

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

**85-GS-36 VOTED:** The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Twentieth Anniversary of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA)"

**TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMISSION ON RELIGION IN APPALACHIA (CORA)**

WHEREAS, the region known as Appalachia in the Eastern United States has historically been and remains today an area of extreme poverty and economic deprivation with 7 million of the 20 million people in the region drawing all or a portion of their support from welfare; 40 percent have incomes below the poverty level; and only 50 percent of those able to work are employed or actively seeking a job; and

WHEREAS, the region has experienced the loss of jobs (loss of 50,000 jobs between 1979 and 1980, compared to a gain of 350,000 in the nation, and 100,000 additional jobs were lost in 1981 and 1982) and many of the unemployed are not temporarily unemployed but are structurally unemployed (which means their old jobs are never returning and they are not able to find new employment) because of changed production processes or the relocation of industry; and

WHEREAS, although the infant mortality rate has been dropping steadily in the last 20 years, still 38 counties within Appalachia have recorded averages 50 percent higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that suicide among terminated workers involved in plant closings was 30 percent higher than national rates; and

WHEREAS, the federal government drastically has reduced or has abolished many of the social programs which benefit people of Appalachia; and

WHEREAS, the geographic scope of Appalachia, as defined by the Commission on Religion in Appalachia encompasses parts of thirteen states and includes portions of eight conferences of the United Church of Christ (Central Atlantic, New York, Ohio, Penn Central, Penn Northeast, Penn West, Southeast, and Southern); and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has an historical and on-going commitment to ministry in Appalachia through United Church of Christ congregations, conferences, and the Commission on Religion in Appalachia; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia is celebrating its Twentieth Anniversary this year, 1985; and

WHEREAS, the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls upon the Church to respond to human need out of the abundance of Christ's love for the poor and dispossessed; and

WHEREAS, economic justice repeatedly has been an important concern of the United Church of Christ;

THEREFORE, the Fifteenth General Synod calls attention to the Twentieth Anniversary of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia; and

FURTHER, the Fifteenth General Synod affirms the United Church of Christ commitment and participation in the Commission on Religion in Appalachia; and

FURTHER, the Fifteenth General Synod recommends to the Conferences in the Appalachian region, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Office for Church in Society, and the Office for Church Life and Leadership to develop plans and strategies in addressing such Appalachian issues as economic justice, unemployment, land usage, environmental concerns, and parish development within the context of the program and ministry of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia; and

FURTHER, the Fifteenth General Synod recommends that at the Sixteenth General Synod in Cleveland, Ohio, the planning committee for that Synod, in collaboration with the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, give special attention to the issues of economic justice and poverty in Appalachia and similar regions.

**9. ADOPTION OF PRIORITIES**

The Moderator turned the meeting over to Rev. John Krueger, Moderator. Mr. Krueger called on Rev. Jean Curtis, the Chairperson of the General Synod Committee on Proposed Priorities, to present the recommended action from the Committee. Ms. Curtis moved that the Fifteenth General Synod adopt two (2) priorities. In discussion it was moved to amend to three (3) priorities. There was discussion on this amendment. It was voted to close the debate. The vote on the amendment was defeated.

The motion was made that Family Life be adopted for an additional year. It was declared out of order.

There was discussion on the original motion, after which it was moved to close debate. The motion was carried.

Ms. Curtis expressed the Committee's recommendation to the Fifteenth General Synod, its judgement that Justice and Peace and Spiritual Renewal be adopted as Priorities.

The Parliamentarian was asked for an opinion on whether to debate on the recommendations. He suggested that a vote be taken.

Debate was terminated by the necessary 2/3 vote.

**85-GS-37 VOTED:** The Fifteenth General Synod adopts two priorities.

Ballots were distributed for voting. Delegates were asked to vote for no more than two of the following: Spiritual Renewal, Justice and Peace, Family Life.

**10. SPEAK OUT**

The Moderator called on Secretary Carol Joyce Brun to conduct the Speak Out.

**11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements were made by Secretary Brun, at which time she stated there were an estimated 7,100 persons attending the Sunday morning worship service.

**12. RECESS**

The Moderator declared the Fifteenth General Synod to be in recess until 8:45 a.m. Monday morning.

**13. WORSHIP**

The Fifteenth General Synod recessed to evening worship at C. Y. Stephens Auditorium.