multiple-role expectations and demands, and forms of clergy-lay conflicts in the context of mutual ministry between clergy laity. It shall explore the role of spiritual disciplines and of support groups in relation to sustaining both in ministry.
6. Calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership to examine within the UCC, other denominations, and ecumenical movements, successful models of faith renewal and development and lay empowerment, as they relate to the above mentioned Pronouncement, and adapt them for use within the UCC.
7. Calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership to give a progress report of its activities in implementing this Proposal for Action to the Sixteenth General Synod.
8. Calls upon the Office of Communication to feature articles and stories related to the empowerment of the laity for ministry.
9. Calls upon the Stewardship Council to emphasize the stewardship of one's gifts for ministry as well as one's financial resources and to put special emphasis on investment of local church resources in the preparation of the laity for ministries in, through and beyond the institutional church setting.
10. Calls upon all local congregations, regional judicatories, and national instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to affirm, celebrate, and seek ways to enable the ministries of the whole people of God to be at all levels of the church's life and mission.

NOTE: It is understood that the implementation of the Proposal for Action is subject to the availability of funds and a determination of the full range of the financial implications involved.

7. RESOLUTION, "PROMOTING EAST WEST CITIZEN DIALOGUE"

The Moderator called on Rev. Robert Jones, Chairperson of the Committee, who referred to the Resolution, "Promoting East West Dialogue" in Advance Material II, pp. 166-168. He moved adoption of the resolution with the amendments suggested by the committee. They were

TITLE: Change title from: Promoting East West Dialogue to Promoting East West Citizen Dialogue.

1st Therefore . . . , Last line: Change "could" to "can".

2nd Therefore . . . , 2nd line, after urges:

Delete - "instrumentalities and boards of the national church";

Add - the United Church Board for World Ministries, the Office for Church in Society, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and the Office of Communication.

3rd Therefore, line 2, after: "call on the"

Insert: Conferences and

Delete: This statement is in support of the "East-West Resolution."

After discussion, it was

85-GS-35 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Promoting East West Citizen Dialogue."

PROMOTING EAST-WEST CITIZEN DIALOGUE

WHEREAS, we represent members of the United Church of Christ who have journeyed to the Soviet Union and East European countries in the past year, and

WHEREAS, we have worshipped in the churches of those countries as fellow Christians who seek to uplift the importance of dialogue with Christians of those countries, and

WHEREAS, we sense the urgency to inform our various constituencies of the universality of the need, hopes and visions for a world at peace of all humankind especially apparent in our fellowship and dialogue with the citizens of the aforementioned countries, and

WHEREAS, we believe that relationships between East-West nations must be strengthened to bring harmony to a planet struggling for its very survival due to the escalation of the arms race,

THEREFORE, the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ supports and strongly encourages exchanges with the people of the Soviet Union and East European countries to further harmony and better understanding of our respective cultures and societies especially as members of Christ's church in a troubled world. Opportunities for travel, fostering pulpit exchanges, visitation to the churches of groups of clergy and laity with dialogue and or discussion an important element of that visit, as well as corporately praising God in worship together, promoting educational material for use in our churches and Sunday schools, and sharing of ideas and experiences by persons who have traveled to these countries, are all ways that support can be manifested.

FURTHER, the Fifteenth General Synod urges the United Church Board for World Ministries, the Office for Church in Society, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and the Office of Communication to continue to provide resources on East-West understanding, to increase opportunities for exchanges to take place, and to facilitate those resources and opportunities recognizing that diplomacy for peace happens in dialogue among Jesus' followers often more importantly than in the political arena.

FURTHER, the Fifteenth General Synod calls on the conferences and member churches of our denomination to become sensitive to the worshippers in the Soviet Union and East European churches, taking seriously the mandate of our Statement of Faith that God is "binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races," and to do all they can to uplift and affirm the sense of this resolution.

THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

The Theological Statement in support of the resolution Promoting East West Citizen Dialogue can be made in three parts:

- 1) We seek to develop strategies for peace rather than war
- 2) We need to uplift our stewardship of the creation with understanding that our world is a community
- 3) We wish to further understand our common humanity, affirming one another as Christians and children of the same God.

In part one, we are seeking to stop the drift toward war running concurrently in our two ideologies as the arms race escalates unchecked. The super powers are backed in an impossible situation wherein not only governments but also the private business sector is engaged in arms sales of an unreasonable volume. Jesus viewing his beloved city cried in agony "would that you knew the things that made for peace." He admonishes us today for we surely know that the armaments of our generation are capable of the ultimate holocaust. In Psalm 33, the psalmist exhorts the nation whose God is the Lord warning that "the King will not be saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a vain hope for victory and by its great might it cannot save." Reversing the process of war with the process of peace, indeed of the building of the peaceable kingdom, is the mandate of the twentieth century Church. Individuals still count in that process. Dialogue and the exchange of friendship and fellowship of communities of faith needs to happen with greater determination.

Viewing our planet as our community of many diverse faiths becomes possible and steps are taken toward a safe environment for all peoples when the priority of cherishing the earth and all its inhabitants is paramount to the articulation of the faith of God's children. As in Psalm 19, we need to proclaim that the heavens are telling the Glory of God, and that God's laws, commandments, precepts, testimony and the ordinances are true and righteous altogether. If all inhabitants of the world today could denounce war, and especially nuclear war, as immoral, then the respect for human life and for the survival of others as well as ourselves would move us to a diplomacy and cooperation, dialogue, and intentional peacemaking. In the acts of the apostles we are given the power of the word to speak out in boldness, to pray and to speak in community (Act 4:23-33) for the benefit of all members of the community. Like Noah, we need to hear the words of covenant (Genesis 9:8-17) for we are called today to be hearers again of that covenant.

As we affirm one another, people of the East and West, ideologically we are the same in Christ even though we exist with different political realities. The expression of our shalom toward one another becomes another priority as we say to one another the Old Testament benediction, "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you shalom." Jesus simply said to His Disciples, "Peace be with you." How many times the word "mir" was heard in the worship services many of us attended in the churches of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. By our dialogue we witness to God's saving power among all nations (Ps 67:2) and with the psalmist we seek guidance and blessing. In understanding one another's stories, in sharing one another's joys and burdens, in worshipping together, we will be living out the Good News of the New Testament that we are all children of one God with its obligation of loving one another.

We believe that the direction of this resolution points us to the way Jesus expects us to move and to express our hope for our time in history as members of God's Church, the United Church of Christ.

No financial implications.

8. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION "TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMISSION ON RELIGION IN APPALACHIA (CORA)"

The Rev. Robert Jones moved the adoption of the Resolution on Twentieth Anniversary of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA). After discussion, it was