

SUNDAY EVENING

During discussion Mr. Zoltan Szucs (CA.SY) proposed an amendment to "add - after to the President of the United States - to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev." During further discussion, a friendly amendment offered by Mr. Mike Patterson (ILL) to insert the name of President George Bush was accepted by the Assistant Moderator.

Discussion was closed and the adoption of the amendment was moved. It was

89-GS-43 VOTED: The 17th General Synod amends the Resolution by adding the phrase and "to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev" following "to President George Bush."

After a brief continued discussion, the main motion was acted upon.

89-GS-44 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "A Call to the General Synod to Work Toward the Goal of Eliminating Short-Range Nuclear Forces in Europe."

A CALL TO THE GENERAL SYNOD TO WORK TOWARD THE GOAL OF ELIMINATING SHORT-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES IN EUROPE

Our Peace Partner, Uwe Dittmer, from the German Democratic Republic has alerted members of the Northern Association of Penn Central Conference to the increasing fear of our brothers and sisters in East and West Germany and West Berlin about the announced intention of the United States to increase short-range missile capability. Therefore, we urge adoption of this resolution, which is based on Biblical teachings, the United Church of Christ's stand as a Just Peace Church, and its full communion with the Evangelical Church of the Union in East and West Germany. It is given special timeliness by the opening of the Conventional Forces in Europe Talks.

WHEREAS, we live in a world which for forty years has known a kind of peace through fear, among nations which could destroy each other at any time;

We live in a world which continues to refine, test, and deploy nuclear weapons daily, and they now number approximately 50,000;

AND WHEREAS, as Christians we proclaim the way of peace that does not depend on fear. We pray for peace that nourishes trust and is nourished by trust;

We affirm dialogue and negotiation, not threat and confrontation, as the way of peacemaking and the building of understanding;

We affirm the reduction of all types of armaments, both nuclear and conventional, as a way of achieving peace and reducing tension;

BE IT, THEREFORE, RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ supports serious, responsible negotiation as the way to approach specific areas of international concern and, in particular, supports immediate negotiation toward the goal of eliminating short-range nuclear missiles and tactical nuclear weapons and achieving a balance of conventional forces in Europe, and

FURTHER, the 17th General Synod directs the President of the United Church of Christ to deliver this resolution to President George Bush of the United States and members of Congress and to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union in an appropriate and effective manner and to bring it for affirmation to the National Council of Churches, thus giving a unified voice to the church's widely shared vision of a way to peace.

11. RESOLUTION "DE-ESCALATION OF FIRST STRIKE ARMS RACE"

On behalf of Committee 18, Mr. Kear moved the adoption of the Resolution "De-Escalation of First Strike Arms Race." Without any discussion on the motion, it was

89-GS-45 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "De-Escalation of First Strike Arms Race."

DE-ESCALATION OF FIRST STRIKE ARMS RACE

Background

Since 1945 the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. have been locked in an escalating nuclear arms race. This arms race has seen the development of: the A-Bomb, the H-Bomb, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs) for missiles, Submarine Launch Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), Maneuverable Re-entry Vehicles (MARV) for missiles, and ever-increasing quantities of strategic nuclear weapons.

Today the nuclear arms race continues with the development and deployment of highly accurate ICBMs to destroy target-hardened missile silos, underwater killer submarines, earth-penetrating nuclear warheads, anti-satellite weapons, anti-missile missiles, and hardened communications systems.

These last developments portend a greatly increased risk for the human race in the near future. Taken together they add up to "unanswerable, disarming, first-strike capabilities."

Ron Aldridge, a former missile engineer at Lockheed Missile and Space Corporation, who quit his job working on the Trident Missile after it became apparent to him that it could be used for a disarming first-strike, has stated that there are five elements necessary for a disarming first-strike. These are:

1. Accurate ICBMs or SLBMs such as the MX Missile and the Trident Missile. These would destroy land-based ICBMs. Part of these systems would be the new NAVSTAR Navigation Satellites.
2. Killer submarines such as the Los Angeles Class subs and the new Seawolf.
3. Anti-satellite weapons. These would eliminate the target countries' ability to detect a first-strike.
4. Anti-missile weapons. These would destroy the ICBMs that escape the first-strike.
5. A Communications, Command, Control, and Intelligence (C3I) system that would co-ordinate the above and send the "fire" signal to the four elements above.

