

MONDAY AFTERNOON

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages members of the United Church of Christ to seek greater understanding about Islam in the society as a whole.

FURTHER, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the Synod to support this resolution, and

1. Calls upon the Office for Church in Society, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the United Church Board for World Ministries to give the highest reasonable support to the work of the Office of Christian-Muslim Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and to urge the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. to increase its emphasis on the work of that office, and
2. Calls upon the subject instrumentalities to coordinate with other denominations and/or other groups who are presently engaged in dialogue with the Muslim community, and
3. Calls upon the subject instrumentalities to identify educational resources for use in local churches to increase understanding of the Muslim community and to foster open dialogue, and
4. Calls upon all local congregations and regional judicatories of the United Church of Christ to actively engage in dialogue with the Muslim community in order to establish relationships of trust and cooperation and to participate in joint witness against all injustice in our local communities and in the world.

19. RESOLUTION "EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH THE CHINESE PEOPLE"

On behalf of Committee 22, Mr. Whitely moved the adoption of the Resolution "Expressing Solidarity with the Chinese People." Mr. Whitely spoke to the motion.

The Moderator and the Chairperson of Committee 22, Mr. Whitely, accepted as a friendly amendment from the Rev. Charles C. Buck, Northern California Conference, the following changes. Page 8, part III of committee reports . . . third to last paragraph, . . . 3rd line . . . strike . . . "reexamine" and replace with "to review" at the end of the fourth line strike "drop" and replace with "to consider suspension of."

89-GS-62 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Expressing Solidarity with the Chinese People."

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH THE CHINESE PEOPLE

Theological Statement

What does God require of us as God's followers? We believe God calls on us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). But how can we when we hear of innocent Chinese people being slaughtered and killed by an armed military, being executed for a dream that seeks to improve their country's government. Do we remain silent, and allow the atrocities to continue or do we walk in the ways of God as Moses said, "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of God which I command you this day, by loving God, walking in God's ways, and keeping God's commandments and God's statutes and God's ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and God will bless you. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land . . . I call heaven and earth

to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your descendants may live . . ." (Deut. 30:15-19)

Choosing life means standing up and opposing the forces which create death in the world. Choosing life means standing in solidarity with the people in China.

Background Statement

The United Church of Christ U.S.A. cherishes its 160 years of relationship with China through our mission involvement. Over the years, our missionaries have given us guidance and counsel, deriving their wisdom from the people of China. This relationship has resulted in a broadened and innovative concept of mission that takes into consideration the expectations of our ideologically different governments.

We rejoiced with the rest of the world when China's doors were re-opened enabling us to renew and strengthen our ties with Chinese people and churches. It was a time for celebration and sharing. We welcomed the Chinese scholars in our schools and their presence enriched us. Americans and others who visited China were awed and inspired by the successful harnessing of a billion people to a more productive and meaningful development. Thousands of people benefited from this face-to-face, heart-to-heart contact and exchange of views. Needless to say the government policy of allowing the Chinese to visit other places is one of the factors that gave birth to the democratic movement.

Church people have lived with and visited, taught and been taught by, touched and been touched by each other's church and culture. In this cross-cultural ministry we learned to listen and maintain a critical stance towards our own cultural presuppositions making way for new patterns of friendship, community and theology. We shared some ideas and differed on others. We were edified by these exchanges, attendance in the Chinese churches doubled. In any interaction some negative and undesirable habits can also be picked up. Some of these influences might even undermine the progress that China's leaders have worked for and won. Yet, we hope, that despite the mistakes and shortcomings, the experience has been one of joy, knowing that we are in solidarity with those who work and give their lives for justice.

Because we all are part of an interconnected web of life, we share the shock and anger of people all over the world at the spectacle of thousands of unarmed civilians killed in a crushing military crackdown on June 3, 1989. We are appalled by the totally unwarranted response of the government to student demonstrators who demanded democratic reform of the government and elimination of corruption in the government. We find the use of violence as a form of crowd control unacceptable especially when a dialogue would have placated the students. We especially mourn the loss of young lives, who are part of an ever-growing circle of people who are trying to make not only China, but the whole world, responsive to human needs. We are also concerned about the recent massive arrests of intellectuals and workers in the wake of the massacre.

