

SUNDAY EVENING

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Moderator called on the Rev. Carol Joyce Brun, Secretary of the United Church of Christ, for announcements.

17. RECESS

The Moderator declared the 17th General Synod to be in recess until 8:00 p.m.

SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 2

1. CALL TO ORDER

Moderator Robert Sherard called the 17th General Synod to order at 8:00 p.m., expressing appreciation to the St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church of Dallas choir and organist, Mr. Richard Abrahamson who provided music and song as the delegates and visitors entered the arena.

2. INSTALLATION OF WILLIAM HULTEEN, JR. AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE FOR CHURCH LIFE AND LEADERSHIP

The Moderator opened with the words: "This evening we have the opportunity to participate in an important event in the life of our United Church of Christ: the installation of the Executive Director of the Office for Church Life and Leadership. I know that I speak on behalf of the whole Church and for all who are present tonight in expressing deep appreciation to the Rev. Reuben A. Sheares, II for his many years of superb leadership of this instrumentality and to the Rev. Thomas Tupper for his excellent leadership as the Acting Executive Director. This evening we shall install the Rev. William Hulteen in this important role."

Moderator Sherard and President Avery Post presided over the service of installation. The Rev. Sheldon Culver, Ms. Dorothy Lester, the Rev. Robert Ullman, and the Rev. Thomas Tupper, all from the Office for Church Life and Leadership participated along with the Rev. Thomas Dipko, Ohio Conference Minister. The entire staff of the Office for Church Life and Leadership sat on the platform.

The 17th General Synod applauded Mr. Hulteen with a standing ovation upon declaration of his installation.

3. EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR THE DELEGATES

Assistant Moderator Alida Millham recognized Mr. C. Dwayne Dolingener, II (ILL) who expressed concern about the sense of respect for the delegates by those officers of General Synod on the podium having the responsibility to assist the delegates in doing what they decide to do through the Synod process.

4. REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE ABOUT DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE FLOOR

Mr. Kiesel, Chairperson of the Business Committee, referred the delegates to the General Synod Handbook, page 24, rule 43, regarding demonstrations on the floor of the Synod during any business meetings. He announced that the Business Committee had delegated to the Moderator the authority to determine legitimate expressions of appreciation versus demonstrations.

5. AGENDA COMMITTEE

The Moderator introduced Ms. Charlene Mason, Chairperson of the Agenda Committee. She explained that she would inform the Synod at various times of its progress on business items and announced the agenda for the session included the hearing of reports from Committee 18 and Committee Five.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE WEATHER

Secretary Brun assured the General Synod that the Synod staff would keep the delegates posted on developments in severe weather warnings.

7. RESOLUTION "NATIONAL SERVICE"

Ms. Millham called upon Mr. Jeff Kear (OHIO), Chairperson of Committee 18, to present the report on behalf of the Committee. Mr. Kear moved the adoption of the resolution "National Service" as found in the Advance Material II, page 119. With no discussion, it was

89-GS-40 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "National Service."

NATIONAL SERVICE

Theological and Biblical Basis

Since the earliest days of the church, believers have followed Christ into a life of service in word and deed (John 13:1-16). Paul and the other apostles appointed elders, deacons, and deaconesses to minister to human need (Acts 14:23, Philipians 1:1, Romans 16:1), and all who have followed Christ have been cognizant of his teaching that in ministering to those in need we are ministering to him.

The four denominations which formed the United Church of Christ have a long history of service in education, health care, social and prison ministries. Since the 1940's, many forms of voluntary service have been organized nationally, and the churches have overseen work efforts which involve thousands of church members. These programs have become major vehicles by which the United Church of Christ expresses its theological ideas in concrete, everyday situations.

Rationale

Proposals to institute programs of National Service for America's youth are now being offered by President Bush and by bills in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Legislative proposals would involve material rewards for national service — jobs for the unemployed, educational subsidies for the poor, money to be used as down payments on houses. Such proposals have theological, social, and public policy implications, and must be the center of vigorous debate both in the church and in society. That debate should raise important questions, such as:

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1. What is the philosophy underlying each proposal? Is the service voluntary or compulsory? Is it attractive to all or only to the poor?
2. What is the relationship of national service to military service?
3. What are the benefits? Is the proposal a way to recruit inexpensive public workers or is adequate compensation offered?
4. What may be the effect on voluntary service? How do the differing philosophies of each — one undertaken for religious or altruistic motives, the other for monetary gain — affect our youth and their view of society and service?

