

## MONDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 1

The Fifteenth General Synod calls for the development of four key components in developing the United Church of Christ so that it can make a real difference over the next years: regional centers, Washington advocacy, international presence, and national programs.

1. We call upon Conferences to develop regional centers able to link local churches into effective regional and national strategies. A variety of options are possible at the Association and Conference levels: The development of regional UCC peace centers that resource local groups through educational, organizational, advocacy, and funding efforts;

The development of ecumenical regional Just Peace centers, in partnership with other denominations;

The funding of part-time, contract, or full-time Just Peace staff at the Association or Conference;

The funding of ecumenical peace staff in states or metropolitan areas.

2. We call for the strengthening of our advocacy work in Washington, D.C., with more funding to develop the capacity of the UCC to make its witness known in the national political arena, to expand its capacity for policy analysis, to increase its presence on Capitol Hill in shaping legislation, to develop stronger communication links with churches around the country to share political developments and urge action, and to build coalitions.
3. We call upon the United Church of Christ Board for World Ministries to explore and develop new models of peace and justice ministries globally to address particular situations of injustice, oppression and real or potential violence, and to develop communication links between Christians in these critical situations and Christians in the U.S., developing global partnership and global awareness in the search for a Just Peace.
4. We call upon all national bodies to continue to develop effective programs of advocacy, empowerment, and education. We call for more resources to develop national strategies of advocacy and action to increase the witness of the UCC for a Just Peace. We call for the Office for Church in Society to facilitate the coordination of this work.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Churches, conferences, and national bodies, including the Office for Church in Society, the Executive Council, the United Church Board for World Ministries, and the Stewardship Council, have been requested in this Call to Action to respond to various directions. These bodies are responsible for developing the strategies and programs to fulfill the goals outlined here.

Note: Implementation of this Proposal for Action is subject to the availability of funds.

### 8. PENTECOST PEACE OFFERING BECOMING A SPECIAL APPEAL

Mr. Lorin Cope presented the recommendation on the Pentecost Peace Offering to become a Special Appeal. Mr. Cope moved that the Fifteenth General Synod adopt the Pentecost Peace Offering to become a Special Appeal and referred to Section II, page 27.

Following discussion, Rev. Linda Mines Elliott, Special Appeals Chairperson, moved an amendment as follows:

Section II, Page 27, before the last sentence which begins "The Stewardship Council . . .", insert the following sentence:

"The Office for Church in Society shall administer the net proceeds of the offering and report on its use to the Executive Council."

After discussion, the amendment passed.

Discussion on the main motion continued, with Rev. George (Bill) Webber moving a substitute motion, that the "Call for Increased Funding" that was previously a part of A Proposal for Action—Organizing the United Church of Christ As A Just Peace Church, replace the Pentecost Peace Offering motion.

After discussion it was

85-GS-52 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod substitutes the motion on the Pentecost Peace Offering Becoming A Special Appeal, for the following:

The General Synod approves an All-Church Just Peace Offering to be received on Pentecost of 1986 and 1987. One-quarter of the proceeds from this offering may be retained to support Just Peace efforts of the local churches, one-quarter to be held for Just Peace efforts of the Conferences, and one-half will be transmitted to the Director of Finance and Treasurer of the United Church of Christ for use by the Office for Church in Society and other national bodies to develop and nurture Just Peace advocacy. The Stewardship Council is requested to promote the offering and the Office for Church in Society is requested to administer the net receipts of the offering and report on its use to the Executive Council. The continuation of the offering beyond 1987 will be determined by a study by the Executive Council on how best to fund the mission of the church through all-church and special offerings, and how to increase financial support for the advocacy of Just Peace regionally, in Washington, nationally, and internationally so that the UCC can make a much greater difference in the seeking of a Just Peace and the ending of the institution of war.

Debate then continued on the substitute motion.

A motion to postpone until the end of the Committee 13 report was made by Rev. Richard Vaught. This motion was sustained by the General Synod and the report of Mr. Lorin Cope in behalf of Committee # 13 continued.

### 9. ALL CHURCH AND SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The Moderator called on Mr. Lorin Cope who moved that General Synod Fifteen adopt the recommendations of the Executive Council regarding the Christmas Fund Offering "Veterans of the Cross" becoming an All Church Offering, and the Family Thank Offering becoming an All Church Offering.

### 10. SPEAK OUT

The Moderator called for a vote as to whether the delegates wished to hear speak out at this time. It was voted not to hold speak out.

### 11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Moderator called on Secretary Carol Joyce Brun for the announcements.

### 12. RECESS

The Moderator declared the meeting in recess at 5:00 p.m.

# MONDAY EVENING, JULY 1

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The Fifteenth General Synod was called to order by the Assistant Moderator, Ms. Janeece L. Dent, at 7:00 p.m.

