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to UCC church partners in Central America and the Central America presidents;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod calls upon the President of the United States and Congress to respect the Central America peace accord and to actively support the various procedures such as the cease-fire, and cessation of aid to irregular forces, i.e. the Contras, non-use of territory to attack other states and financial support for refugees and displaced persons when the peace accord conditions are met, and to grant to the CONTADORA countries the right to self-determination, reconstruction, and their own destiny;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod calls upon the Office for Church in Society and United Church Board for World Ministries to provide educational and advocacy resources on the peace process, and upon United Church of Christ congregations to support actively the Central America peace accord process.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

15. RESOLUTION "AN APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE TO TROUBLED ARMENIA"

On behalf of the Committee Mr. Riddoch moved that the 17th General Synod adopt the Resolution "An Appeal For Assistance To Troubled Armenia."

89-GS-108 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "An Appeal For Assistance To Troubled Armenia."

AN APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE TO TROUBLED ARMENIA

Summary

Recognizing that Armenia had a devastating earthquake which caused enormous loss of life and destroyed large numbers of apartments and dwellings; recognizing that more than 500,000 persons are now homeless as a result, a figure equivalent to 15% of the total population of Armenia; recognizing further, the persecution of Armenians of mountainous Karabagh (historic ancestral region known as Artzakh) suffered at the hands of Muslim Azerbaijanis (Azeris) in consequence of the peaceful request made to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia (USSR) for the annexation of Karabagh to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia; and recognizing further the fact that over 50,000, and according to other figures, 200,000 Armenians ended up as refugees: this resolution calls for two actions, namely, (1) to rally our UCC churches to raise generous funds to assist in the rebuilding of Armenian lives and their habitations; and (2) to call upon the World Council of Churches, our President and the U.S. Government and its departments to request of Mikhail Gorbachev to correct an injustice done under Stalin when Armenian Karabagh with an 80% Armenian population was made part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan.

Background

In February, 1987 peaceful demonstrations were held in the capital city of Armenia, Yerevan, asking the USSR Central Committee to transfer Karabagh from the Azerbaijan Republic to the Armenian Republic. The request was made on the grounds that Karabagh (Artzakh for Armenians) was the ancestral home of Armenians and that Stalin had unjustly and discriminatorily assigned the region to the Azerbaijan Republic. The Armenians wanted Mikhail Gorbachev to rectify the

injustice done in the past chiefly to pacify Turkey as Azerbaijanis (Azeris) are Moslem. Thousands of Azeris took to the streets in Sumgait, a seaport city on the Caspian Sea with a substantial Armenian population, and murdered hundreds of Armenians. Official Soviet communiques put the killings at 31. Protests have continued in Sumgait and Baku, another city on the Caspian with an Armenian population of 300,000. Similar protests are being made in other towns in Azerbaijan. Some towns have been totally emptied of their Armenian inhabitants. There have been rapes, homes have been attacked with some having been set on fire, and a good many children are missing. The terrorist activities have forced deportations as a result of fear and the number of deportees have been estimated from 50,000 to 200,000.

As if the ethnic strife and the hurts were not sufficient troubles, a devastating earthquake shook the cities and towns of northeastern Armenia bordering Turkey on Wednesday, December 7, 1988 precisely at 11:41 on a work day morning. An entire town, Spitak, ceased to exist, thousands of school children were buried alive, and the cities of Leninakan and Kirovakan and cities and towns all across northwestern Armenia were flattened with cries of many survivors, "Somewhere here is my brother." The grief is terrible, the agony of Armenia deep.

The estimated loss of life is placed at approximately 35,000 persons. Rebuilding will run into a score of billions. With the consumer and construction good shortages, the agony will be of long duration.

The population of Armenia is put at 3.4 million, occupying 11,500 square miles. An ancient people dating to 1000 B.C., their country was invaded by many warrior people and it became an important buffer state between the Romans and the Persians. In the 16th century most of the country was occupied by the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Following the Turkish defeat in World War I, Armenia achieved independence but in 1920 the Soviet Union absorbed much of its territory and Armenia became a Socialist Soviet Republic.

Armenia became the first State to adopt Christianity as a national religion. It held its Christian faithfulness under great tribulation withstanding Zoroastrian and Muslim pressures unto the shedding of blood. Always open to Christian truths, many Armenians embraced the preaching and teaching of missionaries during the great worldwide missionary movements of the 19th century. The missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (now the United Church Board for World Ministries) were received well and a mini reformation, the Armenian Evangelical Movement, took hold strongly in Turkey only to be felled as a result of the Turkish atrocities of 1915-1918 against the Armenians. The Armenian Evangelical Movement has prayed for an open door in Godless Soviet Armenia so it can do its mission and energize and inspire, once again, the Christian spirit of the nation.

