

MONDAY AFTERNOON

properly. It also has to be updated from time to time otherwise it is certainly useless, and finally it has to be accessible. These elements all apply to our UCC archival treasures as well and we indeed are very, very grateful that the personnel for accomplishing these goals has been devoted and committed through many, many years.

“We have them with us today, Ms. Florence Bricker who for the past 18 years has served in our UCC Archives in Lancaster, for ten years as an assistant to her husband and for the last eight years as an archivist. I’ve asked her to come forward because I think you would want to meet the person who has preserved our national treasure, our UCC treasure the archives, with her leadership and her devotion and her commitment these past eight years. Florence would you come forward? It’s no easy task to preserve and protect a treasure, as most of us know, Florence has done it more for love than for money, that we know too because the Historical Council has had very little in the way of funds, but a tremendous treasure in the way of commitment on the part of Florence and other archivists throughout the land who’ve committed themselves to this work. So on this day we do indeed thank her because she has finally decided that there are some other things in the world to do besides take care of archival treasures and we will be enjoying her help from somewhat more of a distance.

“The personnel in all of the archives do their work very carefully and with a great deal of devotion and we’re very, very grateful for them.

“We’re thankful this day that if you looked in your calendar for the Board for Homeland Ministries, your prayer calendar, you will see that the archives of the United Church of Christ are designated to receive your prayers for support and we applaud that because indeed support is very, very important if our treasures are to be kept as we know they must be.

“In that regard I must say also, however, that we are most grateful to you for having passed or should I say accepted the budget for 1990 and 1991 because it includes for the first time a line item for UCC archives so that beginning next year we should have a professionally trained archivist in the central archives to lead and give the strong guidance that is necessary for our archives to go into the future. We want our children a hundred years from now, our grandchildren, to be able to check on what we did here and hear our life story. That will be with this new possibility of a professionally trained archivist full-time and with the additional help that will be there.

“Knowing our heritage means that we do indeed want to celebrate it and celebration is the other part of our work. This year the Historical Council is celebrating or lifting up for your particular consideration four significant anniversaries. The first is the printing of the first American Bible which was printed in Massachusetts in 1663 in the Algonquian language. It was indeed a tremendous act of devotion and it was for a people who were very gracious in receiving the word of God in their own language.

“We’re also celebrating this year in a special way, the celebration that was mentioned so beautifully by the Board for Homeland Ministries in their Amistad Event report yesterday. Because the Amistad Event reminds us again that among our forebearers were those who established the first anti-slavery society in America in 1840. Next year we will be celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of the Evangelical Synod which is one of our four antecedent denominations and

I might add quickly that Evangelical in that case means as it does come from the root word *evangel* — one who brings good news and it is a part of our UCC heritage.

“And finally this year we’re celebrating a very special and unique anniversary, the 100th Anniversary of the Deaconess Sisterhood in the United Church of Christ antecedent denomination, Evangelical Synod. This is a very, very unusual anniversary, and we call attention to it because the Deaconess Sisters in their work go back as far as the beginning of the church.

“The Deaconess work began in the United Church of Christ just 100 years ago when Sister Katherine Hawk was consecrated in St. Louis, Missouri, and began a service of sisterhood, a work that included more than 500 young women who were trained to give loving service to others in the spirit of diaconal. More than 500 of those women were consecrated to full time christian service, many of them lifetime christian service. They took the pledge of obedience, willingness and faithfulness and in that regard lifted up for all of us who enter the ministry of the loving service in the church at whatever level, a very inspiring example. The impact of the work of the Deaconess Sister was felt in every level of the church and it is for that reason that we lift them up especially today. They served in mission fields, both foreign and home, they served in local church congregations, in parishes, they served in schools of higher education and they served in every description of health and human service ministries institutions.

“There are today thirteen Deaconess Sisters living in retirement in the United States and we are very fortunate to have with us today Sister Freida Ziegler, the Executive Deaconess of the St. Louis sisterhood which was the primary training place and primary home of the Deaconess Sisters, and Sister Elizabeth Lotts who are with us to represent the more than 500 women who gave this service to the church and who do today represent the thirteen Deaconess Sisters who still live in retirement, eleven in St. Louis, one in Theobode, Minnesota and one in Marshall Town, Iowa. It is an inspiration to all of us who are in the ministry of loving service to have these servants of the church with us and to be able to honor them. Because their service has been so unique and covers every part of the work of the church, the Historical Council has prepared and submitted a resolution honoring the Deaconess Sisters for their gift to the church and in that way lifting up again the opportunity for all of us to look at our service as well.

