

menical partner in mission in the Middle East; and that this partnership reaffirms full consultation in our work in the Middle East between the Middle East Council of Churches and the United Church of Christ through its United Church Board for World Ministries specifically as we

1. support projects;
2. send and receive personnel;
3. lift up mutual areas of advocacy and concern for peace and justice in the Middle East;
4. share support for social, educational and theological work in both areas by exchanges of personnel within the limits of the financial and personal resources available to each partner.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

12. MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Rev. Avery D. Post introduced Mr. Gabriel Habib of the Middle East Council of Churches. He spoke of the Middle East Council of Churches as a major force of leadership and change. He called for us to walk with these people who are represented by Mr. Habib, and he presented Mr. Habib with a gift representing the partnership.

Mr. Habib then spoke to the delegates, thanking them for the reaffirmation that the ecumenical movement is a part of the United Church of Christ. He paid tribute to Mr. Post, the Rev. Scott Libbey and Mr. Dale Bishop. He also presented Mr. Post with a gift for the offices of the United Church of Christ.

13. PROPOSAL FOR ACTION "CHRISTIAN FAITH: ECONOMIC LIFE AND JUSTICE"

Moderator Sherard recognized Mr. John Englehardt, the Chairperson of Committee Two, to complete the actions from Monday evening. He moved the adoption of the Proposal for Action "Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice." There was no discussion and it was

89-GS-82 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Proposal for Action "Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice."

PROPOSAL FOR ACTION CHRISTIAN FAITH: ECONOMIC LIFE AND JUSTICE

I. Summary

This Proposal for Action affirms the United Church of Christ's commitment to be actively concerned with justice in our economic institutions and daily economic lives. It delineates the strategies and specific actions by which all parts of the United Church of Christ (individuals, local churches, instrumentalities, Conferences, Associations and seminaries) can work for economic justice as an imperative of our affirmation and understanding of the Christian faith.

II. Background Statement

This Proposal for Action is based upon the Pronouncement on Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice. The Pronouncement on Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice is a synthesis of two proposed Pronouncements submitted to the 17th General Synod. This Proposal has been developed in response to the request of the Fourteenth General Synod to engage in a study of economics and theology, and to recommend an appropriate response by the United Church of Christ.

The Pronouncement on Christian Faith and Economic Life has

been informed by feedback to the study paper, Christian Faith and Economic Life, provided by a diverse group of United Church of Christ members. The racial and ethnic members of the United Church of Christ felt that the issue of racism in the context of envisioning appropriate economic life from a Christian faith perspective needed further articulation; this was provided in the proposed Pronouncement on Christian Faith and Economic Justice. The 17th General Synod celebrates the active involvement of diverse groups in the discussion and formulation of proposed statements on the highly complex issues of Christian faith and economics presented in these two documents. Hence, the 17th General Synod celebrates the fulfillment of the United Church of Christ's motto: "that they may all be one."

The synthesized Pronouncement presents policy statements for the United Church of Christ on the issue of economic justice. This Proposal for Action, therefore, delineates a specific program of action strategies that will enable the United Church of Christ to become effectively involved at all levels in the struggle to ensure that economic justice is a reality for all of God's people in the United States and throughout the world.

This Proposal for Action further seeks to implement, through Christian social action, the programmatic thrust of the Pronouncement on Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice which seeks to remain faithful to the Statement of Faith and the Statement of Mission of the United Church of Christ.

III. Directional Statements and Goals

"God calls the worlds into being, creates persons in God's image, and sets before each one the ways of life and death . . ."

Our lives are derived from and lived in relationship with God. Our joy is to live in covenant with God and one another in God's household. Our delight is to use freely and faithfully the gifts of God who is Creator.

"In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, God has come to us . . ."

As people of the United Church of Christ, affirming our Statements of Faith and Mission, we seek within the Church Universal to participate in God's mission of economic justice for all of God's peoples and to follow the liberating way of the crucified and risen Christ . . .

We have confessed and stated our Christian conviction to struggle against all forms of economic injustice in this nation and throughout the world . . .

We establish as a goal the just transformation of the market economy into an economic system that fundamentally ensures economic, environmental, gender, racial and social justice and equality in the United States . . .

We further establish as a goal the just transformation of the global economy into an economic order that fundamentally ensures economic, environmental, gender, racial and social justice for all of God's peoples throughout the world . . .

