

MONDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 1

GS-85-48 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod receives the Report of the Consultation on Church Development (see Appendix 13.) and takes the following action in relationship thereto:

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION ON CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

1. Adopts a special program of church development as a major commitment for the period 1986-1995, the goal of which shall be to support 15 new or renewed churches annually for an approximate total of 150 churches aided during the period.
2. Requests the Executive Council to consider appropriate support for this program from the UCC annual budgets and other church wide resources.
3. Requests the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to accept responsibility for managing this program, to commit significant resources for leadership subsidy, and to develop appropriate resources for the capital aspects of the program. As a part of its management of this special program on Church Development, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries shall:
 - a) intentionally initiate and implement a church wide strategy for United Church of Christ development which includes
 - 1) the selection of target areas having the greatest potential for growth
 - 2) the development of a substantial pool of potential leadership for such churches
 - 3) the commitment of one-third of the new starts to racial/ethnic minority communities
 - 4) a long term program of land/site acquisition and management
 - 5) adequate long term provision for facilities construction funding
 - 6) the sharing of responsibilities and resources between the conferences and the national instrumentalities
 - b) intentionally model new possibilities in church development in addition to the current styles in the New Initiatives in Church Development program of the preceding six years. These models would include
 - 1) multiple starts in rapidly growing metropolitan areas
 - 2) pairing strong established churches with new starts as a third partner to the conference and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries
 - 3) a start big and get bigger strategy in selected high potential settings
 - 4) a cluster of contiguous new churches starting a new church together
 - 5) starting new churches in changing communities of large cities rather than redeveloping old ones
 - 6) special criteria be developed for church development in low income communities.

Financial implications are illustrated in the report of the Consultation on Church Development. Implementation is subject to the availability of funds.

4. RESOLUTION TO CONTINUE NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Patricia Eggleston referred to Section II, page 151 and moved to adopt the recommendation of the Committee that

The Fifteenth General Synod take no action on a Resolution to Continue New Church Development.

Following discussion,

85-GS-49 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod takes no action on the Resolution "Continue New Church Development" as proposed by the North Dakota, Central Atlantic, Florida, Illinois, and South Central Conferences, as the substance of this resolution and the proposed resolves are included in the recommended action on the Report of the Consultation on Church Development.

5. PRONOUNCEMENT ON AFFIRMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AS A JUST PEACE CHURCH

The Moderator introduced Rev. Virginia Derr, Chairperson of Committee #3, to present the pronouncement, Affirming the United Church of Christ as A Just Peace Church.

Rev. Derr referred to the proposed pronouncement, Section 1-4. Ms. Derr moved that the Fifteenth General Synod adopt the pronouncement entitled, "Affirming the United Church of Christ As A Just Peace Church" with the following changes:

Section IV, A, paragraph 4—add new paragraph.

Nonviolence is a Christian response to conflict shown to us by Jesus.

We have barely begun to explore this little known process of reconciliation.

Section IV, D, 5, add— . . . and developing strategies of converting military industries to Just Peace industries.

After discussion, a friendly amendment was made by Rev. Raymond Woodruff, Section IV, A of the pronouncement, beginning "The State," the word "is" following "The State", and also the word "is" following "consent and" should be changed to "should be."

Rev. Thomas B. Walter then moved an amendment to Section IV, D, add 7, "We affirm a free and open press within each nation, without hindrance from government." The amendment was adopted.

Rev. David Seymour moved an amendment as follows:
Section IV, E, 1c, add—

in accord with guidelines for nation outlined under IV, E, 9.

The amendment was defeated. The General Synod voted to close debate.

85-GS-50 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the pronouncement "Affirming the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church."

PRONOUNCEMENT ON AFFIRMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AS A JUST PEACE CHURCH

SUMMARY

Affirms the UCC to be a Just Peace Church and defines Just Peace as the interrelation of friendship, justice and common security from violence. Places the UCC General Synod in opposition to the institution of war.

BACKGROUND

The Thirteenth General Synod called upon the UCC to become a Peace Church and the Fourteenth General Synod

asked a Peace Theology Development Team to recommend to the Fifteenth General Synod theology, policy and structure for enabling the UCC to be a peacemaking church. This pronouncement is based on insights from all three of the historic approaches of Christians to issues of war and peace—pacifism, just war, and crusade—but attempts to move beyond these traditions to an understanding rooted in the vision of shalom, linking peace and justice. Since Just War criteria itself now rules out war under modern conditions, it is imperative to move beyond Just War thinking to the Theology of a Just Peace.

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

A Just Peace is grounded in God's activity in creation. Creation shows the desire of God to sustain the world and not destroy. The creation anticipates what is to come: the history-long relationship between God and humanity and the coming vision of shalom.

Just Peace is grounded in covenant relationship. God creates and calls us into covenant, God's gift of friendship. "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezekiel 37:26). When God's abiding presence is embraced, human well-being results, or Shalom, which can be translated Just Peace.

A Just Peace is grounded in the reconciling activity of Jesus Christ. Human sin is the rejection of the covenant of friendship with God and one another and the creation and perpetuation of structures of evil. Through God's own suffering love in the cross, the power of these structures has been broken and the possibility for relationship restored.