The U.S. Military-Industrial Complex is either deploying or developing all five elements of a disarming first-strike capability. Sometime in the 1990's the U.S.A. will have deployed all five elements achieving a true disarming first-strike posture.

SUNDAY EVENING

There is evidence that in spite of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty, the U.S.S.R. is attempting to catch up to the U.S. in these developments.

Aside from the tremendous destructive power of these systems the danger lies in the possibility that one side may attempt to pre-empt the other side's first-strike capability and consciously start a nuclear war. The race toward first-strike capability is thus destabilizing, bringing us into an era where nuclear war could start by human decision rather than by accident. But most importantly for us American Christians, the building of a first-strike capability raises profound moral questions.

What do our faith and religious beliefs instruct us concerning these profound questions?

When the Pharisee asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment, and a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments depend all the law and prophets." (Matthew 22:36-40)

If we love God, can we be a part of the destruction of God's creation? If we love our neighbors, can we participate in their murder?

To cooperate in the building of a first-strike capability is one of the greatest forms of alienation from our Lord, our fellow creatures and from ourselves. Our Lord calls us to help our neighbors, not destroy them. The money and resources that go into building a first-strike capability will make us the goats of the Lord, "for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

Can we say we needed the resources of money and time to build more false gods and idols instead of feeding the hungry?

We need to speak out clearly and effectively to stop the unprecedented evil of this latest development in the arms race before it destroys not only the earth, but also our faith.

Text of Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the governments of the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and all other countries who have or are developing first-strike capabilities to negotiate and sign treaties banning the production and deployment of disarming first-strike weapons systems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod calls on all countries to stop the production and deployment of these systems and to withdraw and destroy disarming first-strike systems that have already been deployed. These treaties must contain safeguards such as on-site verification and inspection provisions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod calls on the President of the United Church of Christ to send this resolution to the President of the United States of America, the General Secretary of the U.S.S.R. and the leaders of other nations who are developing first-strike systems. It should also be sent to our churches with encouragement to them to dis-

cuss this issue and to communicate with congress people about this issue.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

12. PRIORITIES VOTING RESULTS

Secretary Brun announced that the new priorities would be: 1) Evangelism and Membership Growth; 2) The Integrity of Creation, Justice and Peace, and 3) Christian Education. The voting results on United Church of Christ priorities are as follows:

Evangelism and Membership Growth 612
Education 369
Elderly 85
The Integrity of Creation, Justice and Peace 602
Local Church 148
Spiritual Renewal 196

13. SPEAK OUT

The Moderator led the Speak Out with the assistance of the coordinator, the Rev. Richard Sparrow. She noted the time of the next Speak Out. The Speak Out was a time for one minute statements of concern on items not on the agenda of the General Synod. It included the following topics:

Four delegates praised the United Church of Christ, especially the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, for work and resources regarding AIDS. Two delegates read from a memorial listing of those suffering or who died victims to AIDS;

A petition was made on behalf of public witness to the right to privacy;

The Pastors for Peace Caravan to Nicaragua was announced and interested parties invited to participate;

The American Disabilities Act was lifted up as the most important Civil Rights legislation on behalf of people with disabilities. Delegates were encouraged to support its passage by writing to their legislators, and

A call was made to the Synod to respond to the new underground of parents of abused children and to actions remedying this injustice.

14. PRONOUNCEMENT "CHURCH AND GENETIC ENGINEERING"

Assistant Moderator Alida Millham recognized Ms. Diane Darling, Chairperson of Committee Five to present the recommended actions of Committee Five. Ms. Darling directed the delegates to the green document in the Advance Materials and noted the phrase "without undermining the economic viability of the family farm" was added to the printed text in section IV., paragraph 6. She then moved the adoption of the Statement of Christian Conviction in the Pronouncement "Church and Genetic Engineering."

Ms. Darling spoke to the motion expressing the recommendation of the committee for its vote. When the question was called, the Assistant Moderator reminded the delegates that a two-thirds majority vote was required for approval and it was

89-GS-46 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Pronouncement "Church and Genetic Engineering."