All these and other questions arise in response to the proposed legislation. The church must be an active participant in the coming debate, prepared to respond in an informed and thoughtful manner.

Text of Resolution

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ

calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to call together a study group to reflect carefully on the issue of national service and its implications for both church and public life, and

suggests that the group consist of representatives of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the United Church Board for World Ministries, the Office for Church in Society, the Coordinating Center for Women, the Commission for Racial Justice, the Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries, the Council for Higher Education, the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, and such other groups as may be helpful, and

asks the group to prepare and make available to the church a study document for the use of all Conferences, Associations, local churches, and other bodies of the church, and

requires that a full report on the study, including possible proposals for action, be submitted for the consideration of the 18th General Synod.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

8. RESOLUTION "NUCLEAR WEAPONS MATERIAL PLANT CLOSING"

Mr. Kear then directed the delegates to the distributed materials for the revised text of the Resolution "Nuclear Weapons Material Plant Closing." Stating the recommendation of Committee 18, Mr. Kear moved and after brief discussion, it was

89-GS-41 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Nuclear Weapons Material Plant Closing."

NUCLEAR WEAPONS MATERIAL PLANT CLOSING

Theological Rationale

God's action in Creation established a relationship of harmony among God, humanity, and the earth, within which human beings were to act as God's stewards, to treat creation and each other as God would treat them. From almost the begin-

ning humanity has rebelled against this sacred task, through sinful action declaring for itself the prerogative to make decisions according to its own standards of self-preoccupation, instead of God's shalom. Historically, such actions have been shown to be short-sighted and to lead to suffering and death. Personal indulgence, wars and environmental carelessness are evidence of this disregard for God's shalom standards: love, wholeness, peace, justice, etc.

This development of nuclear weapons has many consequences which are argued in both positive and negative ways. However, two clearly disastrous results of their development have been the escalating arms race and the enormous stores of contaminating nuclear waste that have not been, and cannot at this time be, disposed of in ways ensuring the safety of present or future generations. The latter is especially and unequivocally in violation of God's biblical intent that humanity should choose the ways of life and not death, so that we and our children may live (Deut. 30:29). It is in violation of a genuine stewardship that cares for the earth and its environment, the context for healthy human life and relationships. As stated in the 1988 Illinois Conference resolution on Environmental Stewardship (quoting Douglas Meeks, in "God and Land," Agriculture and Human Value, Fall, 1985, p. 16):

Through Christ we have been promised redemption. Romans 8:19-23 expresses the belief. "There is no such thing as a redemption of the earth without redemption of human beings, but neither is there a redemption of human beings without the redemption of the earth." This leads us to recognize our crucial relationship to God's creation. God's command to humanity is the responsibility to keep the creative process alive, not the destruction of the process, to live in the image of God as creator for the good of the whole creation, both now and into the future.

The situation of nuclear waste we have generated is an instance in which we have, in the words of the 15th General Synod Just Peace Pronouncement "mortgaged our future" for the sake of short term goals. Furthermore, as noted in past resolutions and theological statements of the Illinois Conference, the continued build up and development of new nuclear weapons carries the threat of global destruction. It is incumbent upon Christians to seek judiciously, but vigorously and without delay, for ways in which to be faithful to God's intent for human stewardship of earth and its resources. The ending of production of new nuclear weapons' fissionable materials, is a step toward controlling human carelessness with respect to the earth as a wholesome environment, and with respect to humanity's own survival. Our own and our children's future are surely at stake.

Background Information

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has been under fire for mismanagement at several of its facilities involved with the production of nuclear weapons. Unsafe working conditions, radioactive contamination, cover-up of past accidents, (1) and unsafe reactor operation are some of the accusations (2) leveled at DOE management by Congress, the press and an aroused public.

Part of the problem stems from the high level of secrecy surrounding the operation of DOE facilities. Another factor is that safety has generally been secondary to production; now that reactors are worn out (3) from several decades of non-stop nuclear activity, they are increasingly radioactive and dangerous to operate. Moreover, several of the major reactors are of