

9. PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The Moderator, called on Mr. Andrew White of the Maine Conference who clarified changes in Committee #29's report. Mr. White moved on behalf of the Committee that the Fifteenth General Synod adopt the Resolution, "Action for Peace in Central America". After discussion,

85-GS-73 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Action for Peace in Central America."

ACTION FOR PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Calls upon the President of the United States to:

- 1) Reinstate bi-lateral negotiations with Nicaragua;
- 2) Withdraw vetoes of multi-lateral loans;
- 3) Abide by World Court rulings;
- 4) Stop covert and overt aid to Contras;
- 5) Use his office to support the Contadora countries' peace making efforts which include the call for—
 - withdrawal of all outside military advisors from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua;
 - free elections in all the above countries;
 - barring all arms imports to the above countries;
 - a verification commission;
 - barring all foreign military exercises;
 - stopping arms smuggling;
 - closing all foreign military bases;
 - ending support for guerilla movements;
- 6) Cease pressure on Costa Rica to reinstate an army and to abandon its almost forty years of neutrality.

Calls upon the Congress of the United States to:

- 1) Oppose all overt or covert aid to Contras;
- 2) End all military maneuvers in Honduras;
- 3) Investigate all U.S. military construction expenditures in Honduras;
- 4) Impede the involvement of United States mercenaries in Central America;
- 5) Investigate the use by the Defense Department of humanitarian aid which the Comptroller General of the United States questioned in June, 1984 as possibly in violation of United States law;
- 6) Investigate the use of private funds for the Contras to determine if such usage is in violation of United States law;
- 7) Implement a plan for phased withdrawal of United States Military assistance to Central America;
- 8) Promote economic justice and agrarian reform;
- 9) Condition all aid to Central America on demonstrated protection of human rights;
- 10) Encourage dialogue between the El Salvadoran government and the opposition (FMLN-FDR), and between the Sandinistas and the Contras in Nicaragua;
- 11) Urge the Salvadoran government to prosecute those military and parliamentary members involved in political assassinations;
- 12) Maintain the prohibition on funding of police equipment and training for democracies such as Costa Rica;
- 13) Prohibit visits to Central American ports of nuclear-armed battleships and thus uphold the Treaty of Tlatelco which restricts nuclear material transport and storage in the Caribbean basin.

Calls on world leaders to support the Contadora peace process.

Directs established instrumentalities and requests recognized instrumentalities and other national bodies to utilize publications and networks of the United Church of Christ to engage in education and advocacy on Central America through the promotion of:

- biblical reflection and study resources on Central America;
- study tours of Central America with church-related organizations;
- speaking tours in the United States by Central Americans sponsored by the United Church Board for World Ministries and/or ecumenical bodies.

Calls upon the Coordinating Center for Women to lift up the need to unite women across the Americas in the struggle for justice and peace, since the civilian population (primarily women and children) are severely affected by armed conflicts such as indiscriminate aerial bombardments in El Salvador.

Calls upon United Church of Christ members to:

- 1) Engage in biblical reflection and study on Central America;
- 2) Take a study tour of Central America and support others who do so;
- 3) Pray for peace and justice in Central America;
- 4) Give prayerful consideration to signing the Pledge of Resistance (a commitment to protest legally or engage in non-violent civil disobedience in the event of a major escalation of United States military involvement in the region) and/or support those who do sign the pledge;
- 5) Study the Contadora peace proposal;
- 6) Pray in weekly worship services for the success of the Contadora peace proposal;
- 7) Promote legislation consistent with this resolution;
- 8) Write to the four Contadora governments encouraging and supporting their work.

Financial Implications: None

10. IN SUPPORT OF SANCTUARY FOR CENTRAL AMERICANS

The Moderator called on Ms. Cara Beth Zortman, (PC) who moved on behalf of Committee #29 that the Fifteenth General Synod adopt the Resolution, "In Support of Sanctuary for Central Americans." Ms. Zortman spoke to the motion and there was further discussion,

A friendly amendment was made to change the paragraph that begins "Deplores" to read:

"Deplores the June 26, 1985 United States District Court for the State of Arizona ruling that, in effect, confirmed that the government has the power to infiltrate churches and gather information about church people through paid government informants and surreptitious taping of conversations, meetings, and worship. (This is the first court ruling which allows information so gathered to be used to indict church people)."

Replaces the period at the end of the next paragraph with a comma and adds: "and calls on the United States Congress and the United States Attorney General to prohibit government agencies from infiltrating churches."

After further discussion, the amendment was moved and seconded to insert in the third paragraph, after Central Americans:

“Haitians, Philipinos and South Africans.”

