

Debt servicing is undermining the development prospects of most developing countries. High interest rates have increased interest on loans to the point where many developing countries are devoting more than two-thirds of their foreign exchange to servicing their debt. International credit patterns have shifted from an inflow to an outflow of funds from developing countries.

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) conditions for lending to debt ridden Third World governments impose requirements, such as reducing or eliminating social spending, controlling or cutting wages, devaluing currency, reducing or eliminating imports, and encouraging open foreign investments which impinge on the national sovereignty of recipient countries. IMF mandated austerity has fostered social unrest and riots in Brazil, the Sudan, and the Dominican Republic and massive demonstrations in Chile and the Philippines, challenging the legitimacy of regimes that starve their own people.

Conditions in the international economic system make it unlikely that Third World countries will be able to repay the principal on these debts. Developing countries continue to face record low prices for their basic commodity exports and increasing numbers of protectionist barriers against their manufactured products. Private commercial banks often set excessive fees, commissions, and interest rates which go beyond the borrowers' economic capacity to pay.

The world debt crisis also is having an adverse effect on the United States economy. The IMF austerity conditions have required substantial contraction of imports by Third World countries, and about a third of U.S. trade is with the Third World. Workers in export-oriented industries have lost an estimated 1.1 million jobs.

WHEREAS, the world economy faces a grave financial and economic crisis because of a massive debt of some one trillion dollars owed by the Third World to western banks and governments;

WHEREAS, the burden of the international debt crisis has fallen disproportionately on the poor countries and on vulnerable groups within them, particularly the urban and rural poor;

WHEREAS, the debt crisis has dried up outside lending to developing countries for programs, such as water, sewage, health facilities, housing, education, and nutrition, at the same time that these countries have diverted funds from these programs in order to pay their debt service;

WHEREAS, the International Monetary Fund's conditions for lending to debt ridden Third World governments impose requirements which impinge on the national sovereignty of recipient countries and cause hardship by requiring reducing or eliminating social spending, controlling or cutting wages, devaluing their currency; reducing or eliminating imports, and encouraging open foreign investment;

WHEREAS, the conditions in the international economic system make it unlikely that Third World countries will be able to repay the principal on these debts;

WHEREAS, the May, 1986, UN Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa identified the debt crisis as the central issue in North-South relations;

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II in Bogota, Colombia, on July 1, 1986 said, "The poor populations cannot pay intolerable social costs in order to meet foreign debt obligations;"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, mindful of God's special love

and concern for the poor and Jesus' injunction of that which is done for the least of these, my brothers and sisters, is done for me (Matthew 25:40):

1. Recognizes the international debt crisis as a critically important concern which compounds economic injustice for many Third World nations and threatens to create massive instability for the entire international system.
2. Affirms the need for reforms in the international economic order which would include principles designed to relate equitably to basic human needs, to just patterns of participation in planning and decision-making, and to guidelines which would enhance the development needs of the Third World nations.
3. Recommends that the United Church Board for World Ministries develop program resources, with other appropriate UCC bodies and ecumenical colleagues, which would inform church members about the international debt crisis and its consequences and advocate and work for the creation of a more just economic order.
4. Encourages United Church of Christ members to visit debtor nations and to talk with UCC mission personnel and partner church representatives to understand the impact of the debt crisis on the debtor nations.
5. Calls on UCC congregations to participate in the establishment of local ecumenical task forces on economic issues to study the links between the domestic farm crisis and the international debt crisis, and to organize events to publicize the impact of the international debt crisis on local economics.
6. Requests the United Church Board for World Ministries to engage in advocacy in cooperation with the Office for Church in Society and ecumenical partners to encourage Congress to enact appropriate legislation that will ease the burden of the poor in debt-impacted countries. Such legislation could include measures like those presently under discussion by which the United States would:
 - A. write off all or part of the debt owed to it, particularly by the poorest developing countries;
 - B. convert such debt into grants available for development projects;
 - C. reduce interest rates;
 - D. extend periods for repayment of remaining debt;
 - E. allow Third World debtor nations to limit their debt service obligations to no more than 20 percent of their export earnings;
 - F. replace austerity measures related to lending conditions with an emphasis on development;
 - G. encourage private lenders to adopt similar measures with respect to their own loans to Third World nations.
7. Asks the United Church Board for World Ministries in cooperation with the Office for Church in Society and ecumenical partners to urge the World Bank and other appropriate organizations to study the impact of the IMF policies on the poor in Third World countries, especially women and children.