“Ruth Evans of the Executive Council will present the resolution of the Historical Council honoring the Deaconess Sisters. That resolution, I might suggest, has been affirmed by the Coordinating Center for Women, by the Missouri Conference, by the Illinois South Conference, by the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries and the Council for Health and Welfare Services. We give thanks for all of those who have been a part of our heritage and we know that you want to help us celebrate these significant, special anniversaries today - so will you - as I turn once again to the Deaconess Sisters, applaud and tell them how much you appreciate their part of the work in the church.”

16. RESOLUTION “HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEACONESS SISTERHOOD”

Ms. Ruth Evans, Vice Chairperson of the Executive Council

MONDAY AFTERNOON

moved adoption of the Resolution "Honoring the 100th Anniversary of the Deaconess Sisterhood."

Ms. Evans expressed support of the Executive Council on behalf of all the members of the United Church of Christ.

The vote was taken by a standing ovation from the delegates to honor and show appreciation to the Sisterhood on its 100th Anniversary.

89-GS-60 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Honoring the 100th Anniversary of the Deaconess Sisterhood."

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEACONESS SISTERHOOD

WHEREAS, we are called to a ministry of loving service toward others in the name of Jesus Christ, and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a heritage of compassionate care for those in need and of training for the care-givers, a ministry particularly embodied in the Deaconess Sisterhood, and

WHEREAS, 1989 is the 100th Anniversary of the consecration of the first Deaconess Sisters with the founding of the Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, whose members belonged to the Evangelical Synod of North America, one of the antecedent denominations of the United Church of Christ, and

WHEREAS, hundreds of Deaconess Sisters were consecrated and gave outstanding leadership as pioneer professional women of the church in hospitals, in schools of nursing and x-ray technology; in community based social service programs; in homes for children, the aged and the developmentally disabled; as parish assistants in congregations, and as missionaries in India, Honduras and Ecuador, and

WHEREAS, sixteen Deaconess Sisters now continue their witness of consecrated service in retirement, and

WHEREAS, The Historical Council gratefully acknowledges the legacy of the Deaconess Sisters whose gifts and grace have abundantly enriched the life of the whole church;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod honors and expresses appreciation to the Deaconess Sisters on this their 100th Anniversary.

17. REPORT OF COMMITTEE 22

Assistant Moderator David Gerth introduced the Rev. Barry Whitely, Chairperson of Committee 22, who presented the report of the Committee, and called attention of the delegates to the Advance Materials, III page 5.

18. RESOLUTION "THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY"

On behalf of Committee 22, Mr. Whitely moved the adoption of the Resolution "The Relationship Between the United Church of Christ and the Muslim Community." Mr. Whitely spoke to the motion.

89-GS-61 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Reso-

lution "The Relationship Between the United Church of Christ and the Muslim Community."

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Theological Rationale

God calls the people of God to be agents of reconciliation, breaking down walls of division nationally, culturally, racially and religiously (Eph.2:11-18).

Historical Background

The advent of Christianity in human history in the first century A.D. was preceded by Judaism which shares a common heritage and a context for understanding the New Testament. Islam, the third of the Abrahamic and monotheistic religions, was developed in the 7th century of the Christian era. The Old and New Testament interpretations do not require reference to Islam for Christian understanding and thus Christians have traditionally understood little of the faith and beliefs of Muslims.

Therefore, despite worship of the same God, recognition of common prophets, a shared vision of God's justice, righteousness, compassion and presence in the world, Christians and Muslims have had a history of intolerance, vilification and hostility in word and action as exemplified in the characterization and writings of theologians and scholars beginning with initial contacts in the seventh century, in wars often explained as religiously stereotyping common in the present.

Further, with the presence of growing Muslim populations and communities in the United States, American Christians have the opportunity to broaden their experience, revise attitudes and enrich theological perspectives of their faith in context of Islam and the witness of Muslims.

Summary

Faced with the recognition that history extends forward as well as backwards from the crucifixion (in the words of Pilgrim's pastor, John Robinson, "God has yet more truth and light to break forth from His word") and that Christians have often ignored and been openly hostile to the revelation of God to Muslims, we ask for open hearts and minds as we as Christians learn about and support Muslims in their faithfulness in affirming the same God and our common prophets, as we discover in Islam a perspective on our beliefs and traditions and we rejoice in sharing with Muslims a hope in the principle of justice and righteousness and a belief in the peace of submission to God.

Text of the Resolution

WHEREAS, the God we worship is the God of all creation, and

WHEREAS, we recognize that we share a common tradition of revelation through God's prophets as told in sacred scriptures, and a common belief in the compassion, justice, authority and presence of God in human life and society, and

WHEREAS, there exists a lack of understanding in our society about the Muslim community and its religion, and

WHEREAS, injustice and intolerance exist because of this lack of understanding;