To acknowledge God's reign is to shape on earth a community capable of the humanity exemplified in Jesus Christ and to take the suffering love of God made known in the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus as the model for a covenant household of justice and love. Thus, God's reign does not

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mean to flee the rigors of earth and seek some heavenly holiness, rather is sought through service, advocacy, and covenant.

Based on this confession and affirmation, the 17th General Synod calls for the adoption of the following actions.

IV. Call to Members

The 17th General Synod calls members to develop a faith-oriented understanding of economic life by engaging in:

1. Regular public worship, the center and foundation of Christian life, which renews our covenant with God to seek justice in God's household;
2. Prayer and spiritual discipline, to strengthen the struggle for economic justice, which includes tithing or giving to share resources with those who have less;
3. Theological reflection on the basic tenets of Christian Faith to understand better the imperatives of God's mission of economic justice;
4. Efforts to adopt a personal and family lifestyle consistent with life in the household of God and God's creation;
5. Personal contact with and listening to individuals of other races, classes, income levels, economic backgrounds, and nationalities;
6. Personal initiatives and voluntary service to promote economic justice, including involvement in the political process.

V. Call to Local Churches

The 17th General Synod calls local churches and their members to respond to the call for economic justice in their worship and education activities, financial decisions, and social outreach.

1. Worship and Spiritual Concerns: We call churches to:

- a. preach on God, giver of abundant creation, who is a lover of justice and creation, and on the justice-seeking ministry of Christ. This includes regularly incorporating visions of economic justice into public worship;
- b. encourage all members to pray, meditate, and engage in those spiritual disciplines that help relate Christian faith to economic life;
- c. minister to and support those members struggling to live just Christian lives in their work environments, as well as those members and families who are struggling to transform their personal lifestyles and commitments to be more consistent with seeking justice and wholeness in God's household;
- d. implement a program of Christian education that informs and challenges us to knowledge of economic injustices and to commitments to develop more just economic structures and systems.

2. Study and Education: We call churches to engage in study and educational programming that will enable their members better to reflect on and act for economic justice. We call churches to:

- a. establish study groups to engage in Bible study, and to utilize the foregoing Pronouncement, the study paper Christian Faith and Economic Life, and other documents that relate Christian faith to economic life and the economy of the environment;
- b. study the economy of their local communities, analyze

local economic inequities and injustices, identify the social forces, conditions and the policies which contribute to economic suffering, and explore ways their church can address these problems. This may include providing opportunities for dialogue between people of different economic backgrounds;

- c. seek out churches of different racial and economic backgrounds and engage in study and dialogue with them on issues of economic justice;
 - d. increase members' awareness of global economic issues and the concerns and perspectives of persons around the world on these issues. This may include explicitly studying the differing views of the advantages and disadvantages of the market economy held by people who have suffered or benefited from the promises and problems of the market;
 - e. support and encourage church members regarding their own economic pain and problems.
- #### 3. An Economic Audit of the Church: We call local churches to examine critically the economy of their own church. We call churches to:
- a. invest church endowment funds and other church investments in a manner consistent with the economic justice commitments of the United Church of Christ. This means careful attention to the policies of the financial managers, the financial institutions, and the issuers of securities that are selected, as well as active monitoring of the investment decisions made by church managers and/or church oversight committees;
 - b. examine the extent to which the church budget provides equitably for the salaries, pensions, and benefits of all church staff;
 - c. examine and make sure that the church budget reflects a serious commitment to promote economic justice in the community and the world;
 - d. study and adopt procedures in the institutional lifestyle of the church that are consistent with life in the household of God, including regular self-examination of the extent to which the church is focusing on acquisitive and materialistic patterns of behavior, often reflected in an overemphasis on such items as cushions, carpets, or organs;
 - e. implement just church policies for hiring and firing of staff, with particular attention to the hiring of minorities and women;
 - f. examine purchasing practices with attention to the equal employment and affirmative action practices of suppliers and vendors;
 - g. audit church property and equipment for responsible energy use, resource conservation, recycling practices, sound land use, and less polluting forms of transportation.
- #### 4. Advocacy for Economic Justice: We call local churches to:
- a. join and participate actively in the Justice and Peace Network of the United Church of Christ, and the Network for Environmental and Economic Responsibility, and in interfaith advocacy organizations such as IMPACT and Interfaith Action for Economic Justice;
 - b. work on economic injustices within the local community and support community organizations that enhance the life opportunities and political voice of poor and minority groups, and that increase local economic control;
 - c. interpret, support, and participate in the work for economic justice conducted by the Conferences, and the

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national boards and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ.