Additional discussion brought forth an amendment that was moved, and seconded to include South Africans in the resolution. After discussion the amendment was defeated. Debate was closed by vote and

85-GS-74 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution “In Support of Sanctuary for Central Americans.”

IN SUPPORT OF SANCTUARY FOR CENTRAL AMERICANS

The Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Calls upon the United States Government to adhere to the provisions of the United Nations Protocol on the Status of Refugees signed by the United States in 1968;

Calls upon the Attorney General to grant Extended Voluntary Departure status to Central American refugees until they can safely return to their homelands;

Calls upon the Immigration and Naturalization Service to recognize the need for and grant political asylum to Central Americans, Haitians, Phillipinos and South Africans who fear persecution;

Calls upon the Congress of the United States to pass the De Concini-Moakley Bill (S. 377/HR 822) suspending deportation of Salvadorans now in the United States;

Calls upon United Church of Christ congregations, conferences, instrumentalities, and the denomination as a whole to:

- affirm, support, and participate in the provision of sanctuary ministries, in faithfulness to our Biblical tradition;
- join and strengthen ecumenical efforts to provide legal defense to sanctuary workers and refugees;
- prepare and distribute educational materials on sanctuary;

Calls upon the Congress of the United States to investigate Operation Sojourner in which the Justice Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service infiltrate church meetings, Bible study groups, and worship services to gather evidence for the indictment of sanctuary workers and use hidden wireless transmitters to record these events in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

Deplores the June 26, 1985 United States District Court for the State of Arizona ruling that, in effect, confirmed that the government has the power to infiltrate churches and gather information about church people through paid government informants and surreptitious taping of conversations, meetings and worship. (This is the first court ruling which allows information so gathered to be used to indict church people).

Further, the Fifteenth General Synod contends that the government has no legal right to surreptitiously tape record within faith communities, or to use tapes of church meetings and worship services to indict and prosecute church workers, and calls on the United States Congress and the United States Attorney General to prohibit government agencies from infiltrating churches.

Further, that General Synod Fifteen requests that the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ seriously consider participating in any case appealing the above mentioned ruling of the United States District Court in Arizona as a friend of the Court.

Financial Implications: none.

11. RECOGNITION OF IOWA VOLUNTEERS

The Moderator called on Rev. Carol Joyce Brun who introduced the Iowa volunteer organizers, who were met with a standing ovation and many rounds of applause. The organizers introduced were:

CORE TEAM:

Mr. Bill Yungclas, Ms. Jane Meyer,
Rev. Dale Hempen

STAFF LIAISON:

Rev. Duane Meyer

INTERIM CONFERENCE MINISTER:

Rev. Don Yungclas

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:

Ms. Sonia Hofland

ENVIRONMENT DIVISION:

Rev. Peter Sawtell, Ms. Audrey Burtnett

FAMILY HAPPENDINGS DIVISION:

Ms. Dory Wilkinson, Rev. Jim Trosen

MUSIC DIVISION:

Mr. Dick Boyer, Ms. Nancy Boyer

USHERS DIVISION:

Ms. Amy Kroll, Rev. Frank Kroll, Ms. Carol Williams,
Rev. Ira Williams

OFFICE SUPPORT DIVISION:

Ms. Ann Vorbrich, Ms. Rosemary Stouffer

SPECIAL NEEDS DIVISION:

Rev. David Johnston

YOUTH STEWARDS/PAGES DIVISION:

Ms. Vicky Burmester, Mr. Dave Burmester, Mr. Tom
Plagman, Ms. Michelle Plagman

REGISTRATION DIVISION:

Ms. Marilyn Anderson, Mr. Mel Anderson

INFORMATION DIVISION:

Ms. Joan Greiner, Mr. Tom Greiner

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION:

Mr. Lee Couch, Ms. Mickey Couch

HOUSING/MEALS DIVISION:

Ms. Nancy E. Brown

FLORISTS:

Mr. John White, Ms. Melissa White

CLOWNS:

Mr. Bob Miller

IOWA RESOURCES DISPLAY/FARM TOUR:

Ms. Selva Lehman

BACKDROP:

Ms. Carol Van Horn

CELEBRITY CAFE:

Ms. Phyllis Anderson of Nebraska

And approximately 820 other Iowa volunteers.

After the applause died down, plates of cookies were distributed and a few songs were sung before continuing with the business of the day.

12. ORDER OF THE DAY FOR COMMITTEE 13

A motion was made, and seconded to have the report of Committee #13 at 7:00 p.m. that evening as the Order of the Day.