Financial Implications

Implementation is subject to the availability of funds.

13. RENEWED U.S. SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rev. Dorsch then moved on behalf of Committee 20, and with no further discussion

87-GS-52 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Renewed U.S. Support of the United Nations."

Renewed United States Support of the United Nations As Our Best Investment For A Just Peace

Background

For 41 years the United Nations has assisted people around the world in such areas as enhancement of human rights, education, health, population planning, drug control, agricultural development, environmental protection, and peaceful settlement of international disputes. The United Nations now faces the greatest financial crisis in its history, yet the "global village" needs the work of the United Nations and its organizations more than ever before. This Resolution calls upon members of the United Church of Christ to become educated about the United Nations, and, while recognizing the need for strengthening and reform, encourages its support by the United States' government.

Biblical Perspective

We understand the vision of a Just Peace—"I will appoint peace your governor, and justice your ruler" (Isaiah 60:17 NEB)—to be a vision for all the peoples of the world. Thus we consider the world's warfare and its social and economic inequities an affront to God's will. As is stated in "A Just Peace Church," "There is no foreign policy blueprint in the Bible. There is the story of a God who seeks shalom, Just Peace, and who stirs up the people, time and again, to create the conditions of a Just Peace and to take initiatives to bring unity, reconciliation, forgiveness, and justice." (1)

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ in the Pronouncement "Human Rights" urged ratification of "all Human Rights Covenants, Conventions and Protocols passed by the United Nations and signed by U.S. Presidents" (2) and none of these have yet been ratified by the U.S. Senate; and

WHEREAS, the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirmed the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church, which implies that the United Church of Christ is committed to world peace and justice and will support methods that bring about friendship, justice, and common security from violence; and

WHEREAS, the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirmed our support for the United Nations and suggested ways of strengthening it to bring about a peaceful world, and affirmed support for the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, and for the strengthening of international law; (3) and

WHEREAS, the Directorate of the Office for Church in Society, meeting November 22, 1986, and the Coordinating Center for Women, meeting February 23, 1987, voted in response to concerns of women attending the Great Lakes Regional Meeting (10/18/86), that a Resolution be forwarded to the Sixteenth General Synod, "expressing dismay that the U.S. has not ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, has not ratified the Convention on Human Rights and is not honoring its financial commitments to the United Nations;" (4) and

WHEREAS, in this interdependent world the need for the United Nations has never been greater, with the threat of instantaneous global destruction making essential a world forum that provides a place for debate and negotiations; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations faces the greatest financial crisis in its history as both the United States and the Soviet

Union have failed to pay their full dues, in violation of the United Nations Charter; and

WHEREAS, the Forty-first General Assembly of the United Nations designed reforms to streamline the United Nations' operations and give major funders more voice in the budget-making process in an effort to restore funding by the United States; and

WHEREAS, although the United States benefits along with all people throughout the world in a more stable, just world, our nation is also the largest single beneficiary of the United Nations in financial terms because of the \$800 million that the United Nations community spends annually in the New York City area; (5) and

WHEREAS, the United States Government has failed to ratify the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Law of the Sea; has rejected the rule of the International Court of Justice; and has violated its treaty obligations for financial support of the United Nations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod reaffirms its support of the United Nations and requests the Office of the President to communicate to the President of the U.S. and to the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations the Synod's commitment to the future of the United Nations and to its reform, to the financial support of the United Nations according to our fair share, and to the appointment of committed, globally-knowledgeable leaders to represent the United States in the United Nations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod calls upon the United Church Board for World Ministries and the Office for Church in Society to use their accreditation as official Non-Governmental Organizations related to the United Nations to develop and disseminate information about the work of the United Nations and its organizations to the members of the United Church of Christ; and

Calls upon the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society to educate UCC members about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to advocate for its ratification and to collaborate with the Office for Church in Society and the United Church Board for World Ministries in working to strengthen the United Nations commitment to programs to improve the lives of women in this society and around the world; and

Calls upon the Office for Church in Society to monitor and advocate for U.S. legislation relating to support of the United Nations and to work through its action network to build the political will of U.S. policy makers to strengthen the United Nations for the building of a just peace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod encourages members and structures of the United Church of Christ, including congregations, associations, and conferences, to write to their Representatives and Senators urging support of the United Nations, encouraging payment by the United States of its fair dues, resisting further cuts in contributions and supporting reforms that will strengthen it and urging ratification of all the Human Rights Covenants, Conventions, and Protocols passed by the United Nations, as well as the Law of the Sea and renewed acceptance of the rule of the International Court of Justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod encourages members of the United Church of Christ to become more knowledgeable about the United Nations and to pray for the future of the United Nations and for the com-

mitment of all member nations to strengthen the organization to work more effectively for the achievement of justice and peace for all people.