A Just Peace is grounded in the presence of the Holy Spirit. God sends the Holy Spirit to continue the struggle to overcome the powers ranged against human bonding. Thus our hope for a Just Peace does not rest on human efforts alone, but on God's promise that we will "have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

A Just Peace is grounded in the community of reconciliation: the Just Peace Church. Jesus, who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14), performed signs of forgiveness and healing and made manifest that God's reign is for those who are in need. The Church is a continuation of that servant manifestation. As a Just Peace Church, we embody a Christ fully engaged in human events. The Church is thus a real countervailing power to those forces which divide, which perpetuate human enmity and injustice, which destroy.

Just Peace is grounded in hope. Shalom is the vision which pulls all creation toward a time when weapons are swept off the earth and all creatures lie down together without fear, where all have their own fig tree and dwell secure from want. As Christians, we offer this conviction to the world: peace is possible.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CONVICTION

A. The Fifteenth General Synod affirms a Just Peace as the presence and inter-relation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence. The General Synod affirms the following as marks of a Just Peace theology:

Peace is possible. A Just Peace is a basic gift of God and is the force and vision moving human history.

The meaning of a Just Peace and God's activity in human history, especially the life and witness of Jesus,

is understood through the Bible, Church history, and the voices of the oppressed and those in the struggle for justice and peace. Non-violent conflict is a normal and healthy reflection of diversity; working through conflict constructively should lead to growth of both individuals and nations.

Nonviolence is a Christian response to conflict shown to us by Jesus. We have barely begun to explore this little known process of reconciliation.

Violence can and must be minimized, even eliminated in most situations. However, because evil and violence are embedded in human nature and institutions, they will remain present in some form.

War can and must be eliminated.

The State should be based upon participatory consent and should be primarily responsible for developing justice and well-being, enforcing law and minimizing violence in the process.

International structures of friendship, justice and common security from violence are necessary and possible at this point in history in order to eliminate the institution of war and move toward a Just Peace.

Unexpected initiatives of friendship and reconciliation can transform interpersonal and international relationships, and are essential to restoring community.

B. The Fifteenth General Synod affirms the UCC as a Just Peace Church. The General Synod affirms the following as marks of a Just Peace Church, calling upon each local church to become:

A community of hope, believing a Just Peace is possible, working toward this end, and communicating to the larger world the excitement and possibility of a Just Peace.

A community of worship and celebration, centering its identity in justice and peacemaking and the Good News of peace which is Jesus Christ.

A community of biblical and theological reflection, studying the Scriptures, the Christian story, and the working of the Spirit in the struggle against injustice and oppression.

A community of spiritual nurture and support, loving one another and giving one another strength in the struggle for a Just Peace.

A community of honest and open conflict, a zone of freedom where differences may be expressed, explored, and worked through in mutual understanding and growth.

A community of empowerment, renewing and training people for making peace/doing justice.

A community of financial support, developing programs and institutions for a Just Peace.

A community of solidarity with the poor, seeking to be present in places of oppression, poverty, and violence, and standing with the oppressed in the struggle to resist and change this evil.

A community of loyalty to God and to the whole human community over any nation or rival idolatry.

MONDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 1

A community that recognizes no enemies, willing to risk and be vulnerable, willing to take surprising initiatives to transform situations of enmity. A community of repentance, confessing its own guilt and involvement in structural injustice and violence, ready to acknowledge its entanglement in evil, seeking to turn toward new life.

A community of resistance, standing against social structures comfortable with violence and injustice.

A community of sacrifice and commitment, ready to go the extra mile, and then another mile, in the search for justice and peace.

A community of political and social engagement, in regular dialogue with the political order, participating in peace and justice advocacy networks, witnessing to a Just Peace in the community and in the nation, joining the social and political struggle to implement a Just Peace.

C. The Fifteenth General Synod affirms friendship as essential to a Just Peace.

1. We affirm the unity of the whole human community and oppose any use of nationalism to divide this covenant of friendship.

2. We reject all labeling of others as enemies and the creation of institutions which perpetuate enemy relations.

3. We affirm diversity among peoples and nations and the growth and change that can emerge from the interchange of differing value systems, ideologies, religions and political and economic systems.

4. We affirm non-violent conflict as inevitable and valuable, an expression of diversity and essential to healthy relationships among people and nations.

5. We affirm all nations developing global community and interchange, including:

- a. freedom of travel;
- b. free exchange of ideas and open dialogue;
- c. scientific, cultural, and religious exchanges;
- d. public education which portrays the other nations fairly, breaking down enemy stereotypes and images;
- e. knowledge of foreign languages.

D. The Fifteenth General Synod affirms justice as essential to a Just Peace.

1. We affirm all nations working together to insure that people everywhere will be able to meet their basic needs, including the right of every person to:

- a. food and clean water;
- b. adequate health care;
- c. decent housing;
- d. meaningful employment;
- e. basic education;
- f. participation in community decision-making and the political process;

g. freedom of worship and religious expression;

h. protection from torture;

i. protection of rights without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national or social origin.