## 2. SPEAK OUT

Secretary Carol Joyce Brun was called on by the Moderator to explain the rules and to conduct the Speak Out. Some of the subjects presented during Speak Out were concerns for the local churches; an "each one teach one" program to help illiteracy among Blacks and Hispanics; the lifting up of the young adult priority and their not being lumped with youth since they have their own unique problems; an appeal by youth and young adults to let them be program planners; a regional women's meeting to be held in Des Moines in 1986; and greetings from the United Church of Christ Friends for Life, who expressed thanks for allowing them to come and speak.

## 3. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

The Moderator called on Mrs. Winifred Cash Rhodes, Chairperson of the Agenda Committee, who had the following two recommendations, since the meeting was 1 1/2 hours behind schedule:

- (1) that the evening session be extended to 10:00 p.m. with all activities held thereafter. This was adopted;
- (2) that the Order of the Day for Tuesday, July 2 be changed to allow the first thing on the agenda to be several national instrumentality presentations. This was voted by the delegates. A motion to place item 4 of Committee #1, relating to Further Implementation of the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Priority, on the agenda at 8:30 p.m. that evening as an Order of the Day, was seconded and voted.

## 4. BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS BY YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

The Moderator announced that in light of the Youth and Young Adult priority, voted at General Synod Fourteen, youth were to lead in Biblical Reflections. Ms. Dent welcomed Mr. Jeff Hodgson of Schofield, Wisconsin and Ms. Leslie Taylor of Plymouth United Church of Christ in Detroit, Michigan, to lead in reflection on "Jesus Christ: A Word of Courage."

## 5. CONTINUATION OF COMMITTEE 13 REPORT

The Moderator announced that the adoption of the Christmas Fund and Family Thank Offering, found in Section VI Advance Materials, section II, page 26, would be dealt with as two separate items. Ms. Dent announced that Rev. David Hirano and Rev. Yvonne Delk would make presentations to inform the actions. Mr. Hirano, of the Planning and Correlation Committee of the Executive Council, gave a history and definitions of Special Appeals and All-Church Offerings and a Special Appeal Offering. A visual presentation of the schedule for offerings was presented.

Rev. David Butler (MASS), asked to appeal the decision of the chair regarding the order of the vote for item 13. Following a standing vote, the chair decided to hear the whole report before discussion of the Peace Offering.

Rev. Yvonne Delk continued with the report of Committee #13, explaining that the Pentecost Peace Offering would only be for this biennium and then would be re-evaluated.

## 6. PENTECOST ALL-CHURCH JUST PEACE OFFERING

The substitute motion on the Pentecost Just Peace Offering was again on the floor for discussion and action. Following discussion pro and con, debate was closed and it was,

85-GS-53 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod approves an All-Church Just Peace Offering to be received on Pentecost of 1986 and 1987. One-quarter of the proceeds from this offering may be retained to support Just Peace efforts of the local churches, one-quarter to be held for Just Peace efforts of the Conferences, and one-half will be transmitted to the Director of Finance and Treasurer of the United Church of Christ for use by the Office for Church in Society and other national bodies to develop and nurture Just Peace advocacy.

The Stewardship Council is requested to promote the offering and the Office for Church in Society is requested to administer the net receipts of the offering and report on its use to the Executive Council. The continuation of the offering beyond 1987 will be determined by a study by the Executive Council on how best to fund the mission of the church through all-church offerings and special appeals, and how to increase financial support of the advocacy of Just Peace regionally, in Washington, nationally, and internationally so that the UCC can make a much greater difference in the seeking of a Just Peace and the ending of the institution of war.

## 7. PRONOUNCEMENT ON NATIONAL TOXIC INJUSTICE CRISIS

The Moderator called on Rev. Robert Tucker, Chairperson of Committee #4, who presented and moved the Committee recommendation on the National Toxic Injustice Proposed Pronouncement. Following discussion, it was,

85-GS-54 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the Pronouncement "National Toxic Injustice."

### PRONOUNCEMENT ON NATIONAL TOXIC INJUSTICE

#### SUMMARY

During the last two years, a national crisis has emerged where tens of thousands of communities throughout the United States now suffer the horrors of life-threatening toxic injustice. Toxic injustice is defined as the deliberate unsafe production and transportation of lethal and toxic substances; or the conscious dumping of these substances into powerless, poor and minority communities; or the wanton contamination of water, air and other natural resources by the petro-chemical and other industries. This pronouncement is a call to the United Church of Christ to address programmatically the theological, moral, social and racial justice issues emerging out of this crisis and to develop and promote remedies to resolve this crisis. The Word of God through Jesus Christ, the Word of life, commands the Church to do justice and to act to protect God's earth and all of God's children from the evil of toxic injustice.