Financial Implications and Implementation

Cost is limited to that of communicating with various U.S. governmental bodies by the Office of the President of the UCC. Implementation is contingent upon availability of funds and other resources.

Footnotes:

1. A Just Peace Church, edited by Susan Thistlethwaite; produced by the Office for Church in Society, United Church Press, New York, 1986, P. 38.
2. General Synod Twelve: Pronouncement and Proposal for Action: Human Rights.
3. General Synod Fifteen: Pronouncement and Proposal for Action: Affirming the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church.
4. "United Nations Reform Vote Improves Prospect of Restored US Funding," Linda Feldman, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Monday, December 22, 1986, P.7.
5. "U.S. Doesn't Bear Excessive Share of U.N. Costs," Kishore Mahbubani, *The Wall Street Journal*, Thursday, October 30, 1986.

14. ACHIEVING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE UNDER THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

Rev. Dorsch further moved on behalf of Committee 20, the Resolution "Achieving Social and Economic Justice Under The Lordship of Jesus Christ."

87-GS-53 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod takes no action on the Resolution "Achieving Social and Economic Justice Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

15. GREETINGS TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The Moderator called on Rev. Avery Post, who noted that there were over 7,000 in attendance at worship that morning.

Mr. Post then spoke to the need to address in a spirit of unity and healing, the Congregational Christian churches which were meeting during this General Synod and moved the following Resolution of Greeting to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches,

87-GS-54 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, sends its warmest greetings to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches now in session in Chicago, Illinois. We celebrate with thanksgiving the common commitment of our churches to Jesus Christ. We pray for the fruitfulness of your meeting, and extend gratitude for the memories and hopes that bind us.

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECESS

The Moderator recognized Rev. Carol Joyce Brun for announcements which included a "Resolution" from Mr. Joseph Mills of the Local Arrangements Committee,

WHEREAS, the cooks had prepared 5,000 buckeye candies, and 4,999 had been consumed by General Synod Sixteen participants.

THEREFORE, The Local Arrangements Committee was pleased to present the very last one to President Avery Post.

The candy buckeye was instantly consumed.

17. WORSHIP

The Sixteenth General Synod recessed for worship in the Music Hall at 9:30 p.m. The thirty-two member African Methodist Episcopal Swaziland Choir delivered the evening message in song. The choir attended General Synod at the conclusion of its seven-week tour of the United States as part of the 40th anniversary of Church World Service.

MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 29

1. WORSHIP

The morning worship took place in the Music Hall at 8:00 a.m. The meditation was led by Rev. William Johnson, Judson Memorial UCC, New York City.

2. CALL TO ORDER

The Moderator, Mr. Kenneth P. Stewart, called the Sixteenth General Synod to order at 8:40 a.m.

3. BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS

The Moderator introduced Rev. Joseph Taylor, who led the Synod in Biblical Reflections.

4. ELECTIONS

The Moderator called on Mr. Norman Van Klompenburg, chairperson of the Business Committee. Mr. Van Klompenburg described the work of the Nomination and Elections Committee of the Business Committee and thanked its members.

He introduced Rev. Barbara Kershner Daniel, who introduced

the members of the committee: Rev. Elizabeth Hoblin Endicott, Mr. Antoine Crenshaw, Mr. Philip Kavalier, and Ms. Juanita Helphrey. Ms. Kershner Daniel explained the procedure and moved the following action, which passed.

87-GS-55 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod directs the Secretary to cast one vote, unanimously electing all the nominees for uncontested offices and boards as presented to the General Synod in the report of the General Synod Nominating Committee.

Rev. Carol Joyce Brun informed the delegates that she had cast a unanimous vote electing all the nominees of the Nominating Committee for uncontested offices and boards of directors.

In light of her involvement in the election, Ms. Brun asked Rev. Barbara Kershner Daniel of the Nomination and Election Committee to handle the balloting. Ms. Kershner Daniel referred the delegates to Standing Rule 35, page 22, of the General Synod Handbook.

The election procedure was followed, and while ballots were being collected, there was a song.