The Theological Background

The prophets of the Old Testament throughout have called for social justice, freedom of conscience and righteousness. These are the fundamental challenges and the most important needs of humanity. We are called to be obedient to the call. "What doth the Lord require of thee?" Micah inquires, "but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8) Amos, rejected solemn assemblies, burnt offerings and songs as a way to God and calls for "judgment to run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

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(Amos 5:24). Jesus confirms Isaiah's prophecy on the mission of God ". . . he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18.

Is it possible that God is inviting us to win Armenia to the Lord through this open door for service, for the USSR has, in an unusual pronouncement, accepted U.S. assistance? It is a unique opportunity to show the love of God in Christ by our sharing, caring and by being fair by siding with the just cause of Armenians? God always speaks. Sometimes by a small still voice and other times through the storm and the shaking of the earth. Hearts are now receptive!

Text of the Resolution

WHEREAS, the Armenians have stood for Christ beginning in 301 A.D. through trials and tribulations;

WHEREAS, Armenians in Armenia proper have not been able to publicly propagate their Christian faith since 1920 due to USSR's arbitrary constitutional barriers;

WHEREAS, religion is making a comeback in USSR as a result of Mikhail Gorbachev's "glasnost" and "perestroika" principles;

WHEREAS, as a result of a devastating earthquake, the Armenians have suffered a great tragedy with the loss of 25,000 to 50,000 lives and 500,000 lives have been left homeless and disabled;

WHEREAS, a just and reasonable request by Armenia to have historical Armenian Karabagh (Artzakh) annexed to the Soviet Armenian Republic, has caused political strife and 50,000 to 200,000 Armenians have been forced to homelessness having to abandon home and assets to escape threats of all kinds;

WHEREAS, charitable and political assistance at this juncture of Armenian life in the homeland is a crucial one for human kindness and religious possibilities;

WHEREAS, while a great outpouring of help and sympathy by a large number of nations in goods and services has been overwhelming, there remains a great responsibility and challenge upon the Christian Church for generous response;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ, calls upon all of its churches for enhanced support of the Armenian victims of the earthquake through directed gifts and One Great Hour of Sharing, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges the President of the United States, the State Department and Congress to use their influence upon the USSR to transfer historic Armenian Karabagh (Artzakh) to Armenia.

16. RESOLUTION "SUPPORT FOR THE REFORMED COLLEGIUM OF SAROSPATAK IN HUNGARY"

Mr. Riddoch moved that the 17th General Synod adopt the Resolution "Support For the Reformed Collegium of Sarospatak in Hungary."

89-GS-109 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Res-

olution "Support For the Reformed Collegium of Sarospatak in Hungary."

SUPPORT FOR THE REFORMED COLLEGIUM OF SAROSPATAK IN HUNGARY

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ claims the Reformed heritage as one of its essential theological roots;

WHEREAS, three million members of this Reformed heritage live as the children of God in Hungary and hundreds of thousands in Transcarpathia and in Czechoslovakia;

WHEREAS, the Reformed Collegium (high school and seminary) of Sarospatak from 1531 served the Reformed Church of the world over four centuries having close connections with Reformed institutions in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Scotland and the USA;

WHEREAS, this historic institution was taken away from the church in 1952, can be reestablished if there are financial means;

WHEREAS, the Hungarian Reformed Church cannot do this by its own strength, and

WHEREAS, our partner Reformed churches in the United States and Holland offered substantial financial support to this purpose.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ prayerfully and respectfully affirms our Reformed heritage by joining our Reformed brothers and sisters in prayer, moral support and refers to the United Church Board for World Ministries, to explore in partnership with the Reformed Church of Hungary, the issues and needs involved in reestablishing the mission of the Reformed Collegium of Sarospatak in Hungary.

17. RESOLUTION "JOIN WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES AGAINST INHUMANITIES OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IN THE REGION OF TRANSYLVANIA"

On behalf of Committee 16 Mr. Riddoch moved that the 17th General Synod adopt the Resolution "Join World Alliance of Reformed Churches Against Inhumanities of the Romanian People's Republic In The Region of Transylvania."

The Rev. Desmond Parrach (CA.SY.) moved to reword item 3 "to offer our prayers and seek ways to generate financial support for the 40,000 persecuted, dislocated and homeless Transylvania refugees, now in Hungary.

89-GS-110 VOTED: The 17th General Synod amends, "Join World Alliance of Reformed Churches Against Inhumanities of the Romanian People's Republic In The Region of Transylvania" to reword item #3 to read: "to offer our prayers and seek ways to generate financial support for the 40,000 persecuted, dislocated and homeless Transylvania refugees, now in Hungary."

89-GS-111 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Join World Alliance of Reformed Churches Against Inhumanities of the Romanian People's Republic In The Region of Transylvania."