Equally tragic is the outrageous cover-up that the government has launched, shamelessly denying the mass murders of its citizens and glorifying the barbaric action of the military. Instead of concentrating on solving the underlying economic, social and political problems, the leadership has focused on witch hunts and extensive persecution of the dissidents. The

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disruption of the social fabric of China is an ugly aftermath of the bloodbath, sister turning in a brother, neighbor spying on a neighbor will sow the seeds of suspicion and distrust and will greatly set back the country. To us in the West who take our freedom for granted, these latest martyrs reminded us of our moral responsibility to speak for those who don't have it.

As a member of the Christian family, we would like to add our voices of support for those who try to overcome their powerlessness and achieve equality, freedom and justice. We believe that governments can be strengthened by the participation of its entire citizenry. It is time to recognize and negotiate with the student leadership and support their aspiration of full enfranchisement of all Chinese citizens. The combination of wisdom and vision cannot fail, it can only make China once again, one of the pillars of modern civilization. We reaffirm the Chinese value of love and respect for the elderly and at the same time we acknowledge that youth is the symbol of peace and hope.

We call on the Chinese leaders to participate in the shaping of a new society. Explosive new ideas are often threatening and can break the foundations of old social forms, they are often inconvenient. They require rearrangement of power. In the past Chinese leaders have overcome a variety of obstacles in history and have shown grace and sensitivity and we are confident that responsible leaders will continue to play a major role in bringing about serious changes in China as well as the rest of the world. China is blessed with a rich human resource like so many lights that shine forth and enrich the whole humanity.

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a tradition of involvement in working for democracy, justice, liberty and peace;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ desires to exhibit its consistency in being in solidarity with oppressed people wherever they are;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ historically has had ties with members of the Body of Christ in China, especially, in recent years, through the China Christian Council;

WHEREAS, we have witnessed yearnings for freedom among many Chinese and we have further witnessed the appalling massacres and repression recently perpetrated upon unarmed Chinese students and other civilians;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its solidarity with the Chinese Christian Church and the people of China during this time of crisis and expresses its continued support of the China Christian Council in their witness;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all churches of the United Church of Christ to commit themselves to fervent prayer on behalf of the people of China, to pray that the Chinese leadership be more humane and engage in constructive dialogue with its people, and to send letters to the government of the United States and China appealing for an end to the killing, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges President Bush and the government of the United States to express in the strongest possible terms concern for China's utter disregard for human life,

to review its relationship with China, to stop all shipments of military equipment to China, to consider suspension of "favored nation" trade status from China, to protest these atrocities at the United Nations, to extend the visas of visiting Chinese students, to grant political asylum to dissidents who have sought refuge in the United States Embassy in Beijing, to grant political asylum to defecting Chinese diplomats;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ appeals to the government of China to act with more love and compassion toward its people, to end the repressive and suppressive acts against its people, to halt the execution of arrested protestors, and to begin dialogue with its people by calling an emergency session of the People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Council for the purpose of creating a free and just society for the common good;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to review their relationship with the Chinese government;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod directs the President of the United Church of Christ to direct this resolution to the appropriate instrumentalities for implementation.

20. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, INCLUDING REPORT ON THE UCBHM AND CRJ ON HISPANIC MINISTRIES IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Ms. Ruth Evans, Vice Chair of the Executive Council, presented the report on the progress of the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team, Advance Materials, II pages 33 - 37.

An interim report outlining the progress on each of the eight goals adopted by the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team was presented to each of the Executive Council meetings.

Ms. Evans introduced the Rev. Benjamin J. Chavis, Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice, who continued the report directing delegates to Advance Materials II, page 73. Mr. Chavis introduced the Rev. Nicolas Aguilar, chairperson of the Hispanic Council. Mr. Aguilar spoke in Spanish with an interpretation in English.

The report was received by a standing ovation. On stage were members of the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team including the Rev. C. Shelby Rooks, Executive Vice President of United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Rev. Benjamin J. Chavis, Executive Director of Commission for Racial Justice, the Rev. Celsa Coloma and the Rev. Alfonso Roman, co-chairs of the Hispanic Ministries Implementation Team.

21. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Rev. Carol Joyce Brun made announcements including the announcement of a brief candlelight vigil following conclusion of the evening plenary, in support of the issue of Freedom of Choice.

22. RECESS

The Moderator declared the 17th General Synod in recess until 7:00 p.m., Monday evening, July 2, when it will reconvene in this arena.