#### BACKGROUND

The escalating problem of unsafe industrial production of lethal and toxic substances and the improper and unjust disposal of these substances is a "life and death" issue. This national problem has now reached crisis proportions. Pres-

ently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that more than 250 million tons of hazardous materials are added to the environment each year. This is more than one ton of hazardous pollutants per person in the United States of America. 80 percent of such materials have been deposited in the earth, a method widely acknowledged by government and scientific experts as inevitably leading to irreversible contamination of the environment. In 1983, the U.S. General Accounting Office reported that "Blacks make up the majority of the population in 3 of the 4 communities" where the landfills studied were located.

The human effects are startling. Left unaddressed, toxic disposal sites develop into catastrophes like Love Canal, New York, and Times Beach, Missouri where the effects of toxic wastes were considered so hazardous to the communities' health by the federal government that the entire populations were relocated. The World Health Organization and the National Cancer Institute concur that a significant number of human cancers are related to toxic pollution. It is a grievous injustice to allow the direct correlation between lethal and toxic substances and the alarming rise in cancer rates and other forms of human suffering to go unchallenged. It is now estimated by the American Cancer Society that more than one out of four Americans will get cancer, and it ranks as a leading cause of death for children.

This is an all inclusive problem which needs to be addressed from the point of production to the method of disposal. A vast number of potentially dangerous substances are put into industrial and commercial use without adequate safeguards. The crisis has reached a stage where every citizen in the United States will be affected. For example, now virtually every person in this country has a certain amount of toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) in their bodies. Once introduced into the environment, toxic pollutants become a long term problem resulting in adverse environmental and health effects. In general, environmental pollution affects people of every economic and racial background. Communities everywhere, be they inner city, urban, suburban or rural, will eventually be harmed. The reality is, however, that today the decisions to locate toxic production and disposal facilities are often made on socio-economic and racial grounds.

Today, there is no greater necessity than for the Church to speak out and to confront these injustices head on. The deliberate unsafe production and dumping of toxic and hazardous substances, particularly in defenseless poor, minority communities and Indian reservations, is an immoral and injurious act that will cause generations yet unborn to suffer. The American Indian, as the original stewards of the land, now has a very small land base among the 300 federally recognized Indian tribes, and this shameful injustice will be further compounded by use of this land for hazardous waste dumpsites.

The Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ issued a "Pronouncement on Toxic and Hazardous Waste." The pronouncement was "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." It lifted up the United Church of Christ's challenge to the unjustified act of locating a PCB landfill in predominantly poor and Black Warren County, North Carolina.

The Special Project On Action Against Toxic Pollution In Poor Communities was initiated by the Commission for Racial Justice with Neighbors In Need Resources made available by the Special Appeals Committee. This project has now laid the foundation for the United Church of Christ to effectively address the causes and instruments of this toxic injustice crisis through programmatic strategies.

The Commission for Racial Justice has found daily evidence of the widespread proliferation of this problem in communities of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Social inequity was consistently a dominant factor that led to the victimization of these communities. In challenging the existence of the nation's largest hazardous waste landfill in the nation in the poor and Black community of Emelle, Alabama, the Commission for Racial Justice has played a leading role in one of the nation's most profound social and racial justice issues.

In the wake of the recent catastrophe in Bhopal, India where 2,500 innocent people were killed by a leak of toxic methyl isocyanate, many people were surprised to find that Union Carbide produces the same gas in the predominantly Black community of Institute, West Virginia.

Congressional inquiries revealed that more than 60 leaks of this deadly gas took place within the past several years. Without immediate corrective action by all segments of society, the toxic injustice crisis will escalate. This will continue to endanger unborn babies, to destroy entire communities, and to threaten the very ecological balance of God's creation.

#### BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE

The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news to the poor, oppressed and victimized. The Word of life is a word of liberation and we are called to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:19). The prophet Micah affirmed:

"God has showed you, O people, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

Faith in God through Jesus Christ necessitates Christian action in the interest of liberation and justice. According to Waldo Beach, an authority on Christian ethics, in *The Wheel and the Cross: A Christian Response to the Technical Revolution*, "The ethics of stewardship rests on certain crucial aspects of Christian doctrine. The first is that 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.'" (Psalms 24:1) Beach further stated, "The whole eco-system, the continual handiwork of God's creative will, is a glorious interdependent system of organic and inorganic matter. The toxic impact of petrochemicals and the waste products of their manufacture increase the incidence of cancer." Thus, the issue of toxic injustice raises profound ethical and theological questions of the just stewardship of God's creation.

Frederick Herzog, a noted United Church of Christ theologian, in *Justice Church: The New Function of the Church in North American Christianity*, posited that one of the essential marks of the church is its ability and capacity to do justice, i.e. to become a justice church. Herzog stated, "The church is called to challenge, in various ways, the principalities and powers that legitimate injustice." In *Biblical Faith and Social Ethics*, E. Clinton Gardner stressed the theological distinction of caring for and loving one's neighbor. Gardner stated, "Neighbor love" in the New Testament means ministering to