2. We affirm the establishment of a more just international order in which:

a. trade barriers, tariffs and debt burdens do not work against the interests of poor people, and developing nations;

b. poor nations have a greater share in the policies and management of global economic institutions.

3. We affirm economic policies which target aid to the most needy: the rural poor, women, nations with poor natural resources or structural problems, and the poor within each nation.

4. We affirm economic policies which will further the interests of the poor within each nation:

a. promoting popular participation;

b. empowering the poor to make effective demands on social systems;

c. encouraging decentralization and greater community control;

d. providing for the participation of women in development;

e. redistributing existing assets, including land, and distributing more equitably future benefits of growth;

f. reducing current concentrations of economic and political power;

g. providing for self-reliant development, particularly in food production.

5. We affirm nations transferring funds from military expenditures into programs which will aid the poor, and developing strategies of converting military industries to Just Peace industries.

6. We oppose the injustices resulting from the development of national security states that currently repress the poor in organizing society against an external enemy.

7. We affirm a free and open press within each nation, without hindrance from government.

E. The Fifteenth General Synod affirms common security from violence as essential to a Just Peace.

1. We affirm that national security includes four inter-related components:

a. provision for general well-being;

b. cultivation of justice;

c. provision for defense of a nation;

d. creation of political atmosphere and structure in which a Just Peace can flourish and the risk of war is diminished or eliminated.

MONDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 1

2. We affirm the right and obligation of governments to use civil authority to prevent lawlessness and protect human rights. Such force must not be excessive and must always be in the context of the primary responsibility of the state in creating social justice and promoting human welfare. Any use of force must be based in the participatory consent of the people.

3. We affirm that war must be eliminated as an instrument of national policy and the global economy must be more just. To meet these goals, international institutions must be strengthened.

4. We affirm our support for the United Nations, which should be strengthened developing the following:

- a. more authority in disputes among countries;
- b. peacekeeping forces, including a permanent force of at least 5000, able to police border disputes and intervene when called to do so by the U.N.;
- c. peacemaking teams, trained in mediation, conflict intervention, and conflict resolution;
- d. support for international peace academies;
- e. a global satellite surveillance system to provide military intelligence to the common community;
- f. international agreements to limit military establishments and the international arms trade;
- g. an international ban on the development, testing, use, and possession of nuclear and biochemical weapons of mass destruction;
- h. an international ban on all weapons in space and all national development of space-based defense systems and Strategic Defense Initiatives.

5. We affirm our support for the International Court of Justice and for the strengthening of international law, including:

- a. the Law of the Sea Treaty;
- b. universal ratification of the International Covenants and Conventions which seek to implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- c. recognition of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and removal of restrictions, such as the Connally Amendment, which impair the Court's effective functioning.

6. We reject any use or threat to use weapons and forces of mass destruction and any doctrine of deterrence based primarily on using such weapons. We also reject unilateral full-scale disarmament as a currently accepted path out of the present international dilemma. We affirm the development of new policies of common security, using a combination of negotiated agreements, new international institutions and institutional power, non-violent strategies, unilateral initiatives to lessen tensions, and new policies which will make the global economy more just.

7. We affirm the mutual and verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons as the most important step in breaking the escalating dynamics of the arms race, and call upon the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and other nations to take unilat-

eral initiatives toward implementing such a freeze, contingent upon the other side responding, until such time as a comprehensive freeze can be negotiated.

8. We declare our opposition to all weapons of mass destruction. All nations should:

- a. declare that they will never use such weapons;
- b. cease immediately the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons;
- c. begin dismantling these arsenals;
- d. while the process of dismantling is going on, negotiate comprehensive treaties banning all such future weapons by any nation.

9. We declare our opposition to war, violence, and terrorism. All nations should:

- a. declare that they will never attack another nation;
- b. make unilateral initiatives toward dismantling their military arsenals, calling upon other nations to reciprocate;
- c. develop mechanisms for international law, international peacekeeping, and international conflict resolution.

6. ADDRESS BY REV. ALLAN BOESAK

President Avery Post introduced Rev. Allan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, who addressed the General Synod. (See Appendix 14.)

President Post then called on Rev. Charles Cobb to lead General Synod in prayer.

7. PROPOSAL FOR ACTION ON ORGANIZING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AS A JUST PEACE CHURCH

The Assistant Moderator, Ms. Janeece L. Dent called on Rev. Virginia Derr who moved the Proposal for Action, "Organizing the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church" with additions as follows:

Section IV, 1, add after first paragraph:

"We commend to all local churches the use of the World Peace Prayer, using the example of the Benedictine Sisters who pray this specific prayer each day at 12 noon:

Lead me/us from death to life,
from falsehood to truth.
Lead me/us from despair to hope,
from fear to trust.
Lead me/us from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our
world, our universe.

Section IV, 4, paragraph 2, after first sentence add following sentence:

"We call upon local churches to be understanding and even supportive of persons who out of individual conscience take the responsibility for such non-violent extraordinary witness."

After discussion, Rev. Ross McGuire moved an amendment as follows:

Reword IV, 4, paragraph 2 to read:

"While respecting the claims of responsible governments on