

7. RESOLUTION "THE MIDDLE EAST"

Assistant Moderator David Gerth introduced Ms. Susan Adams (MINN) of Committee Nine, who moved the adoption of the Resolution developed from that committee "The Middle East."

The Rev. Nariya Karjian (PC) moved to amend the Resolution.

89-GS-69 VOTED: The 17th General Synod amends the Resolution "The Middle East" by deleting after "independent State" the words "pledged to live in peace with Israel," in paragraph seven of the "Therefore, Be It Resolved" section.

89-GS-70 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "The Middle East," as amended.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Theological Rationale and Background

God calls the people of God to witness to justice and peace. Peace and justice go together; there is no justice without peace and no peace without justice.

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).

God calls the people of God to be a new creation, restoring the original creation and bringing to birth new ways of relating to one another that honor the image of God within us.

As a people of faith — whose Statement of Mission calls us "to hear and give voice to Creation's cry for justice and peace . . . to repent our silence and complicity with the forces of chaos and death . . . to join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation; to work for justice, healing and wholeness of life" — we recognize that working for peace is not optional but is fundamental to the faith of Muslims, Jews and Christians.

The 15th General Synod pronounced the United Church of Christ a Just Peace Church, grounded in a ministry of reconciliation. The United Church of Christ participates in the work of Churches for Middle East Peace and supports the work of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East.

Peace in the Middle East is essential for the future of Israel, for the Palestinian and Arab states, and for the whole world. Peace cannot be achieved by force. It can only be achieved by negotiations.

Text of the Resolution

WHEREAS, we are conscious of the immense suffering of the Jewish people throughout the ages and in modern time, and also of the great suffering of the Palestinian people, especially in recent times;

WHEREAS, Israel has a right to secure borders and peace with her neighbors as an expression of the Jewish people's right to self-determination;

WHEREAS, the Palestinian people have a right to sovereignty and self-determination, including the right to choose their own independent leadership;

WHEREAS, the time has certainly come to establish a just peace of mutual recognition and basic human rights on the part of both peoples;

WHEREAS, the Palestine National Council on November 15, 1988 declared its acceptance of a two state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, thus meeting the United States' conditions for a dialogue between the United States government and the P.L.O.;

WHEREAS, the United States government is a major economic and diplomatic force in the Middle East with obvious military implications, and

WHEREAS, there is ignorance of the facts and subtleties of the Middle East conflict due to the complexity of the issues;

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

1. urges the United Church Board for World Ministries and the Office for Church in Society to develop study materials and educational experiences that will help the church at every level learn "the things which make for peace" in Israel and Palestine;
2. calls upon the United Church Board for World Ministries and the Office for Church in Society to form a broad-based task force to prepare a pronouncement and proposal for action on peace in the Middle East to be brought before the Eighteenth General Synod;
3. requests members of the local churches of the United Church of Christ to join the U.S. Interreligious Committee on Peace in the Middle East;
4. calls upon the United States government to cooperate with the U.S.S.R. and other governments to eliminate further military aid and military intervention in the Middle East;
5. urges the United States government to continue its commitment to human rights for all people in both Israel and Palestine;
6. calls upon the United States government to broaden and deepen its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization;
7. calls upon the United States government to work with all parties to eliminate the violence and to declare support for the Palestinians' right of self-determination in an independent state, and
8. calls upon the United States government to promote negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations, for a just peace in the Middle East by all parties to the conflict. Each party shall determine its representatives without conditions set by any other party.

Financial Implications: Subject to availability of funds.

8. SPEAK OUT

The Moderator reminded people that the Speak Out was for anyone to make a one minute speech on any topic at which point their mike would be cut off. The topics mentioned included:

Mentioned that a former member Juanita Helphrey who is a member of CAIM will be serving the church as a Moderator and others who have worked with COREM were highlighted for their service to the church.

This is the 35th anniversary of the volunteer service program and the caravan program of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.