VI. Call to United Church of Christ Instrumentalities, Conferences, Associations and Seminaries

The 17th General Synod calls national United Church of Christ Instrumentalities, Conferences, Associations, and the closely related seminaries of the United Church of Christ to respond to the call for economic justice through education, institutional change, and advocacy.

1. The Economy of the United Church of Christ: We call the United Church of Christ to work for economic justice by transforming its own internal organizational structure to conform to life in the household of God, so it reflects a commitment to economic justice. We call the United Church of Christ to:

- a. establish or commission existing committees for economic justice at the Association and Conference levels;
- b. sponsor research and development of a critical analysis of current economic justice issues and make recommendations for economic structures and systems that ensure economic justice for all people;
- c. examine and, where appropriate, encourage change in the distribution of income and resources among Conferences and Associations as well as between wealthier and poorer churches, seeking greater sharing based on mission and need;
- d. continue to promote socially responsible investment of the endowments and pensions of congregations, Conferences and Instrumentalities. Where appropriate to the charter of the investment funds, the United Church of Christ should encourage greater use of investments that address economic justice objectives, but may entail greater risk or lower yields;
- e. examine equity in salaries, pensions, and benefits paid to United Church of Christ employees, and design structures that address current inequities;
- f. establish national and regional programs and projects that seek economic justice in the United States and in the world;
- g. assure that policies for hiring and firing of staff are just with particular attention to the hiring of minorities and women;
- h. confront racism and sexism within the church, strengthening the affirmative action activities of the denomination;
- i. reorient the interpretation, promotion, funding patterns, and priorities of mission programs to reflect the United Church of Christ's commitment to economic justice;
- j. develop ways to involve more people from the local church level, particularly from poor and minority communities, in the decision-making and budgeting process of the denomination.

2. Study and Education:

- a. We call upon all Instrumentalities and other National bodies to research and publish critical and constructive analysis of present economic structures and systems and make recommendations for just economic structures and systems;
- b. We call closely related seminaries of the United Church of Christ to participate in the development of a theology which demonstrates the relevance of biblical faith to eco-

nomc systems and practices in the world and which affirms the wholeness of God's creation. Seminaries should be encouraged to offer courses that give students in the ministry a grounding in economics and economic justice, as well as provide similar continuing education opportunities for clergy and concerned lay people;

- c. We call the appropriate United Church of Christ Instrumentalities to collect or develop and distribute curriculum materials which foster the study of economic justice issues by youth and adults in local churches;
 - d. We call the national bodies of the United Church of Christ, along with Conferences and Associations, to develop seminars, and other programs that provide for the study of economic justice issues;
 - e. We call the Office for Church in Society, the United Church Board for World Ministries, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Commission for Racial Justice and the Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries to encourage the study of the Pronouncement on Christian Faith: Economic Life and Justice and of supporting documents. These groups are encouraged to appoint a task force to expand this pronouncement into a fuller study resource, similar to A Just Peace Church, and, in cooperation with Conferences and Associations, to conduct a church-wide study process;
 - f. We call the Stewardship Council to develop a Sunday bulletin back page series which tells stories of economic justice and injustice, and relates these issues to biblical faith, and to utilize other means of communicating economic justice themes such as mission moments and offering material;
 - g. We call all bodies of the Church to provide for study opportunities and dialogue which mix people across economic, racial, and national lines, providing the opportunity for all groups in the Church to listen to the concerns of those whose perspectives differ.
- #### 3. Advocacy for Economic Justice: We call the various bodies of the United Church of Christ, under the leadership of the Office for Church in Society, to increase their advocacy efforts on behalf of economic justice in the economic life of this nation and the international community. We call OCIS, UCBWM, UCBHM and CRJ to:
- a. lobby for legislative efforts that embody the policy proposals in Section VI of the foregoing Pronouncement;
 - b. continue efforts to develop the Justice and Peace Network, placing emphasis on issues of economic justice and their links with peace issues;
 - c. initiate efforts to develop an eco-justice advocacy network to address the linkage between economic and environmental justice issues;
 - d. empower churches and individuals to effectively organize and to change conditions of poverty;
 - e. gather poor people in conferences and hearings, so that their stories may be heard within churches, and the media, and Congress;
 - f. continue to advocate divestment from all corporations doing business in South Africa and other nations where economic and racial oppression are commonplace;
 - g. continue to advocate for the medically indigent and physically disabled due to catastrophic illnesses such as AIDS.
- #### 4. Ecumenical Initiatives: We call the Office of the President to take the initiative in approaching the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the major Protestant denominations that have written public theologies of economics

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to discuss the development of an ecumenical statement on economic justice that would address the nation.

VII. Call to Participation in the Global Community

The 17th General Synod calls upon all members, congregations, Associations, Conferences, Instrumentalities, and related institutions in the United Church of Christ to recognize that we are members of a global community in which a majority of our brothers and sisters are poor. There is a need within this global community to create a new household, bearing one another's burdens and sharing God's gift of life together. To stand with God in solidarity with all people, particularly the poor and oppressed, and to challenge the value systems of this world, we call all parts of the United Church of Christ to:

1. Recognize the existence of one interdependent and global household and one mutually responsible people. This includes support of grassroots people's movements involved in the struggle for justice, peace, and full human development;
2. Participate in extensive people-to-people and congregational exchanges through the United Church Board for World Ministries, providing direct exposure to the situations and problems of churches and individuals in poorer countries;
3. Provide greater support to the ministries of partner churches, social service and relief programs, Christian seminaries, and educational, environmental and health institutions in poorer countries;
4. Participate in and support the World Council of Churches and other international interfaith institutions;
5. Invest in alternative financial institutions, such as the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society, or other lending arrangements which promote socially desirable goals, such as housing, community economic development, or projects initiated by the poor;
6. Solicit the participation of partner churches into United Church of Christ structures and mission programs;
7. Develop new and more effective programmatic relationships with sisters and brothers in the Third World that enhance the global struggle toward economic justice;
8. Provide national and international leadership toward the development of an effective global ecumenical movement for economic justice which has as its central goal the just transformation of the global economic order.

VIII. Implementation

The 17th General Synod requests that the Office for Church in Society, in consultation with the United Church Board for World Ministries, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Commission for Racial Justice and the Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries, coordinate the implementation of this Proposal for Action through a broadly representative inter-agency and church-wide committee and make a detailed report to the Eighteenth and succeeding General Synods.

14. PRONOUNCEMENT "A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY WITH PACIFIC ISLANDERS AND ASIAN AMERICANS"

The Chairperson of Committee Four, Mr. Lorin Cope, spoke of the compelling testimony regarding Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans at the hearing on Thursday evening. He then

moved the adoption of the Proposed Pronouncement "A United Church of Christ Ministry with Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans."

An amendment was proposed to delete a portion of the document, but the amendment was ruled out of order and

89-GS-83 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Pronouncement "A United Church of Christ Ministry with Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans."

PRONOUNCEMENT A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY WITH PACIFIC ISLANDERS AND ASIAN AMERICANS

I. Summary

For over a century, many generations of Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans have made contributions to the economic well-being, national security and cultural richness of the United States. However, they are still largely regarded as "foreigners" and often viewed with suspicion and envy. As a result, persons of Pacific Islander and Asian ancestry are often obliged to demonstrate that they are Americans.

This Pronouncement calls upon the United Church of Christ to welcome Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans into our midst and to minister with these persons, within our churches and our communities, in recognition of their diverse traditions, cultures and languages. It affirms the past efforts of the United Church of Christ to provide a "home" for Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans. It affirms the United Church of Christ's commitment to minister to the poor and the oppressed, and to affirm Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans as full partners in the United Church of Christ.

Finally, this Pronouncement is a call by the Commission for Racial Justice and the Pacific Asian American Ministries of the United Church of Christ for the United Church of Christ to be an instrument for justice which combats racism and violence in all its forms against Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans. Furthermore, it calls upon the United Church of Christ to continue the fight against the powers and principalities which make it difficult for Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans to be fully vested members of American society and the United Church of Christ.

II. Background

He was dying and he said, "It's not fair." Vincent Chin was killed with a baseball bat by two unemployed auto workers because they perceived him to be the cause of their misfortune. The 1982 murder of Vincent Chin typifies the basic pattern of Pacific Islander and Asian American history: a recurring cycle of recruitment of Pacific Islanders and Asians as cheap labor during favorable economic periods alternating with expulsion, often violent in nature and accompanied by vicious scapegoating, during times of economic distress and high unemployment.

Racial discrimination has been a painful fact of life ever since the first Asian American immigrants arrived in this country in the 1840's. Such discrimination ranges from the brutal exploitation of Asian American labor, such as Filipino plantation workers, to xenophobia (a fear of things foreign), often resulting in questionable domestic and foreign policies, race riots and violent expulsion. Underlying racism toward Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans is no doubt aggravated by images of Asians in television, movies and popular print media